

YAPRap

Newsletter of the Youth Action and Policy Association NSW Inc

Vol 17 No 4 April 2007

T ransport concession victory for apprentices & trainees

Kristy Delaney

Many of you are familiar with YAPA's long campaign to get transport concessions for apprentices and trainees.

The campaign started in 1999 when a youth worker in Western Sydney phoned YAPA to let us know that apprentices were eligible for a concession only on public buses but not on private buses. Public buses (State Transit Authority) only operate in parts of Sydney and in Newcastle,

**Western
Sydney
Youth Forum
members who
campaigning
for
concessions**

while western Sydney and the rest of NSW is covered by a private bus system. This meant that the majority of young apprentices and trainees, on very low incomes, were forced to pay full fares for their bus trips.

During the past eight years YAPA has been campaigning on this issue (with your help!) by:

- collecting case studies from other young people
- conducting further statistical research

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Kristy Delaney is leaving YAPA

YAPRap

YAPRap is YAPA's monthly newsletter. YAPA is the Youth Action and Policy Association NSW Inc, the peak organisation representing young people and youth services in NSW.

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YAPRap is sent to members and subscribers only. Go to www.yapa.org.au or contact us for details.

Contributions

Contributions welcome from young people, youth workers and others. Email articles and listings to info@yapa.org.au or ring Nick Manning at YAPA to discuss your contribution. YAPA may also publish your contribution in other newsletters and on our website.

Advertisements and loose inserts

We run ads in YAPRap and insert loose flyers, when space permits. Contact Nick Manning to discuss your ad or flyer.

Deadlines for contributions, ads and loose inserts

(YAPRap is posted 2 weeks after the deadline.)
Monday 7 May
Monday 4 June

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5 April 2007

I am writing to let you know that I have handed in my resignation from YAPA. While I have greatly enjoyed my time at YAPA I feel it is time to explore a new direction for my life.

As many of you may know I have been involved with YAPA for quite a long time. I first became involved in 1994 through the Youth Participation Project. I was elected to the Board as Co-Chairperson from 1995 - 1998, became employed by YAPA as the Western Sydney Regional Youth Development Officer from 1999 - 2001 and I have been in the position of Executive Officer for the past 5.5 years. Over the past 13 years I have developed many strong friendships with many Board and staff members, young people, youth workers and others who have been involved in our work.

While I will be sad to leave I know that the YAPA staff team and YAPA Board will make my replacement feel very welcome. It has been a privilege to work with so many talented and dedicated staff and I know that they will continue to achieve great things for young people and the youth sector.

After having a short break I will be looking for a new position or short term work. If you are looking for a trainer or consultant please get in touch at kristydelaney@gmail.com or 0414 92 72 64.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has supported YAPA over the years. I have enjoyed working with you all and have learnt so much on a personal and professional level.



Kristy with YAPA staff Lam Huynh (left) & John Ferguson

Kind regards

Kristy Delaney

Executive Officer, Youth Action & Policy Association (NSW)



Position vacant:
YAPA Executive Officer
Applications close Friday 27 April.
www.yapa.org.au/yapa/jobs



Unique program for newly arrived youth

Jessie Huard, Newly Arrived Youth Program Coordinator, Australian Red Cross

A unique Red Cross program helping newly arrived young people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds will be launched in May.

The Australian Red Cross Newly Arrived Youth Program (NAYP) will help young people who have recently arrived in Australia to learn about and contribute to their new community as well as giving them an opportunity to meet other young people and have some fun along the way. The program is open to anyone aged 12-25 years who has recently arrived in Australia and lived here for five years or less.

Young people can often face many difficulties in resettling in Australia. They often have a limited knowledge of what support and social services are available to them. This program helps them to learn about and connect with these services now or in the future in a way that is relevant to their particular needs.

For example, we take young people on up to eight excursions to places like Centrelink and legal, education and health centres so

they can learn where services are and what they do. We use public transport to get there, so young people also build the skills and knowledge of how the public transport system works and have the confidence to use it again. It's much less intimidating than trying to figure it out yourself.

NAYP also works to build strong social networks for newly arrived young people by encouraging them to take part in youth days and youth forums.


At the end of each series of excursions, youth days will be held to acknowledge the efforts of the young people participating in the program and celebrate their achievements. They also have the opportunity to have their voice heard through youth forums, the first of which will be held in June. The forums aim to raise awareness of different cultures and the needs of young people from different communities with the broader community using guest speakers, workshops and other fun activities.

NAYP clients are also encouraged to engage in and contribute to their community through volunteering.

Volunteering can often be the first step to meaningful

employment. It also provides the opportunity to meet other people and develop new skills.

NAYP works in partnership with The Newly Arrived Youth Support Service (NAYSS), which is run by Mission Australia at Cabramatta. This service provides one-on-one support through case management and referral by professional caseworkers.

NAYP will initially be focussed on the Fairfield – Liverpool area. The program will be launched at 10.30am on 4 May at the Fairfield-Cabramatta PCYC on Railway Parade in Cabramatta. Youth workers and clients are welcome to come along – please RSVP by 24 April. Following the launch will be an open day for anyone who would like to participate in the program. 

More information

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Dropping off the edge

Extreme social disadvantage in Australia is real and it's measurable. It's endemic [confined] to a small number of locations in this country, and it can be fixed, according to major new research.

Dropping off the Edge: the distribution of disadvantage in Australia is the most comprehensive

The report finds that just 1.7% of postcodes and communities across Australia account for more than seven times their share of top rank positions on the major factors that cause intergenerational poverty. "Our findings demand recognition of a common pattern associated with inadequate education and training - unemployment, low income,

action now from Federal and State governments, before these communities fall off the edge," said Fr Peter Norden, Associate Director of Jesuit Social Services.

"The problem is of a scale that can be treated with the right policies targeted to the right places. Addressing pockets of disadvantage is not only good social policy, its good economic


“Our findings demand recognition of a common pattern associated with inadequate education and training - unemployment, low income, poor health and ‘making ends meet’ by criminal means, resulting in high rates of convictions and imprisonment. Where these characteristics are concentrated there, too, we find high levels of confirmed child maltreatment”

national study of its kind. The report, which is a joint project with Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia, is the third in a series of reports on the issue, written by researcher, Professor Tony Vinson, from the University of Sydney. The previous two reports (1999, 2004) mapped social disadvantage in NSW and Victoria. This latest report provides a very clear picture of areas of entrenched disadvantage nationally. It also shows how and where public policy can be used to overcome these long term problems.

poor health and ‘making ends meet’ by criminal means, resulting in high rates of convictions and imprisonment. Where these characteristics are concentrated there, too, we find high levels of confirmed child maltreatment,” said Professor Tony Vinson, author of the research.

“Just like the challenge of Indigenous disadvantage, the alienation of whole communities within mainstream Australian society simply cannot be tolerated, especially in times of such obvious economic growth and prosperity. We need targeted, coordinated

policy,” said Frank Quinlan, Executive Director of Catholic Social Services Australia.

[Media release 26 February 2007] 

More information

Report: Dropping off the Edge: the distribution of disadvantage in Australia

www.australiandisadvantage.org.au

Have or have-nots, that is the question for education, by Adele Horin, Sydney Morning Herald 3/3/07. www.yapa.org.au, scroll down to Youth News, and click the link.



Call for long term funding in poverty postcodes

Welfare agencies from across NSW have called upon the Premier and Opposition Leader to commit to long term funding for community services in the state's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, claiming that neither party is tackling the issue of entrenched poverty.

building, education and health services is critical," said Mr Boerma.

"We also need to better support the key workers who can make a difference in disadvantaged communities – the youth workers, community centre workers and family support workers who are the unsung heroes of the service system in this state and for whom building community, trust and confidence is core business," Council of Social

with longer term funding for those projects that demonstrate real community benefits and continuing need".

"International research clearly shows that sustained funding of at least eight to ten years is the key to tackling poverty. This is the third in a series of reports on this issue by Professor Vinson and is the first national analysis of extreme disadvantage. The sad news is, not

“International research clearly shows that sustained funding of at least eight to ten years is the key to tackling poverty.”

"Latest research from Professor Tony Vinson shows that just 1.7% of postcodes across Australia account for more than seven times their share of top rank positions on the major factors that cause intergenerational poverty," said Catholic Social Services NSW/ACT Chair, Bernard Boerma.

"The key recommendation from the Vinson Report, jointly sponsored by Catholic Social Services Australia and Jesuit Social Services, suggests that if we are to improve education, health and economic outcomes in disadvantaged communities, then long term investment in affordable housing, transport, community

Service of NSW Acting Director, Michelle Burrell said.

"Both Mr Lemma and Mr Debnam need to make the following commitments if their anti-poverty credentials are to have worth:

- Maintain and enhance existing funding under the Area Assistance Scheme, Community Services Grants Program and Community Solutions projects;
- Establish long term funding for community driven development in areas of entrenched disadvantage;
- Funding for innovation to trial and develop new solutions,

much has changed in the last ten years. Isn't it about time we got the message?" asked Ms Burrell.

"But the news is not all bad" said Mr Boerma. "With political will from both Federal and State Governments, the complex and difficult circumstances facing areas of extreme disadvantage can be overturned, but we need to think beyond electoral cycles".

"Investing long-term funding is not only good social policy, it makes good economic sense," he said.

[NCOSS & Catholic Social Services NSW/ACT media release 16 March 2007]



NSW Labor promises for young people

As you know, Labor won the NSW election in March, so we thought we should summarise what they promised for young people.

Education

- 15 new trade schools (in addition to 10 announced in last year's budget) for students who want to combine studies with vocational training
- Every student who drops out of school to be guaranteed a place at a TAFE college. \$67 million for 12,580 new places in TAFE colleges, trade schools or vocational education
- Improving ratio of computers to students from 1:20 to less than 1:6
- \$29 million to give students their own online work space for receiving and posting homework, specialist podcast lessons, email and internet. Parents to have online access to student report cards. Every public school to have video conferencing facilities.
- Introduce new high school orientation and induction programs including a Transition Coordinator in every High and Central School.
- 280 million on capital works and \$120 million on school maintenance
- Training school counsellors to identify and help children with autism and other disabilities

Employment

- \$200 clothing allowance to all new apprentices
- Government will itself take on

1600 additional apprentices

- \$3.5 million for group training companies to take on 1250 new apprentices on behalf of small businesses
- Free vehicle registration to employers of apprentices
- Inspect employers across NSW to ensure they do not break new Child Labour laws which require employers to offer pay and conditions at least as good as state awards to employees under 18 years of age

Policing & Juvenile Justice

- Youth Conduct Orders for young people charged and/ or found guilty of anti-social behaviour. Penalties for breaches yet to be decided.
- Give Children's Court new powers to order juveniles to complete education, employment or other programs designed to reduce re-offending.
- Pilot a model of Aboriginal Circle Sentencing tailored to deal with juvenile offenders
- New Intensive Supervision Program to closely track young offenders and make parents accountable for their child's behaviour.
- Police to have power to confiscate spray cans from people under 18 if they do not have a lawful excuse.
- Consider a complete ban on sale of spray paint.
- Force all public sector bodies to clean up graffiti on their buildings


within 48 hours (from time of reporting)

- 150 new Highway Patrol officers to target drink driving

Young drivers

- Introduce a tougher test for learner drivers getting their P plates, focusing on hazard perception and driver reactions
- Invest \$130,000 to expand Rotary Youth Driver Awareness Program to 20,000 students
- Provide \$345,000 to PCYC to expand Road Realities program across NSW

Services for young people

- \$58 million to fight childhood obesity
- \$29 million to provide treatment at early stages of serious mental illness
- \$18 million to better integrate mental health services with drug and alcohol services including specialist support for young people
- \$14 million to expand community based professional mental health services including child and adolescent services
- \$10 million for a new Youth Mental Health Clinical Research facility focusing on alcohol and substance abuse and juvenile justice issues
- 450 new respite places + 960 new therapy places for children and young people with disabilities 



Ministers and shadows in the new NSW Parliament

After the recent NSW election, we have new ministers and shadow ministers. Below are some of the more youth-relevant ones.

What is a Minister?

A minister is the member of the government who is responsible for a particular portfolio (topic) within the government. Most ministers are responsible for one or more government departments or agencies, eg:

- the Minister for Education is responsible for the Department of Education
- the Minister for Health is responsible for the Department of Health.

Ministers have to be elected members of parliament. They can be either an MP – a member of the lower house, or an MLC - a member of the upper house of parliament.

What is a shadow minister?

A shadow minister is an opposition member of parliament who is responsible for a particular portfolio (topic) within the opposition. These portfolios usually match the portfolios of government ministers

(eg. health or education). A shadow minister shadows (follows, watches and checks up on) the minister.

Shadow ministers:

- comment on the government's policies and actions in parliament and in the media
- develop and promote their own party's policies on that topic.

How does government work?

There is more easy-to-understand information on how government works, at:

www.yapa.org.au/youth/facts/govt

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Ministers and shadows in the new NSW Parliament

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Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Mental Health)
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You can see the full lists, with updated contact details, at:
www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/members.nsf/V3Home and click on Ministers or Shadow Ministers. 



A Growing Divide?

Bus Fare Affordability in Rural and Regional NSW

Dinesh Wadiwel, NSW Council of Social Service (NCOSS)

Bus users in rural and regional NSW face higher bus pricing than passengers in Sydney. Limited subsidies, poor regulation of fares, and low patronage can often increase fares for journeys to access employment, education or services. Poor targeting of concessions means that many low income people in rural and regional NSW are currently ineligible for a concession fare on bus services.

In December 2006 the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) recommended a 5.0% increase for non-metropolitan bus fares in 2007. The fare increase was approximately twice as large as that recommended for Sydney buses, maintaining a long term trend in NSW that sees country bus fares increase at a more rapid rate than those in the city. Arguably this has led to declining levels of affordability for public transport services in rural areas.

There are a number of factors that contribute to the growing inequality between country and city fares:

1. Significant growth for country bus fares over the last 5 years

Country Bus Fares have grown significantly above inflation since 2002. In real terms, bus fares in country NSW are 9.35% higher than they were in 2002. This means that people who use country buses regularly must spend a larger proportion of their household income on transport costs.

While it is true that fares for all bus services in NSW (public or private, metropolitan or non-metropolitan) have grown above inflation since 2002, country bus fares have experienced the most dramatic growth over this period. In comparison with Sydney private bus fares, country fares are approximately 3% higher than in 2002. In comparison with Sydney public fares, country bus users now pay approximately 6% more than government bus users in the city.

2. Pay more for the same journey time in the country

With the exception of Newcastle services, bus fares in NSW are distance rather than time based. This means that if you travel a longer distance, you will pay a higher fare. The advantage of distance based

fares in city areas is that bus users do not have to pay for factors outside of their control (in particular traffic) that can delay some journeys.

While distance based fares often make sense in metropolitan areas, they are not necessarily affordable for bus users in rural and regional NSW. Many country bus routes cover long distances, particularly between country towns and centres in regional areas. A lack of congestion and relatively infrequent stops (at least in comparison to typical metropolitan routes) means that although large distances may be covered, travelling times are lower for the same distances.

As a result, many country bus users will pay more for the same journey time. For example a 36 minute journey from Glenwood Park Drive to Blacktown in Sydney's western Suburbs will cost \$3.90 in fares. An equivalent journey time in a country area is substantially higher: a 40 minute trip from Casino to Lismore on NSW North Coast attracts a fare of \$8.90.

3. Inequitable access to concession fares

Country bus users do not have access to the full range of concessions that are currently available to bus users in metropolitan

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A Growing Divide?

Bus Fare Affordability in Rural and Regional NSW

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and outer metropolitan Sydney. This includes access to the Pensioner Excursion Ticket (PET), concession entitlements for students over 30 years of age, apprentices and trainees. (There is scope for reform in this area: in 2003 NSW Government made a commitment to reform non metropolitan bus contracts after the Review of Bus Services in NSW).

4. The rural “premium” fare

Rural operators operate on a fare scale that is approximately 25% higher than other areas in NSW, with no clear reason provided for this disparity.

The NSW Government have already acknowledged there is a problem with this, stating that “no evidence has been presented to demonstrate that a 25% premium is required for rural fares.”(1) The 2004 Review of Bus Services in NSW noted that the premium placed on rural fares “is a disincentive for potential bus users. A reduction of these fares may attract additional passengers in these areas.”(2) It is the stated intention of the NSW Government to use the bus reform process to achieve a consistent fare scale in country NSW for bus services.

Moving Forward

Improving the affordability of bus services in country areas requires action from both IPART (which recommends maximum fares for non-metropolitan private buses in NSW) and the NSW Government (which sets fare pricing and concession policy through contract and funding

negotiations with operators). Key concerns include:

Filling the Data Gaps

In NSW there is very limited quantitative data on the effects of transport poverty in rural and regional areas. Although the NSW Transport Population Data Centre currently produces a household travel survey based on research in Sydney, there is no data available on public transport usage outside of Sydney.

This is very concerning, as fare increases are consistently granted for non-metropolitan bus services on the basis of little or no information on relevant social impacts, often with only historical precedent as a guide. For example IPART, in its most recent determination on country fares, states:

The Tribunal has no information on the income levels of passengers who use non-metropolitan private buses or the affordability of the services these buses provide. However as the fare increase is in line with pricing decisions from previous reviews, the Tribunal does not believe the increase will have a significant adverse impact on customers (3).

NCOSS would emphasise that this is not a strong basis upon which to make socially sustainable pricing decisions on country bus services. Both IPART and the NSW Government must make a stronger commitment to better understanding the characteristics of rural public transport use.

Government fares and funding policy

Government policy in relation to funding for country bus operators will have an impact on fare levels for services in rural and regional NSW. As stated above, the NSW Government has made commitments to improve the consistency of country fare scales and look at concession availability in country areas.

NCOSS would strongly urge the government to review fares before new non-metropolitan private bus contracts lock funding arrangements for operators in place. The NSW Government and the private bus industry have recently initiated reforms of funding model options for regional contract areas(4). Although these will clearly have an impact on future fares pricing policy, there has been little public discussion on what contribution fares might make, and how the fares system might be made fairer.

As stated above, a significant inequity is the lack of parity between costs for equivalent journey times between country and city areas. In many respects this inequity might be relatively simple to resolve: NCOSS believes that the introduction of a time based fare – such as a day pass - for relevant country bus contract regions would improve the equity of country fares in relation to the metropolitan fare scale (5).

Country Bus Fare Regulation


Since 2002 IPART has made recommendations to the



Government on non-metropolitan fares for private buses in NSW. The Tribunal uses a Bus Industry Cost Index to measure operating costs movements for services delivered under commercial contracts.

NCOSS is concerned that operating costs for providers appear to be the main driver for fare increases (arguably the historical trends in bus pricing confirm this). An increase in the cost of running bus services should not necessarily guarantee a rise in the cost of fares. Ideally identified cost increases should be balanced against social, environmental and other considerations when justifying a price change for public transport services. For example, potential

serious impacts for low income users may justify a fare increase that is lower than demonstrated costs for the industry. NCOSS would urge IPART to develop a formal process by which identified bus industry costs are weighed against additional considerations, through a transparent framework that is subject to discussion by all stakeholders in the process.

The current reforms of bus services provide a welcome opportunity to examine fare inequities in NSW. Ensuring that essential forms of connectivity are available to all regardless of income status should be a key target. 

More information

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Notes

- (1) See NSW Parliament, Mr Robert Oakeshott to the Minister for Transport Services, Minister for the Hunter, and Minister Assisting the Minister for Natural Resources (Forests), Hansard, 0831 Review of Student Transport Scheme, 19 November 2003
- (2) NSW Government, Review of Bus Services in NSW, February 2004, p74
- (3) Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, Review of Non-metropolitan fares for private buses in NSW, December 2006, p15
- (4) Ministry of Transport, Rural and Regional Bus Reform Consultative Taskforce, August 2006
- (5) Council of Social Service of NSW, Smart Move: An Integrated Day Fare for Public Transport in NSW, July 2006

[First published in NCOSS News Jan-Feb 2007]

T ransport concession victory for apprentices & trainees

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- contributing written submissions to government inquiries, such as the State Plan and Review of Transport Concessions
- giving evidence in transport inquiries
- participating in meetings with the Ministry of Transport and the Minister for Youth
- distributing press releases and participating in media interviews.

I'm pleased to inform you that the NSW Government has announced that apprentices and trainees in Sydney, Macarthur, Blue Mountains, Illawarra, Central Coast, Newcastle, and the lower Hunter will now have access to transport concessions, regardless of whether they use a public bus or private bus.

What about rural apprentices & trainees?

Rural and regional bus contracts are currently being re-negotiated - it is not clear when they will change, but the Ministry of Transport website says: "Arrangements are currently under development for implementation in 2008." (www.transport.nsw.gov.au/concessions/concession-changes.html 12/4/07)


Where is YAPA heading on transport issues?

YAPA will keep campaigning on other transport issues for young

people in NSW including:

- Community transport schemes for young people in rural areas
- Transport concessions for young people on junior wages and all job seekers
- Improving the affordability and accessibility of licenses for young drivers

Sincere thanks to everyone who has supported this campaign over the years, and thumbs up to the NSW Government for taking action on this issue.

Please keep supporting our campaign work - together we can make a difference! 



Tightrope walking in the twilight zone

Ethics in youth work: A monthly column

Nick Manning, YAPA Communications Officer



May dilemma of the month: Give me a bloody cigarette!

Kim is a 17 year old young woman who has been sleeping rough, working as a prostitute and using heroin. Nick, her youth worker, has a good rapport with her and is hoping to make some progress soon on the various issues Kim faces.

Kim calls Nick one day in a state of distress and asks to meet in a nearby park. When Nick gets there Kim is bruised and dishevelled. Nick asks what has happened to her and Kim says "give me a cigarette". Nick has a pack of cigarettes sitting visibly in a jacket pocket. Nick ignores the request and asks her again what has happened. Kim again says "give me a cigarette". Nick mumbles something about not being allowed to give cigarettes to

How to use the ethical dilemmas

- post your own response to the blog (anonymously or not)
- debate the scenario at a team meeting or network meeting
- use the scenario and responses in your agency's orientation or training manual

Go to <http://youthworkethics.blogspot.com>

young people, but Kim interrupts and says "Look. I've just been raped. I've just been beaten up. And I've just been robbed. Now give me a bloody cigarette!"

What should Nick do?

Some questions to get you thinking:

- What might be the implications of Nick's actions, immediately and in the long-term?
- What would change your response? (eg. age of young

person? details of the young person's situation? type or level of involvement with your agency? city or small town?)

- Can you relate the situation to the Code of Ethics (at www.yapa.org.au/youthwork/ethics and click on code of ethics)?

Read what other people think, and post your own reply (anonymously or not), on the blog. Go to www.yapa.org.au/youthwork/ethics and click on blog.

Replies will be published in next month's YAPRap.

Last month's dilemma: A quiet drink or three

After a hard week at work you head off to your regular pub with your friends.

You've had a few drinks and are feeling "happy", when you notice Belinda, an 18 year old client you work with. She is heading in your direction and may or may not have spotted you.

What would you do?

Here are the responses we received on the blog:



Anonymous said...

I would be highly inclined to simply go about my business.

It's after hours, there is a high likelihood that my judgement may be impaired, and it is not appropriate for me to be engaging with a young person after work hours.

Additionally, I personally feel that we all need wind down time, so engaging with this person in my own time is not beneficial for them, or myself. My whole life does not revolve around working, and therefore, I would be doing my best to not have to engage with the young person.

Anonymous said...

If the young person said hello I would respond, I would not ignore them but I also would not make it Ok for them to join the group. We do run into clients from time to time in unexpected places but that doesn't mean we need to be rude.

I agree we need our own space and time but ignoring someone could put your working relationship at risk.

Anonymous said...

I'm not sure why this would be such a dilemma. I'd definitely say hello if they came up to me.

I think it'd be good for rapport with young people for them to see that we are normal people too who like to go out with friends and have a drink.

It's not like you are getting drunk with them at work.

YAPA said...

OK, YAPA is adding more details to this dilemma: The client does see you and comes over briefly, then goes back to her table nearby. You are already clearly under the influence, but you want to stay (it is your regular pub) and keep drinking.

What would you do at that point? And what would you say to her when you next see her at your youth service, given that you have been trying to address her alcohol abuse problem?

Youth Service Coordinator - Hunter said...

I don't think I would have stayed for the extra drinks once I had seen a client. It can be hard especially if you are living in a rural area to balance out your own personal life with your work life as you often see young people out in the community. Yes the young person in question is over 18 and yes it is your regular pub so you both have the right to be there. If a young person works with me and says hello to me in public I would never ignore them but I also don't go out of my way to strike up big conversations. In respecting their right to confidentiality we can sometimes be jeopardising this confidentiality by speaking to them in public. For example what happens if their friends are like - "Why do you know the worker" etc. I guess it depends what your service does. But I think that is an important thing to think about. The other issue from a code of ethics that comes out here is about boundaries and being able to set up

professional boundaries - to make sure that our clients know that we are workers that support them but are not their friends as harsh as that sounds that is what a good youth worker should be doing. The other issue is whether we like it or not for many young people that we work with we do become a role model and whether as people we like that or not we do have to face the reality of it. If this is a real situation after a young person we work with seeing us in a position where we had been drinking and our judgement had been impaired etc we then have to work with them the next time they come into our service. What happens when they walk into the service "Hey Mate how's it going. Awesome night at the pub last weekend. How'd you pull up cause god you were like soooooooooo blind!"

Lion's Fan said...

Don't ignore the young person, simply make polite conversation and then move on, you are the professional (even on your time off) and the young person is still the client. As you have a pre-established worker-client relationship, even when you meet outside 'work' hours the worker-client relationship still remains. This relationship, all the previous work and all potential future work is put in jeopardy if the relationship moves into social 'after-hours' interactions.

For the protection of your own personal and the industry's professionalism youth workers need to maintain a positive professional relationship with

(continued over page)



Tightrope walking in the twilight zone

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all clients, regardless of when they are on-the clock to ensure that you can maintain objectivity, discipline, continuity and respect. Young people need to know youth workers are workers and not friends or confidants otherwise situations will arise when the two roles will conflict and the blurring of the boundaries between the roles of professional and friend/confidante will create the scope for confusion, misunderstandings and potentially manipulation by either the young people or the worker. Young people potentially will fail to understand the difference between Youth Worker and friend and therefore not see when the role of the youth worker ends and role of the friend/confidant begins. The young people potentially will be confused by the inconsistency of the roles of youth worker/friend and placing the interests of the youth work ahead of a friendship will become difficult. Youth workers could find themselves being implicated in 'socially/professionally unacceptable' or illegal behaviours, which will put into question their and the industry's integrity and professional ability. For the sake of continuing to have a drink, the youth workers risk their positive image amongst the management, colleagues, young people, parents and the community which in turn will damage the integrity and achievements of the whole youth work.

Allowing the initial interaction outside of work can in turn lead to ongoing and long term involvement with young people outside working

hours. This can lead to premature professional burnout when workers involvement with a young people extends into personal time or issues of divided loyalties may emerge and the youth worker member may find their life quickly taken over by the demands of young people and families. There is the lack of separation between personal and professional lifestyles and a loss of objectivity in dealing with the young person(s) and a potential division between other youth workers when one worker to be seen as a 'friend/confidante' and the others as an 'authoritarian' and blurred expectations.

These are my 2 cents worth anyway.

Youth service coordinator said...

The young people accessing my service are homeless and mostly have drug and/or alcohol problems that they are struggling to overcome. The most useful way of assisting a young person in this lifestyle is through building a trusting and mutually respectful relationship.


If I was having a drink and one of my young people entered the premises then a couple of issues would be important for me.

Firstly, the young person would see me as a normal person and not some sort of drugs and alcohol cop who can't relax with friends.

Secondly, my duty of care for that young person and my acknowledgement that alcohol consumption is a major problem for him/her would make me be

friendly and welcoming but also dictate that our social contact would not continue beyond the initial contact. I have done this in the past and not had a bad reaction either at the time or through our ongoing professional relationship.

I have known youth workers who have partied with their young people and have assisted with illegal and unhealthy practices. I think this brings down the effectiveness of change in young people's lives as well as the professional relationship that has been established.

Is there another angle or strategy? You can still let us know what you think - on the blog. Go to www.yapa.org.au/youthwork/ethics and click on blog. 

In a dilemma yourself???

Suggest an ethical dilemma for YAPA to publish. It could be a situation you are facing or have faced in the past, or just something you have wondered about.

Simply email info@yapa.org.au with the subject: ETHICAL DILEMMA. It can be real or not. Give plenty of detail about the context. You don't have to identify yourself or your agency, and in any case we will not identify you publicly.



One in four young male deaths due to suicide

Tanya Plibersek MP, Shadow Minister for Human Services, Housing, Women and Youth

Labor is concerned that new data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) shows that after a steady period of general decline, suicide rates for young males aged 15 - 24 years old increased in 2005.

For those aged 20 – 24 years old, there was a 16 per cent increase in the number of deaths from 2004 to 2005.

It is enormously sad that over a quarter of male deaths in this age group are due to suicide.

I am also concerned that suicides account for around 1 out of 6 (or 16.5 per cent) deaths for young women of the same age group.

Young people and youth workers around the country tell me that many young men are lonely and confused, often relying on alcohol and drugs.

Many lose their way along the road from their teens to adulthood – struggling to cope with school or starting work, higher education and training.

Changing gender roles add to the pressures young men are faced with.

Young men and women need positive role models; secure family life and hope for the future.

Labor calls on the Howard Government to:

- improve mental health services for young people;
- introduce genuine national youth representation;
- improve investment in schools, TAFEs and universities; and
- help more young people get secure work and plan for their future.

[Media release 15 March 2007]



Opening the Doors: A “do it yourself” access and equity manual for working with young people

We are pleased to announce that Opening the Doors is now available online. This manual is for anyone who works with young people, or wants to work with young people. It was developed for agencies in Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Penrith (Nepean Region), but it contains lots of useful information for other areas in NSW and Australia as well.

Opening the Doors has lots of practical advice about working with

different groups of young people who may experience barriers to using your service:

- Young people with a disability
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people
- Gay, lesbian, bi-sexual and transgender young people
- Early school leavers
- Rural and geographically isolated young people
- Young women
- Young parents
- Refugee and migrant young people
- Young people with mental health issues

- Young people involved with the juvenile justice system.

Produced by YAPA & the Nepean Access Project Reference Group for the Nepean Better Futures Strategy.

How to get it

A limited number of hard copies have already been distributed. Opening the Doors is now only available online, as a set of web pages and as downloadable PDFs: www.yapa.org.au/openingdoors



Opportunities

Youth Change Makers

If you are a young person involved in local issues, events or campaigns, have a great idea and want to make things happen but might not have the money or resources, there is funding available for 'Youth Change Makers'.

This is a new grant round that responds to the need of young

people who are advocates for change in their communities. It will support individuals and small groups of young people who have identified an issue in their communities and have developed an advocacy response which aims to take action and create a positive impact and/or change in relation to that issue.

Youth Change Makers grants will support initiatives up to \$10,000 per applicant group. There will be two grant rounds in 2007.

Applications close end of April. The Foundation for Young Australians.

www.youngaustralians.org/fund/ya_fund_youth_change_makers.asp

ViVa Leichhardt! Short Film Festival

The inaugural ViVa Leichhardt! Short Film Festival is to encourage creativity and expression through the media of film. Any genre is acceptable and the theme for the festival is I Love Little Italy. There is a youth category for

filmmakers under 25, with 1st prize of \$2000 and a special prize will also be awarded to best filmmaker under 18. Entries close Friday 25 May 2007. Films will be screened on Sunday 10 June from 6pm at Martini Bar, 99

Norton St, Leichhardt. There will be industry speakers, special guest judges and DJs. www.coasit.org.au or call 02 9564 0744 and speak to Nino Lo Giudice, Youth and Family Worker.

Launch Pad - Partnership Grants with Young People and Organisations

Launch Pad Grants is a two-stage grant to support community development initiatives designed and delivered locally by young people based on a partnership model. Young people will work with a local community organisation to

identify and prioritise local youth needs and develop an innovative and responsive initiative.

The aim of Launch Pad Grants is for young people and organisations to work together to implement a creative idea that

results in meaningful change with young people aged 12-25 years. Applications close 4 June 2007. www.youngaustralians.org or call 03 9670 5436



Youth Participation Grants Project

YAPA's Youth Participation Grants Project gives young people the power and resources to develop and implement community activities in their local area. You can apply if you are aged 12 - 25 years, and living in:

- South Western Sydney
 - Mid North Coast
 - Far North Coast
 - New England
- (see website for exact regions).

Ideas for projects


- sporting events
- websites
- music workshops
- youth forums
- discos
- local radio programs
- film making
- competitions
- recreational programs
- outings
- school based projects
- festivals
- community days
- movie nights
- break dance competitions
- artist exhibitions
- setting up a music studio
- band nights

- drama performances
- publications

Make us an offer, and we'll consider it.

There are 4 levels of grants on offer:

1. \$200 - \$500
2. \$500 - \$1000
3. \$1000 - \$1500
4. \$1500 - \$2500

See more details at www.yapa.org.au/ypp or contact Lam HUYNH, YAPA, phone ext. 6, (02) 9319 1100 or (toll free) 1800 627 323, ypp@yapa.org.au 

Youth activists: Are you surrounded by apathetic young people?

And what effect does this have on what you want to do?

At the YAPA youth conference

in Katoomba last October, Peta Waller-Bryant interviewed other young people on this topic. Listen to her mp3 interview (and read some

other great stuff about whether young people are apathetic) at: www.yapa.org.au/youth/topics/genwhy.php 

Tenants' Rights Manual - NSW

A practical guide to renting, 3rd edition. Who pays for what repairs? When does a rent increase become unfair? When can a tenant be evicted? What are the proper procedures? Where can tenants go when they have a problem?

The Tenants' Rights Manual has the answers to these and many


other questions. Practical and easy to use, it clearly explains what rights tenants have, and shows how problems and disputes can be solved before they become major hassles.

This new edition has been completely revised and updated and includes 32 sample letters that get results.

- A new chapter on social housing with information about the latest changes to the Department of

Housing.

- A new chapter on residential parks with the latest changes to legislation
- A new chapter about the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal.

The Manual is a must for tenants and people who assist in any aspect of tenancy matters. The Federation Press info@federationpress.com.au (02) 9552 2200 www.federationpress.com.au 



What's On

May 2007

Strengths Based Training

UnitingCare Burnside provides a range of workshops that explore the use of the strength's perspective:

- strengths based practice in organisations & management - 8 May
 - young people as experts of their own lives - 9 May
 - advanced strengths based supervision skills - 10 May
 - strengths based groupwork - 11 May

Contact: www.burnside.org.au/organisation/page.cfm?id=35

10 May 2007, Sydney

Advanced Media Skills Training

Public Interest Advocacy Centre 02 8898 6500 cgrenville@piac.asn.au or www.piac.asn.au

22 May, 24 August, 27 November 2007, Surry Hills/Redfern

LGCSA: Local Government Community Services Association

All council youth development officers & youth workers welcome. Charlie Coorey, Marrickville Council, woyth@marrickville.nsw.gov.au (02) 9335 2158

31 May 2007, Greystanes

Launch of SPEAK OUT

Young people against bullying DVD and Workshop Guide Resource aims to explore the issues of bullying and focuses on one specific strategy to overcome bullying, that is, positive peer influence.

Contact: Jennifer Bulley on 02 9840 9939 or jennifer.bulley@holroyd.nsw.gov.au

May-September 2007, Ashfield

Sexual & Reproductive Health Courses for Youth Workers

Negotiating Consent, Talking Sexual Health, That's So Gay, Adolescent Development & Sexuality, Birds & Bees, Beyond the Nuts and Bolts, Same Difference Panel Speaker Training for Same Sex Attracted Young People.

Family Planning NSW - 02 8752 4349 education@fpahealth.org.au or www.fpahealth.org.au

17-24 June 2007

Refugee Week 2007

Theme: The Voices of Young Refugees. Opportunities for creating awareness of local, national and international issues affecting refugees.

Refugee Council of Australia info@refugeecouncil.org.au 02 9211 9333 www.refugeecouncil.org.au



20-21 June 2007, Parramatta
Survival Guide for New Youth Workers

2 day YAPA training program for anyone who has been employed as a youth worker for less than 6 months or who wants to update their skills.

www.yapa.org.au/yapa/events
or Joanne on ext. 3 (02) 9319 1100 or 1800 627 323 info@yapa.org.au

25 & 26 June 2007

18th Annual RYDON Conference - "Engaging Young People"

RYDON (Regional Youth Development Officers Network) is a network of youth development officers from the Hunter, Central Coast and the Great Lakes regions.

Contact: Lisa Ronneberg on Lronneberg@samaritans.org.au
or (02) 4934 2202, 0407 891 650

27 June 2007, Marrickville
Fines and Young People

An overview of the fines system: State Debt Recovery Office; how to challenge fines; what to do if you can't pay; how to give information to your clients about fines; referrals; your questions.

Marrickville Legal Centre \$10. (02) 9559 2899

20 July 2007, Parramatta

Adolescent and Young People's Health Research Forum

Promoting research into the health and well being of adolescents and young people aged 10-24 years. For health professionals, nurses, doctors, and allied health staff, youth and community workers, academics, students and others.

UWS, N-FORCE research group. Michel Stewart (02) 9685 9080 Tues/Thurs

19-21 September 2007, Sydney
YAPA NSW Youth Work Conference

www.yapa.org.au/conf

There is a lot more what's on at www.yapa.org.au. To submit your own event for what's on, email the details in one paragraph in the body of the email (no attachments) to info@yapa.org.au with the subject line: whats on.



NSW Youth Work Conference Sydney CBD

19, 20 & 21 September 2007

After a very successful youth conference in 2006, it is now time to get ready for YAPA's 2007 NSW Youth Work Conference.

Taking place every second year since 1991, it is not only of great benefit to youth workers, but to anyone who works with young people. The conference provides an excellent opportunity for workers to update their knowledge of youth issues, learn new ways to improve their service delivery as well as providing the chance to network with other people. The conference performs the valuable role of strengthening the youth sector and increasing the capacity of workers to achieve real outcomes for young people.

The conference will involve

workers from across the state of NSW. Taking in rural, regional and metropolitan issues, the conference will reflect the real diversity of the youth sector. The conference will consist of presentations, workshops and forums on a range of topics and themes. For example:

- youth employment and training
- policy and research
- youth participation
- advocacy and rights
- health, including mental health
- indigenous, migrant and refugee young people.

Given that the crucial roles of a youth worker are varied, the conference will aim to focus on many areas and cater for youth workers from beginner to more advanced levels.

YAPA aims to ensure that the conference reflects the genuine needs of the youth sector, so youth workers can have input into the planning of the conference. There will also be a steering committee to guide the planning process to ensure the conference is responsive to the sector and the variety of youth workers.

For information regarding the survey of youth workers, the steering committee, as well as Expressions of Interest to present at the conference, please see the insert in this month's YAPRap. For any questions about the conference, please call John Ferguson on ext 5, (02) 9319 1100 or 1800 627 323 or policy@yapa.org.au. 