

Media release

Victoria's first-ever Code of Ethical Practice for youth workers

Victoria's youth workers will soon be able to draw from a Code of Ethical Practice, which will be launched at the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria's (YACVic's) annual general meeting tonight.

The Code establishes a set of youth work principles and practice responsibilities for youth workers, identified through consultation with the Victorian youth sector. It will be an important first step towards embracing an agreed framework that will define safe, professional and ethical practice within the sector.

The Code was developed in response to a challenge to 'rethink the issues of safety and protection of both young people and those that worked with them' posed by Bernie Geary OAM, Victoria's Child Safety Commissioner, at YACVic's 2006 annual general meeting.

At tonight's annual general meeting, Mr Geary will launch the Code, which establishes key practice responsibilities for youth workers, including Duty of Care, Privacy and Confidentiality, and (professional) Boundaries.

The collaborative approach adopted in developing the Code ensures that it 'will continue to be a "living" document owned by the youth sector, even as it serves as a platform for the continued development and professionalisation of the sector', says Georgie Ferrari, YACVic's Chief Executive Officer.

With the launch of the Code, the Victorian youth sector has the opportunity to articulate its approach to youth work in a more consistent manner, while aligning it with other youth sectors, both in Australia and overseas, that have benefited from a uniform ethical-practice framework.

In addition, 'the introduction of the Code is an important step in ensuring programs and services for young people in Victoria continue to be of the highest quality, and that reflect the diverse needs and interests of the sector', says Carmel Guerra from the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues.

'The Code will also provide opportunities for the sector to consider its future directions, including renewing focus on whether a professional association for youth workers ought to be established in Victoria', says Ms Ferrari.

YACVic will assist by continuing to work with the sector on implementing the Code, while developing resources and providing support to ensure it is widely understood and embraced in Victoria.

End

For comments, please contact Georgie Ferrari, CEO YACVic, on 0411 484 428.