

YAPRap

Newsletter of the Youth Action and Policy Association NSW Inc

Vol 19 No 1 January 2009

\$110,000 for youth music events

NSW Minister for Youth, Graham West, has announced \$110,000 in State Government grants to enable young people across NSW to stage all-ages, drug and alcohol-free music events.

The music events will be funded through Indent, a MusicNSW project which provides funding and resources for all-ages events run by young people between the ages of 12 and 25 years.

Indent, funded through ArtsNSW, has for the past nine years provided advice, workshops and resources for young people intent on staging all-ages entertainment while promoting safety, community support, sustainability and emerging talent. Mr West said he supported drug and alcohol-free music



events for all people in NSW, but particularly young people.

“It is important that young people have access to well-organised and entertaining events in their area, whether in the city or in rural and remote parts of NSW. These events help those young people who organise them to forge a career in the NSW music industry”.

Mr West said that the 44 successful event teams demonstrated great ideas for youth-driven entertainment in their local communities, covering

both regional and metropolitan NSW.

The 2009 Partnership Grants will fund more than 100 events taking place across the state, offering a platform for several hundred emerging bands and artists to perform to an expected attendance of around 30,000 young people. With the view to developing skills and creating sustainable youth-driven music events, Indent will also deliver workshops in event management and music business

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New youth magazine

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 9 February
Monday 9 March

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Joanne Bennett

Later in 2009 YAPA starts a new bi-monthly magazine for young people who care about their world, have opinions about it, and sometimes want to change it too.

It will deal with the issues that matter to active and engaged young people wanting to read something that leaves them thinking, informed and inspired to take the next step.

The magazine will be a fun and open space to learn about and discuss issues, government decisions and people that affect the diverse communities, friends, families and lives of young people.

If you get YAPRap in hard copy now, you will get the new magazine (and will continue to get YAPRap) at no extra cost. Other people can subscribe - details in April.

Get involved!

We need contributions from young people with opinions. Anything from 200 words to 800 words, on any topic of interest to young people. Email us with one sentence outlining your topic. We are also looking for community projects and events to showcase, and artwork for the front cover. If you want to contribute in any way, email writer@yapa.org.au. We will get back in touch in February.

Vote for a name!


We need a name for the new magazine and you can vote for your favourite. Go to our online voting form at: www.yapa.org.au/magazine.php

**Voting closes
9 February 2009.**

What's in a name?

ACTivate
advocatoractivator
changemakers
engage
future (now) magazine
neXus
noise
ransom
riot
slander
spark
think.speak.act
unleash
yspace
yvox
zest
#%*!&

Or got a better suggestion?

Go to
www.yapa.org.au/magazine.php
and vote now. 



\$110,000 for youth music events

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Regional

Dubbo Rock Up - **Dubbo**
Cessnock Youth Entertainment Committee - **Cessnock**
Regional Youth Development Working Party - **West Wyalong**
Amplify 2009 - **Moruya**
NYC Events Management Team - **Nowra**
Kiama Indent Committee - **Kiama**
Crew2Deadly - **Queanbeyan**
Bathurst Regional Youth Council - Events Working Party - **Bathurst**
Cowra Rock Up Organising Committee - **Cowra**
New Moon Productions - **Tuncurry**
Metal Zone - **Goulburn**
The Small Top - **Bega Valley**
Outback Indent Team - **Broken Hill**
Live & Loud Productions - **Taree**
Inverell Youth Council - **Inverell**
Ky-akkas - **Rylstone**
B-Sharp Stage 2 Productions - **Gloucester**
FYRE- Fresh Youth Regional Ent - **Kangaroo Valley**
Leeton Youth Committee Indent Team - **Leeton**
Indent HOYE Handstand Team - **Tanilba**
GENR8R - **Belmont**
Bandteen - **Maitland**
Yell Fest Team 09 - **Charlestown**
City And Colour Inc. - **Brunswick Heads**
The Drift Youth Committee - **Lithgow**
GowLive! - **Lithgow**
Bega Valley Shire Youth Council - **Bega**
Orange Rock Up - **Orange**

Metro & surrounds


Access All Ages - **Glebe**
Ignite - **Gordon**
Central Coast Indent Team - **Gosford**
Youth X Festival Committee - **Campsie**
Northo Entertainment Crew - **North Richmond**
Hip-Hoperations Organisation Personnel - **Liverpool**
Rock The Block Team - **Hornsby**
Bondi Blitz Planning Committee - **Bondi**
The Xrayspex Committee - **Darlinghurst**
The AV Team - **Hurstville**
Robz Mums Productions - **Springwood**
Loft Music Event Team - **Newcastle**
P.L.A.Y Committee - **Sutherland**
Noisy Crew - **Burwood**
Campbelltown Youth Entertainment Working Party - **Campbelltown**
The Underground Event Team - **Padstow**

to participating young people throughout the year.

For more information check www.indent.net.au.

INDENT

Indent is the peak all-ages network in New South Wales, developed by MusicNSW and funded through Arts NSW. Indent provides funding for drug and alcohol-free, all-ages events run by young people aged between 12 and 25 years. The project grants young people access to the practical support they need to stage successful events - from funding through to advice, workshops and resources whilst promoting safety, community support, cultural relevance, sustainability and emerging talent.

Indent has supported more than 800 safe, drug and alcohol-free events throughout NSW since it was launched in October 2000. It has also conducted more than 100 workshops across NSW in event management, music industry basics, publicity and promotion with presentations by key music industry professionals. 

More information

www.indent.net.au
(02) 9699 9706
info@indent.net.au



Games teach kids to think like adults

In a week that the media became hysterical about kids not getting enough exercise because they stayed inside and played video games, we learnt the year's best-selling game was Wii Fit - a series of fun exercises for the whole family. Many non-players assume that even if games are not the sole cause of childhood obesity, they still turn our teenagers into zombies and criminals. ... even if gamers don't go to playgrounds as often as generations past, they still end up better people because the games train them in the scientific method. They must think like grown-ups: analyse complex social networks, manage resources, track subtle narrative intertwinings and recognise long-term patterns... [smh.com.au 8/12/08 - google headline for more]

Laptops in schools will be antisocial

A zippy internet connection? Sure. A social network? No way. The State Government will give 197,000 senior public high school students a mini laptop next year. It will have wireless but no access to Facebook and MySpace. The Minister for Education, Verity Firth, said the Government would prevent access to the social networking sites, and other sites, even when the laptops were used

at home.

"We don't want these kids to be using these computers for the not-so-wholesome things that can be on the net. And they won't be able to because essentially the whole server is coming through the Department of Education." Ms Firth said the laptops would revolutionise the way students learnt and teachers taught. "[Students] can take it home, back to school, and then after four years, when they leave school, they can take their computer away with them." ... [smh.com.au 1/12/08 - google headline for more]

Rees Government protects children from smoking in cars

The passing of new anti-smoking laws by Parliament has made NSW a world leader in tobacco reform. The groundbreaking laws will make it an offence to smoke in a motor vehicle if a child under 16 years is in the car. The changes will also make the driver liable if a passenger smokes in those circumstances.

No child should have to seek medical care because of exposure to other people's smoke. Children's exposure to other people's smoke is involuntary, and children are particularly susceptible to health damage caused by inhaling second hand tobacco smoke. In fact, 90% of health care costs for hospitalising people for second

hand tobacco smoke relate to children's exposure to other people's smoke.

Our Government has already phased out smoking in pubs and clubs, and has banned tobacco marketing gimmicks used to appeal to young people - like fruit-flavoured cigarettes and smoking tents at music festivals. - Jodi McKay, Minister Assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer) 14/11/08

Sex abuse teacher loses ban appeal

A student teacher who had a lesbian relationship with a pupil has failed to have a decision overturned that could stop her from working at schools. The 22-year-old woman allegedly formed an intimate and sexual relationship with a year 10 student while undertaking university work experience at a state school in 2006.

The relationship was discovered after another teacher raised concerns about how "familiar" the teacher was around the girl. Later Department of Education investigators received a call from the girl's mother, who said she found explicit text messages from the teacher on her daughter's mobile phone.

The woman cannot be employed in any NSW government school or TAFE without direct permission from the department. Her name will be referred to the Commission



for Children and Young People to alert future employees of her behaviour... [smh.com.au 18/11/08 - google headline for more]

Burn legal education resource

Young people from urban Sydney are the stars of *Burn*, a groundbreaking, gritty improvised drama about juvenile crime and life on the street. The 34-minute film *Burn*, and an accompanying website, are part of a landmark crime prevention initiative being run by Legal Aid NSW. *Burn* tackles a major crime issue in NSW and uses improvised scenarios to engage urban youth and help them to consider the consequences of their behaviour.

Request a workshop & screening of the film at your school or youth centre. Legal Aid NSW is screening the film *Burn* in facilitated crime prevention workshops in schools all over NSW. Contact Burn Project Manager 02 9219 5120. Check out the (very swish) website www.burn-movie.com.au.

Aboriginal students make short work of success

A private school's investment in Aboriginal children is starting to pay off, with dramatically improved literacy and numeracy results.

St Andrew's Cathedral School

in the Sydney CBD established a special school called Gawura for Aborigines just under two years ago in a spare classroom on its rooftop. The school, established with donations, has reached its maximum number of enrolments of 25 pupils in kindergarten to year 6 for this year and next.

A snapshot of results for this year's first national literacy and numeracy tests shows the year 5 Gawura pupils achieved results in writing that bettered the state average and were less than one point below the school average. Reading results were below the state average but well above the state average for indigenous students. Overall literacy was 491 points compared with the state average of 497.4.

While the Gawura children join other school children for cultural and sporting activities, Mr Heath said he had been criticised for teaching them separately from the others and creating a small "apartheid" at the school. But he argues that this was necessary to give the Aboriginal students the level of individual attention they needed to improve their results. "They are really proud of who they are and they haven't lost their cultural identity," Mr Heath said. "They haven't had a 'whitefella' culture imposed on them... [smh.com.au 29/11/08 - google headline for more]

Teachers learn to close culture gap

All 93,000 people who work for the NSW Department of Education will spend up to 10 hours learning about indigenous culture under a new Aboriginal education policy.

Paul Hughes, the principal of Rosemeadow Public School, near Campbelltown, said the program had helped lift literacy and numeracy standards through the development of personalised learning programs for each Aboriginal student.

As part of the new approach, students were given a personalised program designed by teachers and parents. For Maddison Hall, a year 6 student, the plan involved learning about her Aboriginal ancestry. Last month she travelled with her family to western NSW after discovering her grandfather's origins with the Wiradjuri people in Dubbo... [smh.com.au 18/11/08 - google headline for more]

Take the lead on emissions control, Mr Rudd

In 2007, at the UN climate change conference in Bali, I had the pleasure of watching our brand spanking new Prime Minister ratify the Kyoto protocol, and watched him bask in the resulting glory in the following months. The Rudd Government's leadership and vision appears to have tapered off during 2008. One year later,

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and I am again at the UN climate conference, this time in Poland. Climate minister Penny Wong is heading a delegation that won't even let the world know where Australia stands. They will announce their targets only after the conference closes. What sort of leadership is that? As a young person worried about my future in a climate-changed world, I want to be inspired by a government that is a true leader. So, to Kevin, go for 40% emission reductions by 2020. You'll have my vote for the next 12 years if you do. - Anna Keenan, Australian Youth Climate Coalition [smh.com.au 8/12/08]

Crime prevention gives value for money

The Sydney Morning Herald [has highlighted] the failure of hard-line "law and order" policies to reduce crime and address recidivism.

An example of a successful program is the NSW Drug Court. Prison has failed to deter the offenders it deals with. The Drug Court aims to treat their health issues, as well as justice and social issues, to prevent them offending as a result of drug dependency. Studies have found this program is more cost-effective than prison in reducing drug-related crime. For years the Law Society has called on the Government to expand the Drug Court beyond the current catchment area of western Sydney.

The society is also concerned

that the number of children held on remand has risen dramatically since amendments to the Bail Act came into effect in December 2007. The average daily numbers of juvenile detainees in November was 447, compared with 331 for 2006-07, even though juvenile crime is falling or stable in all categories. Only a small percentage of children held on remand go on to receive a custodial sentence.

The immense resources required to accommodate children in custody would be better spent addressing the causes of juvenile offending, providing more accommodation for young people and on rehabilitation and intervention programs. - Hugh Macken President, Law Society, Sydney [smh.com.au 11/12/08]

School counsellors reduce prison numbers

I have been a school counsellor in the NSW public education system for more than 30 years. Early in my career my boss, a kind and thoughtful mentor, reckoned that if I saved one person a year from going to jail, I would have earned my salary - which was then about the same as the annual cost of keeping a prisoner in jail. That cost now is \$73,000 ("Plan to arrest high rates of return", December 8), while a school counsellor at the top of the salary scale earns just over \$75,000.

Counsellors work to improve

life outcomes for students with learning and behaviour problems, mental illness and many social difficulties. If there was an increase in the number of counsellors that students, schools and parents could access, the benefits might not be discernible before the next election, but they would be years down the track when the number of prisoners was reduced, saving the state millions of dollars.

School counsellors in NSW have been trying to improve their career structure, conditions and salary in discussions with the Department of Education, in order to increase recruitment, and improve retention rates, but to no avail. Many school counsellors will retire in the next five years as we are older on average than classroom teachers, leaving large gaps in the ability to provide an efficient statewide service. This will probably be reflected in years to come in an increase in the number of prisoners. - Mila Yates, Valentine [smh.com.au 11/12/08]

Correction

Last YAPRap included a wrong phone number provided to YAPA by Play Now Act Now for their Free Video Workshops. The correct number is 02 9356 1818. (Sorry, but you have now missed the deadline). 🐾



Sending nude images & sexy texts

In the USA 22% of all teenage girls – and 11% of girls aged 13-16 years old – say they have electronically sent, or posted online, nude or semi-nude images of themselves.

According to the results of a survey by CosmoGirl.com and The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, these images are also getting passed around: 33% of teenage boys and 25% of teenage girls say they have had nude/semi-nude images—originally meant to be private—shared with them.

The survey of 1,280 teenagers and young adults indicates that 15% of teenagers who have sent sexually suggestive content such as text messages, email, photographs or video say they have done so with someone they only know online.

Girls are not the only ones sharing sexually explicit content. 18% of teenage boys say they have sent or posted nude/semi nude images of themselves.


What teenagers and young adults are doing electronically seems to have an effect on what they do in real life: 22% of teenagers admit that technology makes them personally more forward and aggressive. 38% of teenagers say exchanging sexy content makes dating or hooking up with others more likely and 29% of teenagers believe those exchanging sexy content are “expected” to date or hook up.

Other findings from the survey:

- Sending sexually suggestive messages is even more prevalent than sending nude/semi-nude images. 39% of teenagers have sent sexually suggestive text

messages or email messages to someone.

- Even more have received sexually suggestive messages: 48% of teenagers and 33% of girls aged 13-16.
- Teenage girls who have sent or posted sexually suggestive content provide a number of reasons why: 66% say they did so to be “fun or flirtatious,” 52% did so as a “sexy present” for their boyfriend, and 40% as a “joke.”
- Even though 75% of teenagers say that sending sexually suggestive content “can have serious negative consequences,” 19% of teenagers say sending sexually suggestive content is “no big deal.”

[www.cosmogirl.com/sexsurvey & www.thenationalcampaign.org/sextech] 

\$20m ad blitz targets binge drinkers

The Federal Government ad campaign of sobering messages in teen magazines, cinemas and toilet cubicles is part of a three-step bid to curb dangerous drinking.

“These are hard-hitting ads. That’s because we are dealing with a group of people who think they are bulletproof,” the Health Minister, Nicola Roxon said.

The ads target people aged 15 to

25 years who can be cynical about being told what to think. “You can’t con the market into being something it’s not,” the creative director of advertising agency M&C

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\$20m ad blitz targets binge drinkers

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Saatchi in Sydney, Ben Welsh, said. "The attitude is: 'Tell me whatever it is and let me make up my own mind.'"


YAPA's Executive Officer, Rey Reodica, said the ads needed to conform more closely with young people's experiences to work. "I do question the effectiveness of shock tactics. Very few people will fall through a table," he said, referring to an ad where a woman in a party dress lies on the remnants of a coffee table with cuts to her face and arms. "It's not just about young people. Their approach to alcohol is learned behaviour."

The director of emergency medicine at St Vincent's Hospital,

Gordian Fulde, said it would take more than just TV advertisements to convince young people they can have a good time without alcohol. "It's already cool because footy players and rock stars and mum and dad do it, and if you're a 16-year-old and you get totally snozzled and vomit and carry on and pass out, on Monday you're a hero at school," he said. Dr Fulde said the number of girls fronting up to emergency drunk or ill from alcohol was increasing because of their appetite for spirits and mixers and desire to get "wasted".

Gino Yumbaca, the executive officer of the Australian National Council on Drugs, which advised

the Department of Health on the campaign's content, said the ad campaign would not work on its own but needed to be part of a wider strategy on alcohol use, including the introduction of a volumetric taxation system, restrictions on alcohol advertising, promotion and marketing and the promotion of low- or mid-strength drinks.

The Government's attack on binge drinking also includes \$14.4 million for sports and community groups to promote responsible drinking and \$19.1 million for early intervention programs. [smh.com.au 14/11/08 & 22/11/08 - google headline for more] 

Code on body image

Kate Ellis, the Minister for Sport and Youth has announced \$125,000 to develop a Voluntary National Media and Industry Code of Conduct on body image.

The new code will be developed in partnership with the media, health sector, fashion and beauty industries and young people.

"Young people are telling us loud and clear that they are concerned about the issue of body image and the impact that it's having on them,

their friends and the community" Ms Ellis said.

The Government will appoint a National Advisory Group consisting of key industry, media, health and sector members. The Government has allocated \$125,000 to establish the code and will consider, among other components, the inclusion of the following:

- Notification of Digital Alterations (in case of physical manipulation)
- 16 year old age limit for adult fashion shows, magazine shoots

and TV programs

- Commitment to diversification of body shape and size
- Glamorisation of severely underweight models or celebrities.

[Media release 5/12/08]

'Stick-figure' code lacks legal muscle

A voluntary code of conduct requiring the media and fashion industries to use "normal-sized"



models and identify manipulated images will not lead to fewer stick-thin models in magazines and on catwalks, industry insiders and health experts say.


The Minister for Youth, Kate Ellis, said it would be up to individual media outlets, advertisers, modelling agencies and fashion designers to abide by the code. A voluntary code introduced by the Victorian Government last year had gained

broad support.

Flinders University law professor Elizabeth Handsley said such codes tended to be nothing more than a "PR exercise".

Mia Freedman, a former editor of Dolly, Cosmopolitan and Cleo, said no fashion magazine editors would abide by the code because they argue they are selling "fantasy" not "reality".

Sales and advertising revenue

increased when she ordered the use of average-size models in Cosmo but no rivals followed suit. "It's hard to find the right models, it's hard to convince the photographers to shoot them and it's hard to find the clothes to put them in, so why would you do it?" [smh.com.au 20/11/08 - google subheading for more] 

Young job seekers warned about unpaid work

John Hatzistergos, NSW Minister for Industrial Relations

Young people looking to boost their wallets with part-time or casual work over the holiday season should watch out for employers offering illegal unpaid trials. Some unscrupulous employers would be tempted to take advantage of young people looking for work during the busiest trading time of the year.

Young job hunters need to know there is no such thing as unpaid trial work. So if you are offered work, even if only for a few hours,


you must be paid. It is illegal under existing NSW laws for an employer not to pay workers for any work that they do and they can be prosecuted.

Getting a job should be a positive experience for young people and that should not include getting ripped off. Every year the NSW Office of Industrial Relations helps young people with complaints about unpaid trials and recovers lost wages. Some of the payments recovered by workplace inspectors for unpaid trials over the last 12 months include:

- \$512 for a Newcastle beautician
- \$437 for a security office from Tenterfield

- \$367 for a junior shop assistant from Singleton
- \$320 for a motor mechanic from Richmond
- \$257 for a beauty therapist from Penrith
- \$233 for a junior shop assistant from Wagga Wagga

The law protects young workers under 18 and they can get help to recover unpaid wages.

For more information call the NSW Office of Industrial Relations on 131 628 or visit the Young People at Work website www.youngpeopleatwork.nsw.gov.au [media release 17/11/08] 



Lizard tale reawakened learning

Keeli Cambourne

At 15, Ben Roberts had not been interested in school for a few years and spent many of his days wandering Macquarie Fields streets instead of attending.

But about a year ago, Ben was offered the chance to reconnect with education at Youth Off the Streets EDEN Learning Centre, which opened last year.

It was through an innovative literacy program developed by an EDEN teacher, Karelynn Randall, that Ben discovered not only that he could read but he could also write a book about his experiences.

Within three months he was also teaching a group of pre-schoolers about the joy of reading and writing.

"This group of young people had effectively been locked out of learning since early primary school through no fault of their own and had developed the attitude that they don't know how to effectively read or why they should even try," Randall says.

She believed that if they were given the right conditions and motivation, and they revisited early reading strategies, they would re-engage with learning. "We just had to re-access what they had previously learned," she says.

Youth Off The Streets's founder, Father Chris Riley, is a strong supporter of service learning, a values-based intervention program designed for youth dealing with issues of violence and aggression. It aims to involve young people in acts of generosity and teach them empathy towards others.

In keeping with this philosophy, Randall worked in conjunction with the KU Children's Services Macquarie Field's Pre-School to design a service-based literacy program - the Lizards Program.

"The idea behind service learning is that the young people give something back to the community and, in this case, we decided to work with young children to try and foster in them a passion for reading and learning," Randall says.

But first she had to get her teenage students to pick up a book and read it all the way through - in many cases for the first time in their lives.

"Holes, by Louis Sachar, is one of the recommended high school texts. The students really connected with the lizard theme throughout the book and decided to use that as the basis for the rest of the program," she says.

The Lizard program also involved the EDEN students working with children from the preschool. They

completed a series of learning activities with the four and five-year-olds, which helped them not only introduce the concept of literacy to their younger charges but also to rediscover the importance of language.

"As part of the program they had to interview the preschool children to find out what they knew about lizards, and record the language little ones used to describe lizards and what the lizards did, with a video and a dictaphone," Randall says.

"The young people had to report back to me about the ways in which they thought the children were learning to understand language and beginning to learn to read!"

The students then wrote their own children's concept books about lizards, using the words from their preschool charges, and illustrating, editing and proofing each other's work before presenting the books back to the little ones at the preschool.

"The process of working with the preschoolers saw the students revisit early literacy strategies transferable to their own learning. They learned what good and poor readers do and have extended their own strategies for reading which they can continue to apply to their own lives, particularly work education," Randall says.




“With the Service Learning component of the program, the students also learned that it takes a community to raise a child, and this has given them the skills to be literacy tutors as well, who can now work alongside the parents of these preschoolers to help them engender in their children a life-long passion for literacy and learning.”

Watching Ben read and interact with his preschool buddy was a

delight for Father Riley. “Sitting here watching these kids reading and helping the preschoolers is amazing,” Father Riley says. “These are kids that everyone had given up on, and now they have the power to contribute to a community. And hopefully these kids will one day be reading to their own kids.”

For Ben, the program has been life changing. After being praised by Father Riley and other academics

who came to watch him working with his four-year-old reading buddy, he has been regularly updating them about his progress and his newfound passion for learning.

“I didn’t know the value of what I had done,” he wrote in one email. He has also started reading some of the required texts for high school. [Republished with permission from Sydney Morning Herald 27/10/08] 

Western Sydney youth live with desperation

Jessica Mahar

Young people across western Sydney need “one-stop-shops” where they can get plenty of help and assistance.

A local MP who has watched many child patients grow up into young adults believes continuity of care is paramount when looking after youth. Andrew McDonald, the Labor MP for Macquarie Fields, is also a pediatrician, so his priorities are keeping young people healthy.

In September, he toured his electorate with Commissioner for Children and Young People Gillian Calvert, visiting child care and neighbourhood centres.

Dr McDonald said the most common problem is exclusion from services. “Young people between the ages of 12 and 20 are at great risk of poverty by exclusion and


family breakdown,” he said. “Family breakdown means you lose your birth certificate, you can’t fill out Centrelink forms, the forms are difficult and you go from crisis to crisis.”

When meeting local youth, Dr McDonald said they felt that they were taken for granted and judged badly because they were from western Sydney.

Some community workers believe opportunities for young people are as restricted as they were 26 years ago. “They want a chance to contribute, but they described the levels of funding for training, youth workers, housing and youth centres as inadequate,” Dr McDonald told Parliament last week. “Many of these young people have experienced family breakdown and for this reason

have little parental involvement that could help break the chain of exclusion from society.”

Housing, dental care, employment and receiving 120 hours of supervised driving to get a license are all critical issues that need to be looked at, Dr McDonald said.

And rather than funding new centres, funding existing centres would provide the continuity of care young people so desperately crave, he said. One-stop-shops would provide a “soft entry point” for young people to get help with Centrelink benefits, health care, job opportunities and housing. “Soft entry to services makes a difference and youth centres are vital to allow for this,” he said. [Republished with permission from Campbelltown Macarthur Advertiser 26/11/08] 



Disadvantaged people to work off their fines

In an Australian first, severely disadvantaged members of the community will be able to complete charity work or treatment programs to pay off their fines, NSW Attorney General John Hatzistergos announced.

Mr Hatzistergos said major reforms to the state's Fines Act were being introduced into Parliament and had received the backing of the state's key charity groups, including The

financial hardship to apply for a Work and Development Order from the SDRO. "These Orders could require a person to undertake voluntary work for approved charities. Alternatively, they could be required to complete educational, vocational or life skills courses, counselling, drug and alcohol treatment, or a mentoring program if the person is under the age of 25," he said.

The program aims to address a phenomenon known as 'secondary offending', which occurs when disadvantaged people can't pay their

John Picot, said they welcomed the opportunity to participate in the scheme. "These are innovative measures that will ensure those people who can't afford to pay their fines are able to give back to the community in a meaningful way," Mr Picot said.

Chief Executive Officer of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, Robin Banks, said: "We congratulate the Government and, in particular, the NSW Attorney General for moving forward with these important reforms. The Attorney's willingness

“disadvantaged people can't pay their fines and then get dragged deeper into the criminal justice system because of their fine debt”

Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul Society and Youth Off The Streets.

"Currently we have a system in which any unpaid penalty notices and court fines are ultimately referred to the State Debt Recovery Office (SDRO) for enforcement action," Mr Hatzistergos said. "This system works well for people who have an income and assets. However, there are many disadvantaged members of the community who are simply unable to pay."

Mr Hatzistergos said the Rees Government would conduct a two-year trial to allow disadvantaged people such as the homeless, mentally ill and persons experiencing acute

fines and then get dragged deeper into the criminal justice system because of their fine debt.

Other changes to the Fines Act include:

- Easier and more flexible payment options for fines, such as periodic deductions;
- Giving guidelines to officers so they know when they should issue an official caution instead of a penalty notice for minor infractions; and
- Making it clear that all agencies can review penalty notices in exceptional circumstances.

St Vincent de Paul Society's Chief Executive Officer NSW/ACT,

to work with organisations seeking reform has been very positive and we think the reforms will make a very real and positive difference for individuals and the community," she said.

The changes were based on recommendations made by the Sentencing Council in its 2006 report on the effectiveness of fines as a sentencing option.

In addition, the NSW Law Reform Commission will conduct a further review of penalty notice offences to ensure fines are consistent across government.

[John Hatzistergos, Attorney General media release 26/11/08]



Young Australians missing out

Reynato Reodica, YAPA Executive Officer



A new report released by ACOSS - the national peak body for poverty and inequality issues - has confirmed that young Australians are being deprived of the essentials of life.

The ACOSS report – *Who is missing out?: Hardship among low income Australians* - indicates that 27% of under 25 year olds suffer multiple deprivation, meaning they could not attain 3 or more items from a list of 26 things considered critical for normal life.

The ACOSS (Australian Council of Social Service) report highlights the difficulties faced by young Australians, and points out to policy makers that young people, who the survey found are among those with the “greatest risk of hardship”, are only able to access Youth Allowance, which is one of the “lowest social security payments” available. This results in young people suffering prolonged deprivation without social supports that other age groups enjoy.

The ACOSS report confirms the findings of research focussed on young people and deprivation, conducted by YAPA earlier in the

Deprived youth miss out on payments

Young people are twice as likely as older people to be deprived, but pensioners and families are the main beneficiaries of the Federal Government’s \$1000 lump sum payments.

More than a quarter of people under 25 cannot afford three or more of the “essentials of life”, a report by ACOSS has found. This compares with a 10th of people over 65. Despite public debate about the adequacy of the age pension, the ACOSS report found the groups at highest risk of multiple deprivation were sole parents, the unemployed, indigenous people and public housing tenants.

“These findings have implications for policy because many of those at greatest risk of hardship ... receive the lowest social security payments, such as Newstart or Youth Allowance. This suggests that the social security system is poorly designed to reduce poverty,” the report says. [smh.com.au 8/12/08 - google headline for more]

12 essentials

- A decent, secure home
- Home and contents insurance
- \$500 in emergency savings
- Money to pay all utility bills
- Money to buy medicine
- Access to dental treatment
- Regular social contact
- Presents at least once a year
- A week’s holiday away
- A bedroom for each child over 10
- Up-to-date schoolbooks and clothes (not second-hand)
- A hobby or leisure activity for children

year, which found that:

- 1 in 3 young people had missed an important event because of a lack of available transport
- 1 in 20 did not have somewhere safe nor stable to live; for young parents, this was 1 in 4
- 1 in 10 were deprived of basic psychological needs, such as the support of their family and a sense of belonging.

The research reports by YAPA and ACOSS each build upon earlier work by the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of NSW, which recognises that poverty and disadvantage is faced by Australians


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Young Australians missing out

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when a person is deprived of a number of essentials such as a secure home, money for small emergencies, and access to dental treatment.

Previous research on poverty in Australia, which focussed on income levels, often failed to show the depth of disadvantage experienced by those in poverty. 

More information

YAPA Report: *Poverty and disadvantage among young Australians*

www.yapa.org.au/yapa/policy/poverty.pdf

or just follow the link on our home page

ACOSS Report: *Who is missing out?: Hardship among low income Australians*

www.acoss.org.au

Looking out for children and young people

Mandy Loundar, Youth Liaison Officer,
NSW Ombudsman

The Ombudsman is responsible for undertaking a wide range of work involving children and young people.

“Strong, effective systems for the care and protection of children are essential” the Ombudsman, Bruce Barbour, said. “Our work allows us to identify actual and potential weaknesses in the system, and work with agencies to close those gaps.”

Snapshot 2007 – 2008

This year we:

- received over 34,000 matters
- conducted 47 formal investigations to improve service delivery in areas such as policing and care and protection of children
- reviewed the circumstances of 123 deaths of children
- reviewed almost 3,000 police complaints, of which 36% were made by other police officers

The NSW Ombudsman is an independent and impartial watchdog who is accountable to the public through Parliament itself. Our central goal is to keep NSW government agencies and some non-government organisations accountable — by promoting good administrative conduct, fair decision-making and high standards of service delivery — and protect the rights of people in NSW.



- visited 68 regional towns to audit systems, provide training and increase awareness of our office

Strip search

A young person was involved in a police pursuit. After the car crashed and he absconded on foot, police eventually arrested him. When the young person did not comply with police directions, a degree of force was used to restrain him and caused minor injuries. He was then taken to the police station and strip searched. When he later arrived at a detention facility, he complained that police had assaulted him. Police investigated the allegation and made no adverse findings. We were concerned that the young person may have been strip searched unlawfully. Police must have reasonable grounds to conduct a strip search. However, an internal custody document that was regularly used at the station appeared to specify that strip searches should be routinely conducted in all circumstances. We raised our concerns about this document with the commander and he agreed with our view. The commander advised that the document would be amended to ensure that strip searches are not considered a routine practice for people in custody.

Impact of fines on vulnerable people

The impact of fines on vulnerable members of the community — such as young people, Aboriginal people and people with a disability — was a recurring theme that emerged during our audits of the NSW Police Force's implementation of their Aboriginal Strategic Direction.

We also received feedback about this issue from my consultations with youth workers. Once alerted to research being conducted by the NSW Sentencing Council we worked cooperatively with them by providing a detailed submission for their research into the effectiveness of fines as a sentencing option.

Our submission addressed issues such as:

- the use of discretion by transit officers, police and revenue protection officers when dealing with the community
- available alternatives for issuing officers — such as warnings, cautions and diversionary programs
- the adequacy of training for issuing officers about the use of discretion and dealing with vulnerable groups, and
- public scrutiny of issuing agencies.

Phone calls from JJ detention

This year we received a call from a detainee in a juvenile justice centre to complain that he could not make any legal calls as the detainee automatic phone system was blocking him. He told us he spoke with unit staff and nothing had happened. We immediately telephoned the centre manager who found a problem with the system affecting all detainees at that centre. The manager resolved the problem by providing detainees with alternative phone access to make legal calls while the technical problem was fixed.

School suspensions

We recently completed an investigation into the implementation of the Department

of Education and Training's policy and procedures for long suspensions (suspensions up to and including 20 school days). There is an obvious impact on students' access to learning, as well as supervision issues and the student's disengagement from school when they are on long suspensions. We found that the existing procedures provide a strong framework for managing long suspensions, but they were not always fully and correctly implemented. We have made a number of recommendations across areas such as operational and administrative issues, measures to help the department better understand the characteristics of students who are being suspended, the adequacy of support services and assistance and the use of in-school suspensions and time out rooms. The department worked constructively with us and we have asked them to report to us on the implementation of the recommendations.

Uni complaint

We received a complaint from a student who had been excluded from her university for poor academic performance. She believed this was strongly connected with the fragile state of her mental health after aggressive conduct towards her by a teacher. In addition, certain key documents about the student's performance appeared to be missing from the university's records. Following our inquiries, the university redoubled their efforts and located the documents. They then proceeded to deal with the student's situation appropriately, structuring a return to studies program designed to maximise her chances for success.

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Looking out for children and young people

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Child Protection

Western NSW

Also this year, in response to a specific complaint made to us by a prominent member of a remote community in western NSW, we held discussions with DoCS about how they might improve their caseworker presence and service delivery in the region. We also sought specific advice from the NSW Police Force about their plans for responding to Aboriginal child sexual assault, and consulted with the Department of Aboriginal Affairs about their coordinating role for the NSW Interagency Plan to tackle Aboriginal child sexual assault.

From these discussions, we are aware that DoCS is considering particular strategies to both increase caseworker numbers to cover high-need areas and provide their staff with better infrastructure and support. We have asked DoCS to consider this planned increase in the context of their other work in this region, such as out-of-home care, family support and early intervention services.

Wood Inquiry

We provided a substantial body of child protection related information from our child death review, investigative and inquiry work to the Wood Special Commission of Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW. Additionally, we made detailed submissions outlining our views on different topics such as assessment practices, privacy, interagency cooperation, children in out-of-home care and young

people at risk.


Our young people at risk submission supported the trend towards a coordinated, multi-agency approach for responding to young people at risk and their families. We also supported giving the Children's Court the power to require information from DoCS about care and protection issues relating to young people appearing before the court on criminal matters. Another related issue highlighted in our submission is the need to strengthen the availability of accommodation options for young people charged with a criminal offence. Our submissions can be accessed through www.ombo.nsw.gov.au.

Carers of Aboriginal children

In 2007 we completed a review of the issues affecting carers of Aboriginal children and the adequacy of services and supports in place to help them to provide quality care. The review involved interviews with 100 carers as well as Aboriginal out-of-home care agencies and other stakeholders. We also examined the health, educational and cultural needs of Aboriginal children in care. The final report was given to the departments of community services, education and health for their consideration, as well as the Wood Special Commission of Inquiry. We have asked DoCS to provide us with formal advice on how they intend to respond to our observations within two months of the Wood Inquiry reporting its findings.

Other work

- We developed Guidelines for dealing with youth complaints to assist other state and national organisations to make their complaint practices more accessible to young people. We received positive feedback from all sectors about the value of the document. We also changed our internal guidelines to allow staff to take complaints from young people over the phone instead of in writing.
- We ensured that young people's experiences were taken into account as part of our review of the Law Enforcement (Powers & Responsibilities) Act 2002. Some of the police powers under review included those relating to personal searches on arrest or while in police custody. After discussing consultation methods with members of the Youth Justice Coalition, we approached young people attending Bidura Children's Court and asked a series of questions about their experiences of police searches following arrest. We also surveyed a number of young people who we met while accompanying youth workers during their outreach walks.

For a copy of our Annual Report, Guidelines for Dealing with Youth Complaints, youth poster, brochure or sticker go to www.ombo.nsw.gov.au or call (02) 9286 1000. If you are interested in specialist Ombudsman staff attending network forums, please contact me on (02) 9286 1094 or at mloundar@ombo.nsw.gov.au. 



More snippets from Child Protection Inquiry

Thom Scire, YAPA Policy & Training Officer



Following on from a year-long process of consultation and research with government and other stakeholders in child protection, Justice James Wood recently handed down the Report on the Inquiry into Child Protection Services in NSW. YAPRap Nov-Dec 2008 included an inserted summary of highlights. Some further details...

Key Child Protection Research (Chapter 4)

The inquiry found that there the most common primary reported issue(s) to DoCS were: domestic violence followed, in descending order, by neglect, physical abuse, carer drug and alcohol, psychological abuse, carer mental health, sexual abuse and child/young person risk taking behaviour. Most of the reports concerned multiple children.

Research also indicates that the underlying causes of child abuse and neglect is a 'complex and multifactorial issue', with some of the key risk factors including younger age, disability, chronic or serious illness and behavioural problems as well as parental/family risk factors including mental health, domestic violence, substance abuse,

poor parent-child interaction, single parent status and low parental education levels. Notwithstanding social or environmental risk factors including low socio-economic status, stressful life events, lack of access to medical care and adequate childcare, parental unemployment, isolation, lack of support, homelessness and dangerous or violent neighbourhoods.

Key Child Protection Data (Ch 5)

Aboriginal children are more likely to be the subject of a child protection report than non-Aboriginal children and young people. In 2007/08 (preliminary), for every 1,000 Aboriginal children and young people in NSW, 289 were reported to DoCS, compared with the rate of 75 per 1,000 for non-Aboriginal children and young people.

Re-reporting has significantly increased over the last five years and most children now reported have a history of prior reports. A re-report is considered to have the same issue type if any of the three reported issues match those from a previous report. Issues are grouped into physical, sexual, psychological, neglect, and carer, for matching.

Risk of harm reports to DoCS (Ch 6)

The report noted a slight increase in the proportion of reports from other mandatory reporters, including

reporters from NGO sector. In general, mandatory reporters have made around three quarters of all child protection reports.

The report questioned the validity of the reporting process expressing that there was some support (primarily academic) to the Inquiry for abolition of the mandatory reporting provisions. The principal reason being "that the child protection system was being flooded with reports, the response to which used up scarce resources and diverted attention from those families whose children were in need of the State's intervention."

In terms of those reporting the inquiry reveals that 'There was much dissatisfaction expressed to the Inquiry from mandatory reporters that they received delayed feedback, inadequate feedback or in some cases no feedback at all.

Out of Home Care (OOHC) (Ch 16)

The inquiry recognises that removing children and young people from their family must be conserved as a last resort and should only occur where it is deemed absolutely necessary in order to protect them from the risk of serious harm. It is crucial that the safety, welfare and well being of the child or young person removed are 'paramount' over the rights of the parents.

The inquiry also admits that 'While
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More snippets from Child Protection Inquiry

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these principles governing the removal of children and young persons are apparently straightforward, their application is not. This is primarily due to the lack of research that tracks children and young people through OOHC.

The report also notes that DoCS is implementing, in conjunction with non-government organisations, an OOHC minimum data set that will collect information on such things as school attendance, suspensions from school and medical assessments, as a means to better the data collected.

The report goes on to detail the needs of children and young people engaged in OOHC pertaining to education, health and mental health.

The Inquiry found that there is a lack of safe accommodation for children and young people, resulting in an increase in the number of children and young people being placed on remand in detention centres. There was support for the view that a range of safe accommodation models for this group should be available throughout NSW.

Domestic and family violence and child protection (Ch 18)

The Inquiry notes that in service provision, research, legislation and policy the terms 'domestic violence', 'family violence' and 'domestic and family violence' are sometimes used differently and at other times interchangeably. The Inquiry recognises that 'family violence' is the term preferred by many Indigenous communities. 'Family' covers a diverse range of ties of mutual obligation and support, and perpetrators and victims of family violence can include, for example, aunts, uncles, cousins and children of previous relationships.

The report concluded that domestic and family violence "is typically not about one-off incidents of actual violence but a sustained pattern of abusive behaviours and attitudes that may escalate over time," although it is usually an incident that triggers the mandatory report which is made to DoCS.

Domestic violence in NSW has consistently accounted for about a quarter of all reports made to DoCS.

Aboriginal over representation in child protection (Ch 19)

This chapter refers greatly to the "Bringing them home" report prepared by HREOC in 1997. "Bringing them home" details ongoing negative effects for many survivors of indigenous family separation. Main areas discussed were parenting skills (including high anxiety about parenting that can manifest as a lack of discipline), reluctance to use mainstream services due to a fear that those services will take their children away, and a higher incidence of behavioural problems in the children of those who were removed.

Only 2.1% of the NSW population identify as Aboriginal. Aboriginal children account for approximately 4% of the total NSW 0-17 year old population, while 13% of Aboriginal families have four or more children compared with 5% for the total population of families in Australia.

As can be seen in Chapter 5 of the Wood report, Aboriginal children and young people are far more likely to be reported to DoCS than non-Aboriginal children and young people. For children aged less than one year, Aboriginal children are almost five times more likely to be reported than non-Aboriginal children. Aboriginal

children are also more likely to be the subject of multiple reports.


A case study: The communities of Toomelah and Boggabilla

Toomelah is an Aboriginal community located on the border between NSW and Queensland. Boggabilla is another small community located half way between Toomelah and Goondiwindi.

Both towns have very limited infrastructure for education, transport and health care. As a result the Toomelah and Boggabilla communities experience various socio-economic problems associated with isolated Aboriginal communities including poverty, poor housing and a high incidence of domestic violence, alcoholism and diabetes.

In 1988 a HREOC report was commissioned after racial violence occurred between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Boggabilla, Toomelah and Goondiwindi. Later on in 2005, with the assistance of a consultant, the then elders of the area identified key issues in the Toomelah community as health, child sexual abuse and relations with police.

This became the foundation for the "Child Protection Project" led by DoCS. The DoCS Project Team, the all-Aboriginal team consisted of three caseworkers and a manager, whom would be assisted by two health workers.

The objectives of the project were to: Coordinate the planning and implementation of government responses, interventions and prevention programs regarding child sexual abuse issues as well as engagement of the local people in learning necessary skills. 



What's on

25-26 February 2009, Sydney CBD

14-15 May 2009, Sydney CBD

28-29 July 2009, Parramatta

Survival training for new youth workers

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! The training will provide an overview of:

- Duty of care & ethics in youth work
- Consulting with young people & evaluating projects
 - Engaging young people
- Lobbying/advocacy and working with the media
 - Peer support & professional supervision
 - Access & equity
 - Drug & alcohol issues for young people
 - Mental health issues for young people
 - Managing challenging behaviours.

www.yapa.org.au/yapa/events/survival.php

2-4 March 2009, Hunters Hill (Sydney)

5-7 March 2009, Lismore NSW

12-14 March 2009, Dubbo

16-18 March 2009, Newcastle

23-25 March 2009, south west Sydney

25-27 March 2009, Brisbane Qld

Rock & Water

The Rock and Water course offers youth workers and teachers a new way to interact with boys in relationship to their physical and social development. The program is also effective for girls. Physical exercises are constantly linked with mental and social skills. In this way the program leads from simple self-defence, boundary and communication exercises to a strong notion of self-confidence. The program offers a framework of exercises and thoughts about boys and manhood to assist boys to become aware of purpose and motivation in their life.

The Rock and Water program has met with critical acclaim in Australia and internationally as a way of reducing bullying and violence among young people and of building self-control, self-confidence and self-respect.

Contact the Family Action Centre FAC-Events@newcastle.edu.au or 02 4921 6403
www.newcastle.edu.au/centre/fac/rock-and-water/workshops.html

28 March-5 April 2009

National Youth Week 2009

www.youthweek.nsw.gov.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.



Youth work news

Brotherhood welcomes \$800 million for homelessness

The Brotherhood of St Laurence welcomed Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's announcement that the Council of Australian Governments has agreed to spend an additional \$800 million over the next four years to improve the nation's response to homelessness.

"This is an increase in real terms of more than 50% ... this is by far the most substantial commitment ever made to tackling homelessness in this nation," said Tony Nicholson, Executive Director of the national welfare agency. "It represents a massive turnaround from recent years when the Commonwealth Government's contribution to tackling homelessness has declined in real terms," Mr Nicholson said.

"When combined with the Commonwealth's commitment to an additional \$400 million for social housing, it holds out the very real prospect that we can make a major assault over the next four years on Australia's scandalously high number of homeless people. Because our indigenous people are grossly over-represented amongst the homeless, the unprecedented allocation to indigenous housing will make one of the biggest contributions to reducing our overall levels of homelessness. [media release 29/11/08]

Housing Young People with a Previous Offending History

I have recently completed a research project that looks at reasons why young people that we accommodate appeared to have shorter or less successful stays at our service. If you work with young people that are at-risk of homelessness and/or offending

feel free to contact me for a copy. The report is based on statistics from LYAAC, but I believe can be related to all accommodation and other youth services such as drop in etc. - Derek, Liverpool Youth Accommodation Assistance Company (LYAAC), 02 9600 6011, lyaac2170@hotmail.com

Future directions in youth mental health DVD

The latest Youth Health Forum DVD from NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health (CAAH) has been released. Informative and interesting presentations include:

- The challenge of delivering effective mental health services to young people
- The NSW Youth Mental Health Service Model- Central Coast Pilot (ycentral)
- Youth work and mental health - integrating philosophies
- Engaging young minds with immersive technologies for better mental health
- What young people find helpful when accessing help
- A panel discussion joined by all speakers on the day .

Other Youth Health Forums currently on DVD:

- The risks of adolescence - can we keep young people safe? (Aug 2008)
- Bouncing back: building resilience in young people (May 2008)
- Bullying and young people – a shared responsibility? (Nov 2007)
- Double trouble – understanding the impact of comorbidity in diverse settings (Sept 2007)
- Getting back on track – a community focus on Aboriginal Health (June 2007)

All programs, speakers' notes, and DVD order forms: www.caah.chw.edu.au/resources/speaker_notes or contact Ken Yap at NSW CAAH 02 9845 0631, wuyi@chw.edu.au.

edu.au/resources/speaker_notes or contact Ken Yap at NSW CAAH 02 9845 0631, wuyi@chw.edu.au.

ACOSS Australian Community Sector Survey 2009

The ACOSS 2009 Australian Community Sector Survey is now online. The information it collects will provide a picture of the size, shape and experiences of the sector over time and is an important tool for service development, social policy and building sector capacity.

The closing date is Monday 2 February 2009. The survey is intended to be completed by organisations that deliver services directly to the community (NGOs only, not local councils). Organisations which complete the survey will be sent a copy of the final report and will also be placed in a draw to win a complimentary registration to the ACOSS Conference in 2009 plus travel costs.

By participating in this survey organisations are taking the opportunity to speak to governments and the community about how the sector is faring.

The national findings will be released in 2009 and the State and Territory Councils of Social Service, as well as many other organisations, will use and promote the survey findings throughout 2009. NCOSS encourages you to complete the survey.

Thank you for your past and ongoing involvement in the Australian Community Sector Survey.

Australian Community Sector Survey 2009: www.acossweb.org.au/survey9. The 2009 survey covers the 2007-08 financial year. If you would like paper copies or more information, please contact: Jacqui Phillips, ACOSS 02 9310 6200 or jacqui@acoss.org.au 