

YAPRap

Newsletter of the Youth Action and Policy Association NSW Inc

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Music takes another trip down the scapegoat road

Emily Dunn

As night fell at the Sydney Big Day Out, a black parade of mostly thin, androgynous looking teenagers streamed into the main stage arena. From afar, in their shrunken jeans, inky hair hanging low over their black-smudged eyes, they appeared a fearsome lot. When questioned, most were softly spoken.

Then, out of the darkness, My Chemical Romance began to

play and the teenagers erupted in rapturous excitement, not one wrist-slasher among them, not one theatrical swoon.

Sometimes it is too easy to blame the music. With news of the deaths of Melbourne teenagers Jodie Gater and Stephanie Gestier, the menace and melodrama of "emo" subculture became the latest target.

Emo, text-speak for "emotional", has been around since the 1980s but only recently surfaced in the mainstream media via the commercial success of bands such

as Dashboard Confessional, New Jersey's My Chemical Romance and the suburban proliferation of the music's mostly juvenile followers, characterised by black clothing, asymmetric haircuts and a melancholy air.

The music blends goth and punk influences but it is songs such as Dashboard Confessional's If You Can't Leave it Be, Might as Well Make it Bleed that have raised the ire of commentators quick to link the music to acts of self-mutilation and suicide.

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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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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

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Music takes another trip down the scapegoat road

(continued from previous page)

Hunched and depressed, emos are not the first rock'n'rollers to cop the blame for youth malaise and bad posture.

From Black Sabbath to goth-rocker Marilyn Manson and the disaffected pin-up boy Kurt Cobain, the dramatic lyrics and costumes of the dark music genres have always been a more tangible enemy than the behavioural and mental health problems that contribute to a young person's decision to stop living.

Music has been blamed for inciting suicide, murders and massacres.

The teenagers responsible for the Columbine High School massacre listened to Marilyn Manson; in 1995 the Australian band Silverchair, then teenagers, were accused of inciting a 16-year-old Washington boy to kill his family.

In 1990 court claims were made that subliminal messages on an album by the British metal band Judas Priest led two youths, in 1985, to shoot themselves. One died at the time, the other died three years later. The case, which failed, was brought by their parents.

After the Virginia Tech tragedy in the US last week, an article in the Miami Herald criticised My Chemical Romance - who openly shun the emo tag - as "wallowing in gore and death" and "offering a timely window into the damaged psyche of today's troubled youth".

Forty years earlier the Beatles were cited as influencing Charles Manson's killing spree.

There has been little research into emo - no doubt it is not long off - but a 1999 study claimed heavy metal fans were twice as likely to have suicidal thoughts than non-fans. Last year researchers aligned followers of goth music and culture - also characterised by black clothes and pale skin - with a higher rate of self-harm and suicide.

But suicide is not limited to those who wear black eyeliner and prefer their music played in darkened rooms. Even cowboys get the blues.

US researchers claimed the amount of airtime devoted to country music boosted the suicide rate of urban-dwelling white Americans. The same researchers also proposed the love-gone-wrong themes in blues music could attract people who were suicidal.

As anyone who's listened to the lyrics of Leonard Cohen, the Smiths, the Cure, Billy Holiday or the 1930s "grandfather of rock'n'roll" Robert Johnson - blues folklore says he sold his soul to the devil in exchange for guitar mastery - knows, sad songs are often the most cathartic.

The same goes for violent riffs. A 1993 study showed heavy metal inspired happy feelings in most fans, with the small number of those who reported feeling worse



more likely to already be suffering mental health problems.

Australian researchers found rates of suicide among those aged 15 to 24 fell in the month following Kurt Cobain's death.

For many young people, music - however dark in hue - provides a tribe. Like Manson and Alice Cooper, the new breed of macabre bands such as My Chemical Romance have an irresistible

element of fantasy and pantomime. By adopting the uniform and posturing of their favourite bands fans build an identity. What could be more life-affirming than that?

[Reproduced with permission from Sydney Morning Herald April 26, 2007]



Labor commits to Australia's youth

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

Today I announced a series of commitments to increase the number and influence of youth on policy under a Rudd Labor Government.

Young Australians will be given a formal, funded mechanism to advise a new Labor Government on how policies affect them which will be independent, more representative and have a broader role than current youth advisory bodies.

This mechanism will be called the Australian Youth Forum, and will bring together young people and advocates to discuss problems affecting youth, and how the federal government can be part of a solution.

There are a lot of topics that youth have important knowledge

and views about, from containing the spread of drugs such as 'ice' to improving the quality of education: knowledge that is currently wasted on the Howard Government.

The Australian Youth Forum will be a formal communication channel between outstanding youth representatives and service-providers and the Federal Government.

Another key to this improved communication will be the appointment of a Youth Minister.

Over the last ten years, the Howard Government has:

- abolished the National Indigenous Youth Leadership Group;
- de-funded the Australian Youth Policy and Action Coalition;
- replaced a genuine lobbying

body with a hand-picked round table – then halved the size of that round table;

- abolished the position of Youth Minister;
- abolished universal student unionism; and
- disenfranchised 18 year olds who are not enrolled to vote.

Labor will redress the downgrading of young people as citizens and contributors to our country.

We will restore the position of Youth Minister, repeal the electoral laws which if in existence at the last election would have denied up to 160 000 young people their vote, and take seriously the views and interests of youth in policy.

[Media release 3 May 2007]



Youth Participation Grants Round 1 recipients

Congratulations to these projects which received grants in Round 1:

“RIFF MUSIC PROGRAM” - Byron Bay

A group of young 12 – 18 year old musicians from Byron Bay will use the grant to pay for workshops in performance, managing anxiety, microphone technique & sound engineering, and music equipment (microphones, stands, and cables).
YPP Grant Awarded: \$1,650

“SKATERS FESTIVAL, Nambucca Valley Skaters Competition” – Nambucca Heads

A one day skate competition held during Youth Week. Events on the day will include DJs and hip hop performance, skate comp, skating demos and skating workshops. The event organisers are hoping to show the general community that young people can be organised and responsible.

YPP Grant Awarded: \$2,000

“MISSABOTTI MOVIES” - Missabotti

A group of young people in a remote community will use their grants to purchase a digital camera and projector for their local community hall so that young people can produce and watch movies.

YPP Grant Awarded: \$2,000

“4 DAY SURVIVOR CAMP” - Claymore

An outdoor activity camp aiming to build self esteem, positive relationships of 10 young women living in the Claymore housing estate. Group sessions with a counsellor will take place during the camp.

YPP Grant Awarded: \$2,000

“YOUNG SHORTIES” - Narellan

A short-works performance festival for local and emerging writers and actors from the Campbelltown area. Local young writers will get chance to see their stories performed live on stage.

YPP Grant Awarded: \$1,240


“NUTRITION KITCHEN” - Camden

An educational 6 hour program for disadvantaged 12-16 year olds to learn about healthy eating and to develop skills in preparing nutritious meals.

YPP Grant Awarded: \$821

MOREE SUPERSTAR - Moree

This is the showcase Youth Week event for Moree. This project is a singing competition organised by Moree Plains Youth Council and will consist of auditions prior to a Grand Final gala night held in Youth Week.

YPP Grant Awarded: \$1,500 

More information

YAPA's Youth Participation Grants project operates in:

- South Western Sydney
- Mid North Coast
- Far North Coast
- New England.

More details at www.yapa.org.au/ypp



NSW Crime Statistics 2006

Figures released today by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research show that, apart from a 4.3 per cent increase in malicious damage to property, the major categories of crime across NSW either fell or remained stable over the 24 months to December 2006.

all trend tests showing either stable or falling crime in each of the 17 major categories. There were a few areas, however, where the regional pattern bucked the trend for the State as a whole.

The most notable of these were substantial increases in robbery without a weapon in Central Western Sydney (up 25.1 per cent), Blacktown (up 22.0 per cent) and Lower Northern Sydney (up 27.9

Commenting on the figures, Dr Don Weatherburn said that the six-year decline in property crime that began around Christmas 2000 had now begun to level off, with more categories of crime becoming stable and fewer showing substantial declines.

“The picture for violent crime, particularly assault, is quite different. After substantial increases in the recorded rate of assault between

“After substantial increases in the recorded rate of assault between 1995 and 2002, violent crimes had levelled off and over the last five years begun to show some slight signs of decline.”

Over the 24 months to December 2006, the recorded incidence of:

- Break and enter (dwelling) fell by 4.1 per cent
- Break and enter (non-dwelling) fell by 2.4 per cent
- Motor vehicle theft fell by 3.0 per cent
- Steal from person fell by 6.8 per cent.


The remaining 12 major categories of crime (murder, domestic assault, non-domestic assault, sexual assault, indecent assault, robbery without a weapon, robbery with a firearm, robbery with a weapon other than a firearm, steal from motor vehicle, steal from retail store, steal from a dwelling and fraud) remained stable.

The regional picture generally mirrored the State picture across the 154 LGAs, with 94.4 per cent of

per cent). Central Western Sydney also experienced an increase in robbery with a weapon other than a firearm (up 23.4 per cent). In addition to the increase in robbery, Blacktown experienced increases in stealing from a motor vehicle (up 23.2 per cent) and fraud (up 43.5 per cent).

The most notable State-wide changes outside the Bureau's 17 major categories were a substantial decline in recorded incidents of use/possession of heroin and significant increases in use/possession offences involving ecstasy, amphetamines and cocaine, betting and gaming offences and breach bail. The Director of the Bureau, Dr Don Weatherburn cautioned that these trends could reflect changing law enforcement activity rather than changing crime.

1995 and 2002, violent crimes had levelled off and over the last five years begun to show some slight signs of decline.”

[Media Release: 18 April 2007] 

More information

www.bocsar.nsw.gov.au:

- New South Wales Recorded Crime Statistics 2006 (PDF, 865 KB)
- New South Wales Recorded Crime Statistics 2006, regional analysis of crime trends (PDF, 661 KB)
- Find the crime statistics you need using new online interactive data tools. Compare crime in your Local Government Area with other LGAs.



Are we there yet?

Lam Huynh & Rey Reodica, YAPA

The eagerly anticipated first National Youth Affairs Conference to occur in 10 years took place in Melbourne on May 1 - 3, 2007. Organised and hosted by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, its theme was Are We There Yet? Participants reflected on the nature of youth work, how far the youth sector has come, and explored future issues which still need to be addressed.

Four YAPA staff attended and the conference turned out to be a major success. It brought together a diverse range of young people, workers with young people, community workers, policy makers, academics and researchers from all over Australia and around the world.

The conference provided an long overdue opportunity for delegates to discuss ideas, test theories, have conversations, agree and disagree, make connections, share best practice and, most importantly, be energised and inspired in their work with young people and youth affairs.

The overwhelming consensus that emerged from the conference was that it had been way too long between national conferences, and that at the very least, biennial national conferences were needed

in order to sufficiently facilitate continuity in the dialogue and debate concerning youth issues.

Another predominant issue to arise out of the discussions was the need for the reinstatement of some form of national youth peak. The consensus amongst delegates was that since the de-funding the Australian Youth Policy and Action Coalition in 1998, young people have been left without a consistent and independent national voice in governmental decision-making processes.

In their feedback to all the youth workers in attendance, young people expressed an enthusiastic desire to participate and collaborate with the youth work sector so that they could develop the skills necessary to make meaningful contributions to campaigns and initiatives relating to youth issues.

Conference plenaries

There was some hot discussion throughout the conference plenary sessions, where conference attendees looked at specific issues that have an impact on young people around the nation. Particularly heated discussion surrounded the ways in which mainstream youth organisations best deal with indigenous young people and whether some form

of Code of Ethics is appropriate for youth services.

The plenaries provided a great deal of evidence of the diversity of young people and youth service providers around Australia, and the importance of creating a space for the different views and issues to be discussed openly and with the aim of working together to further the interests of our nation's young people.

Conference workshops

The conference was packed full of opportunities to learn about different programs and issues that relate to young people and the youth sector, from national youth agendas and the need for a national body focussing on youth affairs, to fun circus skills and hip hop workshops.

Workshops catered to the professional development needs of youth workers, but also had some fun activities for those who were inclined to take part.

Here are some snapshots from workshops YAPA staff attended:

- The findings of the Youth Electoral Study were presented and provided an insight into the structural barriers that many young people face in exercising their democratic rights at the polling booths.
- St. John Ambulance presented




on the ways in which young people within the organisation have been driving a shift towards youth participation at all decision-making levels. The account highlighted the challenges and successes of this task, all within what has traditionally been a highly conservative organisational structure.

- The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth presented their draft for a national youth agenda, highlighting the specific areas

of need and concern for young people across the country. The draft agenda is an evolving document and is still open for interested young people, youth services and others to get involved in its formation.

- Sydney University lecturer Ariadne Vromen presented an account of three different ways in which groups of young people have used online communities to have an impact upon Australian politics, using the internet for discussion, collaboration and action.

All in all, it was a fantastic forum and great opportunity to connect, reflect and share ideas about youth work and its many manifestations. Let's hope it's not another decade before another such opportunity occurs. Many thanks to the fabulous team at YACVic and all those involved in the organising the event.

Conference proceedings are expected to be published in July 2007. For more information, go to www.yacvic.org.au. 

Youth homelessness

Federal Budget refunds Reconnect

The Government will continue to fund Reconnect at a cost of \$21 million per year. Reconnect aims to reconcile adolescents who are homeless, or at risk of becoming so, with their families, schools or workplaces. Since 1999 it has helped 85,000 people.

Homeless left out in the cold

- The State Government has no clear picture of the extent of homelessness in NSW and no definite targets to deal with the problem...

- Leadership needed from the Premier on a homelessness strategy...
- Audit Office report: Responding to Homelessness


For links to the full articles, go to www.yapa.org.au and scroll down to Youth News.

Enquiry

The National Youth Commission [NYC] inquiry is the first independent inquiry into youth homelessness since the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission [HREOC] inquiry completed by Commissioner Brian Burdekin in 1989.

With some 33,000 homeless young people in Australia without

a safe place to call home each night, the current inquiry is examining why youth homelessness continues to be a major problem in Australia. It will gather evidence on the issue of youth homelessness and seek input from all stakeholders including service providers, government agencies, community organizations and homeless young people.

The inquiry is underway with first round hearings already held in Hobart, Townsville, Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra, Darwin, Geelong, Warrnambool and Wagga Wagga. If you missed the hearings, you can still participate by sending in a written submission (closing date: 15 June 2007) or by doing an online submission at: www.nyc.net.au. 



North Richmond Rock Chicks

Brandon-Leith Bear



North Richmond Youth Centre has been allowing up and coming bands to get off the ground with their monthly band nights for a long time now. However, the young people organizing the event found it hard to get bands off the ground, when they didn't even have a stage for the band to play on.

Bands were happy to play of course, in North Richmond they love having an audience, however several young people thought it simply wasn't good enough. And from that thought grew what has blossomed into Rock Across The River.

Rock Across The River is set to be a one day music festival on 2 June, with a youth focus combined with a family festival attitude. The whole day is aimed at making money for a new stage for the bands from now on, so it's music for music's sake, and also to give the local people something to do,

and local bands an audience to play for with a big name act.

I met up with a few of the girls on the steering committee for the event and was amazed at how this had all come together. From their description it seemed to have grown almost unassisted out of a tiny idea. Apparently a few girls got a spark of inspiration, and ran with it, then some other people came on board. Then some people got off board and it just happened. It took a bit of talking to coax the harder stuff out of them, but once they got started it was hard to stop them.

According to the girls, their area isn't the most youth friendly place to live. One young woman even told me that kids from the area go other places because they are so isolated. The name of their event reflects her concerns. Rock Across The River is an invitation for young people to cross the river for some great live music. Pamphlets and fliers are being distributed as far as the Hills District and the Blue Mountains, thanks to the dedication of all the girls (and let us not forget the hard working male) who have been working hard on this project. One of the young women involved, Brittini, is a local musician

herself and understands that young people in the Hawkesbury area don't often have a lot of opportunity to have their music held. She loves the fact that North Richmond had the monthly band nights, but thought this event was really taking local youth music in the area to the next level.

The girls explained to me that it had been hard but fun working with this group of people, one of them told me that they would not take a project like this on again unless at least one of the same people was there as well. Perhaps it might be easier to do another time, the girls are involved in full time work or study, in fact Brittini is in her HSC year this year. The dedication and camaraderie between the girls made the whole process seem more fun. I wondered why there weren't more boys on their committee, and was about to be disappointed in the male community of North Richmond, but the girls put my fears to rest, telling me that the boys were working hard performing on the day and networking to get bands like the big name Bagster to perform on the day. I felt satisfied knowing the boys were in fact working hard. The one boy I did meet, Anthony,



was drawn in by an article in the local paper about the event, which just goes to show the positive power of your local paper. In fact local sources got most of the committee involved. People brought friends or sisters along to a meeting and if they liked what they were doing they would stay and help. Seems easy enough, if you have friends willing to share your cause then get them on board. It certainly worked for this group, who seem to have had their membership confirmed by the time I got to see one of their meetings.

What I saw of their meeting, where I learned most of what was going on, made the whole event look easy. And as the girls and women explained to me, it has been. Under the supervision of North Richmond's Youth Development Officer, Michelle, the team has come up with some truly ingenious ideas. Michelle says that once everything was structured it became very easy, though the young women tend to think she did a lot more than that, attributing a lot of their funding success to Michelle's "snazzy words" and flair for letter writing. On further research I found that they received an initial funding

grant from Indent (see below), after sending a great package of promotional items for their already existing band night. After that, it was up to hard work and community support. Rachel, the youngest member of the dynamic group, aged only sixteen,

pointed out to me "If you have a good team willing to put in the effort, you can achieve anything." I quickly learnt that a good team is great, but a connected team is better. Every single girl in the group (Michelle included) knew someone, or knew someone who

knew someone who could help. I thought about that for a while and realized that it wasn't just some mafia-like connection circle North Richmond has, but in any group of young people putting on an event you would be able to find connections, and these girls were not afraid to use them.



Rachel, Brittni, Mel, Meg, Loralie

put together a very enticing sponsorship kit which went out to local business, with a fair bit of money coming in from that. The other members of the group saw her extreme dedication to the event as a clear reason why publicity and sponsorship had happened. Of course, a lot of the money came from hard work in the community. On Election Day this year the young people were at the voting booth hard at work selling sausages and raffle tickets.

Of course it hasn't all been sunshine and lollipops for the group, but as one of the girls, Mel,

Nor were they afraid to think slightly to the side, a quality that can make a hard situation much easier. The creative juices in the room were flowing at full speed when they showed me the tickets for the event. Beautiful glossy design and full colour tickets like these would usually cost a lot of money, but apparently had not. A local business had donated to them 2000 free prints for digital photos. Wondering what they would do with 2000 prints other than raffle them off, the thought ran to the back of their minds. Until someone had a light bulb moment

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North Richmond Rock Chicks

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to turn the ticket into a digital file and print them off with their free prints. Of course they didn't need 2000 prints, so still have some left to raffle off. Both Michelle and I were highly impressed by that stroke of genius and decided that was something only a group of young people would come up with.

The girls also have the advantage of being in touch with the young folk using the right medium. Local newspapers, posters around the

retentive youth worker" but the girls seem to appreciate knowing where everything is. According to Loralie, the only thing they would change if they did it again would be being more organized from the very beginning, though as I left the meeting I felt confident that this would be a great event, with clever, creative ideas and strong ties with the community making it all the better. The girls have been praised by the community but they have done what any

More information

Rock Across The River

2 June 2007

11am - 6pm

North Richmond
Community Centre
a drug and alcohol free
event

More details: www.myspace.com/northoentertainment


“I asked the girls to give me one piece of advice for any other young people starting something up, and told me that the most important thing was “to get your friends on board”

community and of course, the website for the world, MySpace, are all being used. The team has constructed a beautiful MySpace (see below), which has blossomed to a fuller friends list than mine could ever hope for. Local businesses approached for sponsorship also got a brief lesson in what MySpace was as well, making sponsorship seem even more worthwhile.

So now Rock Across The River is less than a month away, and the girls seem confident, with a quiet air of hope and panic underlying. Michelle and the girls refer constantly to their large, super-organized A4 folder filled with quotes and statements, phone numbers and emails, sketches of car parks and pictures of bands. Michelle calls herself “an anal

other group of young people can achieve. Though at times they had to push themselves to continue, and lean on their support person for an inflation of morale they have put together something truly remarkable.

I asked the girls to give me one piece of advice for any other young people starting something up, and told me that the most important thing was “to get your friends on board”. Apparently many hands make light work, and on 2 June, in North Richmond, many bands will make the night work.

Well here's hoping. Good luck. Not that you need it. 

The project

For more background information on the project development, please contact North Richmond Community Centre - Youth Development Officer, Michelle Tibbets on (02) 4571 3659

Indent

Indent distributes over \$100,000 in grants each year to help young people set up and run drug and alcohol free events. www.indent.net.au



Tightrope walking in the twilight zone

Ethics in youth work: A monthly column

Nick Manning, YAPA Communications Officer



June dilemma: Come and work for me?

You are on 12 months parental leave and have several jobs around the home that could be done by a young person such as weeding, babysitting and housework. There were several young people from the program that you previously ran (who will not be clients when you return to work), who are desperate to get their first job (and the good reference that would hopefully come with it). You want to offer one or more of these young people a few hours work on a regular basis over a few months, just to help you get on top of things at home.

What do you do?

How to use these 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 to illustrate situations in your agency's orientation or training manual

Go to www.yapa.org.au/youthwork/ethics and click on blog.

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: 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 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?

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Tightrope walking in the twilight zone

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Here are the responses we received on the blog:

Anonymous said...

Give her a cigarette and then go to the pharmacy and get yourself some patches. Very hard to be self righteous if you very obviously have cigarettes yourself.

Anonymous said...

Every now and again, a scenario comes along that can make professional and personal rules no longer seem so important and this could be one of them. I am a smoker who has always had a personal rule of not giving cigarettes to clients, regardless of whether they're over 18 or not. In this instance though, I may well be tempted to place the packet on the bench and if she happened to pick them up and take one, well so be it. I think I'd be asking myself whether it is more important in that instance to keep her engaged and talking or to implement a rule she'd learn nothing from under that particular circumstance? Who knows?

Anonymous said...

I would give her the cigarette and have no regrets or doubts about it!!!

crim said...

I would give her the cigarette. We are in this industry to help these vulnerable young people. I would proudly stand before a court of law and say "yes your honour, I did give this client a cigarette. As a social worker I made a professional decision that I would connect with this young person and help them through this horrific moment of their life."

YAPA said...

A note on the law in NSW: It is an offence to sell cigarettes to, or buy cigarettes for, an under 18 year old (NSW Public Health Act). It is not clear if buying your own cigarettes, then giving one of them to an under 18, would be judged to be buying for an under 18. The law is aimed at retailers and they are sometimes prosecuted. I believe that a case against a youth worker is unlikely. More information in YAPA's fact sheet at www.yapa.org.au/youthwork/facts/ok/drug.php.

I think, rather than focussing on the (unclear) legalities, it is more useful to explore the ethics of this situation. So more comments please!

- Nick Manning, YAPA

Anonymous said...

Give her the bloody cigarette.... jeeze!

Anonymous said...

I work in youth health, but have been a youth worker since the late 80s and this issue just doesn't go away.

I don't think we should ever give tobacco to our clients. And by being more conscious of the role that we have might eliminate problems like 'having the packet of cigs visibly in my pocket', because we would be conscious of not having them visible when we were with our clients.

Nicotine remains this country's biggest drug killer, and I believe a youth worker's role is very much to provide healthy and safe options and alternatives to the young people we work with.

If we, as workers, were addicted to other drugs, say alcohol, marijuana or cocaine, I'm sure we wouldn't even begin to condone those drugs being offered to a client (regardless of age), and we also would expect that a) those drugs weren't used in the workplace or during work time; and b) that if our addiction did lead us to bring that drug to work, that we would keep it well hidden, and not permit our clients to witness its use.



I endorse the comments of someone else, that if we as workers have addictions, then addressing these for ourselves is an important first step in keeping ourselves healthy and providing a safe and healthy environment and modelling for the young people who meet us in our youth work roles.

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.


April dilemma revisited: 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?

Since last month's edition we had another comment on this dilemma, from Julie-Anne of SSYS:

My ideas around this dilemma are more general than specific to the problem. I do agree with

previous posts. Something that may be helpful to incorporate into youth work practice when beginning the therapeutic youth work relationship is that we speak with the young person about the therapeutic relationship. What it is and what it is not. (This would be informed by our organisation's Code of Ethics and our own professional ethics). For example, young people can be asked what they would like to see happen if they 'bump' into you (their youthworker) outside of the workplace. This is especially important in regional areas because it is likely to happen and issues of confidentiality are very important. It may be beneficial to the important relationship youth workers have with young people to find names for this relationship in collaboration with the young person so that all is out on the table. Assisting young people to see that the relationship is friendly and professional with certain negotiated boundaries can result in solid understandings for both the youth worker and the young person. This will create safety and sustain us in the work. Once I was at a large shopping centre and came out of the cubicle of the toilet into the area where the basins are. A young person who I had been working with (as a sexual assault counsellor) was waiting to go in - she started screaming and screaming when she saw me, like

in fright. I needed to think quickly about what to do - eventually she calmed down, it was like two of her worlds collided and 'freaked her out'. 

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. 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.



Federal Budget

Luke Bo'sher, Policy Officer, Youth Coalition of the ACT

Summary

The Federal Government presented the 2007-2008 budget in early May. This budget is, in many ways, similar to previous budgets for young people in Australia. It has a strong focus on education and training, and - in regards to Centrelink - has a focus on compliance and fraud protection. It is positive to see Youth Allowance extended to Masters (coursework) students and Rent Assistance to Austudy recipients. Similarly, it is pleasing to see a range of measures targeted at indigenous young people to provide them with support to access education, employment and health care.

The education measures in this budget are significant - particularly in the areas of higher education. The changes are mixed, with increasing capital investment for universities coupled with increased HECS-HELP fees for those studying Economics, Commerce and Accounting.

Importantly, there is no funding for the community sector to increase its skills and to provide better services for young people. The government has continued to fund:

- Reconnect (\$85 million over 4 years)
- SAAP: Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (\$932 million over 5 years)
- the Australian Division of General Practice (\$80m in 2008-09)
- the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Young People (\$4.2m over 2 years)

and significant investments for professional development for teachers, but has failed to invest in a national peak body for young people.

Finally, there is very little money for important areas such as mental health and housing which continue to have significant detrimental impacts on young people. Centrelink payments continue to be inadequate for young people to live on and training wages and youth wages are also inadequate for young people to achieve independence.

Below are some of the budget items affecting young people. (This material is quoted directly from government documents).

Some budget items affecting young people

Australian Defense Force

- \$100 million. Expanding the number of cadets and cadet units and improving their experience through a youth development programme conducted in a military environment
- \$71 million for identifying potential students for direct entry into ADF technical trade training and sponsoring younger students to commence technical trade training before ADF entry.

Just what is the "Federal Budget"?

The Federal Government is the Australian or Commonwealth Government in Canberra, headed by Prime Minister John Howard. Each year it asks Federal Parliament to approve its plan for raising and spending money. That plan is called the "budget".

Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth — additional resourcing

\$4.2 million over two years will enable the ARACY to continue to pursue its core operations of encouraging collaboration in the development and application of research.

Combating illicit drugs — strengthening the Non-Government Organisation Treatment Grants Programme

\$79.5 million over four years to significantly increase the number of treatment places and increase the capacity services to provide assistance to families and youth. These services include therapies and detoxification management for those people fighting drug addiction along with specific youth-focused treatment services.



World Youth Day 2008 — support

\$3 million over two years & forgone revenue of \$3.2 million to manage the orderly entry and stay of the 135,000 international pilgrims expected to visit Australia for World Youth Day 2008. The Government will also waive the visa application charge for pilgrims coming to Australia to attend World Youth Day, resulting in revenue forgone.

Respite Support for Carers of Young People with Severe and Profound Disabilities — continuation and expansion of funding

\$29.8 million over 4 years to continue and to expand the Respite Support for Carers of Young People with Severe and Profound Disabilities programme. This includes additional funding of \$6 million above current funding levels to provide additional immediate and short-term respite places for carers of young people with a severe or profound disability, taking the total number of carers assisted from around 5,000 to around 6,000.

Skin cancer awareness campaign — continuation of funding

\$11.5 million over 2 years to extend the current National Skin Cancer Awareness campaign to particularly focus on teenagers and young adults.

Financial responsibilities of parenthood — development of an education resource

\$0.5 million for the development of an educational resource for high school students on the financial issues and responsibilities that arise from becoming a parent. To support students to better understand the financial costs associated with having a child and to provide them, as future possible parents, with the knowledge to effectively manage the Australian Government payments that may follow the birth of a child, including the Baby Bonus and Family Tax Benefit.

Health Care Card for ex-Carer Allowance (child) students aged 16-25 years

\$32.5 million over 4 years will allow students aged between 16 and 25 to retain a Health Care Card where their carer has been in receipt of Carer Allowance (prior to the student turning 16) at an estimated cost of \$19.3 million over four years. This measure will assist students who have a disability or medical condition and do not qualify for a Health Care Card under any other provisions.

Personal Support Programme — additional places

\$15.8 million over 4 years This will be used to expand the Personal Support Programme (PSP) by 2,000 places. The PSP provides individualised assistance for the unemployed who face multiple non-vocational barriers to participation such as homelessness, drug and alcohol problems, psychological disorders, or domestic violence. The PSP acts as a bridge between short-term crisis assistance and employment-related assistance.

Humanitarian settlement initiatives — increased per capita funding for English as a Second Language

\$127.8 million over four years to double the existing per capita rate to \$10,554 will support 12 months of intensive English language support for newly arrived humanitarian entrants in Australian schools.

Humanitarian settlement initiatives — Programme of Assistance for Survivors of Torture and Trauma — additional funding

\$12.2 million over 4 years Additional funding will be provided to expand the Programme of Assistance for the Survivors of Torture and Trauma to increase the capacity of specialised treatment services in Australia to meet the needs of humanitarian entrants. This will further improve access

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Federal Budget

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to medium- to long-term specialist counselling for an additional 1,800 survivors of torture and trauma annually.

Income/Student Support items in the budget

Extending Rent Assistance to Austudy recipients

\$86.9 million over 4 years. Rent Assistance will be extended to Austudy recipients assisting around 11,000 students aged over 25 years of age.

Extending income support to Masters students

\$43.3 million over 4 years will extend eligibility for Youth Allowance and Austudy to students undertaking approved Commonwealth-funded Masters by Coursework courses that are an entry requirement to a profession or are part of a restructure of existing course requirements.

Youth Allowance — participation requirements for payment eligibility

(Saving) \$1.6 million over 4 years. This will ensure that Youth Allowance (other) recipients with participation requirements are paid only from the date they apply as a job seeker and commence their engagement with a provider of Australian Government employment services.

A Better Future for Indigenous Australians — expanding employment pathways for Indigenous young people

\$32.8 million over four years:

- \$27.7 million will be provided to give 1,000 disadvantaged Indigenous students per year access to a one-off payment of \$4,000 on their commencement of an undergraduate course.
- \$3.0 million will be used to extend the Youth Allowance independence status to ABSTUDY recipients, extend ABSTUDY Incidentals Allowance to students undertaking enabling courses and extend Crisis and Bereavement payments to ABSTUDY recipients.

Fraud and compliance — consolidation and expansion of risk profile reviews for student payments

\$3.9 million (to save \$4.9 million with a net saving of \$1.1 million over 3 years). The Government will maintain the number of reviews for full-time students in receipt of Youth Allowance and Austudy at current levels while consolidating the risk profile review process. Risk profile reviews will also be introduced for ABSTUDY which will minimise the risk of student debt as a result of incorrect payments or non-compliance.

Fraud and compliance — improved reporting of changes in income of people receiving Centrelink payments

\$2.7 million (to save \$39.3 million with a net saving of \$36.6 million over three years). The Government will enhance the job placement information in Centrelink's systems to ensure Centrelink staff request updated reports of earnings from people who have recently been placed into employment by providers of employment services. This is expected to result in earlier reporting of changes in the income of people in receipt of Centrelink payments.

Some education items in the budget

A Better Future for Indigenous Australians — opportunities for education

\$177.4 million over 4 years including:

- \$69.1 million over four years will expand the Indigenous Youth Mobility Programme from 640 to 1,500 places and the Indigenous Youth Leadership Programme from 250 to 1,000 places over this period.



- \$65.3 million over three years. Supporting infrastructure works by existing non-government boarding schools in remote and regional areas. The funding for infrastructure will allow the repair and replacement of existing boarding school facilities and support new developments to accommodate more students.
- \$38.8 million over four years & 2.4 million over 2 years. FaCSIA will establish three new boarding hostels and expand two existing boarding hostels. Aboriginal Hostels Limited will operate two of the new boarding hostels.
- \$1.7 million over 3 years Will be provided to extend the YouthLinx and Reconnect programmes, administered by FaCSIA, allowing assistance and support to students of the new hostels.

Realising Our Potential — support for young Australian Apprentices in skill-shortage trades

\$342.5 million over 4 years This will be for first and second year Australian Apprentices under 30 years of age in skill-shortage trades to receive a tax exempt payment of \$1,000 per annum as a wage top-up. This will be paid in six-monthly installments of \$500 and will assist these Australian Apprentices to complete the first two years of their training. This measure will benefit around 228,000 apprentices over four years.

Realising Our Potential — increasing university funding

Higher Education Endowment Fund: \$5 billion investment with expenditure of \$304 million every year from 2008. The Government will establish a new, perpetual Higher Education Endowment Fund (HEEF) with an initial investment of \$5 billion funded from the 2006-07 surplus. The HEEF will be invested to earn income which will be distributed by the Minister for Education, Science and Training, after receiving advice from a panel of experts, to individual institutions for capital works and research facilities on an annual basis.

\$559.6 million over 4 years to increase Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding to the disciplines of Mathematics, Statistics, Allied Health, Engineering, Science, Surveying, Clinical Psychology, Education, Nursing, Social Studies, Behavioural Science, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science.

CGS funding for Accounting, Administration, Economics and Commerce will be adjusted downwards to match the Commonwealth contribution for Law reflecting the commercial nature of these courses. At the same time, Accounting, Administration, Economics and Commerce will also move into the same HECS-HELP band as Law, Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science. This will increase the maximum HECS-HELP contribution that students in Accounting, Administration, Economics and Commerce may make.

Realising Our Potential — allowing more responsive universities

\$223.2 million over four years. In order to ensure universities can respond appropriately to demands from students and the labour market in determining their course mix and place numbers, the Government will provide \$223.2 million over four years to relax the caps placed currently on university places. This will provide universities with full additional funding for over-enrolments of up to five per cent (up from the current one per cent) and will abolish existing over enrollment penalties.

The Government will remove all caps on the proportion of domestic full-fee paying places. Students obtaining a domestic full-fee place will continue to be eligible to receive a FEEHELP loan as per current arrangements. The Government will continue to require providers to deliver a specified number of Commonwealth-supported places in agreed disciplines such as nursing and medicine.

Realising Our Potential — Diversity and Structural Adjustment Fund

\$208.6 million over 4 years will be used to promote structural reform by universities to support greater specialisation, diversity and responsiveness to local labour market needs.

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Federal Budget

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Realising Our Potential — reducing red tape for universities

\$0.9 million over 2 years. The Government will work with the States and Territories to streamline regulatory and legislative requirements and reduce the reporting burden for universities.

Realising Our Potential — additional Commonwealth Learning Scholarships

\$91.4 million over 4 years to increase the number of Commonwealth Learning Scholarships (CLS) which the Government will provide to students from around 8,500 to 12,000 each year. Around 2,000 of these new scholarships will be extended to students from disadvantaged backgrounds for study towards Associate Degrees and will be issues by the Commonwealth.

Realising Our Potential — FEE-HELP for Diploma and Advanced Diploma VET Courses

\$14.5 over 4 years. The Government will extend FEE-HELP to full-fee paying students in Diploma and Advanced Diploma courses that are accredited as Vocational Education and Training (VET) qualifications, where significant credit towards a university degree is guaranteed and agreement with States and Territories is reached on mechanisms to ensure TAFE fees do not increase as a consequence.

Realising Our Potential — fast-track apprenticeships

The Government will provide \$58.5 million over four years to Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) to partner with industry and local employers to develop and implement fast-track apprenticeships with competency-based progression, so that apprentices can be trained more quickly and enter the workforce more quickly. RTOs will be able to apply for up to \$50,000 to work with industry partners to develop innovative on-the-job and off-the-job training that focuses on the acquisition of skills and competencies, rather than time served, with appropriate safeguards.

Realising Our Potential — Australian Technical Colleges

\$83.6 million over 5 years for the establishment and operation of a further three Australian Technical Colleges in the Brisbane, Sydney and Perth areas. This will take the total number of colleges to 28, accommodating up to 8,400 Year 11 and 12 students.

Realising Our Potential — national literacy and numeracy vouchers

\$457.4 million over 4 years will provide a \$700 tutorial voucher per child to parents whose children do not achieve current literacy or numeracy benchmarks in Years 3, 5 and 7.


Realising Our Potential — rewarding schools for improving literacy and numeracy outcomes

\$53.2 million over 4 years. Public and private schools that can demonstrate improvements in literacy and numeracy outcomes will be eligible to apply for rewards of up to \$50,000 per annum.

Realising Our Potential — national student aptitude test for tertiary admission

\$14.5 million over 3 years to trial the use of student aptitude tests by universities as a supplementary or alternative mechanism for assessing Year 12 students seeking entrance to a tertiary course.

Investing In Our Schools Programme — continuation

\$195.9 million over 2 years to undertake a fourth and final funding round of the Investing in Our Schools Programme. This final funding round will particularly target those schools which have not yet received a grant under the programme. 



Children in Detention Advocacy Project

The Children in Detention Advocacy Project is a joint initiative of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, the Public Interest Law Clearing House Inc, and Legal Aid NSW.

Do you have clients under 18 who tell you they have been:

- Wrongfully arrested or detained by police

- Picked up for breach of outdated bail conditions
- Arrested when they should have been issued with a Court Attendance Notice
- Transferred to an adult prison
- Injured while wrongfully detained

The Project provides free legal advice and representation to

media and meeting with the police, government and other relevant organisations.


We encourage you to contact us if you have a client or clients who may require the services of the Project, and to distribute information about the Project as widely as possible:

- for legal assistance please contact Alex Grosart, Legal Aid, (02) 9219 5830

“Where no legal action can be taken, the Project aims to improve the ‘system’ through research, lobbying, using the media and meeting with the police, government and other relevant organisations.”

- Wrongfully arrested or detained by private security guards or state transit officers
- Granted conditional bail but kept in custody because DoCS/DJJ couldn’t find accommodation
- Arrested on a warrant that’s been withdrawn

young people who may be able to sue for false arrest, unlawful detention, malicious prosecution and/or the use of excessive force by the police, state transit authorities and/or private security companies. Where no legal action can be taken, the Project aims to improve the ‘system’ through research, lobbying, using the

- for project information please contact Alexis Goodstone, PIAC, (02) 8898 6500. 



What's On

May-June 2007, Parramatta **Suicide**

UnitingCare Unifam Training & Education are offering this workshop to those working in community services. This workshop will equip you with both skills and knowledge for working directly with people who are suicidal. For more information or to speak with a consultant 02 8830 0777 or www.counselling-courses.com.au

13 June 2007, Redfern

Young worker safety: one size fits none?

Youthsafe free professional development forum to explore emerging research on the unique characteristics of young people that can increase their risk of workplace injury and what approaches 'best fit' when it comes to ensuring young worker safety. Presentations from leading practitioners and academics in the fields of developmental psychology, epidemiology, industrial relations, policy development and OHS.
www.youthsafe.org/pdf/forum_flyer_2007.pdf (PDF 500KB)

17-24 June 2007

Refugee Week 2007

Theme: The Voices of Young Refugees. Refugee Council of Australia info@refugeecouncil.org.au 02 9211 9333 www.refugeecouncil.org.au

25 & 26 June 2007, Hunter

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

10am-1pm. 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

13-14 July 2007, Randwick

Let's Talk About Sex: Young Women's Gathering on Sexual Reproductive Health

An opportunity for young women (and men) from across Australia to discuss and explore sexual and reproductive health issues. This gathering will encourage youth participation and community networking, generate new knowledge about rights-based approaches to sexual reproductive health, and foster a better understanding of current attitudes in young Australians. ywg@arha.org.au (02) 6282 8922 www.arha.org.au/ywg

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.

