

Youth Affairs Network Qld

# What is Youth Work?

Defining a Sector

Liz Archer

Final Project Report | November 2012



**YANQ believes that the Traditional Custodians and primary Culture of Australia is Aboriginal.**

Aboriginal Lore has always ruled this Land. We recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) cultures as distinct, separate cultures. We acknowledge Torres Strait Islander peoples as Custodians of the Torres Strait Islands and surrounding waters.

**YANQ supports the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to self determination.**

We recognise the capacity of communities to generate their own solutions to the problems imposed on them by continuing colonisation and ongoing pressures to assimilate. Further, we value the wisdom and leadership ATSI cultures can bring to addressing the problems faced by Australian society. We can benefit greatly, at an individual, community and social level, from embracing opportunities to learn from ATSI Culture, Lore, Land and Sea.

## **What is Youth Work?**

### *Defining a sector*

Liz Archer

November 2012

Report on a research project conducted for the Youth Affairs Network of Queensland.

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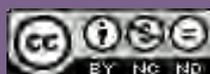
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## Introduction and Background

YANQs **Youth Sector in Queensland** Report (Feb 2010) identified the lack of a commonly held definition of Youth Work as a major obstacle to ensuring that Youth Work remains a clearly identified and valued occupation within the broader community services sector. The report also noted that youth program contracts are increasingly going to large, nationally or externally based organisations with insufficient understanding of and commitment to local or “youth centred” service and community contexts.

Youth Workers are increasingly expected to take on roles or responsibilities that were previously undertaken by government or statutory bodies (e.g. Child Protection, Juvenile Justice, etc). Increasingly workers in the broader Youth or Community Services Sectors either do not identify as being Youth Workers but as Case Workers, Child Protection Officers, Education Consultants, Community Development Officers, and so on. Where workers do identify as being “a Youth Worker”, they are being given insufficient recognition or being treated as “junior workers”.<sup>1</sup>

YANQ consequently released two discussion papers to assist the sector to develop and adopt a definition reflective of the purpose and nature of Youth Work, including Murri Youth Work. The **What is Youth Work** discussion paper considers the history, different approaches to and current status of Youth Work and proposes a working definition.<sup>2</sup> The **Which Wei? Values in Youth Work: A Murri Perspective** discussion paper

looks specifically at Murri Youth Work, including its history and current context and focuses on the values and attitudes required to work well with young Murris.<sup>3</sup>

Consultations were then held in March 2012 in 4 regions throughout Queensland for workers to discuss whether they saw “Youth Work” as being different from “working with young people” and if so, how they would define it. The consultations included gauging support for the above working definition and included holding separate sessions for Murri Youth Workers. The outcomes from this round of consultations are documented in **Are We There Yet? Findings from What is Youth Work Consultations** (August 2012).<sup>4</sup>

In summary, over 80 workers participated in 8 sessions held in 4 regions. All participants saw Youth Work as:

- a distinct occupational group from those which happened to work with young people (e.g. teachers, social workers, child protection workers, case workers),
- being values driven and
- of unique worth within the broader community services sector.

Views about what made Youth Work distinct or different to work with young people, and of the proposed working definition were reformatted into an alternative definition which also included a separate section on Murri Youth Work. Workshop sessions were very short,

<sup>1</sup> YANQ (May 2010), Which Wei? Values in Youth Work: A Murri Perspective. A Discussion Paper, Melissa Lucashenko (Yugambah) – the paper can be downloaded from YANQs website: <http://www.yanq.org.au/our-work/2611-qwhich-wei-values-in-youth-work-a-murri-perspectiveq>  
<sup>2</sup> YANQ (Oct 2010), What is Youth Work? A Discussion Paper, Suzi Quixley – the paper can be downloaded from YANQs website: <http://www.yanq.org.au/what-is-youth-work>  
<sup>3</sup> YANQ (July 2012), Are We There Yet? Findings from What is Youth Work Consultations, Liz Archer. The paper and survey can be downloaded from YANQs website: <http://www.yanq.org.au/what-is-youth-work>

<sup>1</sup> YANQ, (Feb 2010), The Youth Sector in Queensland – the report can be downloaded from YANQs website: <http://www.yanq.org.au/workforce>  
<sup>2</sup> YANQ (Oct 2010), What is Youth Work? A Discussion Paper, Suzi Quixley – the paper can be downloaded from YANQs website: <http://www.yanq.org.au/what-is-youth-work>

with a significant number of participants being either new to the field or to thinking about this particular topic. The resultant draft definition was expressed differently, had a lot more detail about youth centred and needs based youth work, and lacked some of the focus and weight on rights based youth work compared with the original working definition. The consultations also provided an opportunity for Murri workers to contribute their views about Youth Work in general and more specifically about working with young Murris.<sup>5</sup>

YANQ decided to test support for both definitions and on the basis of this, along with input from the consultations already conducted, to determine a final definition to adopt and review at regular intervals. The following report outlines this resulting definition including the method used to derive it, and the degree of support for each component within it.

YANQ also conducted a project in 2012, led by Michelle Hayes, a student on placement who interviewed 5 young people about what they thought a “Youth Worker” was, whether they trusted their worker, what they valued and liked about seeing a Youth Worker, and, whether and how this differed from other “professional support.” Comments from these interviews have been included in this report to illustrate specific aspects of the definition of Youth Work when viewed from a youth perspective.

<sup>5</sup> See **Appendix 2** for copies of both the draft definition proposed in the *What is Youth Work?* Paper and that developed as a result of the consultations in March 2012.

## The Definition

A **Youth Worker** is someone who works with young people within the context of their culture, identity and place to ensure their rights are protected and promoted and their needs are genuinely met.

A **Young Person** is someone who sees themselves differently to an older child but who is not yet an adult or being given their due rights as an adult.

The **primary purpose of Youth Work** is to resource and support young people who want help to access, navigate and make the best of their life choices.

*Youth Workers do this by:*

### Promoting strengths and change

- Using a strengths based, solution focussed approach to our work with young people
- Recognising the worth of all young people and building on their assets and strengths
- Helping young people make their own choices and learn from their own experiences
- Showing young people what is possible and helping them achieve their own goals
- Helping young people who need it to navigate the best possible pathway in life.
- Being role models ourselves: setting an example in our own community
- Building young people’s belief in the possibility of change and their capacity to contribute to



- positive social and individual change
- Helping young people to adjust to change and harness opportunities

### Supporting young people's culture, place and identity

- Supporting positive connections between young people, their families and the broader community
- Recognising the diversity amongst young people, and listening to and valuing individual young people's needs, ideas, preferences and choices
- Supporting the development of young people's identity as an individual, within their family and as part of broader communities
- Encouraging and supporting young people to take responsibility as active global, national and local citizens
- Advocating for young people within their family and community
- Recognising the integral relationship between young people and their family, community and society
- Recognising that young people identify with a range of different cultures and supporting them in developing their own cultural identity
- Helping parents, adults and elders to understand young people

### Working ethically

- Being conscious of our structural power and influence as a Youth Worker, and not taking power over young people.
- Particularly recognising the cultural context of marginalised young people and taking responsibility for learning to work in a culturally appropriate way
- Being responsible for what we do with or for young people and their families and being able to justify why we do it.
- Being clear about our ethical responsibilities to ourselves, young people, families, communities, our organisation and within the broader sector.
- Being proud of our identity as a Youth Worker: supporting one another, seeking to ensure new colleagues understand what Youth Work means and educating other workers or services about young people and about our role

### Meeting young people's needs

- Providing proactive and holistic support to young people
- Providing young people with linkages to other services and supporting them in accessing these
- Providing practical, useful support to address young people's real situations and needs

including being able to provide consistent, longer term services for young people who may require more intensive support.

- Using an integrated and broad range of models, tools and approaches consistent with providing youth centred, culturally appropriate services and supports. This includes community development and peer based projects as well as personal support.
- Providing flexible support for young people outside formal, statutory systems.

### Providing informal, youth centred support

- Working at the young person's pace
- Maintaining young people's confidentiality
- Remaining open-minded about people's backgrounds and circumstances and treating each situation individually
- Providing youth centred services and supports in a friendly and informal way
- Being there for young people
- Genuinely caring about young people
- Supporting youth led and youth participation activities

### Promoting young people's rights and empowerment

- Respecting and promoting young people's rights
- Supporting young people's voices to be heard within their families and the broader community
- Being solid and proud defenders of "youth culture:" challenging negative assumptions made about young people in our communities.
- Encouraging and supporting young people to be agents of change – both individually and collectively at both a personal and social level
- Helping young people to understand their rights, and resourcing young people to address breaches of their human rights
- Lobbying the government to improve the situation for young people
- Promoting the actual and potential contributions of young people to the wider community
- Advocating young people's right to actively participate in community life and access their fair share of community resources

### Values underpinning Youth Work

Youth Work is deliberately values based. The values upheld by Youth Workers are those consistent with rights based, young person driven, culturally relevant Youth Work (e.g. respect, trust, honesty, empowerment, fairness).

## Concluding statement

***Youth Workers recognise that working to genuinely empower young people will inevitably require a higher than usual level of commitment, self-examination and a willingness to grapple with social issues affecting marginalised young people. It will require clear articulation of the multiple social advantages of enabling active civic participation by young people and undertaking community development – in particular, the social value of contributing toward a vibrant, genuinely inclusive democracy in Queensland.***





## Murri Youth Work

**Murri youth work includes and supports the statements and principles made in the overall (or general parts) of the definition.**

**Murri Youth Work also includes:  
Following Murri traditions, laws and protocols and respecting the full diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Australia**

**Being solid and proud defenders of “Murri culture”. Challenging assumptions made about Murris and Murri youth in our communities.**

- persisting in supporting pride in being Murri. Holding out against the constant barrage of “whiteness” at school and in other places and encouraging young Murri pride in their “blackness” and cultural identity.
- supporting and learning from the aunties and nannas who are growing up lots of family
- seeking to involve elders and extended family where possible and linking young people in with supportive family members
- recognising that Murri Youth Work is often about a search for identity and helping heal transgenerational traumas resulting from parents and grandparents being grown up within white institutions and not being allowed to speak our language or practice our cultures: as well as being culturally traumatised these parents have little knowledge of how to grow up their own children. Murri Youth Work therefore includes strengthening and healing family connections where possible. Murri Youth Workers play a critical role in modelling appropriate behaviour within communities and often take on a closer relationship with young Murris, including being seen as “Aunty” or “Uncle.” This must be

understood and accepted by the broader Youth Sector.

- Advocating for young Murris within their families and communities
- Playing a broker or bridging role between young people and their families/communities and encouraging both to understand the other’s perspectives

**Recognising that cultural mentoring is an essential part of Murri Youth Work**

**For Murris this means:**

- supporting one another as Murri Youth Workers no matter where we come from
- finding our own cultural mentors & seeking their guidance
- finding out whatever we can about our family history and cultural backgrounds, especially if these have been taken from us
- being prepared to act as strong role models for young Murris and within our Murri families and communities.
- doing what we can to educate others about Murris and working with young Murris

**For others working with young Murris it means:**

- seeking – and accepting - cultural and other guidance from local Murris
- respecting cultural contexts or protocols without the need to question them
- accepting that you will rarely have the relationship that Murri Youth Workers have with young Murris, doing whatever you can to acknowledge and support their cultural development as Murris, and finding the best ways to offer what you can as non-Indigenous workers.

### 3: Project methodology and demographic information

#### Methodology

As outlined above and documented in *Are We There Yet?*, a series of consultations about defining Youth Work in Qld were held in 4 regions in March 2012. Regions included Brisbane metropolitan, Rockhampton, Townsville and Mount Isa with an estimated 83 participants overall contributing their ideas.

Because of some of the key questions arising from the initial consultations, a survey to ascertain support for various components of the definition was developed and put on line as a *Survey Monkey*<sup>6</sup>. The survey was kept open for about 6 weeks, closing at the end of September, 2012. It was promoted through YANQ's networks including C-Plan regional groups and the Murri Reference Group, displayed prominently on YANQ's website and included in YANQ newsletters. On the basis of feedback from previous consultations, the survey was particularly promoted to workers with experience in working directly with young people and who identified as being "Youth Workers," rather than service or agency managers, funding or policy officers and so on.

The survey included demographic information about each respondent as well as asking them to indicate which elements of the proposed definition they supported. 41 surveys were submitted on line. 6 were excluded from all analysis since the respondents only provided demographic information about themselves but did not go on to complete any other survey questions. A further 10 respondents indicated which statements defining *youth worker*, *young person* and the *purpose of youth work* they agreed with but either did not respond to or did not agree with any of the additional statements describing how Youth Workers supported or interacted with young people. A flaw in the survey design was not including a check box to indicate where each respondent did NOT agree with including any of the statements proposed in each section of the survey.

Of the 35 surveys deemed eligible for inclusion, 23 respondents currently work with young people in Queensland, 5 had done so over the past 5 years and 7

had never worked as a Youth Worker in Queensland. Of the 5 respondents who were not currently employed as a Qld Youth Worker, only one completed the entire survey with the other 4 all indicating their support for the 3 broad statements defining a Youth Worker, a young person and the primary purpose of youth work, but skipping all other sections.

The 35 surveys included 8 from Murriss, 6 of whom currently work in Queensland. 3 of these completed the whole survey, including the statements about Murri Youth Work, and one completed the questions about the general definition and stated they supported having a Murri definition like that generated through the consultations but did not go on to specify which statements to include. The remaining two only answered the first set of questions about defining a Youth Worker, a young person and the primary purpose of Youth Work.

There were responses from 2 Murriss who were not currently working in the Qld youth sector. One of these had worked in Queensland in the previous 5 years but only completed the first 3 broad statements and did not complete either the remainder of the general questions or any of those about Murri Youth Work. Similarly, the Murri respondent who had never worked in the Qld youth sector only completed the first three questions and did not provide any input about the Murri definition, including whether or not to include it.

It was therefore decided to only use the 23 surveys completed by current workers in Queensland in the data analysis.

#### Appendix 5: Statistical Analysis of Survey

**Respondent Statements** contains a table detailing all responses.

The survey provided two alternative definitions for each of the following:

- a youth worker,
- a young person and
- the purpose of youth work.

Respondents also had the opportunity to provide additional alternatives. The definition includes those

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix 1: The Survey instrument used for a full copy of the survey

preferred by the majority of respondents.

Most of the remaining questions in the survey asked participants to select the statements they wanted included in the definition as descriptors of how Youth Workers achieve their occupational purpose or to suggest alternatives. Only those statements which received approx 50%+ support were included in the final definition. In other words, at least 11 of the 23 respondents had to indicate their support for a statement for it to be included in the general definition. Statements within the Murri section of the definition required support from at least 3 of the 6 Murri respondents.

**Appendix 3: Final definition compared with previous drafts** shows which parts of the definition were derived from the previous consultation and which from the working draft first proposed by YANQ in the **What is Youth Work?** Report.

**Appendix 4: All descriptor statements ranked in order of preference** is a table of all the descriptor statements included in the survey in ranked order.

### Sample size, completion rates and data exclusions



56% (or 23 of 41) of all respondents were currently working in the Qld youth sector. A further 5 (12%) had worked in the sector previously, within the last 5 years. 7 (17%) respondents had never worked in Qld and the remaining 6 surveys (15%) contained insufficient information for them to be included as useful evidence since the respondents had only completed the demographic information but provided no other input into the survey.

It was decided to only use those surveys completed by current workers, which gave a sample of 23 surveys.

### Gender



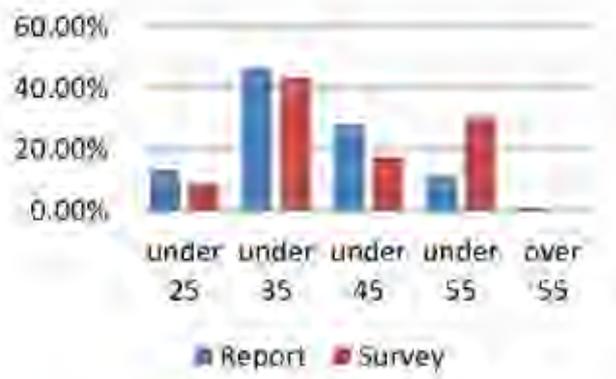
Worker responses included 14 women and 9 men. The graph on the left compares this with statistics given in YANQ's 2010 report *The Youth Sector in Queensland*. Although a small sample size, the surveys mix is broadly representative of the gender make up of the youth sector.

### Cultural background

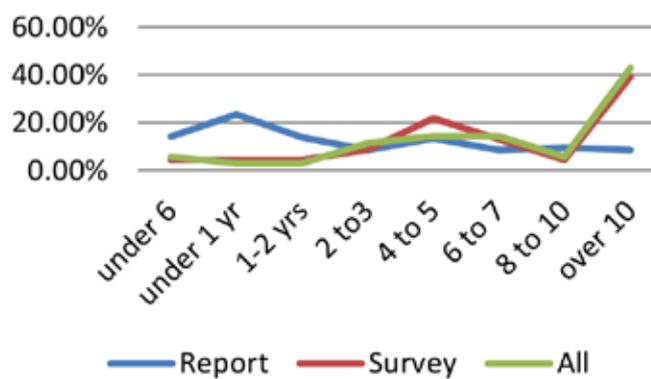


6 workers identified as Murri. The remaining were other Australian, although one also stated they immigrated very early in life and several also gave anglo-celtic or similar additional explanations to "other Australian" as their cultural heritage. 5 of these workers also worked with young Murriss.

## Age

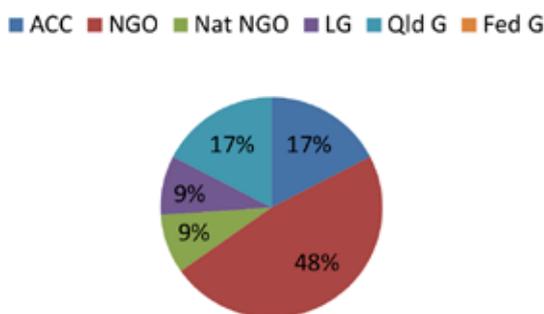


## Years Working in the Sector



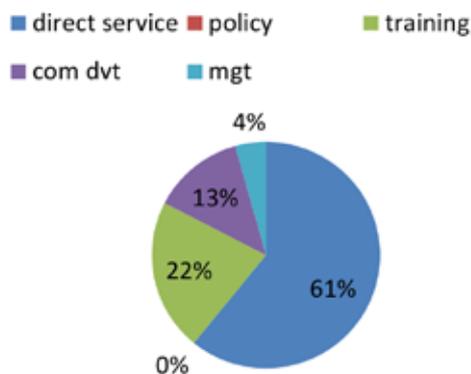
As illustrated by the above two graphs, the survey included an over-representation of older workers and those who had been working in the field for more than 2 or 3 years. Although a small sample, it appears that the most interest in defining Youth Work and associated debates may be from older and/or more experienced workers. It may be that workers need time to recognise the significance of the issue. This is less concerning than inferring that the debate has outlived its relevance. Given evidence that about half the Qld youth sector workforce leaves the sector after about three years, it may be worthwhile reflecting more on how to engage newer Youth Workers with this issue.<sup>7</sup> Interestingly, a lot of participants at the consultations, especially Murri or newer workers, said that they had not considered aspects of Youth Work including its values, definitions, purpose, and so on, and that they were critical concerns for the sector, especially given the proliferation of service contracts and program areas which clearly support government driven agendas rather than youth driven services.

## Employing agency



Almost 3/4 (74%) of workers came from the NGO sector, with the majority of these being employed by state based organisations (48%) and Aboriginal Community Corporations (17%). Of the remainder, 17% worked with the Qld Govt and 9% with Local Govt.

## Primary work history



YANQ achieved its aim of hearing primarily from those with a background in working directly with young people. 61% (3 in 5) respondents had a primary work history in direct service provision and a further 13% in community development.

<sup>7</sup> YANQ (2010) The Youth Sector in Queensland, p 43



## 4: How the definition was derived

### Summary

As noted in the introduction, in March 2012 approximately 83 Youth Workers (and workers with young people) participated in half day workshops looking at defining Youth Work across Queensland, including identifying its values base. This resulted in significantly changing an existing draft which YANQ had offered as an initial starting point and in a **Survey Monkey** being then used to further “test” support for each draft. Whilst 41 people responded to the Survey only the 23 from current workers in Queensland were used to determine the final draft.

The workshops in March included separate consultations with approximately 40 Murri Youth Workers and a further 8 workers identifying as Murri responded to the Survey. Of these 8, only 3 Murris were from Queensland who also completed the additional questions for Murri respondents about Murri Youth Work.

**Appendix 3: Final definition compared with previous drafts** contains a comparative analysis of which statements were included from each draft. **Appendix 4: All descriptor statements ranked in order of preference** ranks responses in order of how many survey respondents wanted them included in the definition. **Appendix 5 Statistical analysis of Survey descriptor statements** shows how popular each statement was and indicates whether it would have been included if responses from previous workers or those from outside Queensland were also included.

The following section of the report provides an analysis of each aspect of the definition including:

- where it was derived from
- the extent to which it was supported, and
- any additional comments received from the Survey

### Youth Worker

*They are a person who works with younger people to make sure they are doing okay,*

*like a teacher. But it's not a teacher because they ...are focussing on you not your school work. [Having] confidentiality makes it more reassuring.*

*It's just someone to be there, someone to be there when you don't have anyone to go to or you need help*

*Young people's comments about Youth Workers*

**A Youth Worker is someone who works with young people within the context of their culture, identity and place to ensure their rights are protected and promoted and their needs are genuinely met**

This statement was derived from the definition resulting from the workshops and was supported by 17 of the 23 (73.9%) workers, with no further comments made about it. Another added the following, in bold, to it: “*someone who works with young people within the context of their culture, identity and place to ensure **they have the support to ensure that their rights are protected and promoted and they are able to voice their needs and interests and aims and have access to support to have these met***”.

Additionally, one respondent stated “*Other than the use of the phrase ‘primary goal’, I believe youth work incorporates both examples above.*”

One respondent used the above definition but removed the reference to protecting and promoting young people’s rights.

Another added “*respectfully support[ing young people] to make a healthy transition to adulthood*” to the above preferred definition. The 6th alternative response was as follows: “*A youth worker is someone who has a*

natural affinity and respect for young people and is able to work along side them and support them in any decision they make however in a parallel manner be able to be a role model to that young person and try to guide them to choose the right decisions. Someone who is not blinded and thinks they will be able to “save” the young person.”

Only one worker preferred the definition provided in the **What is Youth Work** report (4.3%).

## Young Person

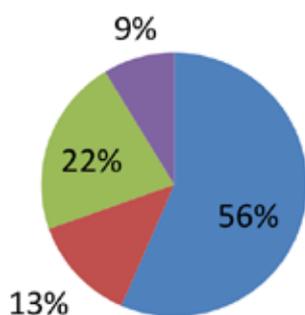
**A young person is someone who sees themselves differently to an older child but who is not yet an adult or being given their due rights as an adult**

This statement was derived from the workshop definition and was supported by 13 of the 23 workers (56.5%), with no further comments made about it. 3 (13%) preferred the alternative provided in the **What is Youth Work** paper.

Both the survey and the consultations showed strong support for the definition of a “young person” as being too difficult to categorise within age limits.

### Definition of a Young Person

■ Consult ■ Paper ■ age based ■ other



Neither of the alternatives in the Survey included age as part of the defining features associated with being a young person. Only 5 (21.7%) respondents wanted “youth” to be defined according to a person’s age, with 3 defining a young person as aged between 12 to 25, one as between 10 to 25 and one as being aged 10 to 17.

One of the 23 respondents added “responsibilities” as well as rights to the above definition.

One saw a young person as “a person (usually between 12-35) that identifies as a young person.”

## Primary purpose of Youth Work

*[A youth worker is] someone who supports and assists young people in making decisions regarding their own life but not take over the role of making the decisions. Letting [young people] know they have their own choices. Being supportive and being there to talk to.*

*They are there for support and they are not there to say “yeah okay whatever” and not care.*

*They can give you advice on how to help you out with situations or how to do something better or how to deal with things.*

*Young people’s comments about Youth Workers*

**The primary purpose of Youth Work is to resource and support young people who want help to access, navigate and make the best of their life choices**

The two alternative definitions of the primary purpose of Youth Work provided in the survey were very similar. The definition resulting from the workshops was preferred by a very narrow margin, with 10 respondents preferring it, 8 preferring the original and 2 considering them to be “interchangeable” or “fine” with the difference being so minor it was “negligible”.

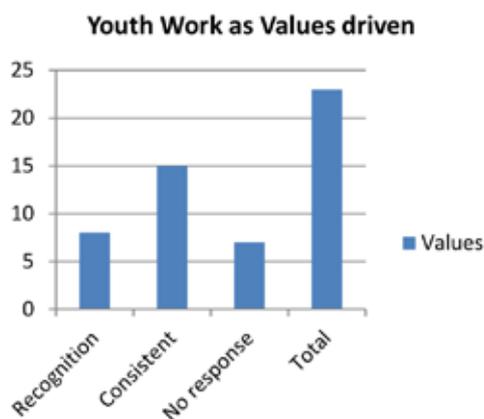
Of the remaining three responses, one added “safe and fulfilling” to the life choices that were to be optimised. A second said “the above plus being a role model, not a “friend.” Someone they can know that will always be consistent.” The third respondent re-stated their preferred definition of a Youth Worker.

## Values

*...the whole safety thing... they don't judge... are nice... confidential... funny ... crack jokes... but are still able to be serious... think of them as a friend... smile ... talk about random things... rarely yell at me ... listen... take the edge off life... aren't up themselves ... open-minded... care... respect ... not rushing things and taking the time to talk... have tissues ... not confronting and all up in your face ... cheery ... don't hold things against you or bring back past stuff ... kind natured... soft hearted...*

*Youth Worker values identified by young people*

**Youth Work is deliberately values based.  
The values upheld by Youth Workers are those consistent with rights based, young person driven, culturally relevant Youth Work (e.g. respect, trust, honesty, empowerment, fairness).**



All the Youth Workers at the consultations considered Youth Work to be values driven, as did 15 of the 23 (or 65.2%) eligible survey respondents. 7 workers did not respond to the question. This could be due to not completing the entire questionnaire. It could also indicate that they did not consider Youth Work to be values driven.

All participants at the consultations saw Youth Work as clearly and deliberately being values driven, with a high degree of congruence between many of the values individual participants identified as being of critical relevance to Youth Work. 8 survey respondents wanted the definition to recognise that Youth Work is clearly values driven. 15 wanted the definition to state that Youth Work upholds those values consistent with rights based, young person driven, culturally relevant Youth Work and to list some examples.

Three survey respondents made additional comments, with one stating that the definition should also include “equity and access” and one listing their preferred values which were *Fair, Timely, Dignifi[ed], Confidential, Impartial, Unprejudiced, Age appropriate*. The third additional comment was “You either have it or you don't in regards to working with young people, I don't believe it's something that can be learned or named within six values”.

## Descriptors

The following section looks at the level of support for each of the statements in the definition which describe how Youth Workers achieve their purpose to resource and support young people. As with the survey, they are grouped into common themes. The themes themselves are presented in order of most to least support<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>8</sup>This was determined by calculating the average score of the statements included in the definition from each theme. The themes are presented in this report in order of highest to lowest average number of participants who included them in the definition.

**Appendix 3: Final definition compared with previous drafts** shows which statements came from each of the definitions the Survey was constructed from. **Appendix 4: All descriptor statements ranked in order of preference** lists each of the descriptors in ranked order, from those included by most to least workers.

## Promoting strengths and change

*They notice changes within different people, they watch you change.*

*They take their time and show you how to work stuff out.*

*[make me feel] wanted. Needed... not needed, like alive, normal, special.*

*Young people's comments about Youth Workers*

1. Using a strengths based, solution focussed approach to our work with young people
2. Recognising the worth of all young people and building on their assets and strengths
3. Helping young people make their own choices and learn from their own experiences
4. Showing young people what is possible and helping them achieve their own goals
5. Helping young people who need it to navigate the best possible pathway in life.
6. Being role models ourselves: setting an example in our own community
7. Building young people's belief in the possibility of change and their capacity to contribute to positive social and individual change
8. Helping young people to adjust to change and harness opportunities

17 of 23 respondents indicated support for a variety of the above statements. Statement no 1 was amongst the group of 4 statements which received support from the second highest number of respondents (15) and many of the other statements within this theme received a higher than average number of "votes" overall<sup>9</sup>.

Only one statement, as follows, from the "strengths and change" theme was not included in the definition:

**Providing solid or true foundations - being the roots for young people's trees**

The above statement was derived from the Murri workshops held in as part of the initial consultations.

Only one survey respondent made additional comments, stating that "*All [the statements are] relevant: the issue here is getting young people to engage in the process, in particular disengaged young people.*"

<sup>9</sup> See **Appendix 4: All descriptor statements ranked in order of preference** which lists each of the descriptors in ranked order, from those included by most to least workers



## Culture, place and identity

*They listen to you, you can unload a whole pile of stuff and they will try and make you feel better*

*They encourage you to do what you want to do. They ask you what type of job you want to do and they give you options and help you out and show you how to get there*

*Young people's comments about Youth Workers*

1. Supporting positive connections between young people, their families and the broader community
2. Recognising the diversity amongst young people, and listening to and valuing individual young people's needs, ideas, preferences and choices
3. Supporting the development of young people's identity as an individual, within their family and as part of broader communities
4. Encouraging and supporting young people to take responsibility as active global, national and local citizens
5. Advocating for young people within their family and community
6. Recognising the integral relationship between young people and their family, community and society
7. Recognising that young people identify with a range of different cultures and supporting them in developing their own cultural identity
8. Helping parents, adults and elders to understand young people

17 of 23 respondents indicated support for a variety of the above statements.

Statement 1 about supporting positive connections between young people, families and the broader community received support from the highest number of respondents (16) of all the descriptor statements contained in the survey. No 2 was amongst the group of four selected by the second highest number (15)<sup>10</sup>.

The following four statements received insufficient support to be included in the definition.

1. Adopting an overall framework which acknowledges and supports the critical role culture plays in shaping young people's personal identity and place within broader family and social groups.
2. Recognising that young people cannot be seen in isolation from their social, cultural, historical, economic and political contexts
3. Enabling young people to become more aware of themselves and their places in the wider community
4. Working within individual young people's cultural understandings, including supporting the attached definition of Murri Youth Work

The majority of Survey respondents (14) generally supported the inclusion of a separate section Murri Youth Work and only 3 of 23 actively opposed its inclusion and the Murri participants at the consultations were emphatic about the requirement for the broader sector to acknowledge and support fundamental differences between working with young Murris and "mainstream" Youth Work. However, the statement about working within individual young people's cultural understandings and **supporting the proposed statement defining Murri Youth Work** (no 4) received insufficient support (9) to be included in the definition.

One survey respondent stated "*There is no difference in youth work Murri, Lebanese, Finnish, or otherwise.*" This is clearly a minority view, included in the group of 3 who actively opposed adopting a separate section about Murri Youth Work. See Murri Youth Work for a more detailed analysis of the above. Another participant added the statement "*Supporting youth led and youth participation activities*" which has been included below as part of the Providing informal, youth centred support theme.

<sup>10</sup> See **Appendix 4: All descriptor statements ranked in order of preference** which lists each of the descriptors in ranked order, from those included by most to least workers.



## Working ethically

*They come across as an equal rather than over the top of you.*

*I had a counsellor at the hospital that judged me. I never went back to her. She gave me a weird look, like she was looking down at me. I could sense that she was judging me. She had this whole professional feel about her and she was like 'you have to do this and this' and 'I am too good to listen to your problems even though that's what I am paid to do.'*

*Young people's comments about Youth Workers*

1. Being conscious of our structural power as a Youth Worker, and not taking power over young people
2. Particularly recognising the cultural context of marginalised young people and taking responsibility for learning to work in a culturally appropriate way
3. Being responsible for what we do, being able to justify it and remaining careful of how we use our power and influence with young people and their families.
4. Being clear about our ethical responsibilities to ourselves, young people, families, communities, our organisation and within the broader sector.
5. Being proud of our identity as a Youth Worker: supporting one another, seeking to ensure new colleagues understand what Youth Work means and educating other workers or services about young people and about our role

16 of 23 respondents indicated support for a variety of the above statements. Statements one and three were both supported by 13 survey respondents and contain similar elements. They have been refined and appear as the following two statements in the Definition (see Section One, Working ethically)

- Being conscious of our structural power and influence as a Youth Worker, and not taking power over young people.
- Being responsible for what we do with or for young people and their families and being able to justify why we do it.

The following statements received insufficient support for them to be included in the definition.

- Taking responsibility for our own learning about youth, cultural or community groups if we are "outsiders" (e.g. Australian working with refugees, non-Indigenous person working with young Murriss, non drug user working with users).
- Taking responsibility for and pride in what we do as Youth Workers.

One additional statement was put forward: *Having rigid boundaries to provide safety and security to the young people we work with.* This has not been included since insufficient similar statements or values were included in the consultations or appear throughout the responses to this survey to warrant its inclusion.

## Meeting young people's needs

*They actually help you*

*[they helped me] have an intervention. It wasn't the amount of support: it was the amount of money that this place forked out to get me help. It's crazy.*

*[I don't get help from other places than a Youth Worker] because they have to ask too many questions*

*Young people's comments about Youth Workers*

1. Providing proactive and holistic support to young people
2. Providing young people with linkages to other services and supporting them in accessing these
3. Providing practical, useful support to address young people's real situations and needs including being able to provide consistent, longer term services for young people who may require more intensive support.
4. Using an integrated and broad range of models, tools and approaches consistent with providing youth centred, culturally appropriate services and supports. This includes community development and peer based projects as well as personal support.
5. Providing flexible support for young people outside formal, statutory systems.
6. Being prepared to offer diverse, flexible services and work in a multi-skilled way.

17 of 23 respondents indicated support for a variety of the above statements. In fact, statement **No 1: providing proactive and holistic support** was ranked amongst the second most popular of all the statements by survey respondents<sup>11</sup>. Statement No 6 was not included in the definition since it is implicit throughout others included in this theme, especially within no 4 and no 5.

The following statements received insufficient support for them to be included in the definition.

- Recognising that the best services and supports are based on local knowledge and local ownership and by making services and programs as responsive as possible to local contexts and perspectives
- Enabling young people to access all the supports and funding they can and advocating for better guidelines for its distribution

The same respondent who commented about the difficulties of "engaging" with "disengaged young people"<sup>12</sup> also made the following comment with regard to meeting young people's needs. *Once again fantastic in an idealistic world however funding from the government is going to severely restrict these practices particularly again in regards to outreach if targeting disengaged young people."*

## Providing informal, youth centred support

*Just coming in and seeing him all the time. Talking to him. Building a bond with him.*

*She helped me get things off my chest. She just listened and didn't judge and actually offered to help me with things.*

*I feel comfortable being around them and being able to tell them things and that without being judged.*

*Why young people trust Youth Workers*

<sup>11</sup> See **Appendix 4: All descriptor statements ranked in order of preference** which lists each of the descriptors in ranked order, from those included by most to least workers.

<sup>12</sup> See earlier section **Promoting strengths and change**

1. Working at the young person's pace
2. Maintaining young people's confidentiality
3. Remaining open-minded about people's backgrounds and circumstances and treating each situation individually
4. Providing youth centred services and supports in a friendly and informal way
5. Being there for young people
6. Genuinely caring about young people

16 of 23 respondents indicated support for a variety of the above statements. Working at the young person's pace (no 1) was amongst the group of 4 statements which were included by the second highest number of respondents (n =15).

Only two respondents advocated a more restricted or qualified definition of confidentiality, with the following comments made in the Survey:

- *Being transparent for the need to respect limited confidentiality*
- *Confidentiality doesn't work in regards to stakeholders, everyone needs to be on the same level, if the rapport is there with a young person and they know you won't disclose everything about them they will be happy with shared information from my experience.*

The following two statements received insufficient support to be included in the definition.

- Working alongside young people in a friendly, informal manner
- being prepared to enter into a more personal relationship with young people whilst still being able to maintain ethical – or “professional” - boundaries

The first of the above statements is already included in statement number 4. The second is one that was highlighted by Murri and rural/remote participants during the consultations as being of particular importance and relevance and one of the signature differences between Youth Workers (especially Murri Youth Workers) and occupational groups like Social Workers or those working for statutory authorities (e.g. child protection, corrections). It received the least support of any of the statements in the Survey (6)<sup>13</sup>. One respondent noted that *“It's not clear what is meant by the use of the term 'more personal relationship.'”*



## Promoting youth rights and empowerment

*They empowered me to accomplish my year twelve.*

*They come along beside you. They judged me as a person and not as a student*

*They don't force you to speak 'cause it's your problem and if the issue is one you don't want to deal with, they won't force you to deal with it. They let you know they are there for you, knowing you will talk in your own time.*

### *Young people's comments about Youth Workers*

1. Respecting and promoting young people's rights
2. Ensuring young people's voices are heard within their families and the broader community
3. Being solid and proud defenders of "youth culture:" challenging negative assumptions made about young people in our communities.
4. Encouraging and supporting young people to be agents of change – both individually and collectively at both a personal and social level
5. Helping young people to understand their rights, and resourcing young people to address breaches of their human rights
6. Lobbying the government to improve the situation for young people
7. Promoting the actual and potential contributions of young people to the wider community
8. Advocating young people's right to actively participate in community life and access their fair share of community resources

17 of 23 survey respondents indicated support for a variety of the above statements.

One respondent qualified statement no 2 to read *Supporting young people's voices to be heard within their families and the broader community,* commenting that "[I] don't think you can ensure this." This is an important point and whilst only one person made it, the statement in the final definition has been modified to reflect it.

Another respondent added *"Including young people in identifying their rights and how they need to be empowered"*. This statement is implicit in many of the statements which were included about rights: for instance, understanding Youth – or any Human – Rights includes ensuring young people have as much control over all actions taken to address their circumstances as possible; ensuring free, prior informed consent; going beyond consultation and to genuine inclusion of young people in how services are provided and what sort of support they require, and so on.

A third respondent commented *"Helping young people to understand their and others rights"* which is also implicit within a rights based approach to Youth Work, since no individual has the right to take away another's rights. The definition has not been modified to include this.

The following four statements received insufficient support for them to be included in the definition.

- Focusing on empowerment of young people both individually and as a group
- Standing up for and with young people.
- Actively confronting discrimination against young people and breaches of their human rights
- Prioritising empowerment of marginalised groups of young people whose human rights are being breached, and seeking to tip the balance of power in young people's favour

## Concluding Statement

**Youth Workers recognise that working to genuinely empower young people will inevitably require a higher than usual level of commitment, self-examination and a willingness to grapple with social issues affecting marginalised young people. It will require clear articulation of the multiple social advantages of enabling active civic participation by young people and undertaking community development - in particular, the social value of contributing toward a vibrant, genuinely inclusive democracy in Queensland.**

11 of 23 respondents agreed with including the above statement without any modifications and a further 2 made the following qualifications:

- *Some bits fine. Needs rewording. [I] don't believe you can empower someone (a bit like creating a superhero) – [but you] can work in empowering way - support empowerment processes, etc*
- *Does it need to include the democracy? The rest is fantastic.*

Given that the remaining 5 respondents “skipped the question,” it is unclear whether they also disagreed with including the statement or simply did not choose to fully complete the survey.





## Murri Youth Work

8 participants who identified as Murri responded to the survey. 6 currently work in the Qld youth sector, one had in the past 5 years and one had never worked in as part of the youth sector in Qld. As with the responses overall, it was decided to include the 6 surveys from Murris who work in Qld in analysing Murri contributions to shaping the definition.

All 6 of these respondents answered the questions relating to demographic information, defining youth workers, young people and the purpose of youth work. However only 3 went on to indicate which of the descriptor statements they wanted included, and to indicate which statements they agreed with including as part of the Murri section. This means that **all three respondents** needed to agree to include a statement for it to become part of the definition of Murri Youth Work, since there needed to be agreement from 50% of the overall respondents for it to be deemed as having sufficient support<sup>14</sup>. Given the relatively small number of respondents, it is difficult to gauge how much support the resulting definition of Murri Youth Work will attract within its own community.

The majority of Survey respondents (14 of 23) generally supported the inclusion of a separate section Murri Youth Work, only 3 of 23 actively opposed its inclusion, and the remaining 7 respondents “skipped the question”. Furthermore, the Murri participants at the consultations were emphatic about the requirement for the broader sector to acknowledge and support fundamental differences between working with young Murris and “mainstream” Youth Work.

However, a statement about working within individual young people’s cultural understandings

and **supporting the proposed statement defining Murri Youth Work** received insufficient support to be included in the definition<sup>15</sup> (9 of 23; 2 of 6 Murri participants).

One survey respondent stated “*There is no difference in youth work Murri, Lebanese, Finnish, or otherwise.*” This is clearly a minority view, included in the group of 3 who actively opposed the inclusion of a separate section about Murri Youth Work and all of whom identified as non-Indigenous Australians.

Appendix 4 lists all statements in ranked order. Appendix 5 contained a more detailed statistical analysis of the results.

The following statement literally shows what was included and what discarded from the statements about Murri Youth Work included in the Survey and open to respondents who identified as Murri. Statements with a line through them (like this) mean they were not included in the definition.

**Murri Youth Work includes and supports the statements and principles made in the overall (or general parts) of the definition.**

~~**Murri Youth Work acknowledges Murri cultures as the foundation of everything important for Murri peoples. This includes:**~~

**Following Murri traditions, laws and protocols and respecting the full diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Australia**

<sup>14</sup> See **Appendix 5: Statistical Analysis**

<sup>15</sup> (see **Appendix 5 Statistical analysis of Culture, Identity and Place, 1.2**)

- understanding that whilst there is a lot of diversity between different First Nation groups there are many, many similarities and connections.
- understanding what it is like to be a young Murri in the community – understanding young Murris' lifestyles, goals and problems and all the family and other connections within their lives.

**Supporting the development of young Murri's or Islander's identity as an individual, within their family and as part of a broader clan or community:**

- always viewing young Murris within their family and community context
- supporting and learning from the aunties and nannas who are growing up lots of family
- seeking to involve elders and extended family where possible and linking young people in with supportive family members
- advocating for young Murris within their families and communities
- Playing a broker or bridging role between young people and their families/communities and encouraging both to understand the other's perspectives
- recognising that Murri Youth Work is often about a search for identity and helping heal transgenerational traumas resulting from parents and grandparents being grown up within white institutions and not being allowed to speak their language or practice their culture: as well as being culturally traumatised these parents have little knowledge of how to grow up their own children. Murri Youth Work therefore includes strengthening and healing family connections where possible. Murri Youth Workers play a critical role in modelling appropriate behaviour within communities and often take on a closer relationship with young Murris, including being seen as "Aunty" or "Uncle." This must be understood and accepted by the broader Youth Sector.

**Being solid and proud defenders of "Murri culture". Challenging assumptions made about Murris and Murri youth in our communities.**

- translating "young people's rights" into a language that both young Murris and elders can understand
- persisting in supporting pride in being Murri. Holding out against the constant barrage of "whiteness" at school and in other places and encouraging young Murri pride in their "blackness" and cultural identity.
- Doing what's right for young Murris and not just following policies and procedures if they are harmful or wrong.

**Recognising that cultural mentoring is an essential part of Murri Youth Work**

***For Murris this means:***

- supporting one another as Murri Youth Workers no matter where we come from
- finding our own cultural mentors & seeking their guidance
- finding out whatever we can about our family history and cultural backgrounds, especially if these have been taken from us
- being prepared to act as strong role models for young Murris and within our Murri families and communities.
- doing what we can to educate others about Murris and working with young Murris

***For others working with young Murris it means:***

- seeking – and accepting - cultural and other guidance from local Murris
- respecting cultural contexts or protocols without the need to question them
- accepting that we will rarely have the relationship that Murri Youth Workers have with young Murris, doing whatever we can to acknowledge and support their cultural development as Murris, and finding the best ways to offer what we can as non-Indigenous workers.



# Appendices

## Appendix 1: The Survey instrument used

The following survey was put on line in Survey Monkey format, with participants having about 6 weeks to respond.

### SURVEY QUESTIONS: WHAT IS YOUTH WORK? ABOUT YOU...

Please indicate which **best** describes you and your employment background in Youth Work. You can only tick one box per question.

- 1 What is your gender identity?  
 female       male Otrans
  
- 2 What is your cultural identity?  
 Murri or Islander  
 other Australian First Nation (e.g. Nunga, Arrernte)  
 other Australian  
 other First Nation (e.g. Maori, Inuit)  
 CALD  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 3 How old are you?  
 25 & under  
 26 - 35  
 36 - 45  
 46 - 55  
 Over 55
  
- 4 Do you currently work in the Queensland Youth Sector?  
 yes  
 no.  
If no, have you in the past 5 years?  
 yes  
 no
  
- 5 How long have you worked as a Youth Worker?  
 less than 6 months  
 6 – 12 months  
 1 – 2 years  
 2 – 3 years  
 4 – 5 years  
 6 - 7 years  
 8 – 10 years  
 Over 10 years
  
- 6 Where do you work?  
 Brisbane metropolitan area

- other major city or service centre
  - rural town
  - remote community
- 7 Do you currently work with
- Mainly ATSI young people
  - Mainly CALD young people
  - Young people in general
- 8 Which best describes your current employing agency?
- Indigenous Community Organisation (e.g. Darumbal Community Youth Service Inc)
  - State based NGO (e.g. Inala Youth Service Inc)
  - National NGO (e.g. Anglicare)
  - Local Government
  - State Government
  - Federal Government
  - Private company (e.g. ITEC Health)
- 9 What role BEST describes your overall employment history in the Youth Sector?
- direct service provision
  - policy
  - training and education
  - community development
  - management
  - other. Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- 10 Are you or is the organisation you work with a YANQ member?
- yes
  - no.

## QUESTIONS ABOUT DEFINING WHAT YOUTH WORK IS

*Tick the statement you most agree with in each of the following areas. If you don't agree with either statement, add your own alternative.*

### **A Youth Worker is...**

someone who works with young people within the context of their culture, identity and place to ensure their rights are protected and promoted and their needs are genuinely met

OR

someone working in a non-government organisation whose primary goal is to protect and promote the individual and collective human rights of young people

OR add yours \_\_\_\_\_

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### **A Young Person is...**

Someone who sees themselves differently to an older child but who is not yet an adult or being given their due rights as an adult

OR

Someone who has commenced puberty but has not yet been afforded the full rights of adulthood

OR add yours \_\_\_\_\_

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### The primary purpose of Youth Work is to....

- resource and support young people who want help to access, navigate and make the best of their life choices
  - OR
  - resource and support young people who want help to access, navigate and optimise their life choices
- OR add yours
- 
- 
- 

*The remainder of the survey asks what you think ought to be included as statements outlining **how** Youth Workers achieve the above purpose.*

*The following statements are from both working definitions and have been grouped according to themes. Some of the statements in each group are **very** similar. Click on **ALL** the statements you think ought to be included in the accepted definition of Youth Work. There is space at the end of each section for you to add alternatives or change the wording of those already included. If there is not enough room for you to include all your suggestions, contact [lam05@bigpond.com](mailto:lam05@bigpond.com)*

### Culture, place and identity

- Adopting an overall framework which acknowledges and supports the critical role culture plays in shaping young people's personal identity and place within broader family and social groups. This requires
    - Recognising that young people identify with a range of different cultures and supporting them in developing their own cultural identity
    - Working within individual young people's cultural understandings, including supporting the attached definition of Murri Youth Work
    - Supporting the development of young people's identity as an individual, within their family and as part of broader communities including
      - Advocating for young people within their family and community
      - Helping parents, adults and elders to understand young people
      - Supporting positive connections between young people, their families and the broader community
  - Recognising the integral relationship between young people and their family, community and society
  - Recognising that young people cannot be seen in isolation from their social, cultural, historical, economic and political contexts
  - Recognising the diversity amongst young people, and listening to and valuing individual young people's needs, ideas, preferences and choices
  - Enabling young people to become more aware of themselves and their places in the wider community
  - Encouraging and supporting young people to take responsibility as active global, national and local citizens
  - 
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### Rights and empowerment

- Focusing on empowerment of young people both individually and as a group including
  - Ensuring young people's voices are heard within their families and the broader community
  - Respecting and promoting young people's rights
  - Standing up for and with young people.
  - Being solid and proud defenders of "youth culture". Challenging negative assumptions made about young people in our communities.
  - Lobbying the government to improve the situation for young people

- Encouraging and supporting young people to be agents of change – both individually and collectively at both a personal and social level
- Helping young people to understand their rights, and resourcing young people to address breaches of their human rights
- Prioritising empowerment of marginalised groups of young people whose human rights are being breached, and seeking to tip the balance of power in young people's favour
- Actively confronting discrimination against young people and breaches of their human rights
- Promoting the actual and potential contributions of young people to the wider community
- Advocating young people's right to actively participate in community life and access their fair share of community resources

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### Promoting strengths and change

- Helping young people who need it to navigate the best possible pathway in life. Including
  - Being role models ourselves: setting an example in our own community
  - Showing young people what is possible and helping them achieve their own goals
  - Helping young people make their own choices and learn from their own experiences
  - Providing solid or true foundations – being the roots for young people's trees
  - Using a strengths based, solution focussed approach to our work with young people
- Helping young people to adjust to change and harness opportunities
- Building young people's belief in the possibility of change and their capacity to contribute to positive social and individual change
- Recognising the worth of all young people and building on their assets and strengths

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### Meeting needs

- Providing flexible support for young people outside formal, statutory systems
- Providing services that meet young people's real needs in a practical way. Including
  - Recognising that the best services and supports are based on local knowledge and local ownership and by making services and programs as responsive as possible to local contexts and perspectives
  - Enabling young people to access all the supports and funding they can and advocating for better guidelines for its distribution
  - Providing proactive and holistic support to young people
  - Providing young people with linkages to other services and supporting them in accessing these
  - Using an integrated and broad range of models, tools and approaches consistent with providing youth centred, culturally appropriate services and supports. This includes community development and peer based projects as well as personal support.
  - Being prepared to offer diverse, flexible services and work in a multi-skilled way
  - Providing practical, useful support based on young people's real situations including being able to provide consistent, longer term services for young people who may require more intensive support

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## Providing friendly, informal support

- Working alongside young people in a friendly, informal manner
- Providing youth centred services and supports in a friendly and informal way including
  - being there for young people
  - working at the young person's pace
  - maintaining young people's confidentiality
  - remaining open-minded about people's backgrounds and circumstances and treating each situation individually
  - being prepared to enter into a more personal relationship with young people whilst still being able to maintain ethical – or "professional" - boundaries
  - Genuinely caring about young people

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## Values underpinning Youth Work

- Recognising that Youth Work is intentionally and deliberately values driven.
- Values upheld are those consistent with rights based, young person driven, culturally relevant youth work (e.g. respect, trust, honesty, empowerment...)

If you would prefer to name the values that drive Youth Work, add up to 6:

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1

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2

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3

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4

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5

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6

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## Ethics and professional responsibility

- being conscious of Youth Workers' structural power, and not taking power over young people
- Particularly recognising the cultural context of marginalised young people and taking responsibility for learning to work in a culturally appropriate way
- Taking responsibility for and pride in what we do as Youth Workers. Including
  - Being responsible for what we do, being able to justify it and remaining careful of how we use our power and influence with young people and their families.
  - Taking responsibility for our own learning about youth, cultural or community groups if we are "outsiders" (e.g. Australian working with refugees, non-Indigenous person working with young Murriss, non drug user working with users).
  - Being clear about our ethical responsibilities to ourselves, young people, families, communities, our organisation and within the broader sector.
  - Being proud of our identity as a Youth Worker, supporting one another, seeking to ensure new colleagues understand what Youth Work means and educating other workers or services about young people and about our role

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## Additional statement about rights based youth work.

The following statement was also included as a closing paragraph in current (2010) working draft definition.

***Youth Workers recognise that working to genuinely empower young people will inevitably require a higher than usual level of commitment, self-examination and a willingness to grapple with social issues affecting marginalised young people. It will require clear articulation of the multiple social advantages of enabling***

**active civic participation by young people and undertaking community development – in particular, the social value of contributing toward a vibrant, genuinely inclusive democracy in Queensland.**

Should it be included?

Yes

No

Include the following statement as an alternative

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## Murri Youth Work

Do you support including an additional section about Murri Youth Work, like the one developed from the 2012 consultations and outlined below?

Yes

No

### The following questions are for Murri Youth Workers

**Which of the following statements do you think ought to be included in the definition of Murri Youth Work?**

**Murri Youth Work includes and supports the statements and principles made in the overall (or general parts) of the definition. (i.e. the rest of the Survey)**

**Murri Youth Work acknowledges Murri cultures as the foundation of everything important for Murri peoples. This includes:**

**Following Murri traditions, laws and protocols and respecting the full diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Australia**

understanding that whilst there is a lot of diversity between different First Nation groups there are many, many similarities and connections.

understanding what it is like to be a young Murri in the community - understanding young Murris' lifestyles, goals and problems and all the family and other connections within their lives.

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**Supporting the development of young Murri's or Islander's identity as an individual, within their family and as part of a broader clan or community.**

always viewing young Murris within their family and community context

supporting and learning from the aunties and nannas who are growing up lots of family

seeking to involve elders and extended family where possible and linking young people in with supportive family members

advocating for young Murris within their families and communities

Playing a broker or bridging role between young people and their families/communities and encouraging both to understand the other's perspectives

recognising that Murri Youth Work is often about a search for identity and helping heal transgenerational traumas resulting from parents and grandparents being grown up within white institutions and not being allowed to speak their language or practice their culture: as well as being culturally traumatised these parents have little knowledge of how to grow up their own children. Murri Youth Work therefore includes strengthening and healing family connections where possible. Murri Youth Workers play a critical role in

modelling appropriate behaviour within communities and often take on a closer relationship with young Murris, including being seen as “Aunty” or “Uncle.” This must be understood and accepted by the broader Youth Sector.

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**Being solid and proud defenders of “Murri culture”. Challenging assumptions made about Murris and Murri youth in our communities.**

- translating “young people’s rights” into a language that both young Murris and elders can understand
- persisting in supporting pride in being Murri. Holding out against the constant barrage of “whiteness” at school and in other places and encouraging young Murri pride in their “blackness” and cultural identity.
- Doing what’s right for young Murris and not just following policies and procedures if they are harmful or wrong.

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**Recognising that cultural mentoring is an essential part of Murri Youth Work**

***For Murris this means:***

- supporting one another as Murri Youth Workers no matter where we come from
- finding our own cultural mentors & seeking their guidance
- finding out whatever we can about our family history and cultural backgrounds, especially if these have been taken from us
- being prepared to act as strong role models for young Murris and within our Murri families and communities.
- doing what we can to educate others about Murris and working with young Murris

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***For others working with young Murris it means:***

- seeking – and accepting - cultural and other guidance from local Murris
- respecting cultural contexts or protocols without the need to question them
- accepting that we will rarely have the relationship that Murri Youth Workers have with young Murris, doing whatever we can to acknowledge and support their cultural development as Murris, and finding the best ways to offer what we can as non-Indigenous workers.

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**Additional questions for CALD Sector workers**

Is there enough attention paid to working with CALD young people within the definition (N.B. this is mainly addressed in the survey section on **culture, place and identity**)

- yes
- no

If not, please provide the additional statements you think ought to be included in the definition.

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**Anything else??**

Any comments or other statements you would like to add about the definition OVERALL?

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**THANKYOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS IMPORTANT DISCUSSION.**

## Appendix 2: Definitions used during all consultations

### Draft Definition from What is Youth Work Discussion paper

**A Youth Worker = someone working in a non-government organisation whose primary goal is to protect and promote the individual and collective human rights of young people.**

**A young person = someone who has commenced puberty, but has not yet been accorded the full rights of adulthood.**

**The primary purpose of Youth Work is to resource and support young people who want help to access, navigate and optimise their life choices. Youth Workers do this through:**

- Providing flexible support for young people outside formal, statutory systems.
- Working alongside young people in a friendly, informal manner
- Building young people's belief in the possibility for change and their capacity to contribute to positive social and individual change
- Helping young people to adjust to change and harness opportunities
- Recognising the worth of all young people, and building on their assets and strengths.
- Recognising the diversity amongst young people, and listening to and valuing individual young people's needs, ideas, preferences and choices
- Enabling young people to become more aware of themselves and their places in the wider community
- Recognising the integral relationship between young people and their families, community and society
- Recognising that young people cannot be seen in isolation from their social, cultural, historical, economic and political contexts
- Particularly recognising the cultural context of marginalised young people and taking responsibility for learning to work in a culturally appropriate way
- Advocating young people's right to actively participate in community life and access their fair share of community resources
- Being conscious of Youth Workers' structural power, and not taking power over young people.
- Helping young people to understand their rights, and resourcing young people to address breaches of their human rights
- Prioritising empowerment of marginalised groups of young people whose human rights are being breached, and seeking to tip the balance of power in young people's favour
- Actively confronting discrimination against young people and breaches of their human rights
- Encouraging and supporting young people to be agents of change – both individually and collectively; at both a personal and social level
- Promoting the actual and potential contributions of young people to the wider community
- Encouraging and supporting young people to take responsibility as active members of their family, community and society.
- Encouraging and supporting young people to take responsibility as active global, national and local citizens.

## Draft Definition from Are We There Yet? Report on Consultation

*This is the definition compiled as a result of consulting about the current working definition*

**A Youth Worker is someone who works with young people within the context of their culture, identity and place to ensure their rights are protected and promoted and their needs are genuinely met.**

**A young person is someone who sees themselves differently to a child but who is not yet an adult or being given their due rights as an adult.**

**The main purpose of Youth Work is to resource and support young people who want help to access, navigate and make the best of their life choices.**

**Youth Workers do this by:**

**Adopting an overall framework which acknowledges and supports the critical role culture plays in shaping young people's personal identity and place within broader family and social groups<sup>16</sup>.**

**This requires:**

- Recognising that young people identify with a range of different cultures and supporting them in developing their own cultural identity.
- Working within individual young people's cultural understandings, including supporting the attached definition of Murri Youth Work when working with or on behalf of Murri young people or communities.
- Supporting the development of young people's identity as an individual, within their family and as part of broader communities including.
  - Advocating for young people within their family and community
  - Helping parents, adults and elders to understand young people
  - Supporting positive connections between young people, their families and the broader community

**Focusing on empowerment of young people both individually and as a group.**

- Ensuring young people's voices are heard within their families and the broader community
- Respecting and promoting young people's rights
- Standing up for and with young people.
- Being solid and proud defenders of "youth culture". Challenging negative assumptions made about young people in our communities.
- Lobbying the government to improve the situation for young people

**Providing services that meet young people's real needs in a practical way.**

- Recognising that the best services and supports are based on local knowledge and local ownership and by making services and programs as responsive as possible to local contexts and perspectives
- Enabling young people to access all the supports and funding they can and advocating for better guidelines for its distribution
- Providing proactive and holistic support to young people
- Providing young people with linkages to other services and supporting them in accessing these
- Using an integrated and broad range of models, tools and approaches consistent with providing youth centred, culturally appropriate services and supports. This includes community development and peer based projects as well as personal support.
- Being prepared to offer diverse, flexible services and work in a multi-skilled way
- Providing practical, useful support based on young people's real situations including being able to provide consistent, longer term services for young people who may require more intensive support

**Helping young people who need it to navigate the best possible pathway in life.**

- Being role models ourselves: setting an example in our own community

<sup>16</sup> Within the context of this definition, the term **culture** is used in its broadest meaning, not just racially based cultures. There are many other "cultural groups" within societies – for instance: youth, Christian Church, LGBT, rural to name a few. Many of these cultures will also have sub-cultures within them, some of which may be significantly different – for instance Pentecostal church culture compared with a Uniting or Anglican church culture; rural farm culture compared with rural town culture compared with remote Aboriginal cultures.

## *APPENDIX 2: Definitions used during all consultations*

- Showing young people what is possible and helping them achieve their own goals
- Helping young people make their own choices and learn from their own experiences
- Providing solid or true foundations – being the roots for young people’s trees
- Using a strengths based, solution focussed approach to our work with young people

### **Providing youth centred services and supports in a friendly and informal way**

- being there for young people
- working at the young person’s pace
- maintaining young people’s confidentiality
- remaining open-minded about people’s backgrounds and circumstances and treating each situation individually
- being prepared to enter into a more personal relationship with young people whilst still being able to maintain ethical – or “professional” - boundaries
- Genuinely caring about young people

### **Recognising that Youth Work is intentionally and deliberately values driven.**

- Values upheld are those consistent with rights based, young person driven culturally relevant youth work (e.g. respect, trust, honesty, empowerment...)

### **Taking responsibility for and pride in what we do as Youth Workers.**

- Being responsible for what we do, being able to justify it and remaining careful of how we use our power and influence with young people and their families.
- Taking responsibility for our own learning about youth, cultural or community groups if we are “outsiders” (e.g. Australian working with refugees, non-Indigenous person working with young Murris, non drug user working with users).
- Being clear about our ethical responsibilities to ourselves, young people, families, communities, our organisation and within the broader sector.
- Being proud of our identity as a Youth Worker, supporting one another, seeking to ensure new colleagues understand what Youth Work means and educating other workers or services about young people and about our role

## **Murri Youth Work**

**Includes and supports the above statements and principles.**

**Additionally, Murri Youth Work acknowledges Murri cultures as the foundation of everything important for Murri peoples.**

**This includes:**

### **Following Murri traditions, laws and protocols and respecting the full diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Australia**

- understanding that whilst there is a lot of diversity between different First Nation groups there are many, many similarities and connections.
- understanding what it is like to be a young Murri in the community - understanding young Murris’ lifestyles, goals and problems and all the family and other connections within their lives.

### **Supporting the development of young Murri’s or Islander’s identity as an individual, within their family and as part of a broader clan or community.**

- always viewing young Murris within their family and community context
- supporting and learning from the aunties and nannas who are growing up lots of family
- seeking to involve elders and extended family where possible and linking young people in with supportive family members
- advocating for young Murris within their families and communities
- Playing a broker or bridging role between young people and their families/communities and encouraging

both to understand the other's perspectives

- recognising that Murri Youth Work is often about a search for identity and helping heal transgenerational traumas resulting from parents and grandparents being grown up within white institutions and not being allowed to speak their language or practice their culture: as well as being culturally traumatised these parents have little knowledge of how to grow up their own children. Murri Youth Work therefore includes strengthening and healing family connections where possible. Murri Youth Workers play a critical role in modelling appropriate behaviour within communities and often take on a closer relationship with young Murris, including being seen as "Aunty" or "Uncle." This must be understood and accepted by the broader Youth Sector.

**Being solid and proud defenders of "Murri culture". Challenging assumptions made about Murris and Murri youth in our communities.**

- translating "young people's rights" into a language that both young Murris and elders can understand
- persisting in supporting pride in being Murri. Holding out against the constant barrage of "whiteness" at school and in other places and encouraging young Murri pride in their "blackness" and cultural identity.
- Doing what's right for young Murris and not just following policies and procedures if they are harmful or wrong.

**Recognising that cultural mentoring is an essential part of Murri Youth Work**

***For Murris this means:***

- supporting one another as Murri Youth Workers no matter where we come from
- finding our own cultural mentors & seeking their guidance
- finding out whatever we can about our family history and cultural backgrounds, especially if these have been taken from us
- being prepared to act as strong role models for young Murris and within our Murri families and communities.
- doing what we can to educate others about Murris and working with young Murris

***For others working with young Murris it means:***

- seeking – and accepting - cultural and other guidance from local Murris
- respecting cultural contexts or protocols without the need to question them
- accepting that we will rarely have the relationship that Murri Youth Workers have with young Murris, doing whatever we can to acknowledge and support their cultural development as Murris, and finding the best ways to offer what we can as non-Indigenous workers.

## Draft Murri Youth Work Definition from Are We There Yet?

### Definition developed by the Brisbane metropolitan Murri group.

#### Murri Youth Work:

1. Operates from an overarching cultural framework that acknowledges culture as the foundation of everything, which supports following Murri traditions, laws and protocols and which respects the full diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Australia.
2. Supports the development of young people's identity as an individual, within their family and as part of a broader clan or community.
3. Includes government workers
4. Works with younger ones, with pre-pubescent children – from when they start getting treated differently or see themselves differently to children. Respects that this often occurs earlier with Murris than in mainstream Australian culture/s.
5. Is holistic
6. Is family based
7. Youth Workers are the roots for young Murris' trees – our role is to provide solid or true foundations
8. Murri Youth Workers must know where young people come from culturally and socially and operate from this basis
9. Be solid and proud within our own cultural identity, no matter what it is. Challenge assumptions made about Murris and Murri youth.
10. Cultural mentoring is an essential part of Murri Youth Work
11. Murri Youth Work is intentionally and deliberately values driven – (see values map)
12. Murri Youth Work is focused on empowerment of both individual Murri young people and of Murris as a group
13. We must be responsible for what we do.
14. If we are outsiders, we need to do our own learning in new situations, especially if we are not just not from that particular cultural group (i.e. First Nation but not Murri) but outside the whole culture as well (i.e. non-indigenous workers with young Murris)

## Appendix 3: Final definition compared with previous drafts

The following table compares the key elements of the final draft with the two previous working drafts – i.e. that proposed in YANQs *What is Youth Work* discussion paper and that developed following initial consultation workshops. Statements NOT included in the final have been crossed out (like this). The colour of each statement included in the final definition indicates which of the previous definitions it came from. Blue text means statements were altered on the basis of survey input.

PROPOSED DEFINITION DRAFT FROM INITIAL CONSULTATION	CURRENT DEFINITION DRAFT FROM YANQ DISCUSSION PAPER	FINAL DEFINITION AFTER SURVEY
<b><i>A Youth Worker is...</i></b>		
...someone who works with young people within the context of their culture, identity and place to ensure their rights are protected and promoted and their needs are genuinely met.	<del>...someone working in a non-government organisation whose primary goal is to protect and promote the individual and collective human rights of young people.</del>	...someone who works with young people within the context of their culture, identity and place to ensure their rights are protected and promoted and their needs are genuinely met.
<b><i>A young person is...</i></b>		
...someone who sees themselves differently to an older child but who is not yet an adult or being given their due rights as an adult.	<del>... someone who has commenced puberty but has not yet been afforded the full rights of adulthood.</del>	...someone who sees themselves differently to an older child but who is not yet an adult or being given their due rights as an adult.
<b><i>The primary purpose of Youth Work is...</i></b>		
...to resource and support young people who want help to access, navigate and make the best of their life choices.	<del>... to resource and support young people who want help to access, navigate and optimise their life choices.</del>	...to resource and support young people who want help to access, navigate and make the best of their life choices.
<b><i>Youth Workers do this by...</i></b>		
<del>Adopting an overall framework which acknowledges and supports the critical role culture plays in shaping young people's personal identity and place within broader family and social groups.</del> This requires	Recognising the integral relationship between young people and their family, community and society	Recognising the integral relationship between young people and their family, community and society
Recognising that young people identify with a range of different cultures and supporting them in developing their own cultural identity	<del>Recognising that young people cannot be seen in isolation from their social, cultural, historical, economic and political contexts</del>	Recognising that young people identify with a range of different cultures and supporting them in developing their own cultural identity
<del>Working within individual young people's cultural understandings, including supporting the attached definition of Murri Youth Work:</del>	Recognising the diversity amongst young people, and listening to and valuing individual young people's needs, ideas, preferences and choices	Recognising the diversity amongst young people, and listening to and valuing individual young people's needs, ideas, preferences and choices

<p>Supporting the development of young people’s identity as an individual, within their family and as part of a community, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advocating for young people within their family and community</li> <li>• helping parents, adults and elders to understand young people</li> <li>• supporting positive connections between young people, their families and the broader community</li> </ul>	<p><del>Enabling young people to become more aware of themselves and their places in the wider community</del></p>	<p>Supporting the development of young people’s identity as an individual, within their family and as part of a community, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advocating for young people within their family and community</li> <li>• helping parents, adults and elders to understand young people</li> <li>• supporting positive connections between young people, their families and the broader community</li> </ul>
	<p>Encouraging and supporting young people to take responsibility as active global, national and local citizens</p>	<p>Encouraging and supporting young people to take responsibility as active global, national and local citizens</p>
<p><del>Focusing on empowerment of young people both individually and as a group. Including</del></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ensuring young people’s voices are heard within their families and the broader community</li> <li>• respecting and promoting young people’s rights</li> <li>• <del>standing up for and with young people</del></li> <li>• being solid and proud defenders of “youth culture”. Challenging negative assumptions made about young people in our communities</li> <li>• lobbying the government to improve the situation for young people</li> </ul>	<p><del>Helping young people to understand their rights, and resourcing young people to address breaches of their human rights</del></p> <p><del>Prioritising empowerment of marginalised groups of young people whose human rights are being breached, and seeking to tip the balance of power in young people’s favour</del></p> <p><del>Actively confronting discrimination against young people and breaches of their human rights</del></p> <p>Promoting the actual and potential contributions of young people to the wider community</p> <p>Advocating young people’s right to actively participate in community life and access their fair share of community resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• respecting and promoting young people’s rights</li> <li>• supporting young people’s voices to be heard within their families and the broader community</li> <li>• being solid and proud defenders of “youth culture”. Challenging negative assumptions made about young people in our communities</li> </ul> <p>Helping young people to understand their rights, and resourcing young people to address breaches of their human rights</p> <p>Promoting the actual and potential contributions of young people to the wider community</p> <p>Advocating young people’s right to actively participate in community life and access their fair share of community resources</p>
	<p>Encouraging and supporting young people to be agents of change – both individually and collectively, at both a personal and social level.</p>	<p>Encouraging and supporting young people to be agents of change – both individually and collectively, at both a personal and social level.</p>

<p>Providing services that meet young people’s real needs in a practical way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <del>Recognising that the best services and supports are based on local knowledge and local ownership and by making services and programs as responsive as possible to local contexts and perspectives</del></li> <li>• <del>Enabling young people to access all the supports and funding they can and advocating for better guidelines for its distribution</del></li> <li>• Providing proactive and holistic support to young people</li> <li>• Providing young people with linkages to other services and supporting them in accessing these</li> <li>• Using an integrated and broad range of models, tools and approaches consistent with providing youth centred, culturally appropriate services and supports. This includes community development and peer based projects as well as personal support.</li> <li>• Being prepared to offer diverse, flexible services and work in a multi-skilled way</li> <li>• Providing practical, useful support based on young people’s real situations including being able to provide consistent, longer term services for young people who may require more intensive support</li> </ul>	<p>Providing flexible support for young people outside formal, statutory systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing proactive and holistic support to young people</li> <li>• Providing young people with linkages to other services and supporting them in accessing these</li> </ul> <p>Providing services that meet young people’s real needs in a practical way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using an integrated and broad range of models, tools and approaches consistent with providing youth centred, culturally appropriate services and supports. This includes community development and peer based projects as well as personal support.</li> <li>• Providing practical, useful support based on young people’s real situations including being able to provide consistent, longer term services for young people who may require more intensive support</li> </ul> <p>Providing flexible support for young people outside formal, statutory systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being prepared to offer diverse, flexible services and work in a multi-skilled way</li> </ul>
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<p>Helping young people who need it to navigate the best possible pathway in life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being role models ourselves: setting an example in our own community</li> <li>• Showing young people what is possible and helping them achieve their own goals</li> <li>• Helping young people make their own choices and learn from their own experiences</li> <li>• <del>Providing solid or true foundations – being the roots for young people’s trees</del></li> <li>• Using a strengths based, solution focussed approach to our work with young people</li> </ul>	<p>Helping young people adjust to change and harness opportunities</p> <p>Building young people’s belief in the possibility for change and their capacity to contribute to positive social and individual change</p> <p>Recognising the worth of all young people and building on their assets and strengths</p>	<p>Using a strengths based, solution focussed approach to our work with young people</p> <p>Recognising the worth of all young people and building on their assets and strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping young people make their own choices and learn from their own experiences</li> <li>• Showing young people what is possible and helping them achieve their own goals</li> </ul> <p>Helping young people who need it to navigate the best possible pathway in life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being role models ourselves: setting an example in our own community</li> </ul> <p>Helping young people adjust to change and harness opportunities</p> <p>Building young people’s belief in the possibility for change and their capacity to contribute to positive social and individual change</p>
<p>Providing youth centred services and supports in a friendly and informal way</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being there for young people</li> <li>• working at the young person’s pace</li> <li>• maintaining young people’s confidentiality</li> <li>• remaining open-minded about people’s backgrounds and circumstances and treating each situation individually</li> <li>• <del>being prepared to enter into a more personal relationship with young people whilst still being able to maintain ethical – or “professional” – boundaries</del></li> <li>• Genuinely caring about young people</li> </ul>	<p><del>Working alongside young people in a friendly, informal manner</del></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• working at the young person’s pace</li> <li>• maintaining young people’s confidentiality</li> <li>• remaining open-minded about people’s backgrounds and circumstances and treating each situation individually</li> </ul> <p>Providing youth centred services and supports in a friendly and informal way</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• being there for young people</li> <li>• Genuinely caring about young people</li> </ul>

<p>Recognising that Youth Work is intentionally and deliberately values driven.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Values upheld are those consistent with rights based, young person driven culturally relevant youth work (e.g. respect, trust, honesty, empowerment...)</li> </ul>		<p>Recognising that Youth Work is intentionally and deliberately values driven.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Values upheld are those consistent with rights based, young person driven culturally relevant youth work (e.g. respect, trust, honesty, empowerment...)</li> </ul>
<p><del>Taking responsibility for and pride in what we do as Youth Workers</del></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being responsible for what we do, being able to justify it and remaining careful of how we use our power and influence with young people and their families.</li> <li>• <del>Taking responsibility for our own learning about youth, cultural or community groups if we are "outsiders" (e.g. Australian working with refugees, non-Indigenous person working with young Murris, non drug user working with users):</del></li> <li>• Being clear about our ethical responsibilities to ourselves, young people, families, communities, our organisation and within the broader sector.</li> <li>• Being proud of our identity as a Youth Worker, supporting one another, seeking to ensure new colleagues understand what Youth Work means and educating other workers or services about young people and about our role</li> </ul>	<p>Being conscious of Youth Workers' structural power, and not taking power over young people</p> <p>Particularly recognising the cultural context of marginalised young people and taking responsibility for learning to work in a culturally appropriate way</p>	<p>Being conscious of our structural power and influence as a Youth Worker, and not taking power over young people</p> <p>Particularly recognising the cultural context of marginalised young people and taking responsibility for learning to work in a culturally appropriate way</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being responsible for what we do with or for young people and their families and being able to justify why we do it</li> <li>• Being clear about our ethical responsibilities to ourselves, young people, families, communities, our organisation and within the broader sector.</li> <li>• Being proud of our identity as a Youth Worker, supporting one another, seeking to ensure new colleagues understand what Youth Work means and educating other workers or services about young people and about our role</li> </ul>

APPENDIX 3: Final definition compared with previous drafts

	<p>Youth Workers recognise that working to genuinely empower young people will inevitably require a higher than usual level of commitment, self-examination and a willingness to grapple with social issues affecting marginalised young people. It will require clear articulation of the multiple social advantages of enabling active civic participation by young people and undertaking community development – in particular, the social value of contributing toward a vibrant, genuinely inclusive democracy in Queensland</p>	<p>Youth Workers recognise that working to genuinely empower young people will inevitably require a higher than usual level of commitment, self-examination and a willingness to grapple with social issues affecting marginalised young people. It will require clear articulation of the multiple social advantages of enabling active civic participation by young people and undertaking community development – in particular, the social value of contributing toward a vibrant, genuinely inclusive democracy in Queensland</p>
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## Appendix 4: All descriptor statements ranked in order of preference

The following tables rank each of the descriptor statements included in the Survey in order of most to least popular. The number at the top of each different section of the table indicates how many respondents voted to include it in the definition.

The first table shows the results for the general definition and the second gives them for the Murri Youth Work definition.

### General definition

Descriptors were grouped into the following 6 themes, which are presented in order of most to least popular, with statements from each theme written in their corresponding colour (i.e. green for strengths, etc). The popularity rating for each theme was determined by calculating the average score for questions in each theme, with the highest score indicating the most popular.

- 1 Promoting strengths and change**
- 2 Culture, place and identity**
- 3 Ethics and professional responsibility**
- 4 Meeting needs**
- 5 Providing friendly, informal support**
- 6 Rights and empowerment**

<b>16</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting positive connections between young people, their families and the broader community</li> </ul>
<b>15</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using a strengths based, solution focussed approach to our work with young people</li> <li>• Recognising the worth of all young people and building on their assets and strengths</li> <li>• Recognising the diversity amongst young people, and listening to and valuing individual young people's needs, ideas, preferences and choices</li> <li>• Providing proactive and holistic support to young people</li> <li>• working at the young person's pace</li> </ul>
<b>14</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Helping young people make their own choices and learn from their own experiences</li> <li>• maintaining young people's confidentiality</li> <li>• remaining open-minded about people's backgrounds and circumstances and treating each situation individually</li> </ul>

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- Showing young people what is possible and helping them achieve their own goals
- Supporting the development of young people's identity as an individual, within their family and as part of broader communities
- Encouraging and supporting young people to take responsibility as active global, national and local citizens
- being conscious of Youth Workers' structural power, and not taking power over young people
- Particularly recognising the cultural context of marginalised young people and taking responsibility for learning to work in a culturally appropriate way
- Being responsible for what we do, being able to justify it and remaining careful of how we use our power and influence with young people and their families.
- Providing young people with linkages to other services and supporting them in accessing these
- Respecting and promoting young people's rights

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- Helping young people who need it to navigate the best possible pathway in life.
- Being role models ourselves: setting an example in our own community
- Helping young people to adjust to change and harness opportunities
- Building young people's belief in the possibility of change and their capacity to contribute to positive social and individual change
- Advocating for young people within their family and community
- Recognising the integral relationship between young people and their family, community and society
- Being clear about our ethical responsibilities to ourselves, young people, families, communities, our organisation and within the broader sector.
- Providing services that meet young people's real needs in a practical way.
- Using an integrated and broad range of models, tools and approaches consistent with providing youth centred, culturally appropriate services and supports. This includes community development and peer based projects as well as personal support.
- Providing practical, useful support based on young people's real situations including being able to provide consistent, longer term services for young people who may require more intensive support
- Ensuring young people's voices are heard within their families and the broader community
- Being solid and proud defenders of "youth culture". Challenging negative assumptions made about young people in our communities.
- Encouraging and supporting young people to be agents of change – both individually and collectively at both a personal and social level
- Helping young people to understand their rights, and resourcing young people to address breaches of their human rights

11

- Recognising that young people identify with a range of different cultures and supporting them in developing their own cultural identity
- Helping parents, adults and elders to understand young people
- Being proud of our identity as a Youth Worker, supporting one another, seeking to ensure new colleagues understand what Youth Work means and educating other workers or services about young people and about our role
- Providing flexible support for young people outside formal, statutory systems
- Being prepared to offer diverse, flexible services and work in a multi-skilled way
- Providing youth centred services and supports in a friendly and informal way
- being there for young people
- Genuinely caring about young people
- Lobbying the government to improve the situation for young people
- Promoting the actual and potential contributions of young people to the wider community
- Advocating young people's right to actively participate in community life and access their fair share of community resources

10

- Adopting an overall framework which acknowledges and supports the critical role culture plays in shaping young people's personal identity and place within broader family and social groups. Recognising that young people cannot be seen in isolation from their social, cultural, historical, economic and political contexts
- Enabling young people to become more aware of themselves and their places in the wider community
- Taking responsibility for our own learning about youth, cultural or community groups if we are "outsiders" (e.g. Australian working with refugees, non-Indigenous person working with young Murris, non drug user working with users):
- Taking responsibility for and pride in what we do as Youth Workers.
- Recognising that the best services and supports are based on local knowledge and local ownership and by making services and programs as responsive as possible to local contexts and perspectives
- Working alongside young people in a friendly, informal manner
- Focusing on empowerment of young people both individually and as a group including
- Standing up for and with young people.

9

- Working within individual young people's cultural understandings, including supporting the attached definition of Murri Youth Work
- Actively confronting discrimination against young people and breaches of their human rights

8

- Providing solid or true foundations – being the roots for young people's trees
- Enabling young people to access all the supports and funding they can and advocating for better guidelines for its distribution
- Prioritising empowerment of marginalised groups of young people whose human rights are being breached, and seeking to tip the balance of power in young people's favour

5

- ~~being prepared to enter into a more personal relationship with young people whilst still being able to maintain ethical—or“professional”- boundaries~~

## Murri Youth Work definition

3

**Murri youth work includes and supports the statements and principles made in the overall (or general parts) of the definition**

**Following Murri traditions, laws and protocols and respecting the full diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Australia**

- supporting and learning from the aunties and nannas who are growing up lots of family
- seeking to involve elders and extended family where possible and linking young people in with supportive family members
- recognising that Murri Youth Work is often about a search for identity and helping heal transgenerational traumas resulting from parents and grandparents being grown up within white institutions and not being allowed to speak our language or practice our cultures: as well as being culturally traumatised these parents have little knowledge of how to grow up their own children. Murri Youth Work therefore includes strengthening and healing family connections where possible. Murri Youth Workers play a critical role in modelling appropriate behaviour within communities and often take on a closer relationship with young Murris, including being seen as “Aunty” or “Uncle.” This must be understood and accepted by the broader Youth Sector.

**Being solid and proud defenders of “Murri culture”. Challenging assumptions made about Murris and Murri youth in our communities.**

- persisting in supporting pride in being Murri. Holding out against the constant barrage of “whiteness” at school and in other places and encouraging young Murri pride in their “blackness” and cultural identity.

**Recognising that cultural mentoring is an essential part of Murri Youth Work**

***For Murris this means:***

- supporting one another as Murri Youth Workers no matter where we come from
- finding our own cultural mentors & seeking their guidance
- finding out whatever we can about our family history and cultural backgrounds, especially if these have been taken from us
- being prepared to act as strong role models for young Murris and within our Murri families and communities.
- doing what we can to educate others about Murris and working with young Murris

***For others working with young Murris it means:***

- seeking – and accepting - cultural and other guidance from local Murris
- respecting cultural contexts or protocols without the need to question them
- accepting that you will rarely have the relationship that Murri Youth Workers have with young Murris, doing whatever you can to acknowledge and support their cultural development as Murris, and finding the best ways to offer what you can as non-Indigenous workers.

**2**

**Murri Youth Work acknowledges Murri cultures as the foundation of everything important for Murri peoples**

- understanding that whilst there is a lot of diversity between different First Nation groups there are many, many similarities and connections.

understanding what it is like to be a young Murri in the community – understanding young Murris' lifestyles, goals and problems and all the family and other connections within their lives.

Always viewing young Murris within their cultural, family and community context

- translating “young people’s rights” into a language that both young Murris and elders can understand
- Doing what’s right for young Murris and not just following policies and procedures if they are harmful or wrong.

**1**

Supporting the development of young Murris or Islander’s identity as an individual, within their family and as part of a broader clan or community

## Appendix 5 Statistical analysis of Survey descriptor statements

The following tables provide information about the number of overall respondents who supported each of the descriptor statements about how Youth Workers achieve their purpose.

It has been broken down into four main groups:

- All respondents who are currently working within the Qld youth sector – this group was the sample group used in all deliberations about the general definition.
- The above plus all respondents who have previously worked in the Qld youth sector in the previous 5 years.
- All respondents who lodged a valid survey (i.e. who did more than complete the demographic information included as the first part of the survey)
- All Murri respondents who are currently working within the Qld youth sector. This was the sample group used to determine the Murri definition.

The number columns (#) indicate how many respondents wanted the statement included. A tick (✓) in the “include” columns indicate that it would have been included in the definition if this particular group of respondents had been selected as the sample group.

### General definition

Statement	Current Qld Youth Workers		All Qld Youth Workers		All valid survey responses		Murris currently working in Qld	
	#	Include	#	Include	#	Include	#	Include
<b>Culture, place and identity</b>		R = 23 Inc 11+		R = 28 Inc 14+		R = 35 Inc 18+		R = 6 Inc 3+
1 Adopting an overall framework which acknowledges and supports the critical role culture plays in shaping young people’s personal identity and place within broader family and social groups.	10		11		12		2	
1.1 Recognising that young people identify with a range of different cultures and supporting them in developing their own cultural identity	11	✓	12		13		2	X
1.2 Working within individual young people’s cultural understandings, including supporting the attached definition of Murri Youth Work	9		10		12		2	

APPENDIX 5: Statistical analysis of survey descriptor statements

Statement	Current Qld Youth Workers		All Qld Youth Workers		All valid survey responses		Murriss currently working in Qld	
	#	Include	#	Include	#	Include	#	Include
1.3 Supporting the development of young people's identity as an individual, within their family and as part of broader communities	13	✓	14	✓	17		3	✓
1.3.1 Advocating for young people within their family and community	12	✓	13		16		3	✓
1.3.2 Helping parents, adults and elders to understand young people	11	✓	12		14		3	✓
1.3.3 Supporting positive connections between young people, their families and the broader community	16	✓	17	✓	19		4	✓
2 Recognising the integral relationship between young people and their family, community and society	12	✓	13		14		4	✓
3 Recognising that young people cannot be seen in isolation from their social, cultural, historical, economic and political contexts	10		11		13		2	
4 Recognising the diversity amongst young people, and listening to and valuing individual young people's needs, ideas, preferences and choices	15	✓	16	✓	19	✓	4	✓
5 Enabling young people to become more aware of themselves and their places in the wider community	10		11		13		2	
6 Encouraging and supporting young people to take responsibility as active global, national and local citizens	13	✓	14	✓	16		4	✓

APPENDIX 5: Statistical analysis of survey descriptor statements

Statement	Current Qld Youth Workers		All Qld Youth Workers		All valid survey responses		Murris currently working in Qld	
	#	Include	#	Include	#	Include	#	Include
<b>No response to any statements from the above section</b>	6		10		14		2	
<b>Rights and empowerment</b>		R = 23 Inc 11+		R = 28 Inc 14+		R = 35 Inc 18+		R = 7 Inc 3+
1 Focusing on empowerment of young people both individually and as a group including	10		11		13		1	
1.1 Ensuring young people's voices are heard within their families and the broader community	12	✓	13		16		3	✓
1.2 Respecting and promoting young people's rights	13	✓	14	✓	17		3	✓
1.3 Standing up for and with young people.	10	X	11		13		3	✓
1.4 Being solid and proud defenders of "youth culture". Challenging negative assumptions made about young people in our communities.	12	✓	13		14		2	X
1.5 Lobbying the government to improve the situation for young people	11	✓	12		15		3	✓
2 Encouraging and supporting young people to be agents of change – both individually and collectively at both a personal and social level	12	✓	13		15		2	X
3 Helping young people to understand their rights, and resourcing young people to address breaches of their human rights	12	✓	13		15		4	✓

Statement	Current Qld Youth Workers		All Qld Youth Workers		All valid survey responses		Murris currently working in Qld	
	#	Include	#	Include	#	Include	#	Include
4 Prioritising empowerment of marginalised groups of young people whose human rights are being breached, and seeking to tip the balance of power in young people's favour	8		9		10		1	
5 Actively confronting discrimination against young people and breaches of their human rights	9		10		12		2	
6 Promoting the actual and potential contributions of young people to the wider community	11	✓	12		15		3	✓
7 Advocating young people's right to actively participate in community life and access their fair share of community resources	11	✓	12		15		2	X
<b>No response to any statements from the above section</b>	6		10		14		2	
<b>Promoting strengths and change</b>		R = 23 Inc 11+		R = 28 Inc 14+		R = 35 Inc 18+		R = 7 Inc 3+
1 Helping young people who need it to navigate the best possible pathway in life.	12	✓	13		16		2	X
1.1 Being role models ourselves: setting an example in our own community	12	✓	13		14		3	✓
1.2 Showing young people what is possible and helping them achieve their own goals	13	✓	14	✓	16		4	✓

Statement	Current Qld Youth Workers		All Qld Youth Workers		All valid survey responses		Murriss currently working in Qld	
	#	Include	#	Include	#	Include	#	Include
1.3 Helping young people make their own choices and learn from their own experiences	14	✓	15	✓	18	✓	4	✓
1.4 Providing solid or true foundations – being the roots for young people’s trees	8		9		10		2	
1.5 Using a strengths based, solution focussed approach to our work with young people	15	✓	16	✓	18	✓	4	✓
2 Helping young people to adjust to change and harness opportunities	12	✓	13		15		3	✓
3 Building young people’s belief in the possibility of change and their capacity to contribute to positive social and individual change	12	✓	13		15		1	X
4 Recognising the worth of all young people and building on their assets and strengths	15	✓	16	✓	19	✓	3	✓
<b>No response to any statements from the above section</b>	6		10		14		2	
<b>Meeting needs</b>		R = 23 Inc 11+		R = 28 Inc 14+		R = 35 Inc 18+		R = 7 Inc 3+
1 Providing flexible support for young people outside formal, statutory systems	11	✓	12		14		3	✓
2 Providing services that meet young people’s real needs in a practical way.	12	✓	13		16		3	✓

Statement	Current Qld Youth Workers		All Qld Youth Workers		All valid survey responses		Murris currently working in Qld	
	#	Include	#	Include	#	Include	#	Include
2.1 Recognising that the best services and supports are based on local knowledge and local ownership and by making services and programs as responsive as possible to local contexts and perspectives	10		11		14		1	
2.2 Enabling young people to access all the supports and funding they can and advocating for better guidelines for its distribution	8		9		10		2	
2.3 Providing proactive and holistic support to young people	15	✓	16	✓	19	✓	4	✓
2.4 Providing young people with linkages to other services and supporting them in accessing these	13	✓	14	✓	16		3	✓
2.5 Using an integrated and broad range of models, tools and approaches consistent with providing youth centred, culturally appropriate services and supports. This includes community development and peer based projects as well as personal support.	12	✓	13		15		3	✓
2.6 Being prepared to offer diverse, flexible services and work in a multi-skilled way	11	✓	12		15		2	X

Statement	Current Qld Youth Workers		All Qld Youth Workers		All valid survey responses		Murriss currently working in Qld	
	#	Include	#	Include	#	Include	#	Include
2.7 Providing practical, useful support based on young people's real situations including being able to provide consistent, longer term services for young people who may require more intensive support	12	✓	13		15		2	X
<b>No response to any statements from the above section</b>	6		10		14		2	
<b>Providing friendly, informal support</b>		R = 23 Inc 11+		R = 28 Inc 14+		R = 35 Inc 18+		R = 7 Inc 3+
1 Working alongside young people in a friendly, informal manner	10		11		13		3	✓
2 Providing youth centred services and supports in a friendly and informal way including	11	✓	12		14		3	✓
2.1 being there for young people	11	✓	12		13		4	✓
2.2 working at the young person's pace	15	✓	16	✓	18	✓	4	✓
2.3 maintaining young people's confidentiality	14	✓	15	✓	18	✓	4	✓
2.4 remaining open-minded about people's backgrounds and circumstances and treating each situation individually	14	✓	15	✓	18	✓	3	✓
2.5 being prepared to enter into a more personal relationship with young people whilst still being able to maintain ethical – or "professional" - boundaries	5		6		8		2	
2.6 Genuinely caring about young people	11	✓	12		13		4	✓

APPENDIX 5: Statistical analysis of survey descriptor statements

Statement	Current Qld Youth Workers		All Qld Youth Workers		All valid survey responses		Murris currently working in Qld	
	#	Include	#	Include	#	Include	#	Include
<b>No response to any statements from the above section</b>	5		9		13		2	
<b>Ethics and professional responsibility</b>		R = 23 Inc 11+		R = 28 Inc 14+		R = 35 Inc 18+		R = 7 Inc 3+
1 being conscious of Youth Workers' structural power, and not taking power over young people	13	✓	14	✓	16		4	✓
2 Particularly recognising the cultural context of marginalised young people and taking responsibility for learning to work in a culturally appropriate way	13	✓	14	✓	16		3	✓
3 Taking responsibility for and pride in what we do as Youth Workers.	10		11		13		2	
3.1 Being responsible for what we do, being able to justify it and remaining careful of how we use our power and influence with young people and their families.	13	✓	14	✓	17		4	✓
3.2 Taking responsibility for our own learning about youth, cultural or community groups if we are "outsiders" (e.g. Australian working with refugees, non-Indigenous person working with young Murris, non drug user working with users).	10		11		14		2	
3.3 Being clear about our ethical responsibilities to ourselves, young people, families, communities, our organisation and within the broader sector.	12	✓	13		16		2	X

APPENDIX 5: Statistical analysis of survey descriptor statements

3.4 Being proud of our identity as a Youth Worker, supporting one another, seeking to ensure new colleagues understand what Youth Work means and educating other workers or services about young people and about our role	11	✓	12		14		4	✓
<b>No response to any statements from the above section</b>	5		9		13		2	

## Murri Youth Work Definition

Statement	Yes	No response	Included in definition (3+)
<b>Murri Youth Work includes and supports the statements and principles made in the overall (or general parts) of the definition.</b>	3	3	✓
<b>Murri Youth Work acknowledges Murri cultures as the foundation of everything important for Murri peoples. This includes:</b>	2	3	
<b>Following Murri traditions, laws and protocols and respecting the full diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Australia</b>	3	3	✓
understanding that whilst there is a lot of diversity between different First Nation groups there are many, many similarities and connections.	2	3	
understanding what it is like to be a young Murri in the community - understanding young Murris' lifestyles, goals and problems and all the family and other connections within their lives.	2	3	
<b>Supporting the development of young Murri's or Islander's identity as an individual, within their family and as part of a broader clan or community.</b>	1	3	
always viewing young Murris within their family and community context	2	3	
supporting and learning from the aunties and nannas who are growing up lots of family	3	3	✓
seeking to involve elders and extended family where possible and linking young people in with supportive family members	3	3	✓
advocating for young Murris within their families and communities	2	3	
Playing a broker or bridging role between young people and their families/communities and encouraging both to understand the other's perspectives	2	3	

Statement	Yes	No response	Included in definition (3+)
recognising that Murri Youth Work is often about a search for identity and helping heal transgenerational traumas resulting from parents and grandparents being grown up within white institutions and not being allowed to speak their language or practice their culture: as well as being culturally traumatised these parents have little knowledge of how to grow up their own children. Murri Youth Work therefore includes strengthening and healing family connections where possible. Murri Youth Workers play a critical role in modelling appropriate behaviour within communities and often take on a closer relationship with young Murris, including being seen as "Aunty" or "Uncle." This must be understood and accepted by the broader Youth Sector.	3	3	✓
<b>Being solid and proud defenders of "Murri culture". Challenging assumptions made about Murris and Murri youth in our communities.</b>	3	3	✓
translating "young people's rights" into a language that both young Murris and elders can understand	2	3	
persisting in supporting pride in being Murri. Holding out against the constant barrage of "whiteness" at school and in other places and encouraging young Murri pride in their "blackness" and cultural identity.	3	3	✓
Doing what's right for young Murris and not just following policies and procedures if they are harmful or wrong.	2	3	
<b>Recognising that cultural mentoring is an essential part of Murri Youth Work</b> <i>For Murris this means:</i>	3	3	✓
supporting one another as Murri Youth Workers no matter where we come from	3	3	✓
finding our own cultural mentors & seeking their guidance	3	3	✓
finding out whatever we can about our family history and cultural backgrounds, especially if these have been taken from us	3	3	✓
being prepared to act as strong role models for young Murris and within our Murri families and communities.	3	3	✓
doing what we can to educate others about Murris and working with young Murris	3	3	✓

Statement	Yes	No response	Included in definition (3+)
<b>For others working with young Murrís it means:</b> seeking – and accepting - cultural and other guidance from local Murrís	3	3	✓
respecting cultural contexts or protocols without the need to question them	3	3	✓
accepting that we will rarely have the relationship that Murri Youth Workers have with young Murrís, doing whatever we can to acknowledge and support their cultural development as Murrís, and finding the best ways to offer what we can as non-Indigenous workers.	3	3	✓





youth affairs network qld

# What is Youth Work? Defining a Sector

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