

## Media Release

Friday, 3 October 2008

### National youth peak welcomed

Funding for a national youth peak body has been announced as part of an initiative by the Federal Government to establish the Australian Youth Forum.

"The announcement yesterday, from the Hon. Kate Ellis, Minister for Youth Affairs, of the Australian Youth Forum (AYF) has put young people's issues back on the national map," said Georgie Ferrari, CEO of the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria.

"We are very pleased that the Federal Government has honoured their election commitment to fund a national youth peak body, the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition", Ms Ferrari said.

The role of the youth peak body will be to undertake policy development and advocacy on youth affairs issues and also enhance the ability of the youth sector to deliver services to young people.

The announcement comes as part of a broader commitment to fund the Australian Youth Forum, which aims to provide the government with a direct link to young people from across the country. The official AYF website ([www.youth.gov.au/ayf](http://www.youth.gov.au/ayf)) states that the AYF is "a communication channel between the Government, young people (aged 15-24) and the organisations that work with, for and on behalf of young people (also known as the youth sector). It is about engaging young people and the youth sector in ongoing public debate and getting their input to policy and decision-making on issues that affect young people's lives now and in the future."

Part of the initiative is the provision of funding for a national youth peak body. This will see the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition funded and operational from early next year.

"The funding of a national youth peak will mean that the voices of young people, youth service providers and experts in youth affairs will be heard at a federal level," Ms Ferrari said.

In response to the announcement yesterday, Luke Bo'sher, the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition's (AYAC) Chairperson said, "AYAC sincerely welcomes this announcement and Minister Ellis should be congratulated for delivering an innovative package of youth engagement measures, including the funding of a youth peak body."

The Australian Youth Forum is aimed at engaging young people and the youth sector in ongoing public discussion and facilitating their input into policy and decision-making on issues that affect their lives.

The AYF brings together a suite of initiatives aimed at ensuring communication between the Federal Government and Australian young people. The perspectives of young people and the youth sector will be heard through the national peak body, through the AYF website, in policy forums and in community activities.

"A funded national youth peak body for youth affairs will mean that the issues impacting on young people and those delivering critical services to young people will be heard at a federal policy level," Ms Ferrari said. "The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria looks forward to working with AYAC to ensure positive outcomes for young people and the youth sector nationally."

**For media comment, contact Georgie Ferrari, CEO, YACVic 0411 484 428.**