



youth affairs network qld

MEDIA RELEASE

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Forsaken young people

Youth Affairs Network of Queensland (YANQ) is questioning the lack of investment in the youth sector, the front line in working with children and young people. In its [annual pre-budget submission](#) to the Treasury, YANQ has once again outlined a number of urgent proposals requiring funding by State Government. Queensland 2019 Local Hero, Youth Advocate and Vice-President of YANQ, Elijah Buol OAM said “Every year we have been raising the need for investment in the youth sector but It seems that there are more pressing priorities for the Government than wellbeing of our young people. For all intent and purposes, it seems young people have been forsaken”.

“Neglecting children should ring warning bells for the Queensland Government and the broader community” said Debbie Kilroy OAM, prominent Human Rights Advocate and a committee member of YANQ. She went on to say “Unless we invest in children’s lives, we will end up paying a much higher price both in terms of social harmony as well as financial cost to the Government. Lack of support exacerbates the chances of these children becoming entrenched in homelessness, developing ongoing mental health issues, and ending up in the criminal justice system.”

Every child deserves to have the support and opportunities available to make positive choices. The responsibility for providing this support and opportunities lie in the hands of adults in society. Unfortunately, many young people do not have a significant adult in their life due to a range of socio-economic reasons. These young people have no meaningful connection to family or community. Many have been abused in various ways to a point where their trust of the outside world has been totally broken.

Youth workers possess the necessary skills that allows them to build relationships with these young people. However, youth services are struggling with demand and are unable to provide the quality services needed due to lack of funding. As a result, burn out is very high and the youth sector struggles to retain workers. Youth workers are not receiving appropriate supervision, training and professional development and this means the Government’s current investment is not maximised.

YANQ has been praising the State Government for some of the progressive reforms it has undertaken in recent years which includes transferring children from adult prisons to the youth justice system. YANQ has also been grateful for receiving \$100,000 interim funding over the past two years. However, this level of funding does not allow YANQ to undertake all the necessary work to support and represent the youth sector across the state.

“Young people are the backbone of modern Queensland and investing in them today, is preparing a better tomorrow. The brick we lay today, determine the foundation of modern Queensland in the next generations to come. But this foundation can’t be realised unless we put more funding and resources in youth sector in order to support young people who need our support the most. Therefore, I appeal to Queensland government to invest more in youth sector and young people as this approach sets a prosperity agenda for Queensland” said Elijah Buol, Vice President of YANQ.

YANQ is the peak body representing the youth sector for the past 30 years. YANQ is the only voice for marginalised young people with over 600 individuals and organisational members from across Queensland.

Core operational funding of YANQ was cut by LNP/Newman government 6 years ago and has still not been reinstated by the Labor Government.

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