

MEDIA RELEASE - Tuesday, May 5, 2009

Premier's Budget Announcement Misses the Mark for Young People

In a budget that is largely silent on new investment for Victoria's young people the Premier has today announced \$17.7m for a "Respect strategy" focusing on our youth.

The initiative, aimed at promoting "community respect" will see \$9.3m put towards a volunteering strategy that will encourage community participation, particularly among young people.

The Victorian Government sees community respect as "crucial in addressing anti-social behaviour issues among some young people". The strategy draws a link between young people's engagement in volunteering and a reduction in anti-social behaviour and specifically, alcohol-related violence.

"It is not clear to me how encouraging young people to engage in volunteer work will address the issue of alcohol related violence" YACVic CEO, Georgie Ferrari said today in response to the Premier's announcement.

While YACVic welcomes initiatives that seek to support young people's active engagement in their communities, a strategy that believes it can address and resolve complex issues like CBD violence and other types of anti-social behaviour through encouraging participation in the CFA or the SES demonstrates a lack of understanding of the broader issues.

This investment would be better off spent on strengthening youth services across Victoria, ensuring young people have adequate support and opportunities to engage in activities and events that are appropriately targeted to their needs.

YACVic welcomes the investment in the 2009/10 state budget in mental health and out-of-home care initiatives for young people. “We are however, very disappointed that there has been no announcement of funding to support the government’s Vulnerable Youth Framework, due to be released early in the new financial year.

YACVic has written to the Premier, offering assistance in implementing his “Respect Agenda”.

“We look forward to working with the Premier to ensure that this initiative does not miss the mark when it comes to building community connectedness for Victoria’s most vulnerable young people”. Ms Ferrari said.

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For further media comment, please contact:

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