

Issues for Rural and Regional Young People highlighted to Parliamentary Committee

Key issues

Rural and regional issues
Youth services
State Government

Written by

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consultations and surveys for the Committee's consideration in relation to 'measures to promote strong social capital and high quality of life outcomes in growing regional centres.'¹

Jen Rose, YACVic's Manager of Policy and Projects, then had an opportunity to relay this information to the School Focussed Youth Services Co-ordinators from rural and regional Victoria at a meeting bringing them together for the first time in Woodend on the 14th of November. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss options for future collaborative work focussed on rural and regional youth sector issues.

The network and YACVic have begun exploring options for potential project work to specifically advocate for support for youth services and young people in rural and regional Victoria. Should a new rural youth sector project be developed in partnership between YACVic and sector representatives, it could potentially provide a dedicated advocacy focus on the type of issues that YACVic highlighted in our submission to the Rural and Regional Parliamentary Committee. These included:

- » the impact of drought on young people's opportunities, experiences and wellbeing;
- » the relatively high levels of deferral of tertiary education options in rural and regional areas;
- » the impact of poor public transport networks on young people's quality of life in rural and regional areas;
- » the gaps in services available to young people in rural and regional Victoria;

YACVic has highlighted issues facing rural and regional young people and youth services to the Victorian Parliamentary Rural and Regional Committee Inquiry into 'Regional Centres of the Future.' YACVic drew from information collected from young people and youth services through previous YACVic policy forums, submissions,

- » the key importance of a comprehensive youth services system in Victoria; and
- » the value of opportunities for meaningful participation and of celebrating diversity.

YACVic presented to the Rural and Regional Services and Development Committee hearing process for the Inquiry into Retaining Young People in Rural Towns and Communities in 2006. The inquiry explored a number of issues that contribute to the promotion of strong social capital and high quality-of-life outcomes for young people. It highlighted the importance of 'the quality of relationships within the community that make it sociable, participative and connected.'² The Inquiry considered the issues for young people in regional centres as well as

remote rural settings. YACVic highlight the relevance of the Inquiry's findings to this current Inquiry and encourage the Committee to consider these findings in its deliberations.

The report that followed the 2006 Inquiry *Retaining Young People in Rural Towns and Communities* recognised that '(w)hile many negative and inaccurate perceptions exist about life in rural communities the reality is more positive.'³ The report then relied on a 1998 survey to demonstrate that there is not a marked difference in quality of life between rural and urban families.⁴ Whilst YACVic agreed that there is a range of positive elements that young people themselves identify about living in rural or regional areas, we would suggest that levels of satisfaction between urban and rural counterparts might be less aligned as the

social and economic impacts of drought are felt within rural and regional communities. YACVic encouraged the Committee to be mindful of the impact of drought on young people's experiences, perceptions and opportunities in rural and regional Victoria.

In June 2007, YACVic partnered with the North Central Local Learning and Employment Network, to host the *Talking about the big dry* forum in Boort. The forum brought together young people from North Central Victoria, Bendigo and Melbourne to share their perspectives on the impact of drought, and to learn more about how the drought impact on young people, their families and their communities. The report from this forum was

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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 functions of YACVic are to make representations to government and to 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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To add an insert or to advertise, contact YACVic on (03) 9267 3799 or email info@yacvic.org.au.

CEO's editorial

Happy Christmas YACVic Members!

2008 has been a busy and productive year for YACVic. The Code of Ethical Practice for Victoria's Youth Sector kept us busy for the first half of the year and our important work on this issue continues. In this issue of *Yikes* you will find an update on our work and a case study of how one organisation is implementing the Code in their workplace.

Also in this issue of *Yikes* is a report from the Youth Disability Advocacy Service on a recent national youth roundtable they held for young people with disabilities. Jade from the Victorian Indigenous Youth Advisory Council reports on her recent trip to Turkey with Victoria Police and a number of young Aboriginal people.

Jen profiles some recent work we've done on rural and regional young people and there's an article from the Interface Councils on their latest work around the cost benefit analysis of intervening early in young people's lives. I've provided you with a quick update on where AYAC is at and there's a couple of book reviews at the back. Lots of summer reading for you all!

Next year promises to be just a busy for the YACVic team. Early in the new year we'll be developing our strategic plan for the next three years. We'll be doing more work in the youth participation area, developing some training and continuing to advocate for strong youth participation approaches throughout the sector.

2009 is also a conference year for YACVic. We will be holding a state conference somewhere in Victoria – location yet to be decided – around September or October of next year. Be sure to watch this space for updates.

I would like to wish all YACVic members a safe and joyful Christmas break and a productive and successful 2009. My sincere thanks to all of you who have helped and supported YACVic over the last 12 months, without this support we would not be the strong and dynamic organisation that we are.

Best wishes



Georgie Ferrari

New report examines the mentoring needs of young people from the Horn of Africa

Key issues

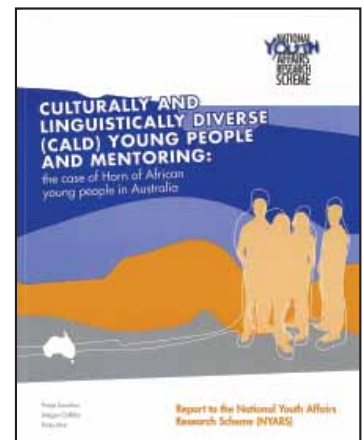
CALD youth
Mentoring services

Written by

Jen Rose
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The National Youth Affairs Research Scheme (NYARS) has released a new report examining mentoring services and CALD young people, with a focus on the needs of young people from the Horn of Africa.

that 'race-matching' mentees and mentors was any more effective than matching mentors and mentees from difference backgrounds. In fact, the report suggests that there are specific benefits to matching mentors and mentees from different backgrounds. For example, whilst it was important that the relationship was one in which the two shared empathy and understanding, differences in experience were useful in promoting interesting and informative discussion.



The research was conducted to identify:

1. Effective practice to be considered when providing mentoring services to young people from Horn of African communities;
2. CALD mentoring program model options for service providers to consider;
3. Good practice case studies of mentoring services to Horn of African communities; and
4. Principles to guide mentoring service delivery to young people from CALD communities.

The broad aim of the research project was to 'understand and compare the needs of Horn of African young people with the needs and resources of mentoring service providers and policy makers.'¹ It acknowledged that whilst mentoring services could offer horn of Africa young people important support, however 'mentoring service providers and policy makers may not be equipped to effectively meet the needs of young people from the horn of Africa, given that they are a recently emerging CALD group in Australia.'²

Newly arrived young migrants have the most intense set of needs, and that once those needs were addressed mentoring could be strongly beneficial to assisting those young people to become accustomed to Australian culture, services and opportunities available to them. The report cautions however that mentoring will not provide enough support for those young people and should be used in conjunction with other, frequently provided supports to assist in their settlement.

The report suggests that the needs of those young people most disconnected from supports and socially isolated, such as young people not attending school, should be prioritised with mentoring resources. The report also found that there was no evidence to suggest

The report also highlighted the importance of involving the mentee's family in the initial development of the relationship and ensuring they had a good understanding of the process as it was generally a foreign concept in Horn of African cultures. It also revealed the key importance of the mentor assuring confidentiality of any information the young person discloses, the importance of having a good understanding of support and referral options for the young person and the value of having Horn of Africa staff involved in the organisation delivering the mentoring. They would be well placed to provide training on issues of cultural competence and engaging Horn of Africa community organisations and members in the program.

The report also outlined learning around mentor program options for services to consider, offers good practice case studies in mentoring Horn of African young people and outlines the principles to guide mentoring service delivery to young people from CALD Communities.

The report will no doubt be a very informative resource for any service providing, or considering providing, mentoring services for CALD young people and will offer specific insights into issues for consideration to best support Horn of African young people in mentoring programs.

NYARS publications are available from the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) website at <http://www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/youth-nyars.htm>.

Jen Rose is YACVic's Manager of Policy and Projects

¹ Sawrika, P., Griffiths, M. & Muir, K. (2008), Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Young People and Mentoring: the case of Horn of African young people in Australia. Report to the National Youth Affairs Research Scheme. Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra. p.9

² Ibid.

continued from page 1

submitted to the Inquiry and is available for download from the YACVic website.

The report highlighted specific impacts in the areas of education, employment and training and health and well-being (including access to recreational activities). The report also suggested that drought was compounding already existing difficulties in terms of access to services and support for young people.

In relation to education, the report highlighted mounting evidence that the drought has adversely impacted on young people's access to and experience of education.⁵ Data collected from the *ON TRACK* surveys⁶ reveals the dramatically higher levels of deferral of higher education placements by young people in rural and regional Victoria as compared to young people in metropolitan Victoria, and paints a picture of a gradual increase in deferral over the last few years, again potentially related to the impact of drought.

YACVic and a selection of the non-metropolitan Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) across Victoria have funded a longitudinal study being conducted by the Centre for Post-Compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning at the University of Melbourne surveying regional school completers who had deferred a university place. The interim report of the study, *Deferring a University Offer in Regional Victoria* released in July 2008, reported that a 'trend of increasing regional disadvantage is evident in the pattern of rising rates of deferral amongst regional school completers, not just in Victoria but in other Australian states.'⁷

Despite this increasing trend of deferral, the report did also find a range of mainly positive destination outcomes described by the students surveyed. A copy of the *Deferring a University Offer in Regional Victoria (interim report)* was also submitted to the inquiry and is available for download from the YACVic website.

YACVic also highlighted the impact of poor public transport networks on young people's quality of life in rural and regional areas. While some regional centres are well resourced in terms of public transport networks, poor public transport networks disadvantage many young people in rural or regional Victoria. Young people rely on public transport to access education,

employment and recreation activities. They also rely on public transport to access critical services in an independent and confidential way. The absence of public transport can mean that young people either miss out on accessing health and community services or engage in risky behavior in order to travel.

YACVic highlighted to the Inquiry that it was critically important that the issue of public transport access for young people in rural and regional areas not continue to be placed in the 'too-hard-basket' by State and Local Governments. YACVic urged the Committee to consider the key importance of effective and accessible public transport in delivering measures to promote strong social capital and high quality-of-life outcomes in growing regional centres.

YACVic also highlighted the impact of service gaps on young people and existing youth service providers in rural and regional Victoria. In the *Talking about the big dry* report YACVic and the North Central Local Learning and Employment Network highlighted the concerning situation that, given the increased stresses placed on families and young people at a time of drought, research identifies serious gaps in youth support services in some rural and regional areas. In 2006, YACVic and the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) released *Who's Carrying the Can? A report into youth service gaps in Victoria*, which documented gaps in the availability of generalist youth support services across Victoria.⁸

The research found that the impact of gaps in youth services were acutely experienced in some rural and regional communities, resulting in more young people missing out on access to support. YACVic urged the Committee to consider the key importance of strong, accessible, locally based youth services in regional centres that are able to provide effective outreach to surrounding rural communities. A copy of *Who's Carrying the Can?* was also submitted to the Inquiry.

YACVic highlighted the opportunity to strengthen the youth sector in the release of the *Vulnerable Youth Framework (VYF)* discussion paper proposing a policy framework that sets 'a foundation for coordinated and effective youth services that assist all vulnerable young Victorians at the time they most need support.' YACVic believes that VYF provides a significant opportunity to improve the way youth services are planned and delivered in Victoria and enable young people to better access locally based supports in a timely way. The development of the service system along with a significant investment of resources in that system will ensure that youth services are more responsive and can better meet the needs of vulnerable young people. The VYF promotes a more integrated and coordinated generalist youth services system by strengthening partnerships between community services and schools, promoting multidisciplinary approaches to address young people's need holistically, investing in workforce development and addressing gaps in the service system.

YACVic suggested that support for the VYF from Government may offer the opportunity to improve access to support for young people in rural and regional Victoria. Central

¹ Rural and Regional Parliamentary Committee, *Inquiry into Regional Centres of the Future: Terms of Reference*. Available from www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rrc

² Rural and Regional Services and Development Committee, (2006). *Inquiry into retaining young People in Rural Towns and Communities: Final Report*. See section 3.39. p.93

³ Ibid. See section 3.44, p.94.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See Alston, M. & Kent, J. (2006), *The impact of drought on Secondary Education access in Australia's rural and remote areas*; Godden, N. (2007) *Regional Young People and Youth Allowance: Access to Tertiary Education*.

⁶ On Track data is collected for the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development by surveying all Year 12 students on a school-by school basis. The focus of the data is to highlight the diversity of pathways that young people pursue after leaving secondary school.

⁷ Polesel, J. (2008), *Deferring a University Offer in Regional Victoria (interim report)*. Centre for Post Compulsory Education and Lifelong Learning, The University of Melbourne, Local Learning and Employment Network and the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria. p.3.

⁸ YACVic & VCOSS (2006), *Who's Carrying the Can? A report into youth service gaps in Victoria*. Available for download from www.yacvic.org.au p.19

to the promotion of strong social capital and high quality-of-life outcomes for young people in regional Victoria are opportunities for young people to meaningfully participate in their communities. Too often young people are not considered stakeholders in issues that affect their communities and are marginalised from decision-making structures and opportunities to be involved in community activities.

YACVic highlighted the way in which young people's participation has benefits not only for young people themselves, but for the development of stronger local communities.

YACVic also highlighted the key importance of embracing diversity in local communities to support young people's wellbeing. Whilst young people in metropolitan areas also experience discrimination, young people in smaller rural or regional communities can feel an added pressure to conform. It is not uncommon for young people to experience discrimination

on the basis of their sexuality, their ethnicity or their socio-economic status in any community, however young people can feel more visible for their difference in smaller communities and may not be able to access support services they may need to get through a hard time.

Interventions to promote understanding and respect for diversity can be supported in any community and best-practice models will engage young people directly in the development and delivery of such activities.

YACVic will continue conversations with rural and regional youth services exploring options for a focused advocacy and sector development project for rural and regional youth services and young people.

Jen Rose is YACVic's Manager of Policy and Projects

AYAC update

Key issues

AYAC
Youth sector
Federal policies

Written by

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in Australia.

AYAC members met recently in Melbourne to hold their AGM and have a planning meeting.

AYAC's constitution provides for a 20 member National Representative Committee (NRC). The NRC must comprise a representative from the eight state and territory youth peaks, six national organisations, four general members and one designated position for an Indigenous organisation and a CALD organisation.

National Organisations are defined as those having a physical presence in at least five states or territories.

The following people were elected to the National Representative Committee:

Youth Peak Bodies

Jennifer Duncan (Youth Affairs Council of South Australia)
Georgie Ferrari (YACVic)
Rey Reodica (NSW YAPA)
Siyavash Doostkhah (Youth Affairs Network of Queensland)
Theresa Moore (Youth Network of Tasmania)
Lisa Laschon (Youth Affairs Council of WA)
Youth Affairs Coalition of the ACT (representative yet to be named)
Northern Territory Youth Affairs Network (representative yet to be named).

As most *Yikes* readers will know, the Federal Minister for Youth, Kate Ellis announced in late September funding for the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC). AYAC will receive \$400,000 per annum for the next four years to operate as the national youth peak body

General Members

Mitchell Wall
Thom Woodroofe
Luke Bo'sher
Alan Wu

National Organisations:

Alice Bleeby – United Nations Youth Association
Angus McFarland – National Union of Students
Ken Ferdinands – Fusion Australia
Ani Weirenga

CALD Organisation

Carmel Guerra – National Multicultural Youth Issues Network

Indigenous Organisation

Position Vacant

From the NRC AYAC appoints an Executive Committee to carry out much of the day-to-day oversight of the organisation. This year's Executive Committee is:

- » Luke Bo'sher (Independent Chairperson)
- » Alan Wu (Young media Spokesperson)
- » Jennifer Duncan (Secretary)
- » Siyavash Doostkhah (Treasurer)
- » Georgie Ferrari
- » Rey Reodica
- » Alice Bleeby
- » Mitchell Wall

If you are interested in nominated for any of the vacant positions on the NRC, please contact Luke Bo'sher at chair@yacvic.org.au.

AYAC members resolved that once the funding contract has been signed and the funding received, AYAC will seek to appoint an interim Establishment Director to co-ordinate the establishment of AYAC as a fully functioning national organisation. It is hoped that the Establishment Director will be recruited by mid February.

Georgie Ferrari is the CEO of YACVic

The *Code of Ethical Practice*: some ideas for implementation

Throughout the past year, YACVic has been gathering feedback from young people and youth sector workers on ways to implement the Code. Here are some of the ideas that have emerged.

Key issues

Code of Ethical Practice

Written by

Alex Frankland

Jen Rose

(jrose@yacvic.org.au)

YACVic staff have been traveling around the state over the last year on a 'Code roadshow' hosting free information and implementation workshops of the *Code of Ethical Practice* for Victoria's youth sector.

These consultation workshops were designed to inform youth workers about the *Code* and to gain their feedback about how they would like to see the *Code* implemented.

The following information provides a snapshot of some key themes stemming from the feedback received from youth service providers in those workshops. It highlights some of the opportunities for implementation of the *Code* as identified by youth workers and youth service providers.

Staff recruitment, supervision and support

A key suggestion that was made by workshop participants related to the *Code* being utilized by management of youth services as a staff recruitment, supervision and support tool.

It was suggested that position descriptions for youth work roles could include a statement outlining an expectation to work within the *Code*. One workshop participant suggested the following statement might be included in a position description or the key selection criteria for a role: 'Must display a commitment to working in adherence with the Victorian Youth sector's Code of Ethical Practice Principles.'

Others suggested that employers could include a reference to the *Code* in employment contracts, compelling new employees to work towards the *Code*'s 'Principles' and 'Practice Responsibilities'.

Another common idea was that the *Code* could be used as a tool during supervision sessions. It could also be incorporated into an audit tool for broader service/organisational review processes.

Further, workshop participants suggested that the *Code* could be usefully integrated into training and professional development activities. A commonly suggested idea was to incorporate the *Code* into induction kits for new workers. Some suggested training on the *Code* for all levels of staff within an organisation, including

administration, Management and Executive Officers/Directors.

Organisational policies/procedures

Workshop participants suggested that the *Code* could be employed as a policy tool. Service providers could embed the *Code* into their existing policies, procedures and mission statements. The *Code* could guide a auditing process or could guide the development of new organisational policies/procedures.

Many participants raised concern that the voluntary status of the *Code* may mean that managers of organisations may not prioritise adopting the *Code*. However, they saw potential for the *Code* to be a valuable resource to managers as a benchmarking tool to develop service responses and programs.

Funding agreements

A number of participants suggested that the eligibility criteria of grants should require that a service work within the *Code*. Other suggested that a requirement to work within the *Code* could be a term of a Government funding agreements with youth service providers.

A best practice reference

Many workshop participants stated that they would find the *Code* useful as a reference when they find themselves in ethically confronting situations in their work with young people. It was suggested that in this way, the *Code* could enable workers to reflect on and refine their individual practice.

On a broader level, participants suggested that the *Code* could be employed in group processes such as team meetings and annual planning days as a means of identifying areas of service provision where improvement may be needed.

An education tool

At all of the workshops, participants suggested that the *Code* should be built into Youth Work course curriculum at a University degree level and in TAFE courses.

Youth ownership

During YACVic's *Code* workshops, many participants highlighted the critical importance of the *Code*'s direct relevance to young people, not just youth workers. Participants suggested that the *Code* should be presented in posters and leaflets using youth-friendly language.

Others suggested that the Code should be presented in a way that recognises the diversity of young people's cultural backgrounds. For this purpose it was suggested that the Code should be presented in multi-lingual and culturally appropriate posters and leaflets.

Workshop participants also expressed a desire to embed the Code into their work with young people on a more interactive level. These participants suggested that the Code could be explained to young service users as a means of ensuring they feel safe accessing youth services and to explain what they could expect from the service they would receive. Many participants stated that putting a 'quality assurance style Code symbol' on the front door or on the pamphlets of a service could also promote feelings of safety at youth services. A number of participants felt that client feedback forms as well as client evaluation and complaints processes could be utilised to monitor whether workers and services are working within the Code.

Promoting youth work and strengthening the youth sector

Workshop participants saw real value in the Code as a tool to promote youth work practice and the work of the youth sector. Many felt that youth work is sometimes an undervalued profession in the wider community and believed that the Code could serve to promote understanding and respect for youth work practice.

Participants stated that the Code would be extremely useful when explaining the responsibilities of the youth

worker to key stakeholders such as parents, police, schools, government departments or agencies and other professionals.

In order to strengthen the sector, participants suggested that an accreditation process could be established to certify that particular youth services work within the Code's Practice Principles. Some suggested there was a role for both state government and YACVic in resourcing and facilitating this process.

Finally, it was suggested at every workshop facilitated by YACVic that the Code would more effectively strengthen the youth sector if a Victorian Youth Workers Professional Association were established. Participants who advocated for a professional association placed value on the weight such a body would add to any efforts to promote the professionalism of the youth sector.

Where to from here

YACVic will continue to host workshops on the Code as requested by the sector and the Code Working Group will progress development of an implementation strategy. YACVic will also continue to disseminate and publicise information to support the implementation of the Code in youth services on our website and in other publications.

*Jen Rose is YACVic's Policy and Projects Manager
Alex Frankland is a youth-work student
at Victoria University*

Case study: the City of Casey's Code of Ethical Practice implementation process

The City of Casey is located in Melbourne's South-East. The Casey municipality is an 'Interface' municipality, meaning that it shares rural and urban community characteristics. Casey has a relatively large population of young people and one of Australia's largest youth services teams consisting of 12 members, responsible for providing services to 10-25 year olds and their families.

The following information outlines the process that City of Casey Youth Services have undertaken to date to implement the *Code of Ethical Practice – A First Step for the Victorian Youth Sector* into their policies and practices.

Imbedding the Code in Service Development processes

Casey Youth Service's held a Development Day in April of 2008. YACVic were invited to attend and present on the Code and to share information on how it may be implemented in a service setting. Following YACVic's presentation, a discussion was facilitated by Richard Hill through which the team considered how the content of the code related to their current work practices and considered a wide range of ideas relating to the implementation of the Code at Casey.

Over the next six months, Casey Youth Services took steps to put the **Code** into action on a number of practical, programmatic and systemic levels.

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Website

The City of Casey Youth Services have made a statement of commitment to working within the Code on their website. It reads:

The City of Casey Youth Services commits to working ethically with young people and has adopted the YACVIC Code of Ethical Practice for the Youth Sector.

To view this page look up the following Casey website link <http://www.casey.vic.gov.au/ethicalpracticeyouth/?nav=pdm>

Casey Youth Services have also developed a 'City of Casey Code of Ethics', adopting the Code Practice Responsibilities to a Casey specific document.

A link to an electronic version of the full *Code of Ethical Practice – A First Step for the Victorian Youth Sector* is also provided from the Casey Youth Services website.

Posters

The Youth Service Team also designed and printed large posters displaying a modified, youth-friendly version of the Code's *Practice Responsibilities*. These posters have been placed on the walls of the Casey Youth Information Centres. Casey Youth Services also modified their service information pamphlets so that they included a statement of commitment to the *Code* which reads as follows:

City of Casey Youth Services commits to working ethically with young people and adopts the following Practice Responsibilities from the YACVIC *Code of Ethical Practice – A First Step for the Victorian Youth Sector*.

- » Recognition of Indigenous People
- » Young People as the Primary Consideration
- » Duty of Care
- » Privacy and Confidentiality
- » Boundaries
- » Transparency, Honesty and Integrity
- » Social Context
- » Cooperation and Collaboration
- » Knowledge, Skills and Self-Care

Refer to the Casey Youth Services website for detailed information about The Practice Responsibilities.

Recruitment and induction

Recruitment processes at Casey Youth Services have even been adapted to incorporate the *Code*. Position descriptions have been modified, with key selection criteria including an awareness of, and commitment to, the *Code of Ethical Practice*. A copy of the *Code* is also included in the induction kit for new employees.

Service audit

Casey Youth Services have also created an auditing tool to check if Casey Youth Service's programs and systems are consistent with the *Code's Practice Principles*. The audit tool lists 'Good practice indicators' for Casey Youth Services alongside the specific *Practice Responsibilities* listed in the Code. A copy of the City of Casey Youth Services Code of Practice Audit tool can be downloaded from the YACVic website.

An annual audit agenda has been set. Casey Youth Services are planning to carry out a *Code*-related audit every two years.

What's been happening on the policy front?

Key issues

Policy issues

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Vulnerable Youth Framework

The State Government have received submission responses to the Vulnerable Youth Framework and is now considering its response. The framework discussion paper, released

by the Department of Human Services, the Department for Planning and Community Development and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, proposes the development of a policy framework that sets "a foundation for coordinated and effective youth services that assist all vulnerable young Victorian at the time they most need support."

YACVic developed a comprehensive, supportive response to the Framework that is available for download from the YACVic website. Other responses to the framework were strong from across the sector. Over 80 written submissions were received and feedback to the framework has been broadly supportive. YACVic eagerly await the Governments response to the submission process and will keep the sector informed of and developments.

Rural and Regional Committee Inquiry into Regional Centres of the Future

The Victorian Parliament's Rural And Regional Committee has been examining a range of issues relating to the development of regional centres in Victoria including 'measures to promote strong social capital and high quality-of-life outcomes in growing regional centres.' (See the article on p 1 for a detailed discussion of YACVic's response to the Inquiry.)

YACVic submitted a response to the Inquiry, drawing from our previous work relating to issues for young people and youth services providers in rural and regional Victoria. YACVic asked the Committee to consider issues such as:

- » The high levels of deferral of tertiary education options in rural and regional areas
- » The gaps in services available to young people in rural and regional Victoria
- » The impact of poor public transport networks on young people's quality of life in rural and regional areas
- » The impact of drought on young people's opportunities, experiences and wellbeing, and
- » The key importance of meaningful participation for young people and of celebrating diversity in communities to promote strong social capital.

YACVic's submission can be downloaded from our website.

The Committee has taken written submissions and is currently conducting public hearings in regional centres in Victoria. For a schedule of the hearings or terms of reference of the inquiry, see the Committee website www.parliament.vic.gov.au/rrc

Fair Pay Commission Review of Minimum Wage

The Australian Fair Pay Commission has commenced its Minimum Wage Review for the 2009 Minimum Wage Decision. The Commission will call for submissions from the 5th of December 2008, with submissions closing on the 20th March 2009.

YACVic provided evidence to the Fair Pay Commission hearings process for the 2008 Minimum Wage Decision and a submission response to the 2007 Decision (available for download from our website).

Details of the Review and of how to make a submission will be available from the Commissions web page from the 5th of December at www.fairpay.gov.au

New Research on young people's wellbeing released

The recent release of two important new research reports shed light on young people's health and wellbeing and their engagement in employment, education and training.

In September the Foundation for Young Australians (FYA) and the Education Foundation released the report *How Young People are Fairing '08: an update about the learning and work situation of Young Australians*. Historically the 'How young people are fairing' reports have been done by the Dusseldorp Skills Forum however is now being produced by the FYA in alliance with the Education Foundation. The report paints a detailed picture of a range of issues relating to Australian young people's learning and work situation, including findings related to educational attainment, engagement in education, training and work and the activities of school leavers. It draws state based comparisons and examines the impact of actors such as social and economic Status and gender on the education and employment experiences of young people. The report can be downloaded from the Foundation For Young Australians website www.fya.org.au

Also recently released is the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) *The Wellbeing of Young Australians Report Card*. The Report Card highlights a number of wellbeing indicators for Australian young people (such as indicators relating to poverty, educational engagement, employment, health, family relationships, engagement with the justice system). It provides comparative data between outcomes for Australian young people and young people from other countries and highlights the general disparity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people's health and wellbeing. The report can be downloaded form the ARACY website www.aracy.org.au.

Jen Rose is YACVic's Manager of Policy and Projects

2008: year in review

As 2008 draws to a close, Dr Robyn Broadbent reflects on the hits and misses – changes to youth housing, JPET, the Vulnerable Youth Framework, AYAC and the recognition of young people – of the year that was.

Key issues

Year in review

Written by

Dr Robyn Broadbent
(Robyn.Broadbent@vu.edu.au)

There has been much for the sector to contend with. The changes to youth housing which has provided new entry points for young people to gain housing assistance and support have been significant and had many challenges. The Local Area Service Networks (LASN) have required young people to enter the same door as the adult population. As youth workers we should always be wary of any change of service structure that lacks a direct youth focus. Young people sometimes miss out when they have to share with adults, who are simply more experienced at manoeuvring their access to resources.

The same will soon be apparent in the very large jobs tenders that have recently closed. JPET as we know it will change. Hopefully young people will gain better access to employment services than they have had in the past. Whatever happens, lets hope that the changes to JPET under this new arrangement does not mean less access for young people.

This year the Office for Youth released the Vulnerable Youth Framework discussion paper. The discussion paper, shared with other departments, provides a statement that will enable us to push for targeted resources in the sector. One of the very notable aspects of the paper is that local planning for youth services system is a focus area. YACVIC began a campaign supported by the Regional Youth Committees two years ago that resulted in the *Who's Carrying the Can?* report. A focus on local planning is to be welcomed and many have contributed to ensuring that programs for young people at a local level are given the priority that is warranted.

It is with some disappointment, however, that I note that attention to workforce development waits until page 38 of the discussion paper to get a guernsey. One may

It's a good time to be writing an article for *Yikes*. We are not only in a festive mood but it is timely to reflect on the year that was.

question how program areas will be delivered without some attention to the sector that must do the work. Wages and conditions, career pathways, training and security of tenure remain some of the most pressing issues for our colleagues. There is a small group of people who are working hard at establishing a professional association that aims to take to task many of these issues for the sector into the future. It is an initiative that you should watch with interest and hopefully support when you are given the opportunity. There is a collective future that depends upon us making change within the current workforce arrangements and infrastructure.

2008 was also the year that the new Rudd Labor Government honoured its promise to re-establish a new Australian Youth Coalition. To quote from Alan Wu, AYAC's Young Spokesperson:

A decade on, this government's decision to establish the Australian Youth Forum, and importantly, to re-fund Australia's national youth affairs peak, represents not merely the realisation of an election promise, but also a recognition of the rights of young people to be heard on issues that matter to them, a response to the overwhelming support of the youth sector for greater sector development and a stronger voice in their government, and, most importantly, a genuine commitment to engaging meaningfully with young Australians in a variety of ways that are independent, accountable and inclusive. (October 2008)



2008: the year that was. Where will we be in 2009?

I should be able to hear your applause. Because I think my last reflection, as I hop off the soapbox, must be about our national shame at our lack of recognition of young people. No youth policy, no ministerial statement, no national agenda, no national strategy. Similarly there is no national agenda or recognition for Youth Work. A ministerial statement on "youth work" as I believe it, is the cornerstone to sector development, and every English-speaking country in the world plus the European Union has a ministerial statement on 'youth work' except us!!! A statement on Youth Work would establish a framework on what youth work is, who does it and what practice frameworks underpin it. How does Youth Work contribute to the broader social agendas for young people in the context of education, employment, social and youth policy?

These are important issues that underpin the sector development discussions.

Could it be that the previous Howard government was keen to support young people only within the context of preparing young people to be good citizens? Under a Howard government, young people were expected to wait their turn as future operatives not as current stakeholders in the wealth of a nation or the national priorities. Our national arena has been absent of a robust debate on the rights, the voice and the place at the national table of young people. It has also been absent on the Youth Work profession and its vital role in facilitating young people to engage in a civil society. In fact, let's have a bi-partisan crack at this: the last statement on Youth Work was from a Victorian government and was contained in the Youth Work training review of 1995!

On this occasion we are living up to the fact that we are an island on this issue. Around the globe, in Europe and even our neighbours in Aotearoa, New Zealand, such national recognition and focus are apparent. I would hope that our newly-established government will be able to rectify some of the wrongs of the past decade in relation to a national focus on young people and of course the youth sector as a whole.

Whatever your focus is throughout this festive season, I hope it is safe and happy; enjoy.

Dr Robyn Broadbent is the Coordinator of Youth Work at Victoria University

Searchers for Self – Working with Young People in Australia

Key issues

Youth work practice

Written by

Georgie Ferrari
(gferrari@yacvic.org.au)

Searchers for Self – Working with Young People in Australia is a newly-released text on working with young people in Australia and an excellent resource for those studying or working in youth work in Australia.

Written by David Nixon and Andrew O'Brien, the book contains topics that link to the National Curriculum for Youth Work. Chapters include a history of adolescence; adolescent

development; adolescent health; understanding diversity; young people, participation and the law and government; working with challenging young people and youth work principles, policies and practices.

Scattered throughout the book are dialogue boxes that encourage further thought and discussion on an issue. These boxes are aimed at prompting the reader to respond to the issues discussed in the chapter and could be used as an excellent self-reflection or supervision tool.

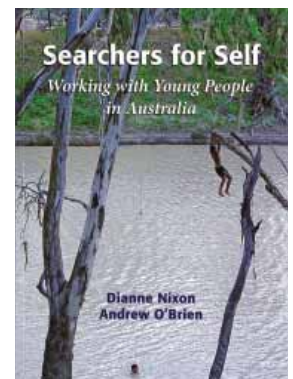
The chapter on youth work principles, policies and practices has some good material on developing a code of conduct. While YACVic's Code of Ethical Practice isn't mentioned this chapter supports the work we have done in developing The Code of Ethical Practice for Victoria's Youth Sector.

The book also contains a number of though provoking case studies.

Well written, concise and packed with up to date and useful information, *Searchers for Self – Working with Young People in Australia* is bound to be a welcome and valuable addition to any workplace library or youth work student's bookshelf!

Further information about this resource can be found at www.dbpublishing.net.au.

Georgie Ferrari is the CEO of YACVic



State Government update

Key issues

youthcentral
Body Image Code of Conduct
Youth Foundations Victoria
Youth Participation and Access programs

Written by

Office for Youth
(youth@dpced.vic.gov.au)

Finished Year 12? Not sure what to do next?

Once school's over, exams are done and results are in... what comes next?

On the youthcentral website (www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au) you'll find heaps of information that can help answer that question and other questions about work, study, travel, friends, relationships and money. If you're not sure of your next step, check out youthcentral!

Youth Foundations Victoria kicks off in West Heidelberg, Ashwood/Ashburton and Neerim District

Young people in West Heidelberg, the Ashwood/Ashburton/Chadstone areas and Neerim District will have the chance to be part of a Victorian Government program where they can learn new skills and help decide where money goes in their community.

Youth Foundations Victoria is an initiative that helps local young people help other young Victorians.



\$226,000 in government funding will combine with funding from Bendigo Bank community bank branches in each area to support young people to implement the project.

Over time these young people will be supported by the YFV- Local Partnership Group in each location to use the interest from this funding to make grants to other young people to run activities to benefit the whole community.

Any young person (aged 12-25) who would like to get involved should contact the project facilitator of their area. Details can be found on the Office for Youth website at www.youth.vic.gov.au.

West Heidelberg, Ashwood/Ashburton/Chadstone and Neerim District are among 15 communities across Victoria to have a YFV established with support of \$4.5 million from the Community Support Fund.

Victorian Body Image Code of Conduct goes national

The Victorian Voluntary Media Code of Conduct on Body Image, developed by the Victorian Government earlier this year, has now been adopted nationally by the Federal Government.

In November, Federal Minister for Sport and Youth, Kate Ellis, announced a Voluntary National Media and Industry Code of Conduct on Body Image. The code builds on the work done over the last two years by the Victorian Government.



James Merlino, the Victorian Minister for Sport, Recreation and Youth Affairs, says the devastating effects of negative body image on young men and women are being addressed in a number of ways by the Victorian Government and a national approach will strengthen that work.

Based on the findings of a 2006 Parliamentary Inquiry into body image, the Victorian Government has funded a range of initiatives to address negative body image. More information can be found on the Office for Youth website at www.youth.vic.gov.au.

ATSI mosaic launch demonstrates benefits of Youth Participation and Access

An innovative program aimed at helping Craigieburn youth develop skills such as art and art-related business has been extended thanks to a \$120,000 Youth Participation and Access grant.

Youth Affairs Minister James Merlino announced the funding boost to Dianella Community Health at the launch of its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Mosaic Triptych. Dianella Community Health is among 100 programs across Victorian to share in a \$12.3 million funding boost under the Victorian Government's Youth and Participation Access program.

The program provides support to community organisations and local governments to ensure young people can find direct support, information on local services and participate in community youth led activities and mentoring programs.

Youth Participation and Access programs aim to level the playing field by giving vulnerable young people new opportunities to showcase their strengths

With the new Victorian Government funding, Dianella Community Health will work through the Northern Metropolitan Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Arts and Culture Program and continue in its strong commitment to mentoring and improving Indigenous young people's connection to local elders and the local community.

The Office for Youth leads the State Government's commitment to working with Victoria's diverse groups of young people, and the communities and organisations in which they are involved.

Key issues

Gallipoli Heroes project
Farewell

Written by

Jade Colgan
(viyac@viyac.org)

The project was run by Victoria Police (Collingwood Station) and Bert Williams Aboriginal Youth Services (BWAYS). Seven Victorian Police officers over the last six months have been mentoring seven young Koorie youth. Two girls and four boys all aged between 14 and 17 years. Attending on the trip were all of the mentors and youth along with Peter Seiz the Officer in charge at Collingwood Police Station, the Collingwood Aboriginal Community Liaison Officer, Commander Ashley Dickinson of Victoria Police, members from Bert William Aboriginal Youth Services and myself. My role was to be extra support for the youth, be an Indigenous leader and contact for them and to mentor them where possible.

Here is some information on the reasoning behind the trip

As the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody drew attention to the over representation of Aboriginal youth in the juvenile justice system and the likelihood of recidivism into adulthood once contact with the system had been made. The Collingwood Police Station, Bert Williams Aboriginal Youth Services (BWAYS) and the Australian Intercultural Society (AIS) initiated the Gallipoli Hero's Project which focuses on 'at risk' Aboriginal youths in trying to head off the possibility of them entering the judicial system.

Until recently there has been little acknowledgment that amongst those who fought in World War One were up to 500 Aboriginal soldiers. History, and therefore successive generations, have failed to recognise their sacrifice and contribution; a contribution which is even more astonishing for the fact that between 1914 and 1918, Aboriginal Australians

Connecting to community and changing the future – Gallipoli Heroes' Project

I have recently had the pleasure of embarking on the Gallipoli Heroes Project, which entailed a two-week trip to Turkey.

were not entitled to enlist, as only 'Australian citizens' could sign up, a status that was not afforded Aboriginal people until 1967. The life changing experience of journeying to Gallipoli and the on-going mentoring program associated with the journey, provides the youths with an alternate pathway. In addition to this individual development, the program is also aimed at stimulating positive change in community leadership by increasing Aboriginal youth involvement in the community and community networks between Aboriginal groups, police and different cultures.

My personal reflection

The trip for me was a fantastic experience. Watching the young ones change and grow over a two-week period was astonishing. It made me so very proud as a Aboriginal woman knowing we have these amazing young people stepping up. Early on in the two weeks many of the youth were a bit quiet and when they were asked to speak up it was at times like 'pulling teeth' so to speak. In comparison by the end of the trip the young ones were asking to get up and thank people & to do speeches etc.. It was fantastic to see.

We saw amazing places and things we just simply wouldn't see here. Experiencing another culture was fantastic; the fact that we got to eat on so many occasions in the homes of Turkish families and share a meal was also really great. Highlights for me were the Ephesus ruins, I felt as though I was in a page of history, watching the youth realise and grasp just how big and wide this world is and of course the trip to Gallipoli.

I would strongly urge people to find out more about the trip by contacting Peter Seiz at Collingwood Police station, and for anyone wanting to try and pull off such a trip, I say "go for it" the rewards are endless not only for yourself and your organisation but most importantly our Indigenous youth!

Jade says farewell

Hi all,

I am moving on from the role as VIYAC State Coordinator. My last day as VIYAC State Coordinator will be the 12th of December 2008. I've accepted another job and will be moving over to the Department of Justice, Indigenous Issues Unit.

It's been a really hard decision for me to make, VIYAC really feels like home, but I feel I need some new challenges & a change. I have really enjoyed (loved) my three and a half years as coordinator and by far the BEST part of my job has without a doubt been the fact that I get to work with all of the amazing young VIYAC members!

I hope that I can stay in touch with YACVic and the VIYAC and keep an eye on VIYAC in the future; I doubt I'll be able to help it... I know VIYAC is destined for very big things, and I'm so very excited to see it grow and evolve.

It is hoped that there will be someone in my role by mid January 2009 to kick off VIYAC into the New Year. So I guess VIYAC activities will be on hold after I leave at least until the new coordinator is appointed.

Have a great silly season everyone, stay safe and have fun!

Cheers all, Jadey.



Jade Colgan is the State Coordinator of VIYAC

Key issues

VicSRC Congress
Local SRC clusters

Compiled by

James Tonson
(vicsrc@yacvic.org.au)

VicSRC Congress 2008

The 3rd Annual VicSRC Statewide Congress was held over two days in mid-August. It involved over 70 student delegates from schools across Victoria.

The delegates voted

this a highly successful Congress, with much intense debate, valuable discussion, essential networking and many resolutions decided upon. The Congress elected an enthusiastic group of students as the new VicSRC Executive and set them a clear direction for 2008-9. The full Congress report is available from the office. Meg Atley, a new member of the VicSRC Executive, reports on the event:

On Friday, 15 August, I attended the Congress of the VicSRC. This was a camp specifically for Student Representative Councils in secondary schools around Victoria. The program over the two days included activities such as:

- » information on the VicSRC;
- » guided thinking exercises;
- » information about the Congress process;
- » workshops on school and community issues (defined by SRCs);
- » a practice of the Congress session;
- » and the main decision-making Congress.

The guided thinking exercise was really relaxing and valuable. It let me open my mind up to re-imagining education in the near future – thinking about what can be done by students to improve the community and environment in secondary schools. There were then several workshops in place. One involved us in thinking about ways students could lead in decreasing bullying. My tactics were:

- » anti-bullying wristbands, slogans, posters and stickers;
- » an anti-bullying policy;
- » counseling for bullies and victims;
- » implementing an anti-bullying campaign;
- » a bullying awareness day; and
- » a state-wide diversity day.

Another workshop I participated in was on the recognition of SRC members. SRCs in secondary schools should be recognised as important assets of the local community, considering we are the voice in general, of young people in society about our school's concerns and problems.

Each workshop brought one or more proposals to be debated in a formal parliamentary Congress setting. Delegates didn't necessarily agree on everything but conducted the debates with integrity and respect for each other's viewpoints. The issues were many and varied and demonstrated the range of issues important to students. Everything from healthy food to rural disadvantage to environmental sustainability was passionately debated. Significantly several resolutions called on government for greater support and training for SRCs and SRC teachers. These are being given high priority by the newly elected Student Executive charged with implementing the Congress Resolutions. I was fortunate to be elected at Congress as one of the new executive members of this thriving group. I am excited to be part of the Executive and to now start planning to implement all the great decisions that we made.



Discussion and debate at the Congress

Overall, the Congress was a very enjoyable and educational experience. The two day nature of the event, made possible by a grant from the Values Education Program, really enabled the students to get to know each other better, think deeply about the issues that concern them and develop a fuller sense of ownership of their organisation. These all contributed to the overall success of the Congress and the development of a strong agenda for the next 12 months.

*Meg Atley
VicSRC Executive Member*

A full report on the Congress will be sent to each participating school. Copies can also be obtained by contacting VicSRC's Project Officer, James Tonson, on 9267 3744 or vicsrc@yacvic.org.au

New SRC clusters

Western Metropolitan Student Alliance

2008 was the inaugural year for the Western Metropolitan Secondary Student Leader Alliance, and will be going through a name change in 2009 to the *Western Metropolitan Student Alliance*. After many attempts to have a student cluster to discuss issues and problems that are facing youth and students in schools today, the alliance seems to be the most successful yet. Having our first meeting in Term 3, the alliance has grown from 4 participating schools (Taylors Lakes Secondary College, Braybrook College, Caroline Chisholm Catholic College and Copperfield College) to estimated 9 in 2009.

Our first meeting, held at Taylors Lakes Secondary College, was on the 5th of September and it was a time of sharing what the alliance is able to do and also what others would like from the alliance. Our second and more productive meeting, hosted by the wonderful Caroline Chisholm Catholic College, happened in mid-October and was concentrating on planning for the cluster for the next year. Next year, we plan to create a student run initiative based on Drugs and Alcohol Awareness and to create a video and show it within our schools and incorporate it with the school curriculum.

Stronger + Better = United is the motto which has been established for the alliance and reinforces the beliefs that we hope for, for the alliance. Becoming stronger in our schools as a student body, becoming better in our connection with our peers and community, but only being able to do it when we are united as a group of people.

This alliance is hopefully going to be advancing to greater heights in 2009 with a vision of building connections with the community as well as connecting with our peers in making sure that we are hopefully making a difference in their school community. The alliance will be having an official public launch early-2009.

Ryan Lim
Taylors Lakes Secondary College

Bayside, Glen Eira and Kingston SRC Cluster

It is with great pleasure that we announce the launch of the Bayside, Glen Eira and Kingston SRC Cluster, the first of its kind in our area. Our region has 32 secondary colleges and over 23,000 students spread across the southern Bayside suburbs of Melbourne.

Our SRC Cluster started as a partnership of local organisations committed to youth participation and student action, namely the VicSRC, Bayside Glen Eira Kingston Local Learning and Employment Network (BGK LLEN), Bayside City Council, City of Kingston, Youth Connect, Victoria Police and School Focused Youth Service. Together these organisations planned the establishment of an SRC Cluster over a number of months and then invited all secondary schools in the region to send an SRC delegation to a student meeting in early September.

Despite it being a busy time of the year, our first meeting was attended by 14 students from four local secondary colleges (Westall, Glen Eira, Cheltenham and Bentleigh Secondary Colleges). The meeting was a great success with all students advising that they were keen to be part of a regional SRC Cluster that would be issue focused, meet at least once per term, rotate between schools and allow for training or guest speakers as part of each meeting agenda.

Our second meeting, held in late October, built upon the first, with 20 students taking part. The meeting was held at Bentleigh Secondary College, and the SRC there planned the agenda, coordinated a guest speaker and school tour, and organised a delicious morning tea and lunch. The guest speaker was Bentleigh Secondary College's Head of Sustainability, Mr Bill Thomas, and through his presentation we learned about the array of innovative, environmentally conscious activities and initiatives the school has introduced. A school tour allowed our SRC Cluster to see some of those initiatives first hand, including the rain water tanks, wetlands area, vegetable garden and IT program that monitors daily water and energy usage. Each school had a chance to highlight the SRC activities that had taken place since the last meeting. It was exciting to hear about our very first cross-school initiative, when one school revealed that they had implemented an anti-graffiti strategy after hearing about its success in one of the other schools at our very first SRC Cluster meeting!

We're very excited about what the future might hold for our SRC Cluster. We are looking forward to 2009 as a time to expand and enhance the SRC Cluster so that it becomes an important vehicle for student action, engagement and development in our region!

Fiona Waugh
BGK LLEN

James Tonson is the VicSRC's Project Officer

National Disability Strategy Youth Roundtable

The recent National Disability Strategy Roundtable hosted by YDAS featured a diverse range of young people, issues, discussions and ideas. Rebecca Feldman was there to capture the day's proceedings.

Key issue

Disability roundtable

Written by

Rebecca Feldman
(ydasprojects@yacvic.org.au)

Photos by

Chris Garbacz
(info@cgistudios.com.au)

In October 2008 the YDAS was commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FAHCSIA) to host a forum for young people with a disability from around Australia to provide input into the framing of the National Disability Strategy. The

National Disability Strategy is an overarching strategy for all policies and programs that address the needs of people with disabilities in Australia. When completed, the Strategy will describe how Australia acts on its obligations under the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.

The event, the National Disability Strategy Youth Roundtable, was held on 19 November 2008 in Melbourne. In attendance were 27 young people with disability, as well as the Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services, Bill Shorten. Support staff included the YDAS staff team, the CEO of the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, the Director of Youthlaw, FAHCSIA staff, direct support workers and Auslan interpreters.

Discussion and sharing of ideas on the day was lively and young people had a variety of opportunities to have their voices heard. A number of participants spoke on the day about issues that were particularly important to them, ranging

from the availability of funded attendant support for tertiary education to the need for more comprehensive mental health supports for people with disability.

Young people were also given the chance to have a short Q&A session with Secretary Shorten. Feedback from participants on the day has been used to formulate the YDAS submission to FAHCSIA.

It was great to be able to bring together such a passionate and vocal group of young people with disabilities to talk about issues that were of most concern to them and how these might be addressed in the future. Feedback from young people on the day indicated that they enjoyed the day, particularly sharing ideas and views with others around the country. As one participant put it, "it was a great experience to see the talented and passionate people we have within our ranks".



Above: Marlena Katene, Stuart Minotti

Below: The Roundtable venue at the Jasper Hotel, Melbourne





Clockwise from top left:
(i) Mario Filintatzis, James Davis, Sam Wallman
(ii) Rachael Rayner
(iii) "Access": one of the key issues at the Roundtable
(iv) Rebecca Feldman
(v) Ariane Garner-Williams
(vi) Jonathon Crockett, Nick Schumi, Natalie Wade
(vii) Anj Barker



*Rebecca Feldman is YDAS's Project Officer.
Chris Garbacz is Director and Senior Photographer at CGI Studios (www.cgistudios.com.au).*

Around the YACVic camp...

New YACVic Board Elected at the AGM

YACVic held a very successful AGM on the 29th of October. The Federal Minister for Youth, Kate Ellis spoke and members and guests were treated to a preview of the YDAS short film, Anything You Can Do.

Members voted in favour of all of the proposed constitutional changes. The changes relate to enabling YACVic to communicate to members by electronic communication (email and fax). Specifying an election process for the election of the designated rural/regional representative on the YACVic Board and specifying that all office bearing positions on the Board of Governance be for one year only.

The following people were elected to the Board of Governance:

- » Richard Hill
- » Cassandra Devine (young member)
- » Thom Woodroofe (young member)
- » Lucas Ryan was elected as Young Media Spokesperson.

At the first meeting of the Board after the AGM the Board elected the following people to office bearing positions:

- » Richard Hill - Chairperson
- » Emma Crichton – Deputy Chairperson
- » Toni Hancock – Treasurer.

The Board will meet in December and again in February for a full day planning meeting. All YACVic members are welcome to attend YACVic Board meetings. Further information on all YACVic Board members can be found at www.yacvic.org.au/pages/about_us/board.htm.

VIYAC is looking for a new State Coordinator

Are you passionate about promoting the voice of Indigenous young people? The Victorian Indigenous Youth Advisory Council (VIYAC) is looking for a new State Coordinator to take them into 2009 and beyond.

Key tasks of the State Coordinator are to maintain the VIYAC, coordinate VIYAC meetings and activities and provide advice on relevant policy and program issues for government and Community committees or organisations.

VIYAC is a statewide network of volunteer Indigenous young people who provide a voice to government and community on issues of importance to them. VIYAC is an avenue for Indigenous young people to come together and voice their ideas, passions and interests, in a safe and supportive environment. VIYAC is committed to supporting all our members to build their skills and capacity. It is a community based volunteer program, which is not for profit. VIYAC currently consists of approximately 35 young volunteer VIYAC Council Members from across the state.

For more information, including a position description or assistance in applying for the role, contact Jen Rose on 9267 3722 or jrose@yacvic.org.au.

Indigenous applicants are strongly encouraged to apply.

Closing date for applications: **5pm, 9 January 2009.**

Youth sector news, opportunities and events

Connecting Up 2009

The Connecting Up Conference is a gathering over two days to explore the realms of technology for application in the nonprofit or community sector. Representatives of Nonprofit organisations, Government, Business and Academia come together to learn about and review the strategies applied by the sector including the growing momentum of social web tools and Web 2.0. There are many applications from creating efficiency operationally to marketing and fundraising via the web or mobile technologies to service delivery! This conference is definitely not just for techno boffins either, it is in fact very much about strategic direction and planning for the future with sessions and workshops to answer a wide range of questions.

Connecting Up 09 will build on many of the discussions touched on at Connecting Up 08 and will have a great deal of hands on elements. We want you to "have a go" rather than just hear about it. There will be demonstrations of technologies and opportunities to use them.

There are some terrific speakers coming from overseas to present on topics such as video blogging. It should be a hive of interesting networking and sharing. Every year we showcase some fabulous local projects too with organisations "doing it" who can tell others about their experiences and we hope to attract anyone who feels they have a story, lesson, or workshop to offer in line with the conference goals.

Further Enquiries: Karen Gryst, Connecting Up Australia, + 61 (8) 8212 8555 ext 208 or CU09@connectingup.org

Applications now open for NextWave KickStart 2009

Next Wave's Kickstart program supports young artists to develop ambitious new work, with a view to getting their work in the 2010 Next Wave Festival.

Kickstart is offering funding for your artists projects, as well as running a series of workshops and seminars on creative and professional development. These workshops will be led by a national cross-section of artists and arts professionals. The program also includes field trips to leading arts organisations and networking, feedback and discussion sessions with other artists.

Up to \$5000 in direct funding, as well as travel assistance to attend the workshops, is available to emerging artists between the ages 18 to 30. Artists across Australia are encouraged to apply.

To apply, visit www.nextwave.org.au and download a Kickstart application pack.

Beyond Homophobia survey

The Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) at La Trobe University is conducting a survey as part of a project to examine ways of improving services for same-sex attracted and transgender young people (SSATY). The project is funded by the William Buckland foundation.

People working with young people in Victoria are invited to take part in the survey, which will only take 15-20 minutes. It will ask you about your work and the things that help or hinder you in providing services to SSATY. The survey is completely anonymous and confidential.

You need to be 18 or over to participate.

For more information and to complete the survey, go to: www.latrobe.edu.au/ssay/BeyondHomophobiaSurvey.html

Win petrol or public transport tickets!

Youthcentral is giving readers a chance to score \$500 worth of petrol or public transport tickets.



For a chance to win, visit www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/Register+for+updates and fill out their mailing list rego form. Everyone who submits a completed survey goes into the prize draw.

Some of you may have already signed up to youthcentral but things in your life could have changed, like you may have finished secondary school now or live in a different town. Youthcentral would like to update that.

Completing this survey will sign you up for Youthcentral's monthly email newsletter.

Competition closes **4pm, 23 December 2008**.

Youth sector news, opportunities and events

Collaborative Internet Innovation Fund grants

Multimedia Victoria, a State Government agency, are offering grants through the Collaborative Internet Innovation Fund (CIIF) 'to accelerate use of 'next generation' ICT by Victorian government, industry and community. The \$15 million dollar fund may provide opportunities for youth services to develop and implement new technology into their program delivery.

Multimedia Victoria explains that 'next generation ICT refers to the move into a new era of networked ICT based around the internet, and is sometimes referred to as 'Web 2.0'. It is characterised by the widespread uptake of high capacity broadband, networked digital devices, and the internet as the key platform for user collaboration.'

There will be a public call for applications to the CIIF program in late 2008. Victorian government agencies, industry bodies, local governments, community and business groups will be encouraged to put forward their ideas for innovating using next generation technology.

Initial concepts will then be developed into business plans describing how the projects will be implemented. A CIIF Applicant Toolkit and other resources will be available online to assist applicants in applying for funding.

For further information about the fund see the Multimedia Victoria website at www.mmv.vic.gov.au/collaborativeInternetInnovationFund YACVic will also update the sector with further information about the grants and grant resources as it is released.

HIV/AIDS educational resource kit

Y.E.A.H (Youth Empowerment Against HIV/AIDS) has recently developed their second educational resource kit *Kevin's Questions: 15 million opportunities to shape the world*, which provides a comprehensive look at the issues surrounding HIV & AIDS in a global context.



The kit is a useful resource for schools and education networks and includes a copy of *Kevin's Questions*, the study guide *15 million opportunities to shape the world* and a DVD.

Themes that are explored in the kit include sexual health, condoms, death, stigma and discrimination, global leadership, politics and the impacts of HIV/AIDS on young people.

For more information or to purchase a copy of the kit, visit www.yeah.org.au.

Help create a drug info website for young people

Are you sick of hearing stuff about drugs that is over exaggerated, old fashioned and irrelevant? Why not apply to be on a steering committee to develop a new site for young people who are curious about drugs and/or those who are occasional/recreational users?

The crew behind Reach Out (in partnership with Ted Noffs Foundation) is developing a new and innovative community website with honest and straight-up info on drugs. It will create a conversation around taking party and recreational drugs such as cannabis and amphetamines (ecstasy, speed, ice) it will also give young people a chance to share tips on the best ways to party safely.

We're looking for a team of young people from Melbourne, who can help us to create this website. You will play an integral part in developing the direction and content of the site. This would include design, content, and marketing.

The duration of the steering committee is 7 months, starting in December and ending with the website launch in June 2009. We communicate mostly through online forums, and there are two one day face-to-face workshop held in Melbourne in January and March (dates TBC).

To become involved you need to be:

- » Aged 18-25
- » Living in Melbourne
- » Able to attend both one-day workshops
- » Able to access the internet at least one hour per week
- » Accepting of the aims of the project

If you are interested, email Marianne Webb at Marianne@inspire.org.au by **Wednesday 31st December**. Include details about yourself and why you'd like to be involved and what you think you can contribute.