



youth affairs network qld



ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015

**Youth Affairs Network of Queensland Inc.
Annual Report 2014- 2015**

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30 Thomas Street
West End Qld 4101

Telephone: +61 7 3844 7713

Email: admin@yanq.org.au

Web: www.yanq.org

Also find us on:



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YANQ acknowledges funding and in-kind support from:

Dusseldorf Forum, West End Wellness Centre, Stavrou Family, Integrated Youth & Family Services, Sisters Inside, Inala Youth Service and Children By Choice.

Our project partners include, The University of Queensland, Griffith University, Bond University, Queensland University of Technology, Youth Connections: Brisbane North and West Consortium, Edmund Rice Education Australia Youth +, Community Action Inc Gympie, Queensland Youth Connections Network, Queensland Partnership Broker Network and Brisbane Catholic Education.

YANQ would also like to thank all its members, networks and communities that invited, hosted or worked with YANQ in various ways during the past twelve months.

Acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

We believe that the primary culture of Australia is Aboriginal. We recognise that Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander peoples are 3 separate cultures. We recognise Aboriginal people as the permanent custodians of mainland Australia, including those areas of land whose owners have been wiped out as a result of racist policies and acts. We use the term custodianship in the context of protection and care for the land.



YANQ is committed to respecting Murri communities and individuals. We seek to understand their responses to policies and issues affecting them. We are committed to learning about their understandings of the impact of decisions on them. YANQ apologises for the past and present social mistreatment of Murri and Islander people created by colonisation, and is committed to supporting the healing process.

A Summary of YANQ's Values

At YANQ, we believe that everyone is unique. At the same time, human beings share a lot in common, and are essentially social. We envisage a society where everyone lives in harmony. For this to happen, society must both value every individual and seek the best outcome for the community as a whole. There is the same diversity amongst young people as the rest of the community; like everyone else, young people need to feel respected and valued. When young women and young men are treated as important, the rest of society will gain from their insights and experiences.

We aim to contribute to developing a society that genuinely includes all its members. That's why we are committed to promoting multiculturalism (in its widest sense), and supporting and respecting the wide range of cultures that are part of Australian society. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people always have been, and always will be, the first people of this land. Because of their special relationship with the land, indigenous culture will always have a particular significance in Australian society. Focussing on reconciliation with indigenous people is an important starting point toward creating a more inclusive society. It also provides a model for other areas of action, including strategies toward improving the situation of young people.

We believe that the most effective way to achieve constructive social change is for people to work together. Economic, social and political change is happening all the time, and it is critical that we constantly assess and reassess our strategies if we are to influence change. Both the process and outcomes of change must be fair if sustained, constructive social change is to occur.

We believe that everybody is entitled to have their basic emotional and material rights met. The central role of governments is to ensure that this occurs. Unfortunately, at the moment, governments in Australia focus on supporting global economic interests. Whilst we believe that everyone is fundamentally equal, some sections of our society do not have access to their fair share of society's resources. This includes young people, whose basic human rights are currently not being met. YANQ is committed to encouraging positive discrimination on behalf of those groups which miss out in society so that this type of social injustice will be overcome. It is only when everyone's fundamental rights are fulfilled, and each has the means to fully participate, that it will become relevant to talk about "mutual obligation" between society and its members.

We believe that a range of strategies is required to achieve constructive social change. Governments in Australia appear committed to stopping the voice of those who challenge their misplaced priorities. YANQ is responsible for being a strong public voice which lobbies and advocates on behalf of those young people who particularly miss out in society and of young people as a whole. To undertake this role effectively, it is crucial that we draw on the expertise of those working most closely with issues affecting particular groups of young people - young women and young men themselves, youth workers and youth organisations. That's why networking is another important social change strategy; it enables the youth sector to participate in collective action.

Ultimately, YANQ's credibility is maintained by practising what we preach. Our whole structure is designed to ensure that our values and vision permeate the organisation. We are committed to maintaining an open, flexible, accountable, consistent, inclusive, valuing approach in all our dealings - within YANQ, and in our relations with our members and the wider community. We are committed to applying our values in everything we say, and everything we do.

About the Youth Affairs Network of Queensland

The Youth Affairs Network of Queensland Inc (YANQ) is the peak community youth affairs organisation in Queensland, representing individuals and organisations from Queensland's youth sector.

We promote the interests and well being of young people across the state by:

- disseminating information to members, the youth sector, and the broader community
- undertaking campaigns and lobbying
- making representations to government and other influential bodies
- resourcing regional and issues-based networks
- consulting and liaising with members and the field
- linking with key state and national bodies
- initiating projects
- hosting forums and conferences
- input into policy development
- enhancing the professional development of the youth sector

We advocate on behalf of young people in Queensland, especially disadvantaged young people, to government and the community.

We promote and support cultural diversity. We encourage the development of policies and programs that respond to the rights and needs of young people.

The YANQ Team from July 2014 to June 2015

Committee Members

Mr Jude Saldanha (President)
Mr (Kuot) Elijah Buol (Vice-President)
Mr Phil Dodds (Treasurer)
Ms Matilda Alexander (Secretary)
Ms Whit Church
Ms Miranda McReynolds
Mr Alvin Hava
Mr Gavin Tyson
Ms Deb Kilroy ex officio
Mr Siyavash Doostkhah ex officio

Staff

Siyavash Doostkhah Director	Sue McComber Finance Officer	Amber Hansen Administration & Communication Officer
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Consultants

Prof. Martin Mills, University of Queensland
Suzi Quixley
Dr Glenda McGregory, Griffith University
Liz Archer
Karen Mitchell (Accountant)

President's report

2014/2015 has been another significant year for YANQ and the Queensland Youth Sector. Although YANQ operated without any Government funding what so ever, the organisation continues to act as the peak body representing the youth sector and rights of young people, and continues to grow its membership since the funding cuts.

The funding cuts however have had some adverse impact on YANQ's ability to engage with the various issues which are impacting on both young people and the youth sector. YANQ has had to continually downsize to ensure we remain a viable entity. We also have had to focus our resources on specific issues and campaigns.

Staging a youth sector conference in August 2014 was no easy task. Historically YANQ received \$50,000 from the Government towards this conference. YANQ used to employ a Conference Coordinator and Conference Administrator to assist with planning and hosting of the Conference. This year all of this was done in-house which meant a lot of YANQ's resources both financially and staff/committee time were invited in bringing the sector together.

The conference was the most significant event for the youth sector in the past year. For the first time the conference had an international keynote speaker, Tony Taylor from the UK, who brought Queensland up to date with information about the state of the youth sector in UK. He also discuss the campaign he has been leading titled "In Defence of Youth Work". Conference themes included youth justice, health, housing, education and workforce development. There is a more detailed account of the conference further in this AGM Report. Over all the feedback from the sector was incredibly positive and we hope to be in a position to host the next conference in 2016.

As well as the conference, YANQ has been involved in many other projects across the state this year and a plethora of other work in advocacy, lobbying, research and policy development all of which are outlined in more detail throughout this report. Please contact YANQ's Director if you would like any further information and/or clarification about any of the issues documented in this report, or if you would like to engage with any of our ongoing work.

A special thanks to all YANQ members for your ongoing support of our work. Without its members YANQ will cease to exist. With your support we will endeavour to represent the youth sector, as we have done since 1989 (our founding year).

Due to family/health issues I will have to step down from my role as the President of YANQ but no doubt I will continue to support the work of the organisation in whatever way I can. I would also like to acknowledge my fellow Management Committee members for their hard work and dedication and especially to the Executive who have supported me in my role and wish them all the best with the work ahead.

Finally, I hope that in the coming year we can continue to build on our strengths in partnership with the sector across Queensland and build YANQ's capacity to become a stronger voice for young people and youth sector in Queensland.

Phil Dodds
President
Youth Affairs Network Queensland

The year at a glance

2014 State Youth Affairs Conference



The major work of YANQ during the year was the 2014 State Youth Affairs Conference which was held on 21/22 August in Brisbane. Delegates gathered from all regions of Queensland as well as interstate and overseas to share knowledge and explore various issues impacting on young people and the youth sector. Many people felt energised by the presentations, discussions, networking and solidarity on display at the conference.

The conference was opened by the Warrajamba Murin Dance Group which grounded the conference by acknowledging the Country and Elders before displaying elements of ancient Murri culture and passing on knowledge. YANQ believes that the Traditional Custodians and primary culture of Australia is Aboriginal. We support the right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to self determination, and recognise their capacity to generate their own solutions to the problems imposed on them by continuing colonisation and ongoing pressures to assimilate. We recognise the proven credentials of Aboriginal Traditional Owners and Custodians in connecting with and managing this Land. We value the wisdom and leadership Aboriginal cultures can bring to addressing the problems faced by Australian society.

This was followed by Siyavash Doostkhah, long time YANQ Director, providing a brief history of YANQ going back to late 80's when youth sector members created YANQ to act as their peak body for Queensland. YANQ was funded and acknowledged as the youth sector peak body in 1992 and successive governments funded YANQ until 2012, when YANQ was defunded by the LNP Government. Governments of both persuasions have always found YANQ's advocacy work uncomfortable which means YANQ has managed to be a strong voice for the youth sector and in recent years with the capitulation of other state peaks, for the broader community sector. Siyavash also outlined YANQ's activities since the organisation was defunded and outlined his personal commitment as well as YANQ's management to continue the role bestowed on them by the sector since 80's.

Siyavash then introduced Tony Taylor, the conference keynote speaker from UK, long time youth worker, activist and the coordinator of the "In Defence of Youth Work" campaign. Tony also went back in time to the 1980's and painted a picture of UK and the world more broadly being influenced by the neoconservative market ideology of Margaret Thatcher and her followers. He eloquently described how market ideology has been rammed down the throat of non-government organisations, and how youth work, as a distinctive practice has become under threat. Tony provided a critique of the "Outcomes" agenda which resonated strongly with conference delegates. Tony tackled some very hard issues with great sharpness and a wonderful touch of humour. Tony described the events which led him to write an "open letter to the sector" 5 years ago which



was the birth of the “In Defence of Youth Work” campaign. The campaign has been undertaking some amazing strategies including a “Story Telling” project by youth workers.



There were 22 workshops covering 7 streams, perhaps a little too ambitious in trying to have something for everyone as feedback so far has suggested people would like more time in a single workshop with opportunity to break into discussion groups and enhance their learning. Presentations clearly had inspired the conference delegates and the discussions flowed to break times and evening talks and drinks.

Plenary sessions were facilitated by Suzi Quixley, they were designed to achieve 3 purposes:

- 1 To pull together everyone’s learning from the whole group sessions.
- 2 To build a sense of cohesion and common ground across participants.
- 3 To develop ideas for future action – at both a local and state wide level.



Overall the conference was a chance for youth sector members to engage in some cutting edge discussions about the role of youth work and how best to preserve the work as a distinctive practice. Feedback from delegates also suggests that networking opportunities and skills development through workshop activities were highlights of the two day conference.

Discussions are underway at YANQ management level and we are working with our colleagues in the UK to find the best way to advance our mutual interest and ensure the “In Defence of Youth work” campaign which has received an initial warm welcome in Queensland, will permeate the sector across the state and potentially Australia wide.

Young peoples’ reengagement with learning

The genesis of this project goes back at least to 2003 with the publication of a discussion paper entitled *What Are Schools For?* In that report, YANQ welcomed the Beattie Government’s plans to fund community organisations to employ youth workers in schools around Queensland. In the same report, however, we also called for greater support for young people who were marginalised from education and not attending schools (and therefore unable to benefit from the support of youth workers in schools).

Since that report, YANQ has continued to agitate for greater support for young people who are disengaged from schooling through a range of publications and research projects, such as the following:

- 2004 *Let's Invite Everyone*, a discussion paper written to encourage discussion and debate about the Education and Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF) process.
- 2005-2006 Submissions to the State Government's review of Education Laws in Queensland.
- 2008 A small research project, *A Snapshot of Queensland's Re-Engagement Services*, was undertaken to assess the level and nature of support that was available for young people (12 to 18) who were disengaged from education and work. This project highlighted the inconsistent (and in some cases non-existent) levels of support for young people who had become disengaged from education and were rarely, if ever, attending school.
- 2010 A pilot study undertaken in collaboration with the University of Queensland and Griffith University collected data from a small, diverse group of alternative schools in South-East Queensland, identified some of the practices that have engaged marginalised young people facing very difficult life circumstances and resulted in a YANQ publication: *Re-engaging Students in Education: Success Factors in Alternative Schools*.

Based on these previous projects, YANQ made the decision to commit significant time and energy into improving our advocacy for young people marginalised from education – and so the Re-engagement Project was born.

For the past 4 years YANQ and our research partners at The University of Queensland and Griffith University have been exploring the provision of existing alternative/flexible learning pathways in Queensland for young people who have become disengaged from mainstream schooling. We have been seeking to assess educational principles and practices that work in such sites so as to develop a framework of educational 'best practice' that may inform this sector.

YANQ's Education Reference Group has been overlooking the implementation of this project which has been supported by Youth +, Catholic Education, Bond University, Brisbane North and West Youth Connections Consortium, and the State Network of Partnership Brokers.

Complementing this research project was a documentary video project funded by the Dusseldorp Forum titled '*Building Young Peoples Voices*'. This project was a way to validate the research findings by engaging young people directly in production of series of short documentary videos. The videos gave young people the opportunity to provide us with their perspective on what is different about alternative education settings and why they have reengaged with learning and maintaining their engagement in these settings.



Documenting the voices of young people and their perspective on best practice in provision of alternative/flexible education was the main outcome of the project. There are 14 short videos produced for informing Educators and Youth workers about the views of young people on practice frameworks that have assisted them in reengaging with learning. These videos will be uploaded on YANQ's website and promoted widely to the youth and education sectors. There are 6 short videos developed specifically targeting young people who may not be aware of Alternative Education options. These videos will be loaded on a Facebook page which will also have information about Alternative Education sites in various parts of Queensland and other information to encourage young people to re-engage with learning. And finally, there is a short video produced targeted at politicians and policy makers. This video was copied on DVD and posted to every member of Queensland Parliament, along with an update on the work of our research team in the lead up to the last state election.

Over 50 young people participated in various parts of the project across three schools in South East Queensland. As part of our research strategy we adopted 3 distinctive practices to see if each approach produced different information from young people. The first school was visited directly by the film crew without any introduction workshops by YANQ. The school staff and students were briefed earlier on and the filmmakers facilitated the process. The focus of this approach was production of high quality professional videos. In the second school the focus was engaging young people not only to talk about their experiences but also to engage with documentary film making techniques. As such there was more time spent with young people interested in film making, some of the footage is not as high quality as others but however it provides a distinct flavour as young people are on both sides of the camera. In the third site there was a number of workshops held by YANQ with students of Social Studies who had self-nominated in being involved in our research. We spend considerable time briefing these students about the background to our work, the purpose of the videos and the target audience followed by video interviews of them as well as interviews with our research team from Griffith University and The University of Queensland.

The research team conducted both observation of workshops implemented by YANQ and filmmakers, as well as conducting their own direct interviews with young people. This information is being analysed by our university partners and will be incorporated in the final report to the Australian Research Council next year. The researchers worked with the students to validate previously gathered information from across the state as well as utilising their observations and interviews with this group to inform our broader research. Although elements of this part of the project were not very exciting for the young participants "being interviewed by academics", this was done during down-time waiting for other young people who were being filmed. All young people expressed satisfaction with the interviews and are interested to see the final research and how it will reflect their experiences.

The final report of the four year research, which was funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) and undertaken by YANQ, The University of Queensland and Griffith University, will be launched in early 2016.

CPLAN: Communities of Practice Leaders Action Networks

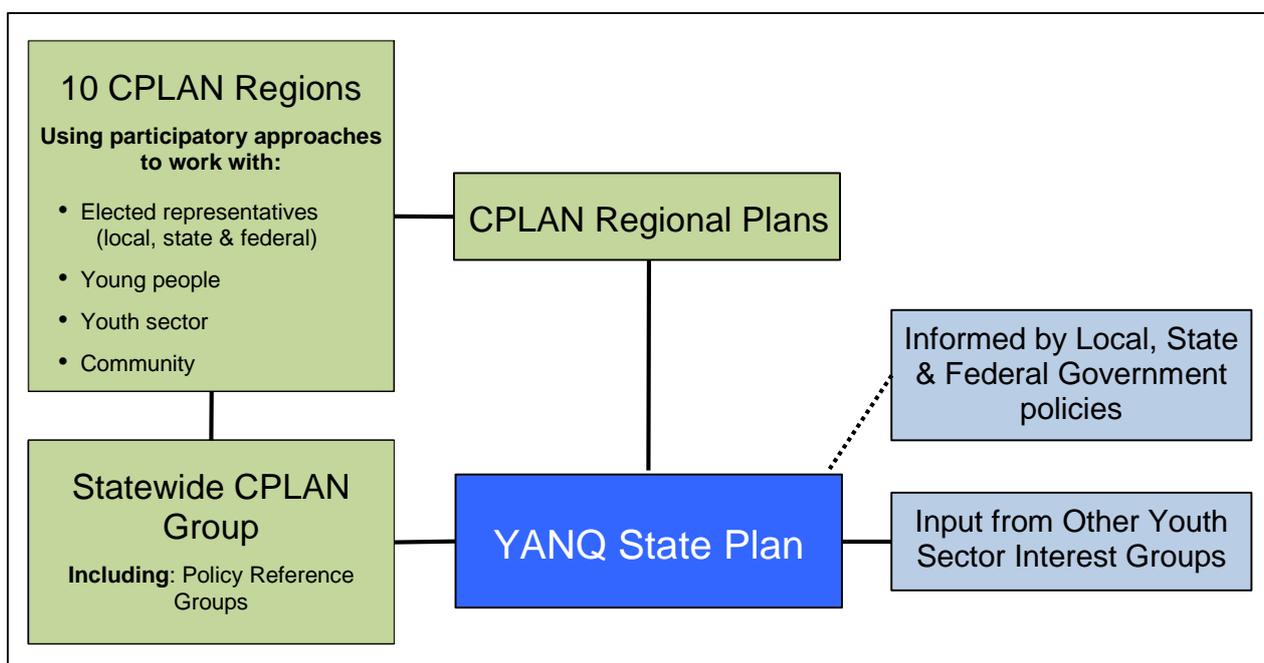
YANQ is distinguished from many other peak bodies by our decentralised model - the priority we place on regional involvement in all aspects of our decision-making. Prior to 2013, a significant proportion of our limited funds were dedicated to resourcing and supporting a sophisticated regional structure and ensuring that regional participation was integral to all aspects of our work. This enabled members across the State to play an active role in identifying the varying needs of young people and youth workers; engaging in customised locally-relevant training; undertaking local research and consultation; and actively contributing to state-level policy development.

Our innovative model, launched in 2011, is called CPLAN (Communities of Practice Leaders Action Networks). Between 2011 and 2013, YANQ employed 10 Regional CPLAN Facilitators throughout Queensland. These were existing youth workers in 10 regions who, with the support of their employer, work 1 day per month

for YANQ. We also appointed an (unpaid) Co-facilitator in each region. The Co-facilitator supported the Facilitator at the local level, attended equally in state-level meetings, and was ready to take their place should the Facilitator become unable to fulfil their role. The work of CPLAN was integral to YANQ's day-to-day operations and decision-making structures. It provided a unique opportunity for us to undertake bottom-up, inclusive, sector-driven policy development. Regional CPLAN groups identified priority regional issues and local workers contribute their ideas. If more than one region had shared interest in a policy area, they could form a Policy Reference Group, which directly contributed to the development of State-level policy.

Regional CPLAN Facilitators and Co-facilitators met 3 times each year at a State CPLAN Forum (funded through the National Workforce Development Fund, 2011-2013). These meetings provided support, an opportunity to discuss issues, mutual information exchange, and background on emerging policy issues and training. In addition, YANQ sought to visit the regions as often as possible to provide training and enable local workers to directly participate in major YANQ research projects.

The following diagram summarises the YANQ policy and planning process:



CPLAN seeks to strengthen existing regional structures rather than create a whole new system. We recognise that locally-appropriate networks and groups have developed over time, and that workers often struggle to find the time (or access to transport) to participate. In most regions, CPLAN has been embedded into existing non-government networks or interagency youth sector groups, or (in one case) a local government youth sector network. In a couple of regions, where suitable structures did not exist, a new CPLAN group has been formed. Feedback from the regions has been extremely positive. Workers have said that CPLAN added to the sense of purpose of their regional structures and provided genuine support for local workers.

The success of this model is reflected in the fact that, despite the absence of funding for regional Facilitators over the past 3 years, CPLAN groups have continued to operate and participate in YANQ (mainly via teleconference), in 8 of the 10 regions.

Celebrate Don't Medicate Campaign

YANQ has set up a new Facebook page to help with our campaign [Celebrate Don't Medicate](#) focusing on "ADHD". We already have 183 likes and the page seems popular with the Murri community.

History has taught us the lesson of “The Big Lie”. Whole societies have bought into ideas and concepts that have later proven to range from baseless to maniacal. Reading with any sort of an open mind through the voluminous literature on the topic of “ADHD” in the early 21st century, one cannot help but be reminded of reading through treatises on slavery in the 18th century. How could something so horrible and so egregious be happening in a “civilized” society? Why didn’t those people take a hard look at what they were doing?

We have no doubt that someday people will look back on the massive drugging of children in Australia in the same way. “ADHD” is a catchall description of childhood behaviour invented by people sitting around a table who stood to benefit by the diagnosis both professionally and financially. Virtually any child who has ever been a problem for any adult, could qualify for this “diagnosis”, and be declared “sick” in the absence of any medical, scientific or organic findings whatsoever. Yet despite the indisputable fact that no one has been able to tell us what “ADHD” actually is, millions of parents, teachers and doctors are accepting it without question and supporting the use of powerful cocaine-like drugs in children. Meanwhile, pharmaceutical companies are reaping hundreds of millions of dollars in profits. When dissidents try to speak out they are either ignored, discouraged or attacked with the viciousness historically characteristic of those profiting from a “Big Lie”. When the information does get out to the public, we are told to discredit it as “fanaticism” or “extremism”. Ultimately truth is the greatest enemy of the “Big Lie”.



AGM and Amendments to YANQ’s Constitution

YANQ held its AGM and Special General Meeting on 10th December 2014. As well as our AGM process we had a small launch of the *Building Young People’s Voices* video project. YANQ’s Education Reference Group members attended the meeting and some of the videos made by young people talking about their experience in Alternative Education settings were screened.

At our Special General Meeting which was held back to back with the AGM, we proposed seven amendments to our constitution and with the affirmative vote and no objections they have been adopted by YANQ’s membership. These changes to the rules were subsequently registered with Office of Fair Trading and are now integrated in our new constitution.

Downsizing staff and office space

The premises at 30 Thomas Street, West End is now leased by a group of health practitioners and YANQ has an agreement with the new tenants to allow us to remain in the back office. The downsizing of the office

has gone hand in hand with the downsizing of staff. Due to lack of any funding from the government in the past three years, YANQ has only one employee, the Director, who works 2-3 days per week. There is no administration support and as such we appreciate our members' patience as we haven't been able to operate to our normal standard. However we are cautiously optimistic that YANQ's funding will be reinstated and that we can return to our normal functionality in the very near future.

Mt Isa and Regional North West Queensland Youth Alliance Network

YANQ was invited on two occasions to be a guest speaker at the Youth Alliance Network. We presented the meeting with an update on our activities and promoted the work of YANQ. YANQ also participated in a discussion about Mt Isa Council's approach to young people disengaged from education.

Inner Urban Youth Interagency

YANQ was the guest speaker at two of the Inner Urban Youth Interagency (IUYI) meetings. Participants were very interested in YANQ's work and the campaigns we are running.

There are so many new faces in the sector that don't know YANQ and it's so important for YANQ to regularly attend and present about YANQ's work at various inter-agencies.

Queensland Youth Alliance

YANQ was invited to be a guest speaker at a meeting of the Queensland Youth Alliance (QYA). This was the second time in many years that QYA have invited YANQ to speak at their meetings. A number of organisational members of QYA are also YANQ members.

TAFE lectures

YANQ was invited on a number of occasions to speak to community services students at South Bank and Bracken Ridge TAFE. Topics included advocacy, organisational development and policy. YANQ is concerned about the level of competency amongst VET students interested in joining the youth sector. YANQ will explore how it could work with the VET system to enhance the training and mentoring of the new students entering the field.

Future of Youth Work, Book and web-based narratives

YANQ has continued consulting with various sector members on how to progress the definition of Youth Work and also looking at best ways to capture and present stories from the sector which have not been told. Presenting the stories (videos, audio, photos and text) as some kind of web-based narratives seems to be the easiest and most cost effective way to achieve this. YANQ has also been sounding out a number of people to potentially act as an editorial subcommittee for the project. We have commenced gathering names and contact details for Youth Workers who have left the sector in the last 3-4 decades to see if we can track them down and find out if they are interested in contributing to this project.

Function at Government House in Honour of Youth

YANQ was invited by the Queensland Governor to a function in honour of youth held at Government House. There were hardly any young people there and it was more a function in honour of those who work with young people. YANQ Director invited Shea Spierings, Australian Youth Representative to the United Nations in 2015, who was visiting Brisbane at the time and the two represented the youth sector at this function. This was a good opportunity to introduce Shea to some of the Youth Sector members who attended the function. It was also a good opportunity for Shea to see in action some of the limitations we work with. YANQ's Director used the opportunity to raise the issue of 17 year olds in adult prisons with the Governor. YANQ also brought to the attention of the Governor that there continues to be a high level violence inflicted on young inmates in adult prisons by the staff at these facilities, his Excellency offered some crumbed delicious prawns in response before walking away.

UN Youth Representative

As mentioned above, YANQ met with Shea Spierings, Australian Youth Representative to the United Nations in 2015. Shea is a Murri Queenslander originally from Mackay. He comes from a rough background and understands a lot of issues faced by marginalised young people. This is very refreshing as most previous UN Youth Representatives struggle with understanding the issues impacting on marginalised young people. Shea travelled and connected with young people and youth sector across the state and more broadly across the country before writing a detailed report which he table at the United Nations late last year.

Meeting with the new Minister for Youth and the Premier

YANQ was very pleased to see the return of the 'Youth' to the title of the ministry by the elected Labor Government. YANQ met with the new Minister, Shannon Fentiman, soon after her appointment as the Minister responsible for youth issues. YANQ congratulated the Minister and emphasised the need for a whole of government youth policy to guide the investment and program design in the youth field. The Minister expressed interest in YANQ's work and the challenges we face as a sector against the "outcomes agenda". She related to the issue from personal experience of working at an NGO and her understanding that community work could/should not be articulated as pre planned "outcomes". The Minister also acknowledged the need for a Youth Peak body in Queensland.

Following this meeting YANQ has been meeting on regular basis with various departmental officers as well as maintaining contact with Minister's office. YANQ has been negotiating with the department to undertake research into priority youth issues and hope to have a project commencing later in the year.

YANQ also met with the new Queensland Premier and briefed her about the youth sector and youth issues. The Premier was very interested and expressed her support for the work of our sector.

Federal Budget

There was some very bad news in the Federal Budget in particular for the youth sector. The loss of the Australian Clearing House for Youth Studies (ACHYS) which lost its funding from 30th June 2015 this year was of major concern. For the past 30 years the ACHYS has been the only national youth journal for our sector and one of the reason's YANQ stopped the production of New Transitions (YANQ's journal) was the fact that ACHYS did cover the issues well and were resourced to do this job. If YANQ is refunded we will need to revisit this issue and explore the possibility of restarting the New Transitions journal.

State, Territory and National Youth Peak Bodies

State and Territory peaks held a number of teleconferences during the year. The cuts to the youth sector by the federal government was the main discussion points. As well as defunding the national youth peak body, Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC). The state peaks and AYAC also responded to the welfare reforms proposed in the McClure Report. We also campaigned against the funding cuts to other federally funded programs such as the Youth Connections and the Partnership Brokers. Despite the funding cuts AYAC continues to operate with the support of state peak bodies and will lead a campaign on youth sector issue in the lead up to the federal election in 2016.

Research

YANQ has been invited to be a part of an exciting new development spearheaded by The University of Queensland. The proposal is to establish a Centre of Excellence for Building Stronger Society (CEBuSS) or "The Centre" for short.

In Australian society today, we face a range of threats to the social glue that holds diverse groups together. Isolation, alienation and marginalization undermine engagement and these have negative consequences for well-being, inclusion, performance and productivity.

To future-proof Australia we must lead the world in understanding the social underpinnings of successful relations between citizens and society. The vision of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Building Stronger Society (CEBuSS) is to be a focal point and repository for such understanding and to be a leading international centre for the analysis and cultivation of stronger society. CEBuSS will do this by bringing leading national and international researchers together with key industry partners to address the challenges of promoting social engagement in ways that build a stronger and more harmonious society.

The core goals of CEBuSS are three-fold:

- to understand the causes of disengagement and to clarify its consequences,
- to develop and test interventions to promote both engagement and re-engagement, and,
- to translate these insights into effective policy to support engagement in schools, organizations and communities.

In seeking to respond to these various challenges in different communities and sectors, it is tempting to see them as unique and independent, and to formulate bespoke analysis and policy to tackle the specific features of each as they are encountered in a particular domain. However, the activities of CEBuSS will focus on integrative analysis that seeks to explore processes that are common to all these problems. In particular, we suggest that all are reflections of reduced levels of social connection and identification. Accordingly, in seeking to promote engagement with diverse institutions and communities, we see the cultivation and promotion of social identification as a core goal.

To pursue this goal, The University of Queensland has brought together a team of leading researchers from the University of Queensland, the University of Melbourne, the Australian National University and the University of Canberra, as well as experts from North America and Europe. All are at the forefront of efforts to understand and promote social engagement in organizational, educational and community contexts, and all have a track record both of attracting competitive funding and of successful collaboration with external partners.

CEBuSS will involve close collaborations with major industry partners for whom engagement is a key issue. This will include public- and private-sector organizations, as well as stakeholders in the not-for-profit sector. Together, we are committed to the process of developing and delivering solutions that have a transformative impact on the communities and institutions at the heart of Australian society.

Australian Research Council (ARC) Centres of Excellence are a focal point for expertise in areas of national priority. They involve high-quality researchers collaborating with external businesses and government agencies to develop solutions to the key challenges that Australia is currently facing.

Youth unemployment and a genuine response from youth sector

YANQ has lodged a funding proposal to Department of Community to undertake research on how youth sector can genuinely engage with employment creation for young people. This research project will examine the potential of place-based or 'community economic' approaches to youth unemployment. Of particular interest are community enterprises, work cooperatives and small business innovations for highly marginalised groups that provide relevant levels of social support along with work/economic benefits. The project will explore the sort of support and scaffolding that is most helpful to young people through these alternative models. More specifically, it seeks to understand what responses to long-term youth unemployment might look like, that take seriously issues of place, social needs, available work, individual capacity, and community capabilities.

Youth health

YANQ met with the Senior Advisor to Health Minister, Cameron Dick. We briefed him about the role of YANQ and our previous history of working with the Health Department including our work as the Chair of the Subcommittee of The Ministerial Advisory Council on Hep C, HIV and Sexual Health. We tabled with him recommendations that the advisory committee had endorsed before the committee was disbanded by the LNP Government. We also briefed him about our work on the "ADHD" campaign.

State Government

YANQ attended the State Budget lockdown and put out an initial response to the state budget. The entire Youth Support Funding in Queensland is now just over \$20 Million. It is so sad to see the LNP Government cutting youth service funding and reducing the overall funding level to such a low amount. On top of this the cuts to Federal Youth Programs will also impact on the sector and together these issues will place more pressure on remaining youth services and marginalised young people. The State government has also aligned with the conservative opposition and announced trials of Social Impact Bonds. This is another Thatcher-era privatisation policy that both Labor and the more conservative governments around the world have been implementing.

YANQ responded to Queensland Government's announcement about reopening the Borallon Prison and got good media coverage in *Weekend Courier Mail* and *Green Left Weekly*. Social media also picked this up and we had a lot of engagement with this issue. This is of major concern as it adds almost 500 additional prison beds which are all designated for holding young people under 25. The prison was decommissioned a number of years ago because of hanging points in cells and as a follow up to recommendations of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Deaths in Custody report.

Youth justice

YANQ attended a one-day Youth Justice Forum focusing on restorative justice. This was an initiative of Griffith University and Restorative Practices International. The forum was opened by the Attorney General, Yvette D'Ath, who stated her commitment to restorative practices. The forum was a great opportunity to network with some key individuals and organisations. YANQ used the opportunity to connect with Rob

Hulls who is currently the Director of the Centre for Innovative Justice at RMIT. Rob was the Attorney General of Victoria back in 2005 when the state government there changed the practice of locking up 17 year olds in adult prisons. The experience in Victoria has been very positive and Rob indicated he is prepared to support our campaign to convince Queensland Government to do the same.

YANQ gave a presentation at the Reintegration Puzzle Conference, speaking about the 17 year olds in Adult Prison and why we should change this practice.

YANQ met with Kelly Richards and Ange Dwyer from the Queensland University of Technology and assisted them with their research into youth justice issues.

YANQ assisted Legal Aid Qld with developing a Best Practice guidelines for working with children and young people to be used by Legal Aid.

YANQ had a visitor from overseas interested in youth justice issues. Sarah Griffiths works for the Youth Justice Board in England and Wales. Sarah visited YANQ and exchanged information about youth justice issues. Sarah was awarded a Travelling Fellowship with the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust to look in to the management of bullying and harassment in Juvenile Custody. She was surprised to hear some of the information we provided to her and equally surprising for us was England and Wales's achievements in reducing the number of young people on remand in the past few years.

YANQ's communication



YANQ's membership has increased to 424. A quarter of these are organisations and the rest are individual youth workers and young people. Majority of our members are from outside of South East Queensland.

YANQ continued to have a significant presence on print and digital media covering issues such as youth unemployment, Youth Justice, and 17 year olds in Adult Prisons.

YANQ's Facebook page has around 680 likes and is very active. YANQ's Web page is classed as Tier 1 which is the category for sites with the highest traffic and is equivalent to the websites of large national organisations.

YANQ continues to send out periodic email bulletins to over 800 recipients.

Treasurer's Report 2015

It is with great pleasure that I present our Accountant's Report for the year ending 30th June 2015.

YANQ received no funding from any government sources in 2015. Under the Incorporated Association's Act YANQ's current assets and income derived from our other activities in 2015, require the organisation's financial records to be verified by an approved person. The YANQ Management Committee therefore, made the decision to save approximately \$2,000 by not undergoing a full audit.

YANQ's financial records have been reviewed and verified by an approved person and our financial records show that the association has book keeping processes in place to adequately record the association's income and expenditure and dealings with its assets and liabilities.

We hope that in the current financial year we will see YANQ's funding being reinstated and that we will be presenting a full audited report at our next AGM.

Although YANQ's recurrent funding was cut by the LNP government three years ago, strict fiscal restraint, ongoing downsizing and a reprioritising of our operations has ensured YANQ remains in a viable position.

YANQ has continued to be a strong voice for the rights of young people in Queensland and the development of the Queensland youth sector. In order for the sector to respond appropriately to challenges faced by young people and communities we require a healthy youth sector. That's why YANQ's work in the sector development area is paramount to the creation of a vibrant youth sector in Queensland.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our members and subscribers for their financial contribution to YANQ. Our current membership stands at 424, the largest number of members since YANQ's inception. Approximately a quarter of our members are organisations and the rest individual youth workers and young people. It is of significance also that the majority of these members are from outside South East Queensland. I would also of course like to thank our many donors for their contributions, of both time and money, which has helped maintain an independent voice for the youth sector in Queensland.

If you would like further information please contact our office.

Miranda McReynolds
Treasurer

Karen Mitchell FCA

1/10 Orealla Crescent
Sunrise Beach Q 4567

P: 07 5474 5655
E: kmi60128@bigpond.net.au



Youth Affairs Network of Queensland Inc. ("YANQ")

ABN 28 205 281 339

ACCOUNTANT VERIFICATION STATEMENT

In respect of the financial statements for Youth Affairs Network of Queensland Inc. setting out the income and expenditure for the year ended 30 June 2015 and the financial position as at 30 June 2015, I verify the following:

I have sighted the association's financial records and the financial records show that the association has book keeping processes in place to adequately record the association's income and expenditure and dealings with its assets and liabilities.

The Financial Statements are based on the financial accounts and supporting records of the association as at 30 June 2015.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karen Mitchell'.

Karen Mitchell FCA

31st August 2015