

YAPRap

Newsletter of the Youth Action and Policy Association NSW Inc

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Youth not apathetic, just misunderstood

Eric Sidoti, Director, Whitlam Institute, UWS

Young Australians are a potent but often misunderstood political force - more likely to exercise their democratic voice by blogging or taking part in a protest rally, than enrolling to vote or joining a political party.

A research project of the Whitlam Institute called "Young People Imagining a New Democracy" is investigating how young people engage with the democratic process in Australia.

This review shows young Australians are anything but apathetic. They are strongly engaged with political issues and social causes such as the environment, poverty, health and an Australian republic.

However, they feel alienated and marginalised by old, formal, institutionalised politics. The review finds that for young people, there's been a generational shift in Australian politics. The research shows it's no longer about political loyalties, it's about political choice.

Young Australians are distrustful of politicians and they are not content to accept the hierarchies in traditional institutions of democracy. They prefer to engage in grassroots campaigns and cause-based activities, where they feel like they can make a difference.

The main observations from the review include:

- Young people will vote because they have to, but they do not see the efficacy of voting.
- High numbers of young people state they would not enrol or

vote all the time, if it were not compulsory.

- Issues such as lack of permanent housing impact on young peoples' electoral enrolment and participation.
- Few young people are mobilised to join unions and ever fewer are members of political parties.
- Young people are interested in political issues and are engaged in a wide range of new participatory activities, particularly when they can see tangible outcomes for their efforts.
- Gender, class and ethnicity have an impact on young people's participation.

[Media release 27/8/08]

To download a copy of the literature review, visit: www.whitlam.org 

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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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To subscribe

YAPRap is sent to members and subscribers. 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 publications 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 6 October

Monday 27 October

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New project for small/ vulnerable CSGP agencies


YAPA, the Local Community Services Association (LCSA), and NSW Family Services (Fams) are pleased to announce the commencement of a two year targeted capacity building project assisting small/vulnerable Community Services Grants Program (CSGP) organisations.

The project is responding to the difficulties many voluntary boards and management committees have in an increasingly accountable environment. The project will provide hands-on assistance for individual organisations to help them attract, train and keep skilled board/management committee members, implement safe and effective governance and management systems, reduce organisational conflict and rebuild membership and community connection.

Rey Reodica, Executive Officer of YAPA believes the hands-on support to be provided by

this project will be vital for the long term health of many youth services. "It can be a minefield for volunteer management committees, struggling to navigate through complex governance arrangements and ever-increasing expectations placed on community organisations", Rey said. "For many services, support from this project will be the best way to ensure they get through and grow stronger".

The three partners will work in partnership on the project which has been funded by Department of Community Services. Participation in the project will be voluntary and CSGP funded organisations will be invited to nominate their interest using an organisational "health" questionnaire

Organisations interested in receiving more information can contact the Project Manager, Sandra Handley, at capacitymanager@lcsa.org.au or by calling 02 9660 2044. 



Shopping centre bans hooded sweatshirts

A shopping centre has banned hooded sweatshirts and hats to prevent young criminals using them to hide their identities from security cameras. Signs have been in place at Tweed City shopping centre for the past three weeks warning that “hoodies” and hats will be banned after 6pm on Thursdays.

Centre management said the trial ban on headwear was prompted by friction between security guards and local youths. Management and police say some troublemakers know the location of security cameras and hide their heads from them.

Executive Officer of YAPA, Rey Reodica, said a permanent ban targeting young people would be discriminatory. “Being able to access a shopping centre is important to young people,” Mr Reodica said. “Young people, whatever they’re wearing, should be able to congregate there. We’d support the shopping centre being able to work with young people in trying to deal with the issues collaboratively.” [4/9/08 news.com.au - google headline for more]

Alarm over teen abuse of parents

Teenage children are bashing and bullying their parents at an increasing rate, in a largely hidden form of abuse that can arise from violent role models or overindulgent parenting. Studies in NSW and Victoria show an increasing number of parents are the victims of physical and psychological violence perpetrated by their children, usually adolescent

sons directing their attacks on their mothers. [smh.com.au 15/8/08 – google headline for more]

Beware the downside of downloads

Fair Trading Minister Linda Burney is recommending consumer caution in relation to new smart phone technology and is encouraging people to avoid the download debt trap. “You can use these phones to download a plethora of information from the internet but mobile phones are already a major reason for youth debt,” Ms Burney said. “The latest technology enables downloading of high volumes of data very quickly and with that comes the risk that users, especially children, could exceed their phone plan value very quickly.”

“It’s crucial that consumers carefully read the fine print in any contract, consider their potential data usage and make sure they sign up to a plan only after they have found out what all the fees and charges are, including excess data charges,” she said. “Young people will be tempted to make full use of the internet services available through the new smart phones, so with music downloads, YouTube videos, web browsing and emails, a data download bill could easily become a data download debt trap.”

Ms Burney said consumers should also check to see if a carrier offered data usage monitoring. “Most carriers do offer monitoring services including internet-based usage checks and SMS messages alerting the user that they are approaching their plan’s limit,” she said. “Many handsets also include

data usage meters. Such features and services are important in helping consumers keep their phone bills under control!”

Kids help force bad billboards off the road

Kids across Australian have had a major victory over offensive billboards following representations on their behalf by the NSW Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP). More than 100 of the large billboards around Australia that feature a ‘blatant message about a sexual act’ will be removed following a ruling by the Advertising Standards Bureau (ASB) in response to a CCYP submission that had raised the young people’s concerns.

The students from Ellison Public School in the Blue Mountains raised the issue with the Commissioner on one of their regular meetings with her late last year. They said they didn’t like the large ‘rude’ billboards they’d seen on their way to the Commission and that ‘it was hard to avoid it’.

The Commission took this issue up in our submission to the “Sexualisation of children in the contemporary media” inquiry being conducted by the Australian Parliament. “This is a positive outcome for children and young people and a great example of how kids can directly influence decision making in society including at the highest levels,” said Gillian Calvert, the NSW Commissioner for Children and Young People. [kids.nsw.gov.au 4/9/08]

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Leading schools open doors

The country's biggest indigenous boarding school scholarship scheme is preparing to go national with a \$5 million endowment fund to send hundreds of Aboriginal children to private schools throughout Australia. If the concept succeeds, by the time another decade has passed many of the nation's most coveted private schools could have more than 50 indigenous students each, paid for by private and corporate donors. [smh.com.au 2/8/08 – google headline for more]

Money still talks at university - to a certain degree

There are two things commonly said about universities. Some will say that, these days, it is so easy for people to get into university that anyone and everyone goes to get a degree. On the other hand, some say universities are elitist, and that only the rich are able to attend. It appears that neither view is correct. [smh.com.au 17/7/08 – google headline for more]

Young farmers map out their future

Young farmers across Australia say another season of drought and crop failure could wipe out the next generation of family farms. Robert Watt is a 24-year-old farmer from Alectown in the central-west of NSW. He's been on the family farm since leaving school and in seven seasons hasn't yet had one year of profit. He says there wouldn't be a young farmer out there who hasn't considered selling up. This week Mr Watt joined 50 other

young farmers at a meeting in Sydney to work out how to keep more of his mates on the land. Sam Gunn is a farmer from Condobolin and chairs the Young Farmer Committee. He says a first farm buyers grant, similar to the first home owners scheme, could be one way to boost investment and commitment. [More at abc.net.au/news 1/8/08]

Adolescent Health GP Resource Kit

Enhancing the skills of General Practitioners in caring for young people from culturally diverse backgrounds. A joint initiative of NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health (NSW CAAH) and Transcultural Mental Health Centre (TMHC). This Kit outlines the skills needed for working with young people and their families, while addressing the developmental, cultural and environmental factors that influence their health.

Although this Kit is designed primarily for GPs, it is also useful for anyone working in the youth health sector. The revised edition has also increased the emphasis on communication and youth-friendly consultation skills; revised and expanded sections on substance use, mental health, cultural competency, medico-legal issues, collaborative care, and the use of Medicare item numbers.

To order a copy of the GP Resource Kit, 2nd edition, download the order form from www.caah.chw.edu.au (under resources). (02) 9845 3585. kidsh@chw.edu.au

\$35 for one copy, \$30 for two or more copies (incl. GST, excl. postage and packaging). The online version is downloadable from www.caah.chw.edu.au.

Slow progress on intellectual disability


In 2002, a group of public servants was formed to improve the outcomes for people with an intellectual disability in contact with the criminal justice system.

"People with an intellectual disability are over-represented and face significant disadvantage in all areas of the criminal justice system," said the NSW Ombudsman, Bruce Barbour recently. "While NSW government agencies have recognised that a comprehensive interagency approach is necessary to meet the needs of these individuals, we have concerns about the progress of this work."

The group's initiatives that have yet to be finalised or progressed to a point where they can be evaluated include:

- trialling of a court liaison service for people with an intellectual disability before the courts
- coordinated case management for adults on community based orders
- case management for adults in repeated contact with police
- support for young people with an intellectual disability in the juvenile justice system
- parolee accommodation and support initiative, and
- assist young people with an intellectual disability at risk of contact with the criminal justice system.

The Ombudsman's report: Supporting people with an intellectual disability in the criminal justice system: progress report

www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/show.asp?id=480 



Teach teens they are not slaves to hormones

Eleanor Gordon-Smith

In those compulsory personal and physical development classes that punctuate early high school, we were told we would “hit puberty” - as though we would forcibly collide with it one morning on the way to school. We were assured we would have no time for school or old friendships amid boys, skin troubles, sex, drugs, rock and roll. We were destined for a roller-coaster of emotions, “tidal waves of highs and lows”, new aspects of ourselves and our surroundings to explore that would be invigorating and exhilarating.

Let me make this clear. Adolescent dramas are exhilarating in the way putting your finger into an electric pencil sharpener is exhilarating. So, imagine my disappointment when I turned out just like the last Star Wars movie - nowhere near as good as the preview.

I passed PD with flying colours in year 8 - and an alarmingly high proportion of my answers were “peer pressure”. In the following scenario, why does Sally choose to take drugs? Peer pressure. Why does Jim drink-drive? Peer pressure. Why are all my answers the same? Peer pressure.


One scenario stands out: the long and short of it was that Sally, a 16-year-old girl, ends up in the boot of a car with a drunk friend at the wheel. We were asked to list five factors that influenced Sally’s decision. I remember scrawling at the bottom of my page- “was Sally OK??”

The problem does not lie in recognising hormones, peer pressure, the media and advertising as root causes of risks teenagers take - the problem lies in the fact that they have become get-out-of-jail-free cards. If we are conditioned from year 6 to believe that hormones and external factors will change us into someone we barely recognise, it seems reasonable not to expect punishment for this monster’s actions. And, sure enough, for the first two years of high school, detentions were simply a written confession with reasons, which took all of 15 minutes - “friendship issues” got you off homework and queen bees were regularly outed by their followers in the scramble to escape blame for bathroom gossip sessions. By about year 9, such strategies had become the last resort of the truly unimaginative - the realms of hard drive crashes and dead grandparents had yet to be explored.

I am not advocating the removal of such strategies. Rehabilitation has always been more effective than outright punishment, and those students who genuinely do face peer pressure and bullying must be

made to feel safe in coming forward. But such strategies must be used in conjunction with what we will later receive - it is no good cushioning early teens from the consequences of their actions, because then it comes as a short, sharp shock when we emerge from adolescence fully accountable to ourselves, those we hurt, and more importantly, the law.

My reaction to PDHPE classes probably tells us more about me than it does about the syllabus itself - but it seems to me that when the emphasis is on the reasons for our actions rather than the consequences, there is a problem looming. “The hormones made me do it” is no more a legitimate excuse than “the devil made me do it”. Peer pressure and hormones do, of course, contribute to decisions. Sometimes they make them for us. But it is time to start teaching pre-teens that society, and those they have wronged, will hold them accountable for what are, when all is said and done, our decisions. Simply being aware I am flawed does not make me less so, however much I would like to pretend that it does. The law recognises that. Deep down, I recognise that. It is time for pre-teens to be taught to recognise it, too.

[Eleanor Gordon-Smith is a Year 11 student at Sydney Church of England Girls Grammar School in Darlinghurst and this year’s winner of The Sydney Morning Herald Plain English Speaking Award. Reproduced with permission from Sydney Morning Herald August 14, 2008.] 



Sexual Health Week: Check it out

Sexual Health Week - 15 to 21 September - is in its fourth year and it's going from strength to strength. The slogan this year is Check it Out. We want young people to check themselves, check their GP and check the websites and phone lines for information.

The aim of Sexual Health Week is to work with individuals, groups and communities in the Sydney region to increase awareness of sexual health issues and promote sexually healthy choices among young people aged 25 years old and under.

This year's focus is on chlamydia as young peoples' infection rates continue to be high and it affects people in this age group the most. Chlamydia is easy to test, treat and prevent. Generally a urine test is all that is required. In most cases chlamydia doesn't have any symptoms and people don't know they have it. If left untreated chlamydia can cause inflammatory pelvic disease and infertility. Encouraging young people to test regularly for chlamydia and other sexually transmissible infections is a way of promoting their own sexual health as well as lowering the number of infections in the community.

25 grants of \$1,000 were awarded to community groups and councils, with priority given to innovative

and creative projects, particularly those focussing on marginalised young people (homeless, same sex attracted, in correctional facilities, young people living with a disability and young people from ATSI and CALD backgrounds).

The projects range from an all boys sleep over at Mountains Youth Services Team, a BBQ at Bondi Beach run by Norman Andrews House and a series of digital story workshops facilitated by Manly Youth Council. The community grants have been useful in past years, allowing young people to connect and engage with services and also allowing services to make sexual health part of their core business.

GPs have also been a focus of Sexual Health Week this year, as we are encouraging young people to visit their local doctor for a test. A resource for GPs was developed to encourage and remind them to

include chlamydia testing in their everyday practice. It provides easy to follow guidelines to implement urine testing for chlamydia with young people. The resource will be distributed to GPs in NSW via the Medical Observer (medical newspaper and online resource) along with a feature article on chlamydia in young people. Other initiatives targeting GPs include advertisements on mydoctor.com.au.

New, exciting youth friendly resources have been developed and some existing ones have been reviewed and updated for Sexual Health Week. There are posters to promote the events, safe sex packs, a chlamydia specific resource and a GP information card for young people.

Particular effort has gone into media coverage this year, particularly in getting to young people that are



harder to reach. There will be ads in Aboriginal media for young people (Vibe) accompanied by an editorial. Also, there will be ads and editorials in the street press (3D World and The Brag) and in the gay press (SX). Media releases will go out to mainstream media and local newspapers.

A group of young women from Dillwynia Correctional Centre (Windsor) had the opportunity to interview our spokesperson

Dr Melissa Kang (Dr Dolly) about issues to do with sexual health. The interview will be aired through Jailbreak (2SER 107.3 FM) during SHW.

Trivia nights will be held in over 15 locations throughout Sydney. Resources will be available on the night. Trivia nights are a fun way to engage young people and have proven a successful strategy to target a large number of young people.

So make sure you get along to a Sexual Health Week event in your area, head out to a trivia night or get your hands on some of the resources developed for Sexual Health Week.

To find out more information about Sexual Health Week check out the Family Planning website www.fpnsw.org.au or contact Dave Worsley on (02) 4734 3956. 🐾

Biting Anorexia

A first-hand account of an internal war

'My name is Lucy. I am in recovery from anorexia nervosa and major depression, each of which almost killed me.'

So begins this extraordinary depiction by an 18-year-old woman of her descent into the tortured existence of anorexia and her arduous and remarkable recovery from it.

While anorexia is often portrayed in the media as a phase that some young girls obsessed by their appearance go through, the realities of the illness prove that nothing could be further from the truth. As Lucy states: 'This isn't about weight, or a diet or a figure. Somewhere along the line I've come to equate fat with failure and weakness. Weight loss is merely symptomatic of the greater psychological problem.'

Biting Anorexia is unique in that much of it was written while the author was in the grips of

Biting Anorexia is the only book written by a recovered anorexic to be endorsed by the Eating Disorders Foundation of NSW because it refuses to glamorise the disorder, highlighting instead the inner turmoil, loneliness and quiet desperation behind the denial of food. "Usually I have nothing to do with these kinds of books because they can be damaging to sufferers, but as soon as I read this, I thought this will change lives," the group's founder, Amanda Jordan, said...

Anorexia nervosa is the most fatal of all psychiatric illnesses. One in 33 people will suffer from it and one-fifth of those will die from starvation, cardiac failure or suicide. About 3800 people are diagnosed each year and the average time between diagnosis and recovery is seven years, often including long periods of hospitalisation or intense outpatient therapy from a stream of clinicians...

[More at www.smh.com.au 26/7/08 - google: "To hell and back: appetite for life regained"]

the condition. Recovery is the hardest, most challenging and most confusing part – and the one least written about. This book tracks her slow progress out of the illness. Lucy says: 'To challenge an eating disorder, or any mental illness, is to wage a prolonged, painful and

devastating war ... it is the most confusing and emotionally draining part of the illness.' [Source: Finch Publishing www.finch.com.au]

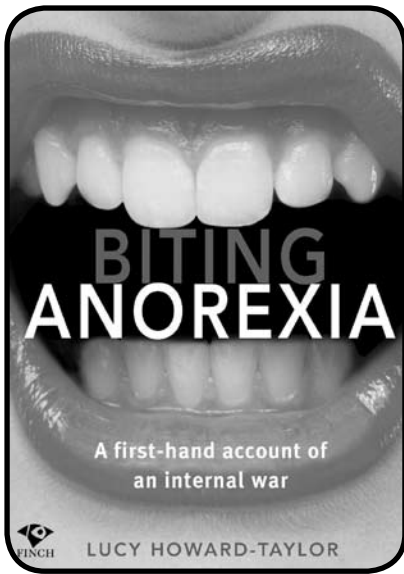
Extracts from the book:

My name is Lucy Howard-Taylor. I am 18 years old. I have starved
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Biting Anorexia

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myself silent. I have slipped through people and out of sight, into black. Rigid at night from fear, curled at another day, I fell: unmoved by the landing.

I am appealing to your parents,


to your family, your peers and colleagues, your judges. I am appealing to a social mockery and a stereotype that laughs psychological torment off as 'selfish' and 'vain'.

I think in some strange way I've never connected myself with 'That Girl in the Mirror'. I watched her curiously as she got thinner and thinner, but when I looked at myself I saw fat. I could feel it, point to it, hold it.

'But that's just skin!' Mum would plead.

Skin or not, it was fat. Eff Aay Tee. Fat. Anything attached to me was unnecessary and had to be gotten rid of. Otherwise I'd never be able to find a new, exciting Lucy for all excess.

Sometimes, when I looked in the mirror, I would feel my peripheral vision fade to focus purely on that flat,

glassed portrait. And I'd feel myself melt away. I have stood in front of the mirror for over half an hour, unable to fix my eyes. The portrait of a girl diseased, but not me.' 

More information

Biting Anorexia, by Lucy

Howard-Taylor

\$24.95 - 224 pages

ISBN (13) 9781876451929

(10) 1876451920

Available from www.finch.com.au

Anorexia signals suffering, not vanity

by Nina Funnell

YAPRap April 2008

www.yapa.org.au/youth/facts/anorexia.php

Working in hell: One young person's story

Sarah* had just finished her degree and was ready to embark on her career in journalism. She'd worked hard to get to this stage and her passion was strong.

The end of her degree involved a work placement at a radio station and she was excited to hear she'd been picked to work on the breakfast program of a talk radio station. She packed her bags, ready to learn and turned up for her first day...

"I came to the radio station at 7am, in the middle of the program. Walking into the office, I was a little bit disappointed. The carpet was a bit dirty and the air was a bit dusty, but I brushed off my preconceptions and walked in with a smile. I briefly introduced myself to the producer and sat down as she busily typed away at the computer.

"There wasn't a lot of time to talk, so I just sat back and observed. Everyone was stressed, I'd describe

it as busy but even I was cracking a sweat watching the producer making calls and furiously typing. I tried to work out what was going on, but without the information about the show – or really knowing anything about the station past what was written in the 'about us' section of their website – it was pretty hard to guess.

"At the end of the show, the announcer left without looking at me. I was a little put off by this, but just assumed it's the way it



all worked. The producer then walked me through what to do after the show and what her job was all about. At about 12pm, the manager asked me into his office. 'Are you sure you want this job?' he asked me. I wasn't quite sure what I wanted beyond a placement that could get me graduated – though I answered truthfully 'I will be looking for a job at the end of my placement here, is there one available at the station?'

"It turned out that not only was there a job available, but I was supposed to be filling it within a few days. I took the plunge, agreeing to take on the position and he told me the hours would be from 4:30am till 12:30pm – give or take a few hours depending on how much news was around. He said he wasn't sure how much they'd pay me, but it probably wouldn't be a lot. Not wanting to spoil the deal, I didn't argue – signing the tax file number declaration and giving over my bank details.

"A few days after taking on the position – I was exhausted. I'm no early riser, though that wasn't the problem. The newsreader explained to me that the 8 hour day was a fantasy – that the previous producer was getting in at 3:30 in the morning and not walking out the door till 6pm. I thought this boiled down to a lack of skill – though then realised that I wasn't too skilled or experienced myself.

"The newsreader was right – there was too much work to do. No one else worked on the program's content, not even the announcer and I would often see the staff for the afternoon shows walking out the door well before me. I also had the announcer calling me on a Sunday to ask me what I'd planned that day. On average I was working 12-16 hour days. There wasn't an option to go home on time as I'd

been told that people had been fired for less at this station.

"The fortnight after my 'placement' had ended – I got my first pay cheque. Dividing it out by the 7 hours a day I was working on paper, it worked out to be about \$8.60 an hour. When looking at what I was actually working – I was getting paid about \$4 an hour. I didn't know what to do about this as I didn't even know who sorted out the pay – so I sought out someone else at the station and asked them if this was normal – they just laughed at me and said "Welcome to the station!"

"I'd always been known as a pretty fiery, confident young woman to everyone I knew but at this stage my confidence was wearing really thin. I didn't know what to do, I didn't know who to talk to and I certainly didn't want to lose my job. I was pretty young to be doing what I was doing and I felt like one wrong move would leave me unemployed in an unfamiliar place with a 12 month lease on a house I couldn't really afford with the job, let alone without it.

"I sought out the news reader, who I got along with really well and asked her for a coffee. I explained my concerns and she told me that everyone there was in the same boat. Most people carried second, even third jobs while they were there. I asked her about the union and she said 'No, no, no. Whatever you do, don't even mention the union while you're at work. They'll find some other reason to fire you and you'll be out of here. Most of us are members, and we're just saving up as much evidence and information as we can while we're here – so that once we get out of here we can bring them down. But even then, it's a pretty small industry – so if you make a noise, every station will hear it and you might

never get a job in radio again.'

"I was stuck. I was stuck in a routine of hopelessness. I was always tired, pumping myself with energy drinks to get through the week. I would drive the 4 hours home to visit my family every Friday night – because I couldn't bare to be alone. I didn't have any time to meet people outside of work and my friends at work were always as tired as I was. I kept getting sick too. I wasn't surprised because one microwave meal every day before 5 hours of sleep at night wasn't enough to keep healthy.

"I had been there 2 months at this point and I was at my wits end. I was shaky and pale, and this particular show wasn't going too well. The person we were talking to for our main story wasn't answering his phone and it wasn't looking good, I was trying to dial the number again and again but every time it would reach his message bank, I got dizzy and my body shook more and more. I tried to push the numbers on the phone but I couldn't see them very well. I could feel my face growing hot and I was gasping for breath. The newsreader rushed in and explained I was probably having a panic attack and to try and relax. She got me some water and sat me down away from the studio before going back to sort out the program which had gone into chaos.

"Someone else from the station drove me to the hospital and left me in the waiting room. The doctor explained that I needed to take a week off. I rang my boss and he insisted on a doctor's certificate and for me to find a replacement for the week – so I convinced one of the weekend producers to stand in for me in the notoriously hard going position. The week was wonderful. My heart sank whenever I thought of going back,

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Working in hell

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though I was quite rested when the fateful day came.

“About a month later, after going through some daily exercises to try and relax, I was sitting at my desk during the show – writing a pretty hard script for the announcer with a short deadline. We were in a longer news bulletin so the announcer was walking around, getting himself a cup of tea and generally keeping himself amused. He came over to me and leaned against my desk: ‘So do you have a boyfriend here?’ – this was the first time he’d actually taken any interest in what I do outside of work, so I perked up: ‘No, not really – I haven’t had a lot of time...’

“He thought on this for a second then said ‘Would you say you... sleep around a lot?’ I stopped typing. I kept looking at the screen with the knot in my stomach tightening rapidly... ‘No, I wouldn’t say that’. After a pause, he said ‘Would you sleep around with someone like me?’ The knot in my stomach reached breaking point and my heart started beating faster. I didn’t say anything – I couldn’t say anything. If I had, I would have started crying or hyperventilating so I just kept typing. He walked away after a few minutes.

“In a week, after much silent treatment from the announcer, I was asked into the manager’s office at the end of a particularly slow news day. He sat me down and simply said ‘We’re letting you go.’

“My heart felt like it stopped, then it dropped. ‘Can I ask why?’ I asked. ‘You don’t have the right attitude around here,’ he said. It was a Thursday, so I asked if I would come in the rest of the week. He said no, asked me for the number of the weekend producer that had filled

in for me before and took my key. I wasn’t even let in to the other side of the building to say goodbye.

“Crying and a little in shock, I got into my car and waited to calm down, before I drove home.

“In hindsight, they probably did the best thing for me. I’d never been more unhappy or unhealthy in all my life. Though I wanted to tell this story, albeit anonymously so that all the young people out there in a similar situation can know that you’re not alone. Hopefully you can read my story and get out, or even, before it destroys your passion, resilience and confidence.”


Sound familiar? What can you do?

According to Rey Reodica, Executive Officer of YAPA, “We know that many young people suffer in similar situations when starting work, not knowing your rights as an employee or what to do to keep yourself safe and prevent sexual harassment. But there’s also many ways that young people can deal with these problems. Earlier in the year, YAPA put out a resource for young people in general, dealing with particular issues for young women as well. *Girls@Work: Getting a Fair Go*, provides some great advice for young people in situations like Sarah’s and can be downloaded from www.yapa.org.au/youth/facts/girlsatwork.php”.

Sarah says she didn’t go to the union for help because she thought they would fire her. The Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) is the union that represents people who work in the media, entertainment, sports

and arts industries and would have been Sarah’s union. Richard Harris, MEAA’s NSW Secretary says “Every journalist should be a member of the Media Alliance. If you have received this sort of treatment at work it is fair to assume others have too and they are as unhappy about it as you are. Joining the Alliance means you are not alone.”

He said “Whatever your grievance, Alliance staff are there to offer confidential help, whether it be advice, assistance or just a friendly ear or shoulder to cry on. Nobody should be treated like this at work, but if you stand alone it is your problem. If you stand together with your colleagues and the Alliance, it becomes your employer’s problem. And you’ll be surprised at how quickly that problem is resolved. For further information contact the Alliance membership desk on: 1300 656 513”.

In every industry, there is a union ready to represent you. If you’re unsure of which union you should belong to, but you’re interested in joining, you can talk to the Australian Council of Trade Unions by logging onto www.actu.asn.au or calling them on 1300 362 223. 

* name changed

More information

If you would like some more information about your working rights, you can also contact:

NSW Office of Industrial Relations 131 628
www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au or
www.youngpeopleatwork.nsw.gov.au



Bail me out!

Bail conditions & young people - too harsh?

Thom Scire, YAPA Policy & Training Officer

It is no question that young people on bail are finding it tougher to live in the community, especially if they have bail conditions. In NSW, we have seen more harsh bail conditions being placed on young people and a lot more monitoring of young people on bail from police.

This, combined with changes to the bail laws makes sure that young people are held accountable to the full extent of the law, but is this too much?

The new changes to the bail laws mean that if a young person doesn't stick to their bail conditions, it will be a lot harder for them to get bail next time. Previously, there was no limit to the number of applications you could make for bail - the new law limits a court's ability to hear a bail application unless there are new facts or circumstances. What has this meant for young people?

It means that where a young person hasn't stuck to their bail conditions, they will get arrested and won't get released again on bail. This has meant that a lot of young people are being held in detention centres - since December 2007, there has been a more than 25% increase in young people in detention.

To make the situation worse, police officers have been zealously monitoring young people on bail.

New juvenile justice centre

Barbara Perry MP, Minister for Juvenile Justice

A new juvenile justice centre is set to open in NSW in order to accommodate higher numbers of young detainees. The new 50-bed centre in Emu Plains in Sydney's west is currently undergoing a \$4.3 million renovation and is due open this month. The facility was formerly used as a periodic detention facility and was run by the Department of Corrective Services.

The Centre is currently being fitted with advanced security features including 42 CCTV cameras, razor-wire fitted on new five-metre high fences and anti-climb measures.

We have had a higher number of detainees coming into our system as a result of targeted policing activities and the strengthening of the State's bail laws. Average daily detainee numbers have grown from 331 in 2006/07 to around 390 in 2007/08. During 2008, numbers have exceeded 400 following concerted police sweeps.

The 'pincer' effect of strong bail laws and targeted policing is making a strong contribution to improved community safety. Enforcement activities play a role in keeping crime down and recent BOCSAR data shows crime is falling or stable in all crime categories.

The new centre will ensure we have the capacity to deal with any unforeseen spike in detainee numbers in the future, especially in the area of remand, which this new facility will be dedicated to.

Fifty new beds means that our frontline staff can continue the important task of helping rehabilitate these young people, enabling them to become valuable members of the community.

Record funding of \$169 million was allocated for NSW juvenile justice in the 2008/09 State Budget including \$10 million in capital works funding to help provide around 60 additional beds, an expansion of the juvenile justice system by around 14%. [news release 3/8/08]

Paul was on bail and had a condition to live with his mum and be on a curfew between 7pm-7am. He has had police visit him a few times at 3am in the morning, waking up his whole family, just to check that he is staying at home*

during that time.

It has also meant that police officers are choosing to breach young people on very minor disruptions to their bail arrangements.

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Bail me out!

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Jane* was attending a supervised YouthWeek event at a local park which finished late. After the event there was a police car waiting for Jane outside the event to breach her as she had gone an hour over her court issued curfew.

John* had a bail condition that he was to reside at home. Unfortunately there was some family violence in the home and as a result he felt unsafe and moved in with his grandmother until things calmed down at home. John was breached for not residing at home.

The Youth justice Coalition (YJC) and YAPA are now working together to minimise the negative effects of young people on bail, 'damage control' if you like...

We are doing this by trying to educate young people about their rights in relation to police and supporting young people in the NSW justice system, especially with the new bail laws.

* names changed

More information

Wondering what you should do if you have a problem? If you feel that you have been treated unfairly by police, then you can contact:

NSW Ombudsman

www.ombo.nsw.gov.au/youth.html

Shopfront Youth Legal Service

www.theshopfront.org
(02) 9360 1847

Marrickville Legal Centre

www.mlc.asn.au
(02) 9559 2899

Juvenile justice in Australia

Juvenile justice in Australia 2006-07 was released today by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. This is the fourth report on young people under juvenile justice supervision in Australia, and includes information on the characteristics of young people in community-based supervision and detention in 2006-07 and the type and length of supervision they experience, as well as patterns of supervision over time and analyses of trends. Some of the main findings:

Number of young people under supervision

- A total of 12,765 young people were under supervision in Australia at some time during 2006-07, 10,675 of whom were aged 10-17 years (the remainder were older).
- Five out of every 1,000 young people aged 10-17 in Australia were under supervision at some time during the year. The majority had community-based supervision, although nearly a third had both community-based supervision and detention in 2006-07. On an average day in 2006-07, there were around 6,000 young people under supervision—around 5,000 in community-based supervision and nearly 1,000 in detention.
- During the four years from 2003-04, the overall number and rate of young people under supervision remained relatively stable. However, while the number and rate of young people in community-based supervision reached a four-year low in 2006-07, the number and rate of young people in detention was highest in 2006-07.

- The number of young people in detention each year increased by 6% from 2003-04 to 2006-07, while the average daily number of young people in detention increased by 12%. This indicates that more young people are being detained and that they are in detention for longer.

Over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

The over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people under supervision is continuing. Only 5% of Australians aged 10-17 years are Indigenous, but Indigenous young people were 14 times more likely to be under supervision than non-Indigenous young people in 2006-07. This pattern is especially prominent in detention. On an average day in 2006-07, there were nearly as many Indigenous young people in detention as non-Indigenous young people.

Age at first supervision and subsequent supervision

The younger people were when they were first supervised, the more likely they were to re-enter juvenile justice supervision. Nearly half of those aged 10-12 years at their first supervision completed four or more periods of supervision in a 5-year period, while only one-quarter of those aged 14 at their first supervision completed as many. Those who were younger at their first supervision were also more likely to be detained in their first supervision, and this detention was also associated with completing more periods of supervision. [Source: aihw.gov.au]

The report: www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/10645



Headspace

Maria Kissouri, YAPRap Feature Writer*

Heard of Headspace? Is it another youth website, or is there more to it? YAPRap decided to go and find out.

"For me, depression started when I was in Year 6 (12 years old), and then it got worse. I grew sick of seeing doctor after doctor, so it went untreated.

Depression feels like emptiness, not feeling anything, not having anything to look forward to. People don't pick up on you having it, because life becomes a big act. It was hard for me to do anything; I had no interest, no motivation!

I didn't want to eat 'coz I didn't want to live.

I saw doctors and psychiatrists; I had x-rays, ultrasounds, headscans....They asked lots of questions, but could not give me an answer.

When I was 14, I saw a counsellor, but I don't think my brain was ready

to see ways of dealing with it. At 17, I was ready; I was mature enough to understand it.

I also made a promise to mum to eat more; she was always on my back. I ate more. Then I had more energy, so I became more motivated and active too. You can't just rely on counsellors and medication. I found acupuncture and a good diet changed my life!

I know people that have depression because they have family problems, if you took those problems away, they would be OK. Some people use alcohol or pot to feel better, but it makes it worse.

I ran around to a lot of different specialists, doctors and counsellors, all across Sydney. It would have been handy to have them all in one place."

- Sabetha (name changed) aged 18 years.

Some research findings on youth mental health:

- Several studies have reported that a perceived lack of social support, particularly parental support, is a risk factor for suicidal behaviour among adolescents. (1)
 - A Victorian study found young people in rural areas prefer to receive the help of school-based helpers and informal support sources such as friends and parents. The difficulty is that these are sources of support which are generally "under-resource and under-qualified to assist". (2)
 - In relation to the issue of youth homelessness, Toby Hall of Mission Australia said: "... many youth services around the country are too one-dimensional. Most focus on one specific area, such as drug and alcohol, mental health or homelessness seldom do they
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Headspace Central Coast

Headspace Central Coast has been set up to help young people aged 12 to 24 and their families to deal with different problems. You can get help and support for a range of issues. Headspace Central Coast is about making sure that young people have the support, information and services they need for health issues early.

Headspace Central Coast can assist if you or someone you know is:

- Feeling down, depressed or anxious
- Not coping at school, work or

home

- Not sleeping well
- Finding it hard to concentrate
- Hurt or bullied by others
- Worried about drinking or drug use

We are currently seeing young people aged 12 to 24 at our venue, ycentral in Gosford and at other locations across the Central Coast. There are a number of different 'teams' at headspace Central Coast:

- headspace Youth Access Team: Youth friendly, first point of

contact for young people and their families to briefly assess their needs and help with accessing appropriate services

- Headspace Youth Alliance: Young consultants employed to improve the youth friendliness and access to services for young people who need help on the Central Coast.
- Headspace yhealth Clinic: A place where you can come and talk to doctors and nurses who are specially trained to work with young people.



Headspace Illawarra

Headspace Illawarra is here to help young people between the ages of 12 to 25 who have a general health problem or who would like help with mental health and/or drug and alcohol problems.

Headspace Illawarra offers youth friendly facilities where GPs, nurses, psychologists, alcohol and drug workers and youth workers will work together to help you get the assistance and care you need. We can also help you if you have housing concerns or would like to link into education, training and employment programs.

You may contact our service yourself to make use of any of these facilities, or other health care providers, welfare agencies, your school teacher or your school counsellor will also be able to refer you to headspace Illawarra if you are willing and they think you could benefit from the services that we offer.

If there are other organisations in the community who can also help you we will be able to refer you to those services and help make sure you can get there when needed.

Headspace Illawarra provides

education and training for those working with young people to ensure we are providing best-practice services. Our community awareness activities have a focus on adolescent development, identifying and treating mental health and substance use problems and maintaining health and wellbeing. This is supported through innovative community partnerships including implementing a headspace-in-Schools program to promote positive attitudes towards help-seeking and develop resilience in young people.

offer help across all three issues, or more. As a result, most young homeless people, the majority of whom also wrestle with several other challenges, such as mental illness, will get shunted from service to service where their problems are addressed separately.” (3)

The calls for increased attention and resourcing for youth mental health early intervention have been heard for over a decade. In 2006 the National Youth Mental Health Foundation was established with \$54 million from the Federal Government under the Promoting Better Mental Health – Youth Mental Health Initiative. Headspace operates within the Foundation. The Foundation is led by national medical and psychology groups such as Australian Psychological Society and the Australian General Practice Network (GPs).

Headspace youth services

Headspace aims to bring a range of clinical and support services to young people, under one roof, to address mental health problems. Nine services have been established in NSW (30 across Australia).

Headspace centres employ a number of different professionals including, doctors, and counsellors, as well as others that can help with drug and alcohol, mental health and vocational issues. These professionals work very closely with each other to make sure that the help that they provide is well coordinated.

Each headspace centre also encourages the input of young people, families and carers to make sure that they establish youth, family and carer friendly environments.

Headspace is delivering training to the professionals that work in the local headspace centres as well

as others in the community such as teachers, police, doctors and youth workers. The training assists staff in the centres to establish a high quality service and identify the young people that need assistance.

The local centres are coordinating awareness campaigns that tell their communities about the challenges facing young people, including their mental health, and how family, friends and other community members might support young people at risk, to get help early.

The 30 centres have been linked up to each other through a national network called the Collaborative Learning Network. This allows them the opportunity to share their learning and resources directly with each other both face-to-face and online.

These new centres mean that thousands of young people will be assisted with a wide range of needs including, health, mental health, drug and alcohol and vocational needs. This might include concerns such as



physical health issues, relationships, emotional difficulties, worries, difficulties with school, training or work, psychological issues and drug and alcohol misuse.

What is a headspace centre?

- a youth-friendly, community-based health service for young people aged 12 – 25 and their families
- a centre where young people can receive help for a range of issues – health, mental health, education, work and drug and alcohol problems
- an integrated service centre staffed by general practitioners, allied health, mental health, youth
- workers and drug and alcohol workers who have specific expertise in working with young people
- a confidential low cost or free service dependent on situation
- a locally run service that has been set up by organisations that understand your community

- a place where young people and their families are encouraged to become involved.

Headspace national resources

Headspace has funded the creation of innovative training packages including Youth-Friendly Practice aimed at professionals who are often the first contact for young people, eg. GPs, community health workers and school counsellors.

Headspace has also resourced the development of a Service Provider Education and Training (SPET) program for centres. The training is designed to ensure service providers are equipped to provide evidence-based intervention. The training includes crucial elements of mental health service delivery, including: skills in engaging with young people, screening for mental health and substance abuse and skills in comprehensive risk assessment.

The delivery of comprehensive

risk assessment training is crucial for youth services taking up headspace. Given generalist youth services are not specialists in mental health interventions, training in this area is crucial. I believe that risk assessment training should be offered in areas relating to mental illness, such as child abuse, domestic and family violence, and sexual assault.

headspace.org.au

Headspace's website is designed to be a first port of call for people seeking information about youth mental health issues and services within Australia. It is one of the key vehicles for communicating headspace activities and messages to the public. It has been built to:

- act as a funnel for a help-seeking young person or family member so that they leave the site more informed and with accurate information about how to go about getting help and where to get it
- provide a vehicle for headspace services to communicate and connect with each other and headspace nationally
- provide accurate and up to date information about the activities of headspace.

There are a number of key sections - My headspace is one. My headspace provides mental health, alcohol and other drug information, a section dedicated to getting help, including the location of headspace sites as well as providing the opportunity for young people to interact with the site through submitting stories or participating in the 'ask an expert' forum. The key objectives of this youth-specific

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NSW Headspace near you?

- Central Coast headspace - Gosford
- Central Sydney headspace - Redfern/Waterloo, Camperdown, Marrickville
- MCSH headspace - Campbelltown
- Mt Druitt headspace - Mt Druitt
- NSW Central West headspace - Bathurst
- The Hunter headspace - Maitland
- Riverina headspace - Wagga Wagga
- Mid North Coast headspace - Bellingen, Coffs Harbour, Nambucca Heads
- Illawarra headspace - Wollongong
- as well as headspace ACT in Bruce.

Find out more about these services and where they are located, at www.headspace.org.au/home/headspace-sites or from the homepage, click headspace Sites.



Headspace MCSH

Headspace: Macarthur Campbelltown Southern Highlands (MCSH) has been established to offer accessible and specialist mental health services for young people aged 12-25 years. We offer a wide variety of clinical services, including:

- physical health
- psychological services
- psychiatric consultation
- job assistance
- educational support
- group programs.

The services on offer are evidence based and provided by Clinical Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Occupational Therapists, Nurses, GPs and educational specialists. All services are 'bulk-billed' through Medicare, and there are no direct

costs to the young person or their family. To do this, the young person will need a letter of referral from a local doctor (GP). If they do not have a GP, we can book an appointment to see one of ours.

Clinical Group Programmes

Social Spice Group: An 8-week open group that runs continuously (this means young people can attend at any stage). It is a social experience group that promotes social adventurousness and participation.

Anger management / Impulse Control Group: A 6-week open group that runs

continuously. It is an evidence-based group that also considers anger and impulsivity from a systemic perspective.

Behaviour Management Group: Includes: a 'Pro-Social Skills Group', Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, smoking cessation workshops, individual sessions and teacher support.

Babes with Babies (Young Mothers Group): This group is based on a collaborative care model and the principles of 'wrap-around care'. This allows headspace to integrate with local service providers to support students at home and at school.

section are to:

- de-stigmatise help-seeking
- provide mental health and wellbeing information to young people
- enable a sense of community
- open a dialogue between consumers and headspace.

Youth participation

Headspace reports a primary commitment to facilitating young people's involvement in the establishment, delivery and evaluation of headspace.

One of the key elements of youth participation in headspace at the national level is the National Youth Reference Group. Twenty-two year old Sarah Alliston is a student at the University of Adelaide.

Sarah is part of a group of young people representing a range of ages, cultures and backgrounds, working together to inform headspace site managers about what works for young people.

The Youth Reference Group attended a national network meeting of headspace centres. Sarah and her peers gave a presentation on environment, governance, youth participation and community engagement to the headspace managers. The presentation reportedly addressed the complexities of achieving meaningful participation. Although the headspace centres are accountable to the national office, and are required to report on their success in gaining meaningful youth participation, Sarah states "we're hoping to establish a two-

way communication mechanism with them".

Sarah feels it is the responsibility of service providers to communicate to those consulted about the barriers that exist in development of their ideas, allowing young people to be engaged in the process of overcoming the barriers.

Some reflections

The Headspace funding period ends in June 2009. Headspace is currently undergoing an independent evaluation by the Social Policy Research Centre at University of NSW. A final report is due in June 2009. Here are some issues to consider:

- Attracting health and welfare staff in rural and remote communities, and to a lesser extent in some urban areas, is



difficult. How has headspace tackled this problem and how successful has its recruitment and retention been?

- Headspace clinical services require young people to provide a Medicare card. Services are offered free where possible; however each headspace centre sets their own fee structure. Many young people do not have their own Medicare card. Has this presented a barrier to access, or to confidentiality? (It is important to also ask young people who have not used headspace about this).
- Headspace hopes to establish centres that are economically sustainable in the future. What implications does this have for headspace fees and requirements regarding Medicare cards?
- With current funding ceasing in July 2009, Headspace, like many other great youth initiatives, faces the challenge of relying on solid outcomes over a short

period of operational time, to justify its continuation. With the evaluation report due in June 2009, this is not guaranteed. Headspace's strength, fairly rare in the NSW youth sector, is a leadership that is publicly recognised, respected and credible, including Father Chris Riley, Divonne Holmes a Court and Grant Hackett.

Given the headspace centres across NSW are newly established and it is such early days, a comprehensive look at the benefits, service models and outcomes of the initiative is not yet possible. Following the end of the establishment phase for all centres, and the release of the national evaluation next year, it will be good to see detailed information on the numbers and backgrounds of young people accessing headspace services, young people's feedback on centres and services provided, and mental health outcomes for young people.

We need this bold initiative to work for young people across Australia.

*Thanks to headspace for much of the material in this article.

Endnotes

1. D'Attilio et al, 1992; Gould et al, 1996; Hart et al, 1988; Kienhorst et al, 1992; Topol & Reznikoff, 1982; Tousignant et al, 1993; Veiel et al, 1988). Setting the evidence-based research agenda for Australia (A literature review) A joint initiative of the Strategic Research Development Committee, the National Health and Medical Research Council and the Mental Health Branch of the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care March 1999.

2. Rural adolescents' attitudes to seeking help for mental health problems. Francis, K. Boyd, C. Aisbett, D. Newnham, K. Newnham, K. Youth Studies Australia Vol 25 No 4 2006 p48)

3. <http://canberra.yourguide.com.au/news/opinion/opinion/seize-the-moment-and-build-on-it-to-give-shelter-to-the-needy/1174944.html>



Headspace Mid North Coast

Headspace Mid-North Coast assists young people aged 12 to 25 who have emerging mental health and substance use issues. Our sites offer youth friendly facilities where GPs, psychologists, drug and alcohol workers, education and employment programs are available.

As well as accessing services through referrals from health care providers, schools or welfare agencies, young people can just hang out at our hub, in a space set up by and for young people, offering a range of leisure and

social activities in addition to the specialist medical services. Trained youth workers are on hand to provide informal guidance and support if needed and clients will be linked to partner community agencies.

The team is based at Nambucca Valley Youth Services hub with venues in Coffs Harbour and Bellingen. The hub has been very effective which is evident from the increasing number of young people accessing the service and the centre in general.

The publicity surrounding the

launch has already seen positive outcomes such as a better understanding of the headspace program, an increase in the use of the centre by youth – particularly indigenous young people – and the development of healthy partnerships with the health and community services sector.

A key factor in our success to date was building relationships and trust with stakeholders - especially young people and their families.



Deaths of children & young people

A new study that examines important information about child deaths from a ten year period was released today by the NSW Child Death Review Team.

Young driver deaths

The report highlighted concerning figures about the deaths of young drivers involved in recreational activities.

The report reveals that 103 children and young people died as a driver, with those living in outer or remote regions 5 times more likely to die as drivers than those living in major cities. Males were 4 times more likely to die than females and risk taking was a factor in 41 (40%) of the deaths. 7 of the driver deaths involved stolen cars.

Most commonly, the driver hit a stationary object such as a tree or power pole (39 deaths) or hit another vehicle (21 deaths) while another 21 died when they lost control of the vehicle they were driving.

Of the total 103 children and young people who died as drivers, just over a quarter (27) of the fatalities were aged under 16 years and most of these (63%) who died were involved in recreational activities, including some at organized events.

Seven of the children were driving either in a quarry, general bushland, or on dirt tracks or unsealed roads; six children were racing motor bikes or go carts in organised motor cross events; and four were driving on rural properties.

"This is the first time a report of this nature has been produced that provides us with important new information about where we need to focus our efforts to help reduce

these kind of child deaths," said the NSW Commissioner for Children and Young People and Convenor of the Child Death Review Team, Ms Gillian Calvert.

"The good news is that in contrasting the first five years of the study with the second five years, there has been a 39% decline in the likelihood of child driver fatalities," Ms Calvert said.

"However, this research has also shown us we need to focus our efforts into helping to prevent younger driver deaths of children and young people involved in either organized or non-organised recreational activities.

"The Team has recommended that the Motor Accidents Authority, in consultation with other agencies, developing target strategies such as public education programs, to help reduce the number of driver deaths of children under 16 years."

Alcohol deaths

The report reveals that while child deaths overall have declined, mortality rates for alcohol related deaths have oscillated across the ten years with alarming differences in trends for age groups, sex, socioeconomic background, geographic remoteness and Aboriginality.

Over the period 1996-2005, 145 (2%) of the 6,879 children and young people whose deaths were registered in NSW died an alcohol-related death. Mostly, alcohol-related deaths were found in association with suicide or traffic fatalities.

Sixty-five (45%) of these deaths occurred with, what for adults, were relatively low blood alcohol levels, typically associated with impairment of thought and judgement (inhibition), coordination and concentration.


Alcopops linked to rise in girl deaths

Alcopops may be implicated in the increased risk girls face of dying from alcohol-related causes.

The report said: "The increase in alcohol-related deaths for females and the decline for males across the two periods may result from several factors, including the introduction of alcopops ... first sold in Australia in 1995, which particularly target females."

"It may be a trend we need to look at to see if there is a pattern emerging," NSW Children's Commissioner, Gillian Calvert said. "The trend parallels the introduction of alcopops and it requires further investigation. We may well be wrong." [smh.com.au 30/7/08 – google headline for more]

Alcohol levels where reflexes, reasoning, depth perception, distance acuity, peripheral vision and glare recovery were very likely to have been impaired were evident for 56% of pedestrian deaths; 59% of suicide deaths and 62% of driver fatalities.

While males were 2.6 times more likely to die an alcohol-related death than were females, the report noted there has been a 17% decline in the likelihood of an alcohol-related death for males and a 37% increase for females. [kids.nsw.gov.au 29/7/08] 

More information

Report: Trends in Child Deaths in NSW 1996-2005

kids.nsw.gov.au/uploads/documents/NSW-CDRT-10-Year-Study.pdf



What's On

27 September 2008, Surry Hills

Using sculpture and other action methods in group work

Have you ever wanted to release the Genie of creative, lateral thinking in your group and use a more creative set of exercises and group work techniques? NSW Institute of Group Leaders www.igl.org.au

16-17 October 2008, Shoalhaven

Beyond 2020 - The Conference

Joining the Dots: Education + Training + Industry = Growth. This Conference looks at who Gen Y and Gen Z are and what they are looking for. And what is Industry looking for over the next decade. Contact: rhonda@blueprintshoalhaven.com.au

22 October 2008, Taree

'Refreshing and updating' group work skills

This workshop is smorgasbord of group theory and skills that group leaders can use to aid group development and thus enhance the learning and experience of the group members.

NSW Institute of Group Leaders www.igl.org.au

23 October 2008, Harris Park

Big Brekky

ADHD & Substance Abuse in young people - dispelling the myths. Big Brekky is organised for youth and refuge workers, counsellors and those working with young people in Western Sydney. Contact: HSYHS on 9687 2544 or fiona.tung@swahs.health.nsw.gov.au

24 October, 21 November 2008, Surry Hills

LGCSA Youth Division

Note changes to dates. Organised by Local Government Community Services Association. All council youth development officers and youth workers welcome. Contact Charlie Coorey, Marrickville Council, woyth@marrickville.nsw.gov.au (02) 9335 2158

5-6 November 2008, Coffs Harbour

A Survival Guide for Youth Workers: 2 day training program

Have you been employed as a youth worker for less than 6 months or want to update your skills? Then this is the course for you! Details at www.yapa.org.au/yapa/events/survival.php

6-7 November 2008, Shoalhaven Heads

Illawarra and South Coast Youth Services Conference

An affordable and responsive training opportunity for local professionals working with young people in a variety of services and organisations. Contact: www.illawarrayouthservicesconference.org.au or Berenice Murphy 4295 2209 berenice.murphy@det.nsw.edu.au

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.



opportunities

NSW Youth Advisory Council

Applications are being sought from people interested in being appointed to the NSW Youth Advisory Council. Applications are particularly being sought from young people with experience and a keen interest in youth affairs. The NSW Youth Advisory Council provides a direct avenue of communication between the young people of NSW and the NSW Government. The Council's functions include:

- providing advice on the planning, development, integration and implementation of Government policies and programs concerning young people
- consulting and conducting forums with young people, community groups and government authorities on issues and policies concerning young people
- monitoring and evaluating legislation and Government policies and programs concerning young people and recommending changes if required

Appointments will be for a period of 12 months. Application forms for membership of the Youth Advisory Council and an information sheet on the Council are available on www.youth.nsw.gov.au or (02) 9716 2844. Closing date: 10 October 2008.

Design a tattoo or poster for Youth Week and win \$500!

Young designers under 25 years can win \$500 and showcase their talent by entering two design competitions as part of next year's NSW Youth Week:

- 2009 NSW Youth Week Poster Design Competition
- Temporary Tattoo Design Competition

The closing date is 31 October 2008. www.youthweek.nsw.gov.au

Youth Week - what do you think?

Would you like to become a member of the NSW Youth Week Young Peoples' Advisory Committee (YPAC) and advise the NSW Government on how Youth Week is managed in NSW? National Youth Week is considered the biggest annual event staged by young people in Australia. It is organised by young people, for young people in local communities across the country. In Youth Week 2008 over 220,000 young people attended more than 900 events and activities in NSW.

Becoming a member of the YPAC is an opportunity for young people who have been part of planning or organising Youth Week in their local community, to have their say on how Youth Week is run at a state level. Membership will be for up to 12 months. To be a member of this committee, you need to live in NSW and be

aged between 12 and 25 years old. More information: Casey Lovelock, Acting NSW Youth Week Coordinator, youthweek@community.nsw.gov.au or ph (02) 9716 2966. Applications close: 30 September 2008.

Heywire

The Heywire competition is up and running & entries are open until October 3rd.

Young people from regional and rural Australia 16-22 years of age are invited to submit a story in text, audio, pictures or moving images about their life issues and experience. Winning stories are selected from each of approx 41 ABC regions around Australia. These stories are produced by the ABC and broadcast either on national ABC Radio, ABC Online and/or ABC TV.

Winners are invited to take part in the all expenses paid Heywire Youth Issues Forum, to be held at the Australian Institute of Sport in Canberra in February 2009. The ABC will work alongside the winners to help produce the pieces that will finally be broadcast on the ABC, so Heywire is not about being the best writer or media maker. Heywire is absolutely about being passionate about issues and ideas and communicating them in such a way that people will take notice. abc.net.au/heywire or FREECALL 1800 26 26 46 or ives.bryce@abc.net.au 