


yikes!

Youth Support Services: WHO'S CARRYING THE CAN?



YACVic and VCOSS are examining the gaps in generalist youth support services in Victoria. We are collecting a comprehensive evidence base on where these gaps lie and on what needs to happen to improve service responses to young people.

Anecdotal evidence demonstrates gaps in generalist support services for young people in Victoria. Shifts in Government funding models have exacerbated gaps in generalist youth support services, overstressing the resources of existing services and leaving some communities without access to them at all. Given the growing concern of the sector around the impact these gaps are having on young people and youth service providers, YACVic and VCOSS have embarked on the 'Youth Support Services: Who's Carrying the Can?' campaign.

The term 'generalist youth support service' is in this context interpreted to mean services ranging from early intervention support (for example, skill development/case management) to secondary intervention (for example support provided to young people 'at risk' of developing tertiary issues like chronic mental

health issues, drug and alcohol issues or homelessness). The types of support that young people might receive from these services might be short term or for a longer term period. Young people seek this kind of support for a range of reasons. For example, they may be experiencing depression or anxiety, or family or relationship breakdown. They may benefit from a peer support network or need individual counselling.

The 'Youth Support Services: Who's Carrying the Can?' campaign began with the release of a survey asking youth service providers to describe the service gaps in their area, how they were impacting on young people and how they were impacting on their own service. Responses to the survey have come from a range of services from across Victoria and are currently being collated. School Focused Youth Service Providers have also been specifically approached to provide input on the issue as they have a unique understanding of the landscape of support services offered by schools and community agencies in their region and where the shortfalls may be.

In addition, two community forums have been held in order to provide opportunities to share information about the gaps and their impact and to identify potential solutions and ways forward. The forums, in Melbourne on May 4, and Benalla on May 17, also gave youth service providers and Government representatives an opportunity to hear from tertiary mental health service providers on the impact of the lack of early support in responding to the mental health needs of Victorian young people.

The outcomes of the two forums and information collected through the surveys and feedback forms will inform a joint YACVic/VCOSS report to be released to Government and the youth sector. The report will shed light on where young people are missing out on crucial supports and will make recommendations on what needs to happen to ensure an adequate service response for young people in Victoria.

For more information on the campaign and access to presentations from the Melbourne forum see our web site at www.yacvic.org.au

This issue...

Our YIKES! June issue is packed to the gills with articles and reports. For starters the **Federal Budget** is taken apart to see where the money is for young people, a **new research report on young people in our community** commissioned by the Knox City Council, plus news on the **extension of Chroming Laws** and a new **Telstra phonecard assistance program being run through YACVic**. There's plenty more inside so I recommend sitting back and turning the page.

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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!

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CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions to YIKES! are welcome. The deadline for the next edition of YIKES! is **17 July 2006**

INSERTS & ADVERTISING

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

Editorial

Aren't Victoria's autumn colours beautiful? I've just returned from Benalla, now there's a town that does autumn justice; it was gorgeous.

YACVic was there with VCOSS to host the second of our two forums on *Youth Support Services - Who's Carrying the Can?* The information collected through the forums and the many surveys service providers have filled out will form the foundations of a report that will highlight the gaps and propose some changes to ensure young people get the services they need. Thanks to all of you who participated in the forums and surveys, your input is really valued!

YACVic has received generous support from the Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs to hold a national youth conference in the first half of 2007. Watch this space for more information.

As we go to print the State Budget is

being handed down and we have high hopes that young people will not be ignored, a fate some would say they experienced at the hands of the recent Federal budget (see page 6). YACVic is particularly interested to see that the new Children, Young People and Families Act is adequately resourced. Please see the special Budget insert in this issue.

Also included in this issue of YIKES! is a postcard that Jobwatch has produced in collaboration with YACVic. As detailed in the last issue of YIKES! the postcard aims to encourage young people to report any unfair treatment they might receive in the new IR climate. If you would like further copies of the postcard please email us at info@yacvic.org.au

Georgie Ferrari, Executive Officer

What's the YACVic Youth Reference Group Up To?

Well, we are nearing closer to the middle of the year, how scary! Time flies when you're havin' fun!

We are still meeting one Saturday a month and loving it! We have members from Metro Melbourne, Outer Melbourne and Regional Victoria all working together to make this state a better place for young people.

The YRG has been involved in consultations with the Office for Youth in updating their New Youth Agenda. We prepared a report from these to give feedback to OFY. The New Youth Agenda is yet to be finalised, but when it is completed, we will let you know!

We have also been busy trying to organise an Advocacy Expo. This expo has been on the YRG agenda for some time now, so this year's YRG is hoping to get it going. Some of our members have been busy contacting councils to see if they are interested in us holding an expo in their area and whether they can provide us any support. While some councils have not been so responsive, other councils seem really keen. Further work will continue and we will keep you all updated on our progress.

At our last meeting in May, the YRG was

visited by Andrew Lavin, the guy who is helping to re-write YACVic's policy platform. The YRG had the opportunity to discuss a number of policy areas with him and will liaise with Andrew by email if we have further comment on other policy areas.

Coming up for the YRG

I am off to Parliament with Georgie for the Parliamentary Inquiry into Retaining Young People in Rural Towns and Communities. Why do we stay? Why do we go? What can be done to make us stay in the country? Though I am packing myself about having to talk in front of a bunch of politicians, I am looking forward to representing the youth that live in regional and rural Victoria (like me). It should be good.

YACVic and the current YRG are going to get together and discuss the way YRG is running at the moment, and what we could do better to run it in the future. Not that there is anything wrong with it at the moment, but there is always room for improvement! This process will begin within the next 3 weeks or so and will only make the YRG a better group to be a part of. And like always, we will keep you posted.

Dani Kline, YRG member

Young People are Part of Safer Communities

Both state and local councils, at random intervals, have attempted to reconcile the perceptions held by the wider community about young people. Through various programs and initiatives, the state government has endeavoured to integrate both the young and older people of the community to project a positive community image.

Despite these efforts, data collected in the *Perceptions of Local Safety Survey (2004)* reveal that across Victoria, 12% of the population feels that youth and youth gangs are a major crime problem. In the Knox region alone, fear of youth and youth gangs is at 19%. Clearly, a challenge exists for policy makers to alter the perceptions of the community, in terms of what actually constitutes a crime being committed by young people. Simply 'hanging around' in groups is not an offence, and therefore generates grave concerns about the impact of fear of crime in local communities, and the implications of young people being perceived as the perpetrators of crime when in a group setting.

Over reporting of offences and focusing on specific demographics as the perpetrators of crime increases fear in local communities. Graffiti and vandalism has long been understood as the domain of teenagers. However, a 34-year old man was one of those arrested by police in the early 2006 'graffiti crackdowns', and charged with various graffiti offences. The Melbourne print media traditionally run stories on graffiti 'waves' for which 'youth gangs' are responsible. The scenario of the 34 year old offender is to the contrary of popular stereotypes and reveals quite a paradox. Despite this, continual association of graffiti with 'youth gangs' in the press entrenches perceptions of youth crime in the community.

Significant work has been undertaken at the local level in Victoria to project the positive image and profile of young people. The types of stories favoured for promotion of young individuals tend to revolve exclusively around those with sporting prowess or those achieving academic success. This is colloquially referred to by youth practitioners as the 'Captain of the Debating Team' syndrome. Despite the occasional punctuation of positive profiling of young people in the local press, the dominant headlines of 'youth striking terror' prevail. Consistently, negative stories about young people are offered better coverage and space in print media than those positive press releases, such as the write ups of young sporting heroes, assigned to the back pages.

In the City of Knox, 23.6% of the population is aged between 10 and 25 (Knox Youth Plan, 2005). This particular demographic also has a low level of participation in arts and cultural activities. Research conducted in the local Knox area attributed a number of reasons as to why young people's participation in arts and cultural activities was not at high levels, or particularly obvious and visible in the community. Factors included;

- The lack of access to transport services being a significant barrier in participation in community activities

- Insufficient knowledge about the events, and a lack of appropriate marketing for activities that had been tailored specifically for young people.

Instead of attempting to move young people on from activity centres to promote a more 'sanitary' image (free of misconceptions about youth crime), there is real and untapped potential to utilise the presence of young people in a passive surveillance, 'eyes on the street' approach. There is significant research reinforcing the notion of participatory communities as safer, however there is very little research that relates young people as integral, available, and applicable to such a campaign. The capacity for improving health, wellbeing, and participation warrants practical application and further research in this area. It remains largely undisputed that young people are highly visible in local communities, underlining the validity of investing in a media campaign that equates the presence of young people 'out and about' with safer and more participatory communities.

Too often we attempt to prescribe a solution to 'youth problems', without looking candidly at whether there is in fact an issue to be solved at all. We must discover better ways of meaningfully contributing to the promotion of the positive profile of a broader range of young people.

This report has attempted to underline the rhetoric of fear of crime, and related facets of traditionally anti social behaviors. It has highlighted legitimate potential for young people's critical participation in increasing perceptions of safety in inclusive communities. What a wonderful day to aspire to, when we pop out to the shops and feel safer and less fearful of crime because there are so many young people hanging around. The challenge is to promote this as not such an abstract concept.

This article has been edited from a new research report *Young People are Part of Safer Communities* by Samantha Spooner, Community Safety Officer, Knox City Council, (Masters Thesis Candidate- Applied Criminology, RMIT University) and Shaun Tolliday, RMIT University Research Student undertaking professional placement with Knox City Council (Criminal Justice Program – School of Global Studies, Social Science, and Planning)

The project work has informed the strategic direction of the Knox Safer Communities Group, as well as the Police led Knox Local Safety Committee.

For a full copy of the the research report contact Samantha Spooner, Community Safety Officer, Knox City Council on (03) 9298-8415 or email samantha.spooner@knox.vic.gov.au

Chroming Laws Extended > June 30, 2008

A recent act of parliament has extended the **Drugs Poisons and Controlled Substances (Volatile Substances) Act 2003 to June 30, 2008.**

The *Drugs Poisons and Controlled Substances (Volatile Substances) Act 2003* had its origins in the Inquiry into the Inhalation of Volatile Substances, which was undertaken by the Drugs and Crime Prevention Committee (DCPC) in 2001. The Inquiry examined the factors contributing to inhalant abuse, considered the options to reduce and prevent inhalant abuse, and reviewed the adequacy of existing strategies. The Inquiry report was tabled in the Victorian Parliament in 2002 and made 16 recommendations. One of these recommendations was that legislation be enacted to provide the police with the power to take preventative action to deter the use of volatile substances.

'Volatile substances' or 'inhalants' refer to everyday household products such as paint ('chroming'), glue, paint thinner, deodorants and petrol, when inhaled for an intoxicating effect. As they can be purchased legally and inexpensively, they are readily obtainable by young people.

The 2003 Act does not criminalise inhalant abuse, but enables police to provide an early intervention to protect the health and welfare of young people. Under the legislation, police can apprehend young people under 18 years who are reasonably suspected of abusing volatile substances. They can search young people, seize volatile substances and items used to inhale, and link young people to suitable care, such as parent or other caregiver, hospital, or drug treatment agency. Adults can also be apprehended if police have reason to believe that they intend to provide a volatile substance or item used to inhale to a person under 18, for the purpose of inhaling. Young people cannot be held in a police cell or lock-up. If the young person cannot be released into the care of a responsible adult and no longer appears to be at risk to themselves or others, they can be released independently. A Protocol between Victoria Police and relevant agencies has been developed to support the use of the legislation. This can be downloaded from <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/drugservices/pubs>

The Volatile Substance Abuse Protocols Advisory Committee oversees the implementation of the legislation. It has wide representation from the community sector and across government.

The impact of the legislation is being reviewed. The Department of Human Services has been collecting data from Victoria Police, alcohol and drug agencies, and Child Protection. The preliminary (first year) data show that there have been over 80 individual contacts under the legislation by police with young people. Young people have been connected to their families and/or residential placements, drug and alcohol services, or hospitals for emergency care. Some of these contacts have been repeat events with the same young people.

The 2003 Act was due to sunset on 30 June 2006. A new Act, the *Drugs Poisons and Controlled Substances (Volatile Substances) (Extension of Provisions) Act 2006* has just been passed which extends this legislation for a further two years, to 30 June 2008. This will allow for the completion of the review of the impact of the legislation. Work is continuing to collect data from Victoria Police and relevant agencies, in order to provide more information about the way the legislation is working, and outcomes for young people. This will inform recommendations regarding the future of the legislation.

Further information about the legislation and other government initiatives on volatile substance use can be obtained from <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/drugservices/pubs> and documents including the *Volatile Substances Protocols 2004; Management Response to Inhalant Use: Guidelines for the community care and drug and alcohol sector*; and *Inhalant Abuse Information Kit for the Koori Community* can be downloaded. *The Responsible Sale of Solvents: A Retailers Kit* can be obtained from Meredith Kiraly, phone 9096-2821 or email Meredith.kiraly@dhs.vic.gov.au. Feedback on the use of the legislation is welcomed.

Telstra Phonocard Assistance Program

Does your service work with young people on low incomes who rely on public pay phones for their communication?

YACVic has 1000 \$5.00 Telstra Phonecards (for use in public payphones) to give to services to distribute to young people.

Under the Program, participating services or agencies have the discretion to issue Telstra Phonecards according to the eligibility guidelines listed below.

Eligibility

The welfare agency must assess the person as being a person, residing in Australia, who depends/ relies on public payphones from time to time for their communications.

It is expected in most cases that the person receiving the Phonocard will:

- have a current Australian Health Care Card
- have a current Australian Centrelink Jobs Network Card

- be a new arrival in Australia with a Temporary Protection Visa
- have a current Australian Centrelink Pensioner Concession Card (eg. Age Pension, Disability Support Pension and Carer Payment recipient)
- have a current Australian Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Card
- be in a crisis situation
- be in a situation where there is a high risk to safety and security,

Looking at the BIGGER Picture

Improving Outcomes for Young People who are Homeless

With the imminent release of the Youth Homelessness Action Plan final report and the announcement of the State Budget, it is anticipated that the Victorian Government will make some solid commitments to the further development of a youth specific response as part of an improved overall homelessness assistance service system.

The Youth Homelessness Action Plan first stage report was completed in 2004 and provided immediate priorities and actions to address the problem of youth homelessness in Victoria. The last Victorian Counting the Homeless Census conducted in 2001 revealed that 7,064 people aged 12-24 years were recorded as being homeless on census night, equating to 35% of the Victorian homeless population.

The youth homelessness assistance service sector has welcomed the first stage of the Youth Homelessness Action Plan and the Victorian Government's commitment to improving the experiences of young homeless people through the initiatives outlined therein. Such initiatives have included funding for family reconciliation and mediation, education, employment and training and independent living skills programs for young people at risk of homelessness.

However, for lasting improvements to be made to the quality of service delivery to young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, it is hoped that the Youth Homelessness Action Plan final report will provide the framework and funding necessary for bigger picture systemic sector analysis and service delivery improvements to occur.

With this as the focus, the Council to Homeless Persons has advocated for the implementation of a comprehensive youth homelessness service planning process and funding model review as part of the second stage of the Youth Homelessness Action Plan. This would be aimed at identifying service gaps and inequalities as well as ascertaining future funding priorities and base level service funding requirements. With young people over-represented in the homeless population, current youth services do not have the capacity to meet demand. In some regions of Victoria, there is no youth specific crisis response meaning that many young people are forced to leave their

community of origin to find support and accommodation.

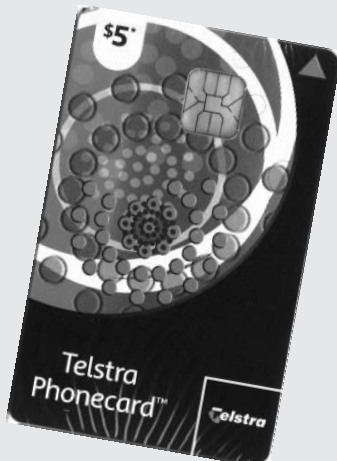
Furthermore, the Council to Homeless Persons believes that the establishment of a cross-governmental consultative planning process is of vital importance in ensuring long-term improvements are made to the services young homeless Victorians receive. A whole of government strategy is required to respond to the needs of disadvantaged young people, incorporating a key component on youth homelessness. If different areas of government funded complimentary initiatives to address youth disadvantage, including homelessness, outcomes for these young people would be greatly enhanced. Such collaboration would validate the Victorian Government's commitment to addressing disadvantage through its *Fairer Victoria* policy framework.

As recognised by the Youth Homelessness Action Plan, young people are a heterogeneous population with varying support and housing needs. Age, gender, developmental stage, cultural background, period of and reasons for homelessness all affect what a young person needs and wants from the service system. Services must therefore have the capacity to act with flexibility so that the individual needs of young people are met with differentiated support and housing responses.

To this end, the first stage initiatives of the Youth Homelessness Action Plan have gone some way—brokerage funds for employment, education and training and family reconciliation and mediation have certainly provided the sector with increased opportunities to respond creatively to the individual needs of young people. So that such practice initiatives can build long-term capacity in the youth homelessness sector, increased funding for existing services to better meet demand together with long overdue sector planning and cross-government collaboration will be some of the key actions required. It is hoped that the Youth Homelessness Action Plan final stage report will soon provide the means and guidance for meeting these sector needs.

For further information please contact Anna Forsyth, Youth Policy Officer, Council to Homeless Persons on 9419 8699 or anna@chp.org.au

Telstra Phonecard Assistance Program: how to access it



where privacy is paramount (eg. domestic violence)

- be a job seeker
- live in a remote indigenous community.

Distribution Process

YACVic will give services the phonecards in multiples of ten, with a maximum of 50 cards per service. Services interested in receiving phonecards should email info@yacvic.org.au or call Larissa Barrie

on 9267 3799.

Services can either collect the phone cards from the YACVic Office, or send a self addressed, stamped, C4 sized envelope to YACVic and we will post the cards to you (please note: postage costs \$2.45 within Victoria).

Once YACVic is satisfied that your service works with young people who meet the eligibility criteria, distribution will be based on a first in, first served basis.

FEDERAL BUDGET PRIORITIES >>>>>

The Federal budget was released earlier this month, with 55% of spending allocated to personal tax cuts and allowing for a budget surplus of approximately \$10 billion.

Unfortunately it provided relatively little investment in young people. This is not surprising given the rapidly diminishing profile young people's issues enjoy at a Federal level since the abolishment of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, the dramatic sizing back of the National Youth Roundtable and the de-funding of the national youth peak body.

Whilst the budget does include some positive initiatives such as new spending on mental health and drug and alcohol services, they are countered by a focus on tightening compliance measures for young people accessing social security payments and the further promotion of a user pays higher education system. Below is a snapshot of some of the key Federal budget implications for young people.

Expanding Fraud and Compliance measures

The Government will spend \$10.6 million over four years increasing the number of fraud and compliance tests that will be carried out by Centrelink on Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY and AUSTUDY recipients. The number of risk profiled reviews for Youth Allowance recipients will be increased from 35,000 to 75,000 a year and from 5,000 to 10,000 a year for AUSTUDY recipients. The Government anticipates this will generate savings of \$73.0 million, leading to net savings of \$62.4 million over for years.

Funding has also been dedicated to increasing the number of Youth Allowance, AUSTUDY and ABSTUDY recipients to be targeted by the rolling random survey program for student payments. The random review of the circumstances of income support recipients will be expanded from 1,500 to 2,000 per year for Youth Allowance recipients and from 500 to 1,000 per year for AUSTUDY payments. The number of

ABSTUDY reviews will sit at 750 per year. Whilst the Government anticipates this will generate savings of \$7.2 million dollars, the costs of implementing the extended measures sits at \$9.6 million, resulting in a net cost of \$2.4 million over the next four years.

The Government also expects to generate savings of \$1.8 million by tightening compliance measures for Indigenous students receiving ABSTUDY

payments by linking payment to attendance and introducing a measure through which payment of the School Term Allowance for terms two, three and four 'will be paid in arrears and only when there is evidence of attendance on 85 per cent of school days'¹. The Government believes this initiative will encourage school attendance by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. However, it may also have the consequence of financially penalising families by insisting they front the costs of their children's education without previously available financial assistance. Further, the initiative runs the risk of particularly penalising those students already disadvantaged and struggling to engage with school. Recipients of ABSTUDY will also cease to receive payments after four years for vocational studies at Certificate levels 1 & 2.

The budget also provides for income support recipients residing in Greece, Italy, Malta Turkey and the UK to be targeted for reviews to curb social security fraud.

Higher Education

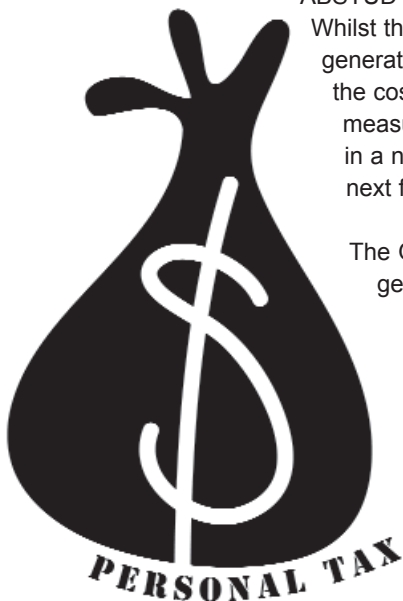
Whilst the budget dedicates \$95.5 million to infrastructure in universities, the budget undercuts the accessibility of higher education to students under the guise of increased spending on student loans. In a move that acts to further entrench a user pays system by raising the cap on loans for local fee-paying students, the Government is further shifting the costs of education onto students. It is anticipated that universities, whose reliance on revenue from student fees has increased with the decline of Government funding will welcome the initiative.² The loan limit has been raised from \$50,950 to \$80,000, with the exception of loans to medicine, dentistry and veterinary science students for whom the cap is set at \$100,000, and is expected to encourage more students to take up full fee paying places at university.

The Government will spend \$81.6 million assisting universities in the transition to voluntary student unionism. The money will be spent on assisting universities who had previously relied on union fees to provide sporting and recreational facilities to construct and maintain those facilities. Also to be funded by this initiative is an independent assessment 'of the economic and other consequences of voluntary student unionism.'³

In terms of the delivery of other services on regional campus, the Government has dedicated \$10 million to universities 'to encourage local businesses to establish and maintain key services in regional areas.'⁴ A further \$10 million dollars will be spent on the Australian University Sport initiative, to encourage regional university students to participate in sporting activities.

Schools

The Government has dedicated \$5.8 million to a study into funding for school students with a disability, stemming from reported concern from parents that funding available to students with a disability in the non-government sector is less than that provided for students with a disability in state schools.⁵ Non-government schools that specifically cater for students at risk of dropping out



>>> Miss the Mark for Young People

of the education system will also receive financial assistance.

Improving literacy is a focus of the budget with \$20 million dedicated to extending the Tutorial Voucher initiative and \$40.8 million over four years to expand the English as a Second Language program for recently arrived school-age migrants.

The Government invests in its agenda to promote civic pride through the civics and citizenship education package, whereby \$16.3 million over four years has been committed to providing travel rebates to school groups 'visiting Parliament House and other national institutions in Canberra' and to 'provide educational resources to help students better understand and appreciate Australia's democratic values and processes.'¹⁶

Training

The Government has committed \$64.3 million over four years to work with the States and Territories to implement 'a new approach' to apprenticeships, training and skills recognition 'to alleviate skill shortages currently evident in the some parts of the Australian economy.'¹⁷ Also a focus in New Apprenticeship initiatives are a 'Rural and Regional Skill Shortages incentive rationalisation' whereby a \$1000 incentive is paid to employers taking on certain apprenticeships.⁸

Mental Health

The Government has dedicated to spending \$1.9 billion over five years on mental health as part of the Council of Australian Government's (COAG) mental health initiative. The initiatives are broadly focused at this stage, and whilst the budget details areas of focus for the package, it does not provide clear details as to how the money will be spent. It is expected that more specific details will be released following the COAG meeting in June.

The budget allocates \$380.5 million towards 'better access to psychiatrists, psychologists and general practitioners through the Medicare benefits Scheme'. As mental illness is the primary health burden for young people, it is hoped that initiatives such as this will assist young people in accessing treatment and support.

Other initiatives for mental health that specifically target young people relate to:

- Expanding the Youth Pathways program to assist more young people experiencing mental illness to stay at school, and
- New early intervention services for parents, children and young people 'to assist parents and schools to better identify children at risk of mental illness and to offer early referral for appropriate treatment.'¹⁹

A campaign to tackle substance and alcohol abuse is also a focus of the budget. Young people attending university have been targeted through a \$19.8 million initiative to employ specialist counsellors on campuses 'to focus on the needs of people with

substance abuse problems, including identifying the early onset of psychosis'¹⁰, to provide family support services and referral to specialist and mainstream community services. An awareness campaign will also be hosted in universities, highlighting the links between substance abuse and mental illness.

Addressing Indigenous Disadvantage

The budget includes initiatives relating to Indigenous health, housing and Community Leadership. Overall spending in the portfolio has only marginally been increased and the Australian Council of Social Service reports the spending allocated to health as 'inadequate to address Indigenous disadvantage significantly.'¹¹ Specific to young people is an initiative to expand the Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme to vocational education and training students. In the context of the restrictions this budget places on ABSTUDY, the value of in-class tutorial assistance may be limited in its capacity to improve educational outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young People.

Encouraging Young People from Diverse Cultural Backgrounds to Participate in Surf Lifesaving

Another sports based initiative, is the provision of \$0.9 million over three years to encourage young people from diverse cultural backgrounds to gain surf lifesaving skills. The initiative will engage the Sutherland Shire Council, Surf Life Saving New South Wales and Surf Lifesaving Australia.

Prime Minister's Youth Challenge and World Youth Day 2008

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney will receive \$20 million as a contribution to host World Youth Day in July 2008. A one off grant of \$600,000 will be received by the Duke of Edinburgh Awards to fund the Prime Minister's Youth Challenge, which will aim to increase the number of young people participating in the Awards nationally from 15,000 to 25,000 by 2010.

For further information on the Federal Budget allocations and measures see www.budget.gov.au

YACVic would like to acknowledge Luke B'osher, Youth Coalition of the A.C.T, and the Australian Council of Social Service for assistance and information on the Federal Budget analysis.

- 1 2006-07 Budget Paper No 2: Budget Measures 2006-07. Attorney Generals Department. May 2006. p. 147.
- 2 Rood, D. 'Uni loans poised to hit \$100,000' The Age, 10/5/06. p.7.
- 3 2006-07 Budget Paper No. 2: Budget Measures 2006-07. p.166
- 4 Rood D. op.cit. p.7.
- 5 op.cit.
- 6 2006-07 Budget Paper No 2: Budget Measures 2006-07. p.163
- 7 2006-07 Budget Paper No 2: Budget Measures 2006-07. p.155.
- 8 2006-07 Budget Paper No 2: Budget Measures 2006-07.p.162.
- 9 2006-07 Budget Paper No 2: Budget Measures 2006-07. p.246.
- 10 Budget Measures 2006-07. Expense Measures 2006-07. p. 262.
- 11 Australian Council of Social Service. Federal Budget Briefing, 16 May 2006. Indigenous Disadvantage Budget Brief.

YDAS Up and Running, Full Speed Ahead

It was a full house at YACVic when the Youth and Disability Advocacy Service was officially launched by Minister Sheryl Garbutt during Youth Week, on Friday, April 7.

The launch was attended by young people with disabilities, and representatives from disability services and various youth and disability community organisations. The master of ceremonies was David Hamra, Chairperson of YACVic. Over 50 people attended the launch which included presentations from young people with disabilities as well as Belinda Lo, the chairperson of Youthlaw. A big thank you to the Department of Human Services who sponsored and helped to organise the event and to all who attended for making the launch such a huge success.



Jen Anderson, Disability Discrimination Legal Service Manager; George Taleporos, YDAS Co-ordinator; Elizabeth McGarry, Migrant Resource Centre North West Region Aged and Disability Team Leader; Belinda Lo, Youthlaw Chair; Minister Sheryl Garbutt, Minister for Community Services; and Georgie Ferrari, YACVic Executive Officer.

right of young people with disabilities to receive services that are responsive to their needs?



Liz Ellis, YDAS Steering Committee member.

The highlight for me was when Liz Ellis, from the YDAS steering committee, spoke so passionately and convincingly about the need for improvements in the provision of services for young people with disabilities. Liz spoke about the negative impact that stringent

There is a strong need for advocacy on this issue as young people with disabilities will find it increasingly difficult to find services that support them in a community that is not always safe and where risk elimination is an impossibility. I believe that the reputation that young people have for their high levels of risk tolerance will serve to challenge the risk aversiveness which is increasing among disability services.

It is fantastic for YDAS to have young people with disabilities on board who boldly demand change and stoically assert their rights to live their lives with freedom. For those who have not yet found the confidence to speak up for their rights, YDAS will work alongside them to provide opportunities for advocacy and change on those issues that matter most to young people with disabilities.

For more info on call George Taleporos on 9267 3755 or email gtaleporos@yacvic.org.au

Occupational Health and Safety requirements have had on her life. This is an issue that affects many young people with disabilities who rely on attendant support to assist them at school, university, in the workplace and in the wider community. Young people with disabilities don't want their lives restricted to a small number of locations that have been fitted out with a hoist and, as Liz explained, hoists aren't quite small enough to carry around!

Young people with disabilities want the same freedoms that other young people enjoy but this is becoming increasingly difficult as support services are imposing 'No Lift' manual handling policies that insist on using a hoist for transfers, even though they are not always available in the community. Of course, everyone has the right to a safe workplace but how do we balance this with the

David Cuthbertson, YDAS Steering Committee member.



COMMUNITY SERVICES UNDER THREAT IN INDEXATION BATTLE WITH DHS

Does your service receive funding from the Department for Human Services? If so you'll probably be aware that negotiations are underway for the 2006/2009 Funding and Service Agreements.

A key part of negotiations is the agreement on price indexation for agreements. Price indexation exists to ensure that funding to services keeps pace with cost increases. These increases are both in terms of salaries and on costs and the other costs of running a service such as fuel costs, fleet maintenance, rent etc.

The funded sector has requested a 4.15% increase on the unit price. DHS have offered 2.6%. Over three years this would represent a \$55.61 million shortfall on what we are asking for.

VCOSS and the Peaks and Statewide network have arrived at the 4.15% figure by factoring in the Labour Price Index (LPI) and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) with a split of 85% to LPI and 15% to CPI. We believe that this is a reasonable and achievable level of price indexation based on sound figures and a vision for a sustainable social services sector.

A recent survey of the Australian Social Services Sector indicated that services were forced to turn away 34261 Victorians who were eligible for a service; that's almost 100 per day! (see www.vcooss.org.au for the full survey results).

The Victorian social service sector needs an adequate level of funding to ensure that those most in need of services are able to access them. Further to this we need to ensure ongoing sector sustainability and viability by having a funding structure that keeps pace with ever increasing costs and demands.

At a recent public meeting those present voted to reject the Department's current offer of 2.6%. The request for a minimum indexation of 4.15% was unanimously endorsed and those present agreed that if this request wasn't met a series of

actions would be taken to campaign hard for what we want.

What can you do?

YACVic will update you regularly (by email and website) on the campaign progress. If you have examples of how your service and clients will suffer under an inadequate price indexation, email gferrari@yacvic.org.au. We will ensure these examples will be presented to DHS and relevant Ministers.

Keep tuned for further updates and a possible call to action if our demands aren't met.

STATE GOVERNMENT'S PUBLIC TRANSPORT STATEMENT

The State Government's Transport Statement was released on May 17. *Meeting our Transport Challenges* outlines a commitment to spend \$10.5 billion investing in the public transport system. The plan contains a 25-year vision for public transport, and outlines funding for the first decade. Amongst the many commitments it makes are:

- investment in new bus, tram and train services, including the extension of later services
- investment in three new outer-suburban train stations
- major investment in improving access for seniors and people with disabilities
- investment in improved public transport links in provincial Victoria.

For full details of the statement visit www.doi.vic.gov.au

CITY OF MELBOURNE OPEN SPACE STRATEGY

The City of Melbourne is developing a new 'Open Space Strategy'. The Strategy is primarily concerned with the maintenance and development of parklands and other open spaces, such as trails, gardens and playgrounds. The City of Melbourne have been receiving submissions and conducting community consultations on the strategy.

YACVic has contributed to this consultation process along with other members of the Public Space Action Group. For more information on the Open Space Strategy see www.melbourne.vic.gov.au

DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE TRANSPORT AND SOCIAL EXCLUSION CONFERENCE

The Department of Infrastructure Victoria, in association with the Institute of Transport Studies at Monash University and the Brotherhood of St Laurence, held its first conference on Transport, Social Disadvantage and Well Being in Melbourne on 5th - 6th April 2006. The conference was supported by the Bus Association of Victoria and Metlink and invited participation from a range of community and Government representatives to hear from a range of International and Victorian speakers and to provide recommendations to alleviate social exclusion and improve access to public transport. YACVic participated in the conference, presenting a workshop relating to the importance of accessible public transport to young people in Victoria.

For more information on the conference, including presentations delivered on the day see: <http://www.monash.edu.au/cmo/Transport2006/index.html>

HUMAN RIGHTS CHARTER BILL PASSING THROUGH PARLIAMENT

The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Bill 2006*, outlining the implementation of a Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities for Victoria was read for the second time in Parliament on 21st April. At the time of writing this update, the second reading was assumed to resume in Parliament on May 30.

For more information on the Charter see the Department of Justice website at www.justice.vic.gov.au

Jen Rose, YACVic's Policy Officer can be contacted on 9267 3799 or by email jrose@yacvic.org.au

CMYI's New Youth Engagement Team

The Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues' newly established youth engagement team has been involved in a number of new youth participation initiatives.

Multicultural Youth Mentoring Project

The Multicultural Youth Mentoring Project began as a pilot project - the *M.C. Voiceraiser Mentoring Project* - with funding from the Office for Youth in 2004 to support young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds to become advocates around issues facing migrant and refugee young people.



M.C. Voiceraiser participants at the 2005 launch of CMYI's new Multicultural Youth Mentoring Project, with Hon Jacinta Allan, Minister for Employment and Youth Affairs, and CMYI's Carmel Guerra and Anna Hutchens.

A new phase of CMYI's mentoring project offers support for young people aged 16-21 through one-to-one mentoring and a peer support and self-advocacy group. The program aims to assist young people in their exploration of opportunities available for work, study and community involvement.

CMYI Youth Participation Register

CMYI is regularly contacted by government departments and organisations wanting to involve CLD young people in activities or events. The purpose of the CMYI Youth Participation Register is to list young people aged 16-25 years who would like to be contacted when such opportunities arise.

By signing up to the Register young people will gain:

- opportunities to express their views about issues
- the chance to participate in training and skill development workshops
- opportunities to work with different organisations and government departments to influence change
- the chance to make new friends.

Some projects that young people have been involved in through CMYI in the past include:

- Being interviewed by The Bulletin magazine about resettlement issues facing Sudanese young people
- Getting involved in youthcentral's e-Zine project, where participants received training and support to produce a short

video on a topic of their choice

- Facilitating YWCA's Girlstorey leadership training for young women
- Providing direct input into the Victorian Government's Youth Strategy Review.

Young people are supported by CMYI in their involvement in project activities and, where required, transport costs are covered. To join the register or to find out more, go to www.cmyi.net.au/GetInvolved

CLD Youth Groups Database

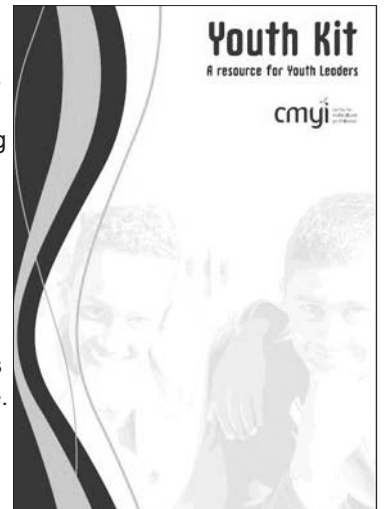
CMYI is establishing a database of CLD youth groups in Victoria. The database, funded by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, will be made available to the public once it has been developed.

In the development of the database, we are seeking to engage a diverse range of CLD youth groups who meet for a variety of purposes such as cultural, sports, recreational, music, friendship and support. To let CMYI know about an existing youth group, email info@cmyi.net.au

Resource for Youth Group Leaders

CMYI has recently launched a Youth Kit for young people wishing to establish or seeking ideas about how to run a youth group. The kit explores issues such as how to recruit members, organise activities and manage finances.

A hard copy of the Youth Kit is available free to young people. Organisations and community groups can purchase a copy through CMYI for \$15 or download a free PDF from www.cmyi.net.au/GetInvolved#youthgroups



Young Leaders of Today Program

CMYI, in partnership with the Australian Red Cross, annually delivers two week long leadership courses for young migrant and refugees in Year 10. With funding from the Office for Youth, the program aims to provide young people with the opportunity to gain leadership skills and confidence and to enhance their participation in community life.

For more information go to www.cmyi.net.au/leadership

State Government News

FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN GOVERNMENT POLICY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

The Office for Youth would like to thank everyone who took part in the Victorian Government's youth policy consultation earlier this year.

More than 1,300 young people, service providers and community members were engaged in a total of 47 discussion forums and focus groups across Victoria.

People from widely diverse backgrounds as well as people from the city, suburbs and rural and regional areas took part. This huge range of views will be of ongoing importance and feedback has demonstrated how much young people valued being a part of the process.

It is hoped that many of those who took

part will continue to get involved in other opportunities to have their say in the future.

A huge range of ideas were discussed at the forums, with some key topics including:

- The need for young people to make informed choices regarding issues of concern to them.
- Access to affordable local sport and entertainment opportunities.
- The need for stronger connections between education, employment and health services.
- The significance of culture in relation to

the health and wellbeing of young people.

- The link between risk-taking behaviours, safety and well-being. Young people spoke about not wanting to be 'kept safe' but about having a safety net; that they should be allowed to learn from their mistakes and experience.

Thanks to everyone, and especially YACVic, the Regional Youth Affairs Networks and the other agencies that hosted forums, for their involvement.

The Office for Youth is in the process of developing the Victorian Government's future directions for young people, which are expected to be released soon.

VIYAC Making Things Happen

It has been a busy time for the VIYAC with the next few months promising to be a very exciting time for the Council.

RESEARCH PIECE IN CONJUNCTION WITH YACVIC

VIYAC is very excited to have embarked on a joint research piece with YACVic. The report will draw from the oral testimonies of young people, which will be collated and transcribed to form the basis of the report. We have begun the interviews with VIYAC representatives, all of which have been compelling and really rich in ideas and perspectives. The report will definitely be a must read and is anticipated for release in July.

INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE IN BRISBANE

Zack, a Gippsland representative of the Council, and I attended the Indigenous Leadership Conference in Brisbane on April 5 and 6. During the two days we heard from 14 speakers on their leadership experiences, programs, initiatives and ventures in their communities. We learnt about Indigenous initiatives across Australia and made great contacts.

VIYAC'S INPUT

As State Coordinator of VIYAC I, along with other VIYAC representatives, have attended relevant State and Local Government consultations over the last two months to bring a young Indigenous perspective to them on behalf of the VIYAC. Recently these have included consultations with the Office for Youth around the new 'Youth Agenda' the Government is developing and consultations relating to the development of the City of Melbourne's 'Open Space' policy. I am continuing to build networks with other existing Indigenous organisations and programs and have recently met with the coordinator of the VACCHO Youth Network to explore the further development of links between the two programs.

VIYAC HAS STARTED WORKSHOPS WITH RMIT

VIYAC has teamed up with RMIT to run workshops to provide VIYAC representatives with specific skills they identified as being important to them, including submission writing, leadership and advocacy skills. We held the first one-day training workshop with RMIT on submission writing on

Saturday the 1st of April. Six VIYAC representatives attended the day, and now are in the midst of developing their own submissions. Through participation in the workshop these representatives will receive a unit from RMIT's Diploma of Community Education.

STILL TO COME: YOUTH GATHERING AND VIYAC WEBSITE

The VIYAC have received funding support from the Helen MacPherson Smith Trust to host a youth gathering later in the year. In its early stages of development, the gathering is shaping up to be a celebration of Koori young people's talents and cultural expression and a place to showcase some of the resources and opportunities available to them.

The VIYAC is also keen to provide another space for Koori young people to access resources and have their say through the establishment of a VIYAC website.

Jade Colgan, State Co-ordinator. For more info email jcolgan@yacvic.org.au or call 9267 3788

Up Coming

CONFERENCES

Young Carers at School

When: 18 July 2006, 9.30–12.30

Where: Rooftop Function Room
Northcote Town Hall

An Information Forum discussing how to identify young carers, what their risk factors are and how they can be supported. The forum is being run by the Commonwealth Respite and Carerlink Centre and Carerlinks North with support from Carers Victoria. For more info call CarerLinks North, 9495 2500 or email: connie@mchs.org.au

Sense and Sexuality

When: 19 July 2006

Where: Telstra Dome,
Docklands Melbourne

A conference on sexual diversity in schools, it will discuss working with same-sex attracted and transgendered students, tackling issues on creating inclusive environments and boosting school leaders capacity to manage sexual diversity. For more info, registrations and expressions of interest to conduct workshops email: ssayp@edu-mail.vic.gov.au

SCEEC EXPO 06

When: Wednesday, June 14

Staged by Melbourne Citymission's Slingshot Community Enterprise and Employment Centre (SCEEC) as part of *Energise Enterprise 06 - Victoria's Small Business Festival*, it will showcase disadvantaged young people's business ideas and how they got going. There will be a youth business panel, a mentoring panel, networking tent and entertainment by DJs and live music in the evening.

SCEEC is a youth specific incubator in North Fitzroy that gives disadvantaged young people the resources and support to develop their own self-employment initiatives into sustainable businesses or achieve other economic or social outcomes.

For full details of the day's program and updates see www.slingshot.org.au or call 03 8486 2111 for more information.

SURVEY

Mission Australia's 2006 Survey of Australia's Young People

Mission Australia is conducting its fifth survey of young Australians aged between 11-24 years. Its primary purpose is to identify and clarify the key and emerging issues for young people. It asks young people about what they value; their concerns; sources of advice and support; involvement in community activities, whether they identify as Indigenous and if they live in or outside a capital city. In 2005, 11,300 young people responded to the survey.

The survey publicly affirms that young people and their views are valued by the community and is a valuable resource for:

- young people themselves
- those working with young people, in helping to evaluate and improve their programs and policies
- those involved in youth issues, including youth organisations, researchers, employers, politicians
- anyone concerned about the well being of young people.

The survey can also be completed on line at <http://www.missionaustralia.com.au/youthsurvey>. For more info contact: ChadwickD@missionaustralia.com.au

GRANTS

Secondary School Scholarships Available for Young Indigenous Australians

Young secondary students are invited to apply to The Foundation for Young Australians for an IYLP secondary scholarship.

The Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme (IYLP) provides scholarships and leadership opportunities targeting young Indigenous Australians from remote areas.

Scholarships of up to \$15,000 per eligible secondary student, per year, are available for tuition and accommodation costs.

In addition to the scholarship, various opportunities will be offered to IYLP scholars for the development of leadership skills. Costs associated with these opportunities will be funded in addition to the scholarship.

Schools and communities are encouraged to identify and assist eligible students to apply for this great opportunity to participate in the IYLP.

Further information and application forms available on www.youngaustralians.org or call The Foundation for Young Australians on (03) 9670 5436.