

North East Youth Organisations Network, February 2010

BEYOND RE-ENGAGEMENT PROJECT SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE UP TO 24 YEARS OF AGE WHO ARE DISFRANCHISED FROM EDUCATION

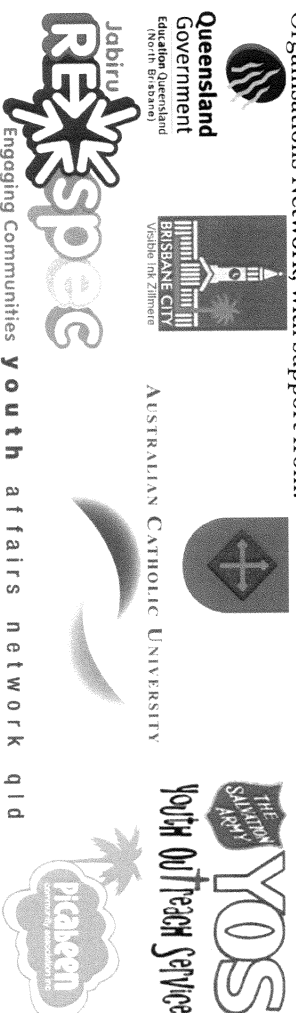


REPORT ON THE DISCUSSION FORUM AND RESEARCH

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The NEYON Re-engagement Project was an initiative of the North East Youth Organisations Network, with support from:



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Executive Summary

Purpose Of This Report

This report presents the major recommendations and findings arising from a discussion forum and research project that investigated the challenges facing young people under 15 who have become disengaged from education.

The forum was initiated by the North East Youth Organisations Network (NEYON) with the aim of encouraging further action on the issue.

It is hoped that this report will be a catalyst for ongoing action, or at the very least, ongoing debate and discussion that may lead to the implementation of positive solutions.

Major Recommendation

The major outcome of the forum is a recommendation that a research project/s be funded that seeks to achieve the following three aims:

1. Collect data on the number (and ages) of school age young people in the North Brisbane Education District who (over a 12 month period) are
 - a) disengaged from education (attending school rarely, if at all);
 - b) at risk of becoming disengaged from education; and
 - c) suspended or excluded from schools in this District;
2. Identify the key causal factors of disengagement for these young people in the North Brisbane District;
3. Identify and document successful re-engagement and retention programs (for 'at risk' groups).

Insights: What Can Community Organisations, Schools & Governments Do?

During the forum and within the research delegates and respondents were asked to identify further strategies they believed would help address the challenges facing young people under 15 who are marginalised from education. The following table summarises the main insights from the workshop regarding the role that the following sectors can play:

Community Organisations can...	Schools can...	Governments can...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote positive community perceptions of young people.• Develop connections and improve the flow of information between services, community members, businesses.• Support young people to have a say on how support should be provided.• Provide community education about different pathways for learners & the need for research to increase awareness of learning journeys of young people.• Support teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop links support services and clubs;• Implement strategies that support young people's transitions between school.• Strengthen in-school support services or encourage community services to have a presence in schools.• Improve early identification of 'at-risk' young people and develop programs to address (e.g. mentoring)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fund services and programs to support young people 8 to 14 years both in and out of schools;• Encourage and support (through funding and other means) the establishment of partnerships between schools and community services.• Encourage and support the establishment of a diversity of schools.

Acknowledgements

The North East Youth Organisations Network would like to thank the individuals and organisations who helped to organise the forum.

Thank you to Mr Elwyn Henaway from the Australian Catholic University who gave the official Acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Land on which the forum was held.

Thanks also to the Australian Catholic University for allowing us to use their hall and specifically to the Associate Vice Chancellor of Australian Catholic University, Professor John Devereux for welcoming us all on the day.

NEYON is grateful to all of the speakers during the morning session – Lizzie Baker (student), Prof Martin Mills (University of Queensland), Dr Glenda McGregor (Griffith University), Mr Gary Fisher-Smith (Everton Park State High School) and Dr Ann Bramwell (Australian Catholic University).

NEYON also appreciates the efforts and advice of Mr Byron Mulligan, who helped us to plan and then facilitated the workshop session.

Thanks also the organisations who offered significant in-kind support at various stages:

- Queensland Government - Brisbane North District of Education Queensland;
- Australian Catholic University (McCauley Campus);
- Visible Ink Zillmere, Brisbane City Council;
- Youth Affairs Network of Queensland;
- Salvation Army Youth Outreach Service;
- Jabiru RESPEC;

Finally thanks to all the delegates who attended the forum and who contributed the ideas and insights.

Introduction

Origins Of The NEYON Re-engagement Working Group And Forum

During the latter half of 2008, services connected to the North East Youth Organisations Network (NEYON) began to notice an increase in the numbers of young people 8 to 14 years who were not attending school regularly. The Network subsequently noticed an increase in the number of referrals to alternative education providers. NEYON was concerned that extra resources were needed to ensure young people have support both within and outside of school and as a result formed a working group to explore the issue more closely.

The working group includes members from the following organisations:

- Visible Ink Zillmere, Brisbane City Council
- Picabeen Community Association
- Jabiru RESpec
- Salvation Army Youth Outreach Service

The working group raised their concerns with the Youth Affairs Network of Queensland (YANQ) Brisbane North District of Education Queensland (BNEQ) and Australian Catholic University (ACU). All three organisations have since worked collaboratively with NEYON to develop strategies to address the disengagement amongst young people 8 to 14 years.

The Re-engagement project aimed to:

- Identify numbers of young people 8 to 14 years who are disengaged from school across North Brisbane
- Identify the number of young people 8 to 14 years being referred to agencies because of issues at school
- Identify factors that lead to young people disengaging
- Identify different options, solutions and recommendations to improve support for young people, who are currently disengaged or at risk of disengaging and how to support students to re-engage.

As part of the project, NEYON has hosted a Forum to provide opportunities for workers to discuss the issues and possible ways forward and has conducted a survey of workers in youth organisations and services to explore the numbers of young people 8 to 14 years who are disengaged or 'at-risk' of disengaging from education and the reasons why they are disengaged.

About NEYON

NEYON is a network of youth and community services from both non-government and government sectors working collaboratively to share information and develop strategies in response to emerging needs of young people across the North of Brisbane.

Originally named ZYON (Zillmere Youth Organisations Network), the network developed in response to young people's needs and issues in the Zillmere community. Since then the network has grown to encompass agencies and community organisations across North East Brisbane. The renaming of the network represents this expansion and commitment to a North East regional focus.

NEYON meets monthly to share information, work collaboratively and develop strategies in response to the emerging needs of young people.



NEYON aims to achieve the following objectives:

- **Advocate Generally for an increase in public funding and support for:**
 - increased public funding and support for young people under 15 that are disengaged (or at risk of dropping out) from school. For e.g. More teacher aides;
 - public funding to build a continuum of support services from prevention to early intervention and onwards to intervention for those already disengaged;
 - more assessments of students to increase the chances of young people getting the right service at the right time.
- **Advocate for Improvements to Traditional ('mainstream') schools:**
 - increased flexibility within traditional ('mainstream') schools to increase the opportunities for young people with various backgrounds and life experiences to achieve positive outcomes at school. This might mean: more flexible delivery of the curriculum; non-threatening spaces within schools for young people who are struggling to attend classes!
 - schools that celebrate individuality and diversity;
 - Community services and schools to develop closer working relationships and awareness of each other.
- **Advocate for an 'alternative' educational service for young people under 15:**
 - easily accessible;
 - non-denominational;
 - small teacher: student ratios.
- **Give Young People an Opportunity to Share their Views and Ideas:**
 - find out what young people would like to see changed at their school;
 - find out what young people think are the main issues and needs.
- **Advocate for greater support for young people's networks:**
 - their family, carers, relatives;
 - educators (teachers, school administrators etc).
- **To Inform Policy/Decision Makers:**
 - So that they have the info to act;
 - At both state and federal level.
- **Raise Community Awareness about the educational needs of young people in state care and others who are disengaged (or at risk).**
- **Develop clear referral processes within schools.**

For more information on NEYON, please contact Visible Ink Zillmere on 3407 8102.

NEYON Re-engagement Forum

The North East Youth Organisations Network Discussion Forum (NEYON Re-engagement Forum) focused on supporting young people aged 8 to 14 years who are disenfranchised from Education. It was held at the Australian Catholic University's McAuley Campus (Banyo) on February 3rd, 2010.

The NEYON Re-engagement Forum was organised by members of the North East Youth Organisations Network, with support from Education Queensland (Brisbane North), Australian Catholic University (Brisbane Campus), Vizable Ink Zillmere, Jabiru Respec, Picabeen Community Centre, Salvation Army Youth Outreach Service and the Youth Affairs Network of Queensland.

The Forum aimed to bring together workers from schools, youth and community services, government, parents and community members across Brisbane to network, share stories, and experiences and to discuss ways of improving support for young people 8 to 14 who are disenfranchised from education.

The forum was attended by over 100 delegates from non-government community services, State and Private schools, State and Federal Government service providers and staff from the Department of Education and Training¹.



Presentations

Presentations from key speakers provided perspectives on young people's experiences in mainstream and non-traditional education, trends in the UK around addressing disengagement, research on young people's perspectives of flexible learning centres in South East Queensland, and an overview of the personal development of children and young people aged 8 to 14 years.

The speakers during the morning session of the forum were:

1. **Ms Lizzie Baker - Student, Salvation Army Youth Outreach Service Flexi-School.**
Lizzie is a student at the Salvation Army Youth Outreach Service Flexible School program. Lizzie became disengaged from education before she was 15 and shared her story about her experience of mainstream education and disengagement and what led her to re-engage with education. Lizzie's story highlighted some of the outside school issues that impact young people's engagement with education.
2. **Mr Gary Fisher-Smith - Everton Park SHS, ACE Program.**
Gary Fisher-Smith has worked in the UK as a Senior Teacher and Deputy Principal and is currently teaching at the alternate school site hosted by the Salvation Army at Stafford. In his presentation, Gary provided an overview of trends and recent policy developments within the UK which have sought to address disengagement and raise achievement. Gary also discussed his first-hand experience as Deputy Principal of a Specialist School and the innovative strategies utilised to engage young people in education.

A video of Gary's presentation and the slides from his powerpoint are available at http://www.yang.org.au/teenage/GFS_uk_trends.

3. **Professor Martin Mills (University of Queensland) and Dr Glenda McGregor (Griffith University).**
Professor Martin Mills (UQ) and Dr Glenda McGregor (Griffith) presented findings from research exploring the successes and challenges facing flexible learning services in South-East Queensland, from the perspective of young people. The research, commissioned by the Youth Affairs Network Queensland (YANO), looks at how 'alternative schools' attempt to meet the needs of young people disengaged from mainstream schooling.

Initial findings from the study were presented which revealed that there is significant diversity in the backgrounds of young people that attend flexi-schools. The findings also explored questions around what flexi-schools have to offer young people. Common themes emerging from interviews with students revealed that flexi-schools provide

¹ See appendix for a list of delegates and (where permission has been given) their contact details.

environments which are flexible, supportive, respectful, positive, and offer a sense of community for young people. The style of teaching within flexi-schools is highly valued by students as they promote relationships which are caring, respectful, equal, supportive, non-judgemental, and characterised by mutual responsibility. Teaching methods which are hands on, connected, and conversational as well as being flexible and allowing sufficient time for students to explore, create, complete, and achieve were also highly valued by students in the study.

A video of the presentation and the powerpoint slides are available from <http://www.yanq.org.au/reenage/2292-flsr-students>.

The full research report will be launched by YANQ in July 2010. For details phone YANQ on 07 3844 7713.

4. Dr Ann Bramwell - Australian Catholic University.

Dr Anne Bramwell is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Psychology at ACU. Ann provided an overview of the personal development of young people aged 8 to 14 years from a variety of theoretical perspectives including the cognitive, social (and moral), emotional and physical domains. Both internal and external factors impacting on engagement and disengagement behaviour were explored.

The powerPoint slides from Ann's presentation are available from http://www.yanq.org.au/reenage/AB_childdevelopment.

Planning Workshop

The workshop session, facilitated by Mr Byron Mulligan¹, sought to explore why young people, 8 to 14 years, are disengaging from education and what can we do to re-engage them.

During the workshop session, Forum participants were able to

- 1. **discuss and share information** about the specific needs of young people 8 to 14 years who have become disenfranchised from learning; and
- 2. **begin developing ideas about how best to support these children and young people** back into education.

Challenges For Young People

The workshop began with Forum participants discussing and identifying challenges within school and outside of school that make it difficult for young people, 8 to 14 years, to attend school.



Within Schools	Outside of Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-involvement in decision-making• Culture• Peer pressure/friends• Community• Learning difficulties• Types of teaching and learning• Respect for each other (students, teachers, other staff)• Climate in the classroom• Feeling valued• Not fun• Too much time doing academics• Learning and fun not balanced• Relationships• Lack of opportunities to build and maintain relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Home environment• Caring role for family member at home• Drug and alcohol use (family and young people)• School not a priority

How Do We Become The Very Best Us?

After identifying some of the key challenges for young people engaging in education, Forum participants then spent time discussing and exploring skills, qualities, characteristics and values that help young people to become 'the very best version of themselves'.

Commonly cited skills, qualities, characteristics and values included (in order of the number of mentions):

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| • Resilience(9) | • Learners (6) | • Trustworthy and trusting (5) |
| • Respectful (9) | • Self worth (6) | • Confidence (4) |
| • Empathetic (8) | • Tolerance (6) | • Courtesy/Manners (4) |
| • Healthy body and mind (8) | • Curiosity (5) | • Empowered (4) |
| • Humour (7) | • Embracing diversity/individuality (5) | • Inclusiveness (4) |
| • Honest (7) | • Happy/content/satisfied (5) | • Listening (4) |
| • Acceptance/Accepting (6) | • Insight/Reflective (5) | • Optimistic/Positive outlook (4) |
| • Aspirations/Dreams/Hopes (6) | • Open-minded (5) | • Self discipline/control (4) |
| • Communication skills (6) | • Responsible (5) | • Sense of community (4) |
| • Compassionate (6) | | • Supported/supportive (4) |

¹ Byron Mulligan is a Community Projects Manager who has worked closely with young people and service providers from education, industry and the community sector for over 15 years. He is well known for delivering key networking events and open floor forums focusing on the educational and social needs of young people. Byron can be contacted via email at byron.m@challengeemployment.org.au.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balanced (3) • Connectedness (3) • Enthusiasm (3) • Ethics/Morals/Values (3) • Fun (3) • Healthy coping skills (3) • Motivation (3) • Patience (3) • Problem-solving (3) • Self-aware (3) • Approachable (2) • Community minded (2) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competence (2) • Cooperative (2) • Creative (2) • Encouraging (2) • Environmental awareness (2) • Fairness (2) • Family (2) • Focussed (2) • Giving (2) • Inquisitive (2) • Integrity (2) • Loving (2) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persistence/perseverance (2) • Personal growth (2) • Questioning & challenging (2) • See things from others perspective (2) • Able to advocate for themselves and others (2) • Good self-esteem/self-image (2) • Sociable/Social skills (2) • Spirituality (2) • Strong sense of identity (2) • Understanding (2) • Work ethic (2) |
|--|---|--|

Who Makes Us Who We Are?

After identifying key skills, qualities, characteristics and values that help young people to become the very best version of themselves, participants then spent some time identifying what role education, family, friends and so on plays in young people's development.

Some responses identified in the workshop included:

Schools	Family/Home Environment	Community/Society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role modelling • Create environment with young people to explore qualities – who they are – how to become the best they can be (through curriculum) • Flexibility and support for teachers • Power battles between young people and staff • Social and emotional wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important at an early age • Practical life skills • Relationships • Power battles between young people and parents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showing respect for others (strangers, friends, family) • Respect needs to be modelled to be learnt • Media contributes to negative perceptions of self and others • Appreciate young people for who they are and where they are and help them identify their own individualities • Time to play

Solutions – Suggestions And Insights

The final part of the workshop session focussed on identifying some strategies and solutions that can help to address challenges for young people engaging in education as well as strengthening young people's development.

Strategies and recommendations were identified for the young person, family and home environment, school, community and society, services and government. Responses identified in the workshop include:



Young Person	School	Family/ Home Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide flexible options that maximise their choice • Ensuring young people have people to talk to • Enhance young people's connections • Recognise the importance of working from their strengths, working with and understanding who young people are • Support the need for young people to be able to make sense of their personal stories and find their own purpose • Support transitions from primary to secondary school • Provide environments where young people can be accepted and gain recognitions from others • Recognise young people's resilience, willingness to move forward and survival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop community links between organisations, support services and clubs • Develop strategies which support young people's transitions in school (e.g. buddies, routines) • Strengthen school support services or develop community hub within schools (YLC, School nurse, CEC, Youth workers, Counsellors, Health professionals) • Establish programs that promote young people's health and well-being • Provide research funding to explore disengagement in 8 to 14 years age group • Improve early identification of 'at-risk' young people and develop programs to address (e.g. mentoring) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide range of parenting support & training options • Enhance family's environment in school system and improve communication between school and the home • Provide practical support for families experiencing difficulties (financial, housing, computer access, social etc.) • Provide a partnership of support for young people 'at-risk' of disengaging from education – organisations working more closely together • Improve understanding of range of factors that may impact access (e.g., background, location, culture, travel etc.) • Work towards reconnecting families into community
Community and Society	Social & Community Services	Government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase positive media on young people • Foster community relations and participation • Enhance positive connections and relationships between services, community members, businesses. • Develop cross-cultural projects in communities to facilitate links to culture and celebrate differences • Develop programs and open forums where young people are listened to, have a say and are able to get involved and direct the projects • Provide of free recreational activities for young people • Create safer places for young people • Provide community education about different pathways for learners & the need for research to increase awareness of learning journeys of young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop community partnerships with schools, agencies, organisations • Increase services available to schools such as speech therapy and health services • Enhance teacher support and provide additional assistance (including both social/ emotional support and professional support) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funding for services to support young people 8 to 14 years • Increase funding to provide more supports in schools and establish partnerships between schools and community organisations to prevent and address disengagement • Recognise the importance of identifying what is needed before action is taken and input is sought from workers and organisations in the area • Ensure all services working with young people are in contact with on another • Provide options for alternative education facilities for young people under 15 years of age

Forum Evaluation

Delegates to the forum were asked to provide feedback on the speakers, the workshop and the overall event. Forty people filled out evaluation forms and the results are outlined below.

Forum Section/Aspect	Rating ¹
Forum as whole – overall rating	3.84
Gary Fisher-Smith's Presentation	3.89
Martin Mills & Glenda McGregor's Presentation	3.89
Ann Bramwell's Presentation	3.21
Planning Workshop	4
Information stalls	3.97
Networking lunch	3.85
Venue	4.26
Catering	3.97



The following table summarise the responses to open ended questions:

What Stood Out:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitated planning workshop.• Presentation from Lizzie Baker.• Diversity of views and opinions shared on the day.• Presentations in the morning.• Positive focus on solutions.
What new things were learnt:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness of other services.• Awareness of other perspectives.
What could be done differently:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that policy/decision makers attend to hear the points of view.• Hold a longer forum.• Keep to time• Provide information on practical solutions.
Other Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Thank you" / well done

¹ These ratings are the average score provided by participants of on a scale of 1 = very poor to 5 = excellent.

Survey – Numbers Of Young People Disengaged

During the later half of 2009 and beginning of 2010 NEYON conducted a survey for workers as part of the Re-engagement Project. The aim was to quantify the numbers of young people aged 8-14 on the north side who are at risk of disengaging from learning and the reasons why they are at risk.

NEYON's intention was to use the survey to inform future planning for child and youth and educational services in the area.

Unfortunately, with limited resources (NEYON relied on the voluntary efforts of members to conduct the survey) the return rate was relatively low (19 workers responded to the survey). This is one reason why NEYON is strongly recommending that a major research project be funded to gather more reliable data.

Nevertheless, useful information was gathered from the 19 youth workers who filled out surveys. The results follow.

Results

Responses: 19 Youth Workers in the North Brisbane area filled out the survey.

Question 1: Over The Past 12 Months, Approximately How Many Young People Under 15 Years Of Age Have You Encountered Who Are Not Attending School Regularly?

Youth workers encountered, on average, 12 young people under 15 years within their programs and services over the past 12 months who were not attending school regularly. Numbers of young people encountered ranged between 2 and 40 across the different services.

Question 2: How Often Were These Young People (under 15) Attending School...

Most workers reported that young people were only attending school a few times a week (45 young people) or a few times a month (25 young people). Between 5 and 16 young people were attending school only a few times a term or less.

Question 3: How Many Young People (under 15) Have You Come Across Who Are Attending School, But Who You Think Might Be At High Risk Of Disengaging?

On average, workers encountered approximately 11 young people under 15 years who they thought were 'at-risk' of disengaging from education. There was, however, a lot of variation in the numbers of young people 'at-risk', with workers reporting between 0 and 60 young people 'at-risk' of disengaging.

Question 4: What Are Some Of The Reasons That Made You Think They Might Be At-risk?

Commonly cited reasons reported by workers included:

- Individual factors (19) – e.g., poor numeracy and literacy, low self-esteem, and boredom
- Family-related factors (17) – e.g., family breakdown, high mobility, parental disengagement, and complex family issues
- School-related factors (8) – e.g., lack of connection and conflict with teachers;
- Peers (4) – e.g., bullying and peer pressures
- Community or society factors (2)

Question 5: What Do You Think Are The Things Within Schools That Made It Difficult For The Young People Who Were Disengaged To Attend School Regularly?

A broad range of factors within schools were cited. Frequently cited factors included a lack of connectedness in the school community (5), bullying (4), no support for emotional, relational or social needs (4), rigid structure (3), learning needs not addressed (3).

Other factors cited included:

- Teaching styles (2)
- Attitudes of teachers and students (2)
- Poor relationships with teachers (2)
- Lack of support staff to mentor students (2)
- Stigma (2)

Question 6: What Do You Think Are The Things Outside Of Schools (e.g. Friends, Family, Work, Health Etc) That Made It Difficult?

Family related factors and individual factors were commonly cited by workers as important factors outside of school that make it difficult for young people to attend school. Commonly cited examples include:

- Family factors (34):
 - Dysfunctional family and home environment (4)
 - Financial hardship (4)
 - Family breakdown (3)
 - Family condoning disengagement (3)
 - Drug and alcohol use (3)
 - Mental health issues (3)
- Individual Factors (28):
 - Emotional and psychological health (e.g., anxiety and depression) (10)
 - Substance abuse and misuse (4)
 - Developmental delays and learning difficulties (2)

Other factors cited included:

- Friends and Peers (5) – lack of friends, peer pressure and bullying
- Availability of alternative options (2)
- Other (3) – lack of transport or resources

Question 7: Can You Comment On How Old Young People You Have Encountered Were When They First Disengaged From School?

Young people between 12 to 14 years of age were most frequently disengaged from school and most likely to miss significant periods of schooling. However, workers reported encountering young people as young as 6 years of age who were disengaged from school.

Question 8: Are There Any Commonalities Or Trends You Have Noticed?

Commonalities between young people disengaged from school reported included reasons for disengagement around a lack of support for transitions from primary to secondary school, transitions into adolescence, bullying, and home issues.

Few commonalities were observed in terms of the gender or ethnicity of young people who are disengaged from education.

Question 9: Do The Young People You Have Encountered Who Are Disengaged (or At Risk) Have Any Extra Support Needs? E.g. Numeracy, Disability Etc.

The extra support needs frequently identified were:

- Learning support around numeracy and literacy (10) and to support large gaps in education (4)
- Mental health (3)
- Behaviour management around anger management and “ADD” (2)
- Social skills (2)
- Family support (2)

Question 10: Is There Anything You Would Like To Recommend That Policy Makers Should Consider In Terms Of Possible Solutions, Ways Of Preventing Disengagement In The First Place Etc?

Many recommendations were put forward by workers to address and prevent disengagement amongst young people under 15 years of age. Recommendations focussed primarily on:

- Promoting supportive school environments (8)
- Adopting a more holistic approach to education (7) – focussing on social, emotional outcomes as well as academic and exploring the link between social issues and student attendance/behaviour
- Increasing the availability of and funding for alternative and flexible options (7)
- Establishing closer links between schools and support staff (5)
- School size (3) – making class sizes smaller and reducing staff:student ratios
- Increasing early intervention support and preventative measures (2)

If you would like more information on these results please contact NEYON via Visible Ink Zillmere on 3407 8102.

Contact Details Of Forum Stall Holders

Stalls were held at the Forum by local organisations that provide services and programs for young people across Brisbane. Details of some of the stall holders are provided below

Multicultural And Social Work Services -Centrelink

Multicultural Service Officers forge links between Centrelink and migrant and refugee communities. They consult and liaise widely and provide customer feedback on the impact of government initiatives on migrant and refugee communities so Centrelink can improve service delivery. For information on the role of Multicultural Service Officers and Social Workers, please see the fact sheets available from the following the links:



• [www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/vLanguageFilestoreByCodes/mcco294_0512_en/\\$File/co294_0512en.pdf](http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/vLanguageFilestoreByCodes/mcco294_0512_en/$File/co294_0512en.pdf)

• [\\$File/mcco267_0512en.pdf](http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/vLanguageFilestoreByCodes/mcco267_0512_en/$File/mcco267_0512en.pdf)

For more information, visit www.centrelink.gov.au.

Community Connections – Community Living Association, Inc.

Community Connections works alongside young people (aged 12-18 years) and families where there are issues that could lead to early home leaving and/or early disengaging from school. Using an early intervention and community development framework, our work encompasses individual support, group and project work as well as creating links with the school and wider community.

Programs include:

- Reconnect (Department of Family, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs),
- Youth Support Coordinator initiative (Department of Communities)
- Youth Connections (Brisbane Youth Service (BYS) led consortia, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations)

School Refusal Project

In 2008, Community Connections commissioned a review of school refusal literature and engaged in a small scoping project which gathered data from parents, students, school authorities, other service agencies and Community Connections referrals. From that scoping study, Community Connection have developed:

- A framework which outlines the potentially contributing realms to entrenched school refusal
- A framework of intervention drawing on our practice experience and the literature
- A suggested service response to 'entrenched' school refusal which could be trialled.

Community Project

This project was initiated in 2008 by a group of year 12 students who wanted to find a way of increasing others understanding of their cultures and experiences in order to reduce racism in the wider community. The project shares the stories of students and staff and has grown into an amazing project, bringing a wide and diverse young group of young people and communities together across the whole school community.

For more information on these services and projects, contact Community Connections on 07 3266 5199 or email: cocomail@tps.com.au.

Home Of Expressive Arts In Learning (HEAL) Program – Milpera State High School

The HEAL program (Home of Expressive Arts in Learning) is based at Milpera State High School, in Chelmer. Milpera is a state secondary school which is an intensive English language centre offering educational and settlement services to prepare newly arrived immigrant and refugee students for participation in secondary schools around the Brisbane area.

HEAL is a school-based mental health program which uses the creative arts, via Art Psychotherapy, Music Therapy, and “Art for relaxation” to aid newly arrived adolescent students of refugee and immigrant backgrounds. Art therapists, music therapists and an art teacher work in the school setting, to enhance the well-being of students in the multicultural school population, to aid in settlement and ultimately improve learning outcomes. HEAL offers an Outreach program to other schools with refugee students who would benefit from some creative intervention. For a fee, such students may attend HEAL, or HEAL therapists will visit other schools on request.

For more information, contact Bethany Mahadeo or Adele Rice at Milpera SHS on 07 3379 5588 or email: admin@milperashs.eq.edu.au marked “Attention-HEAL”.

Jabiru RESpec

RESpec provides early intervention and prevention, individual support and community capacity building programs and services for children and young people in their families and communities in Brisbane’s northern suburbs.

For more information, contact Jabiru on 07 3269 0044 or email: office@jabiru.org.au.

The Mossford Program – Arethusa College

The Mossford Program is an alternative education program for girls in year 9-10, which endeavours to empower young women, by developing their potential and responsibility as they prepare for life. The program offers numeracy, literacy and life skills in the morning and Arts (Drama, Dance, Art) workshops in the afternoon. Individuals are given opportunities in work experience and cultural experiences, as well. The main aim of the program is to help young women to move forward. Young women may choose to stay with the program through to the completion of year 12, choosing alternative pathways to reach their goals. The program is held at 10 Love St, Spring Hill and enrolments are taken through Arethusa College in Burpengary.

For more information, contact Arethusa College on 07 3888 0709 or email: admin@arethusa.qld.edu.au.

Project Circuit Breaker – Mission Australia

Mission Australia’s Project Circuit Breaker (PCB) is a free and mobile early intervention and intervention service. PCB offers support to families with young people (10 - 16 years old) on Brisbane’s northside, who are experiencing conflict and who want to make changes to their lives. The Queensland Department of Communities, through the Future Directions early Intervention and Prevention Initiative, funds the service. PCB’s team has developed a wide range of collaborative partnerships in community and government to support our clients better.

For more information, contact Project Circuit Breaker on 07 3621 4000 or email: pcb@missionaustralia.com.au.

Scripture Union Queensland

Scripture Union (SU) Qld is the fastest growing youth and children’s organisation in Australia. We are passionate about strengthening our communities through the protection and development of our youth. We do this through our

school chaplaincy service, camps, holiday programs and kids-at-risk programs. We exist to bring hope to a young generation and it's a blessing to come into contact with others who share that passion.

School Chaplaincy

SU Qld Chaplains provide spiritual and emotional support to school communities. They are in the prevention and support business: helping students find a better way to deal with issues ranging from family breakdown and loneliness to drug abuse, depression and suicide. They provide a listening ear and a caring presence for kids in crisis and those who just need a friend. They also provide support for staff and parents in school communities.

Vocational Training

With such a large presence in youth work, and as the largest employer of school chaplains in Australia, we believe it is critical that youth and children's workers are trained to support and care for students with excellence, and that they work well alongside other professionals serving our communities.

Through our commitment to providing quality training pathways, we have developed the YMIS Diploma of Youth Work. Our qualified and experienced staff, alongside prominent industry professionals, deliver this nationally-recognised qualification that has now also become highly sought-after by many other organisations and individuals outside SU Qld.

For more information on, please contact SU Qld on 1300 478 753 or visit the website www.suqld.org.au. For further information on SU Qld Vocational Training, please visit www.ymis.suqld.org.au.

Supporting Children In Primary School (SCIPS) – Sunny Kids

SunnyKids aims to break intergenerational cycles of poverty and disadvantage, providing the hope and resilience necessary to move forward, both as individuals and as a society.

The SCIPS program connects families with relevant community resources and professional services to help them overcome the root causes of issues that are resulting in the child's learning or schooling difficulties. Through regularly monitoring progress with school authorities, an integrated comprehensive support structure can be built up around the child.

Key Objectives:

- To facilitate community support and interventions when kids first show signs of disengaging from education
- To re-engage disengaged children in education, by building a platform from which they can reach their full potential
- To build meaningful, long lasting connections and partnerships between schools and community organisations

If you'd like to find out about establishing a SCIPS program in your area or for more information, contact SunnyKids on 07 5479 0394 or email: info@sunnykids.org.au.

Youth Outreach Service (YOS) – Salvation Army

The Salvation Army Youth Outreach Service offers a supportive environment where through compassionate and skilled service youth "at risk" can find hope and achieve their potential. YOS endeavours to contact and engage with young people 12 to 20 years of age (inclusive) who are "at risk" of homelessness or are homeless and / or in need of support.

YOS provides a range of programs across all four of their sites at Fortitude Valley, Caboolture, Lawnton and Stafford, including education programs which offer young people disengaged from mainstream education an opportunity to complete their Year 10 and Senior Certificates in a flexible setting that also offers life skills and personal development workshops.

- Fortitude Valley School in partnership with St James College for those aged 15 – 19 years.
- Lawnton and Caboolture Schools in partnership with EQ for those aged 15 – 17 years.
- Stafford School in partnership with Everton Park SHS for those also aged 15 – 17 years.

For more information, contact YOS on or email:

Other Projects And Programs

The following services who did not hold stalls on the day provided information about their services to the event organisers for inclusion in this report.

Employment Connect – Multicultural Development Association (MDA)

The MDA Employment Connect – Improving Access to Employment for Young people from a refugee background assists young refugees (15-19years) who are no longer engaged in school or another vocational activity. The program provides training and activities around the core focus areas of settlement life skills, employability skills, job preparation skills, career exploration and hope and confidence building over 10 weeks. Participants also have access to a youth worker who will also provide individual support and post placement support for a period of 3 months. The MDA Employment Connect program is funded by the Queensland State Government Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) as part of the Get Set for Work program under the “Skilling Queenslanders for Work” initiative.

For more information, contact Milly Sharman at MDA on 07 3777 5400 or email: mailbox@mdainc.org.au.

MindMatters

MindMatters is a national mental health initiative for secondary schools funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing. MindMatters is a resource and professional development program supporting Australian secondary schools in promoting and protecting the mental health, social and emotional wellbeing of all the members of school communities.

For more information, please visit: www.mindmatters.edu.au.

Delegate Information And Contact Details

The forum was attended by 102 delegates from schools, community services and government agencies. The delegates listed below have all consented to sharing their details with others who attended on the day.

Name	Organisation	Phone	Email
Meissa Ballard	ACU Student	0410 345 126	melballard83@yahoo.com.au
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April Roth	ACU Student	3263 6950 / 0400 223 346	the_pink_world_traveller@hotmail.com
Michelle Shand	ACU Student	0415 155 282	michelle.shand@internode.on.net
Nicki Zielinski	ACU student	5499 1135 / 0417 216 079	nzielinski@comcen.com.au
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Kate Hinds	Dept. of Communities – Western Districts Youth Justice Service Centre	3710 1242	kate.hinds@communities.qld.gov.au
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Tamiera Treblico	Project Circuit Breaker – Mission Australia		treblicot@missionaustralia.com.au
Vicki Savage	Qld Police, Petrie Division	3285 0232	savage.victorial@police.qld.gov.au
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Cheryl Azzopardi	Salvation Army Youth Outreach Service	3854 1245	yosbrisbane@aue.salvationarmy.org
Stewart Hartley	Salvation Army Youth Outreach Service	3854 1245	
Murray Robertson	Salvation Army Youth Outreach Service	3854 1245	
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