



SHIFT THIS 2010

INTERACTIVE
WORKSHOPS
BANDS, ART AND
MORE PRIZES
STAND UP AND
BE HEARD
MAKE FRIENDS
& INFLUENCE
PEOPLE

A FESTIVAL
FOR YOUNG
AGENTS OF
CHANGE



SHIFT THIS 2010 SNAPSHOT

What young people participating at SHIFT THIS 2010 had to say...

ABOUT YAPA & SHIFT THIS 2010

Every two years YAPA holds a youth conference where young people from all over NSW to get together and have a say. This year we've decided to turn it into a festival! **SHIFT THIS 2010** is a festival for young agents of change. Participants have the opportunity to discuss important youth issues and learn some skills to take back to their communities to start activating change. On top of that, it is also a place for young people to meet and have fun!

Throughout **SHIFT THIS 2010**, young people participated in numerous workshops and panel discussions. This snapshot is an overview of what some of the young people had to say throughout **SHIFT THIS 2010**. Many of the issues up for debate and discussion are policy areas YAPA is continually working on in the interest of young people from NSW. Included in this snapshot is a brief overview of YAPA's position and work in each area.

ABOUT YAPA

YAPA is the peak organisation representing young people and youth services in NSW.

YAPA works towards a society where all young people are supported, engaged and valued. The role of YAPA is to:

- Monitor and respond to government policies and proposals affecting young people
- Promote and advocate on issues affecting young people and youth services
- Bring young people and youth workers together to act on issues affecting them
- Work to raise a positive profile of young people in the media and in the community
- Provide training, forums and conferences to young people and youth workers
- Provide information and referral
- Produce a range of resources, publications and newsletters.

For more information on YAPA, **SHIFT THIS 2010**, or any of the information contained in this report, please contact:

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WHO WAS AT SHIFT THIS 2010?

This report captures a snapshot of the 2010 YAPA youth festival, **SHIFT THIS 2010**. Ten workshop topics were selected for coverage. Under each topic heading are the details of the session, verbatim quotes from young people, and summaries of recommendations. Photographs from the event have also been selected for presentation.

Who attended SHIFT THIS 2010?

One hundred and nineteen participants registered for the event, with demographic data available for 95 of those registered participants at the time of writing this summary. From this information, there were fifty-one females and 46 males. The age of participants ranged from 13 to 18, and the mean age was 15. Sixty-six were from greater Sydney, 14 were from regional NSW, and 18 were from rural NSW.



MENTAL HEALTH

FROM YAPA...

Supporting young people to achieve optimal mental health and well-being is an important area recognised by YAPA. Advocating for adequate youth mental health services, working toward reducing the stigma associated with mental ill-health, empowering young people to assist their peers in overcoming mental ill-health, and educating youth service workers about the how to promote mental health are all activities that need support in working towards this goal.

The Creative Peoples Collecting works with young people using the power of hip hop to debate youth issues. During SHIFT THIS 2010, young people debated Mental Health. Below is a snap shot of lyrics created by young people for the Hip Hop debate...

*Drugs make you crazy, your friends don't know what to do.
Headspace for when you are beyond blue
But it ain't enough for a healthy state of mind
People give you weird looks. They misunderstand*

*There isn't enough support and education
For young people in relation to mental health
I feel all alone, it seems like its just me and myself*

*Looking for support but it ain't enough
There's no leg to stand on, its not any good
Looking for some answers, but there's no one who cares
Can anybody help us? Because life's not fair!*

*There isn't enough support and education
For young people in relation to mental health
I feel all alone, it seems like its just me and myself*



YOUNG DRIVERS

Young people participating in the young drivers session came up with the following recommendations:



- Speed limits should be increased while on L's as you have someone guiding you
- Have places where people can go and do unsafe driving so they have a chance to do it
- Have L1 and L2 policy so that you can work your speed limit up
- Drivers Ed course – get a permit, then get a license
- A day of theory introduced which can go towards your 120 hours
- Defensive driver course should be compulsory.

FROM YAPA...

Working with young people to achieve a fair and equitable licensing system, where all young people are supported to become safe and qualified drivers, is a key priority area for YAPA.

In 2009 YAPA conducted a survey of over 450 young people about their experiences of learning to drive and going for their license. More recently, YAPA coordinated a peer research project, exploring in-depth experiences of rural, regional and metropolitan young drivers. The key messages to emerge from this data are

- The requirement of 120 hours of driving practice for learner driver is not achievable for the majority of young people
- A lack of access to a supervisor, the cost of private driving lessons and the time required are the major barriers young people face when working towards 120 hours of driving training
- The 120 hour requirement for learner drivers specifically disadvantages young people from low income families, families with multiple siblings, Indigenous young people, newly arrived young people, and young people not living at home.

To address these issues, YAPA proposes an independent review of the 120-hour driving legislation and an increase in government funded learner driver programs. In addition, YAPA recommends that an effort is made to actively engage young people in public debate and decision making processes about young driver issues.

YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCILS

What did young people have to say about YAC's?

- There is a lack of advertising & awareness of YAC's
- YAC's run good events!
- Motivational people on YAC's is important
- Personalised approach is engaging
- Certain councils have a lack of funding for
- There's a lack of diversity and fair representation in YAC membership



FROM YAPA...

YAPA wants all young people to have opportunities to engage in decisions that affect their lives. Youth Advisory Council (YAC), or similar, mechanisms provide one option where young people can get involved in decisions within government structures. However, it is worth noting that there are many structures that engage different types of young people, and a combination of mechanisms would be required for any good youth participation commitment. It is of the utmost important that all mechanisms are supported, but more so that the work conducted by young people have real impact on decisions and are fully considered by decision-makers. In particular, YACs need real and timely opportunities to provide advice into existing consultative processes of the body they are advising, whilst also having avenues to set their own agenda and provide valuable input on issues that they recognise as important to their peers.

SCHOOL & EDUCATION

Young people were asked 'What would make an ideal school?' and this is what they had to say...

- Promote individuality
- Not all lessons should be in classrooms
- Constructive and Interactive Learning
- Student/teacher equality
- Fun & vibrant environment
- Study Tents
- No early mornings
- Learning outside
- Happy Teachers
- Comfortable
- Freedom
- Always positive encouragement towards everything
- Democratic



FROM YAPA...

YAPA is committed to strengthening partnerships between schools and local youth & community support services as a way of supporting young people to remain engaged in high school, and to transition to further work, study or training. Specifically, YAPA proposes a two-tiered strategy, where local partnerships are supported at both a regional and a state level. This strategy includes a school and community partnership facilitator posted in each of the twenty-eight service regions in NSW, and a statewide training and support person. Supporting meaningful youth participation, accessible to all young people, in decision-making processes involving school and education is an important goal for YAPA.



TRANSPORT

FROM YAPA...

YAPA has been working towards equity for young people in regards to public transport for numerous years. This area of work is extensive and proper weight needs to be given to the differing needs of young people from metropolitan, regional and rural NSW. Areas of concern for YAPA include:

- Safety on public transport, particularly when traveling at night
- The availability and regularity of services, with a particular focus on regional and rural areas, as well as accessibility to public transport at night
- The cost of public transport with reference to appropriate and consistent fares, including eligibility for concessions.
- Including youth participation into public transport decision making processes in a meaningful way and informing young people in an easy to understand way, of how to use public transport and any changes made to public transport options.

Young people debated the topic of Public Transport in a hip hop debate, but before they got into the lyric writing, they had the following thoughts and ideas about how public transport is for young people, and what they would do to improve it...

Do you think the P.T. transport system works well for young people in NSW?

Overall, the young people thought that public transport worked well some of the time but they said it works better for young people living in metropolitan area's and gets increasingly worse in regional and rural areas. They think that it is not constant enough, or consistent, but when its available and frequent it works well.

Do you feel safe on Public Transport?

Young people felt safe most of the time on public transport, but not so safe when travelling at night or when there aren't many others on the bus or train. They did not like being alone on a bus with just the driver, particularly at night.

What's not working?

High fares, crowding, crap drivers, unreliable, lack of night time services, lack of rural services, dirty, busses don't arrive with no explanation, drivers take their breaks and leave passengers waiting, they feel unsafe especially when there are no lights at bus stops.

What would you change?

Lower fares, more night time services, more bus stops/services (rural), reliability, more information at bus stops such as when the next bus is due to arrive, increased services, cleaner, air conditioning on busses, more school busses that are cheaper, better security on trains and busses at night, have hand sanitiser available, more peak hour services, having a phone number available to call to check if a bus is not coming or delayed (only one young person in a session of 16 knew this service already exists), high speed rail between major cities, bring back Trams in CBD's, a bigger budget from the Government (they think too much money is put into roads and not enough into public transport). They wanted Australia's public transport system to mimic Japans as it is a lot more efficient and they'd like to encourage more people to use public transport as it is better for the environment.

GRAFFITI

FROM YAPA...

The war on graffiti is one that has been waged for over 20 years, and under the current approach, no one is winning. Recent changes in state legislation and local government policies have been detrimental to young people with an interest in aerosol art. YAPA, in consultation with academics, youth workers and young people, wishes to acknowledge that zero-tolerance and eradication are policies are not working. YAPA believes it is time to re-think the war on graffiti, and to engage young people and graffiti writers in this process. YAPA has the following recommendations in this area:

- That research is conducted into community opinion and perceptions of different forms of graffiti writing and street art to better inform policy development.
- That the impact of high quality graffiti murals and aerosol artists to increase both social and economic value in the community be encouraged and recognised.
- That mural painting programs are supported within a youth service environment to act as both an engagement tool as well as enhance the artistic development of young graffiti writers.

During a panel discussion between young people, a graffiti artist and an academic researcher, young people at SHIFT THIS 2010 had the following thoughts and ideas about graffiti...

Young people think that the government spends WAY too much money on Graffiti removal. When told that the figure for NSW was between \$100-\$200 million per year they were appalled. "That money could be spent in SO many different ways!"

Young people loved murals and high quality pieces, but some did not like tags. Nobody liked scratchitti (scratched tags) and wished that it wasn't on public transport. The majority of young people enjoyed having graffiti in their communities, as long as it wasn't disrespectful. They also do not agree that a council should be allowed to paint over a mural on private property without the owner's consent.

The participants think that there should be more acceptance of graffiti in the community, and that the legislation in the Graffiti Control Act is too strict. Many had used legal walls and programs and really enjoyed them. They wish there were more legal places for them to Graffiti and to develop their skills.



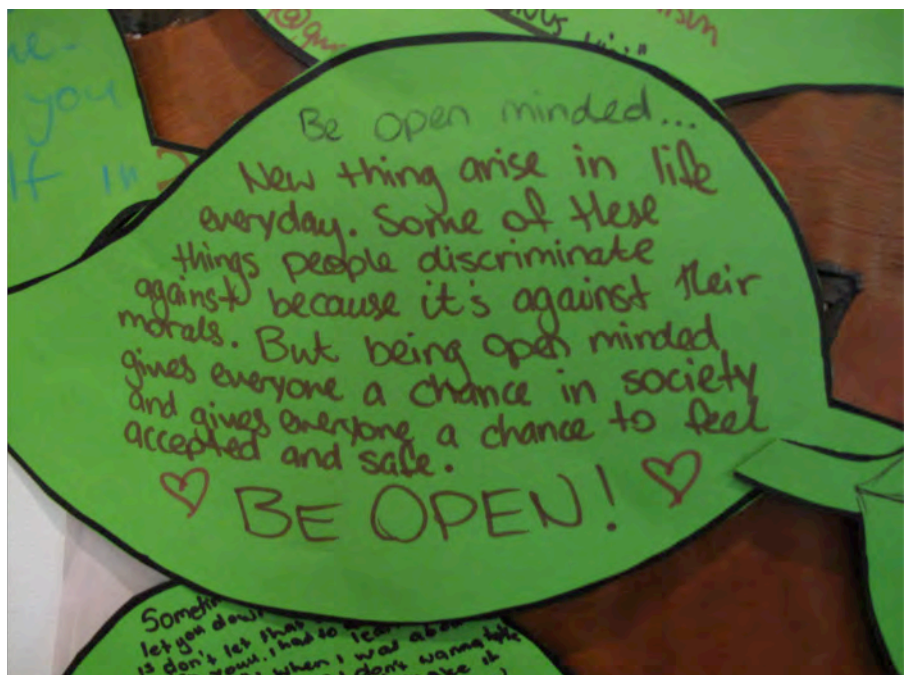
PUBLIC SPACE

FROM YAPA...

Young people need safe spaces for real-world social interactions to take place. The issue of the ability of young people to use public spaces, as well as areas such as shopping centres, has been the considered in work conducted by YAPA over a number of years. The exuberance of young people sharing spaces with other members of the community needs to be accepted, as well as providing avenues for young people and public space management to gain a clearer understanding of the appropriate use of spaces, such as through an agreed protocol between young people and shopping centres.

40 young people at SHIFT THIS 2010 took to the streets to reclaim public space by participating in a flash mob created by Outburst! – The Western Sydney Youth Forum. Before they set off, they had a discussion about how young people feel in public space...

The participants thought that the majority of community members didn't like young people hanging out in public space, and said that often groups of young people are moved on when hanging out in public spaces such as train stations, bus stops and shopping centres. They enjoy using public space, but wish that more people were accepting of young people and the fact that when they hang out they like to be loud, have fun and be rowdy. They didn't think it was fair to be moved on when they weren't doing anything wrong and were just hanging out. They also believe that many parks and other areas of public space need to have more lighting and security at nighttime so that it is safer.



RELATIONSHIPS

During a discussion about Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex and Queer (GLBTIQ) youth issues facilitated by Meredith Turnbull, the young people participating had these insights into the experiences of GLBTIQ young people...

What is it that a GLBTIQ person sees?

inequality ~ narrow-mindedness ~ seen as often fashionable ~ different ~ ostracised ~ seen as clean/tidy ~ accepted and discriminated ~ masculinity / femininity ~ negative stereotypes ~ double standards – e.g. adoption, marriage ~ they are normal / good and should be seen as such ~ curiosity – people don't understand and can't relate

What is it that a GLBTIQ person feels?

afraid ~ anxious ~ intimidated ~ fragile ~ worried about people's reactions ~ proud! ~ confused ~ angry ~ isolated ~ frustrated – waiting for the right moment ~ trying to explain ~ a bit of self-loathing ~ denial by others – “it's a phase, you'll get over it” ~ alone ~ accused of it being made up ~ seen as attention seeking ~ insulted ~ betrayed by your faith

How does a GLBTIQ person react?

erratic ~ defensively ~ spontaneous ~ suppress a part of your life ~ angry at the world ~ embarrassed ~ isolated ~ motivated ~ dealing with the stereotype ~ empathy to other people's treatment ~ suicide ~ lose a part of yourself / reinvention

“it really depends on the support from your friends and family”

How could we all react differently?

- **don't react to people's sexuality at all**
- **be supportive**
- **sending signals that you are ok with it all**
- **honour people who come out to you**

“Why should anyone tell me that my love isn't as good as someone else's?”

young person

FROM YAPA...

Supporting young people to navigate healthy relationships is a key priority area for YAPA, with a strong emphasis on Domestic & Family Violence (DFV).

YAPA is concerned about the myths and misconceptions prevailing young people's perceptions of DFV. Young people are often not aware that DFV is broader than physical abuse; and that it involves numerous other controlling behaviours such as stalking and bullying, as well as sexual, emotional, financial and spiritual abuse. YAPA believes young people need to be made aware of the breadth of the issue.

One in eight young people will experience DFV within their own intimate relationships before they leave high school. More often than not, young people will turn to their peers in the first instance when they need help or support. Young people need to be trained in how they can support each other navigate through difficult situations.



**GRAFFITI MURAL CREATED
BY STU BARBER AND
YOUNG PEOPLE AT
SHIFT THIS 2010**