



youth affairs network qld

## **Impacts of the Queensland State Government Cuts to the Youth Sector: Initial Findings**

The following report is based upon data collected from a survey administered by the Youth Affairs Network of Queensland (YANQ) in September and October 2012. Those surveyed are members of YANQ and provided their responses on the condition of confidentiality.

The survey asked how the Queensland State Government funding cuts impacted these organisations and how this impacted on their ability to work with young people. Surveys were distributed via YANQ's networks to over 3000 workers in the youth sector, but mainly to several hundred YANQ members.

There was a total of 72 responses, 42 of which reported cuts to either funding, staff or both. This report will look at both the cuts to the youth sector and the impact on young people, with cutting of funding to youth services and the cuts to the Get Set for Work Program. The effects on young people and the youth sector will also be discussed and finally this report will look at how the organizations affected would YANQ, their peak body to respond.

### **Qld State Government Cuts to the Youth Sector**

From the responses provided, 28 direct youth services reported having their funding cut. 26 organizations provided a dollar amount, which totalled \$2,331,119. The other two that received funding cuts identified a percentage of their total funding that was lost at 18% and 13.75%. 14 of the youth services reported losing staff, with a total of 45.75 full-time equivalent positions being cut.

### **Get Set For Work Cuts**

14 of the organisations who responded reported having losing funding due to cessation of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. The Get Set for Work program was developed and funded by the state government, fulfilling their legislative obligation to provide young people in highly disadvantaged communities access to programs designed to overcome significant barriers to accessing further education, training and employment. A total of \$3,717,069 was cut from services, resulting in the loss of 49.16 full time equivalent staff.

### **Impacts on Youth Work and Young People**

Of the responses counted 72% of the respondents were able to articulate how the cuts to funding and staff have impacted on the ability to work with young people in Queensland. This question was open-ended and individual responses may not have provided a holistic and definitive representation of the full impacts experienced.

The biggest impact reported was the closure of specific programs, with 13 of the respondents reporting that their organization had to cease or merge programs due to funding cuts. This also helps to explain the second biggest impact – less time with young people and having to reduce direct services. Another key impact identified was the reduction of staff and resources, which limited the time with young people, in addition to creating more work for remaining staff members. 3 of the responses identified that the organization they worked for was forced to close.

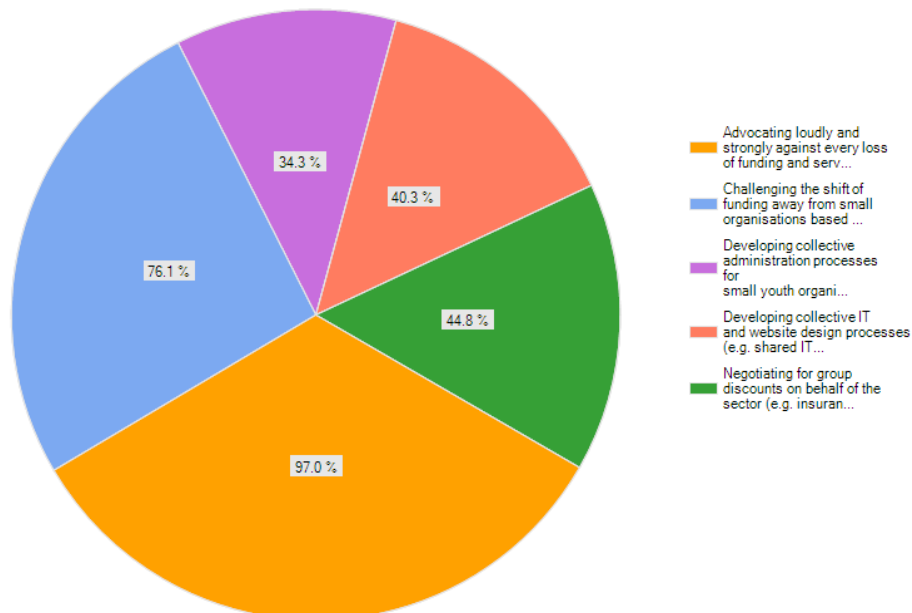
In addition, the following were also impacts on young people identified by the respondents:

- ⤴ No support for young people disengaging from school
- ⤴ Higher pressure on workers to do more work with young people in less time.
- ⤴ No brokerage available to assist clients.
- ⤴ Reduction in service opening hours, resulting in less time with young people.
- ⤴ Reduced training opportunities and employment programs for young people.
- ⤴ No longer able to train volunteers to help out at youth programs.
- ⤴ No longer able to advocate at an industry level.
- ⤴ No more prevention programs to prevent young people entering the criminal justice system.

### YANQ responding to cuts

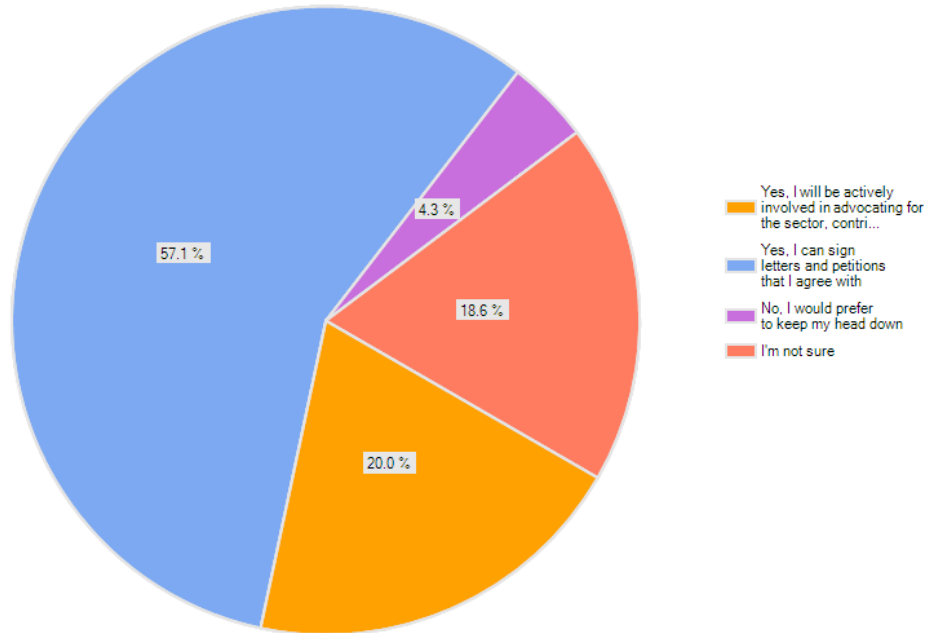
The final section of the survey asked the respondents how they would like YANQ to respond as the peak body for the youth sector in Queensland. 97% of the respondents want YANQ to respond by “Advocating loudly and strongly against every loss of funding and services to the sector”. The break down of responses can be found on the following chart.

What would you like to see YANQ doing to support your service, and the broader youth sector? Tick all that apply and add your own suggestions.



The final question asked concerned whether the individual respondent and their organization would be willing to engage in joint public advocacy with YANQ. 57.1% of respondents identified that they would sign letters and petitions, with only 4.3% stating they would prefer to keep their head down. The breakdown of responses can be found on the following chart.

YANQ was established as a collective advocacy body for the sector.  
Would you or your service be willing to engage in joint public advocacy with us?



## Conclusion

This report has highlighted the impacts that funding cuts have had on a sample of the youth work sector in Queensland. The responses from this survey have provided an insight in to the impacts that funding cuts are having on organisations, youth workers and young people. The vast majority organisations that responded have asked for YANQ to support them and advocate on their behalf, with only a few organisations wanting to 'lay low'.

Many organisations are willing to take on joint endeavours with YANQ to advocate for their needs. Further information about the youth work sector in Queensland, funding cuts and advocacy can be found at [www.yanq.org.au](http://www.yanq.org.au).