



Youth Consultative Network

1/2007

**Brief Response from the
Youth Affairs Network of QLD**

June 2007

Table of Contents

WHAT DOES YANQ DO WITH THE INFORMATION?	1
For More Information.....	1
RESPONSE TO MATTERS RELATING TO YOUNG PEOPLE	1
Housing & Accommodation.....	1
National Youth Homelessness Inquiry.....	1
Possible De-Funding of Queensland's Youth Housing Peak.....	2
Transport.....	2
Gold Coast Youth Transport Forum.....	2
Making the Argument for Public Transport.....	2
Education.....	2
Mental Health.....	3
Anger Management.....	3
Employment.....	3
Labour Underutilisation.....	3
Union for Fast-Food and Retail Workers.....	3
RESPONSE TO MATTERS RELATING TO ORGANISATIONS	4
Funding - Youth Week Funding.....	4
Funding - General Lack of.....	4
Cooperation/Collaboration.....	4
SUGGESTIONS RE TRAINING NEEDS	4
Standards for Community Services.....	4
Community Door Website.....	4
QCOS Resources.....	4
Self-Harm.....	5

What Does YANQ do with the Information?

The information (issues, training needs and announcements of resources) that was provided to YANQ through the YCN between January and March 2007 is used in a variety of ways, including:

- forwarding collated reports to relevant Government Departments and Peak bodies and inviting them to respond;
- making the results publicly available on YANQ's website and distributing them back via interagencies;
- informing YANQ's operational planning for the future (i.e. to help us decide what areas of work to focus on).

For the longer term, the issues raised via the YCN help YANQ to decide what issues it should seek to address through specific and more intensive projects (that we would work on in partnership with the sector).

For the short term YANQ has provided (below) information about current or past activities relevant to some of the issues that may be useful. Where possible, contact details have been provided in case interagencies would like to follow up on this information.

For More Information...

For more information about the YCN or YANQ generally, please phone or e-mail us using the contact details to the right (Who's Who at YANQ). The staff member with particular responsibility for the YCN is the Network Development Officer.

The YCN website also provides further details, as well as reports from previous quarters. You can access the site at <http://www.yanq.org.au/ycn>

Response to Matters Relating to Young People

Housing & Accommodation

All but one of the interagencies that participated in this quarter raised concerns about housing and accommodation support services for young people, continuing the trend from past quarters.

There are two major development occurring in this field: firstly the National Inquiry into Youth Homelessness being conducted by the National Youth Commission; and secondly the proposed changes to the funding of housing peaks, which poses a serious threat to the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition.

National Youth Homelessness Inquiry

The National Youth Commission into Youth Homelessness (NYC) is an independent community inquiry, the first since the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission inquiry in 1989 headed by Brian Burdekin.

YANQ strongly encourages services, youth workers and the young people they work with to make a submission to this inquiry. The 'grounded' perspectives of young people and their services will help the commission to bring this issue to national attention and advocate for real solutions.

Your submissions need not be long, detailed papers – even a short paragraph or two outlining your experience/s will be immensely valuable.

You can make submissions online at <http://www.nyc.net.au> (You will need to register at the site before making a submission). If you would prefer to make your submission some other way (e.g. orally) please phone the

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Commission on 03 9940 1573.

YANQ made a presentation to the Commission during the hearings in Brisbane in April. Details that had been raised with us through the YCN were provided to the commissioners. YANQ also raised the significant housing issues at a recent meeting of Statewide Youth Organisations hosted by the Office for Youth.

Possible De-Funding of Queensland's Youth Housing Peak

The Department of Housing (DoH) has announced that it wishes to change the way it funds housing peak bodies – including the Queensland Youth Housing Coalition, a body that advocates for young homeless people and supports the services that work with them.

DoH has stated it no longer wishes to fund 5 peaks¹ (+ the research functions of the Tenants Union), but instead wishes to fund just two - a consumer peak, and a service provider peak. If the DoH goes ahead with its plans there is a serious risk that young people will find it more difficult to raise and get a response to the specific issues and challenges they face in obtaining safe and affordable places to live.

All of the housing Peaks have been asked to respond to the DoH's proposal to fund just two peaks. Queensland Shelter's initial response is available on their website.

The Queensland Youth Housing Coalition is campaigning to maintain its role. Individuals and services that would like to support the QYHC's campaign to retain its funding are urged to contact them directly by phoning (07) 3876 2088. You can also visit their website at <http://www.qyhc.org.au>

Transport

A lack of useful, public and affordable transport continues to rate highly as an issue of concern.

Gold Coast Youth Transport Forum

The Gold Coast will soon play host to the Gold Coast Youth Transport Forum (May 31st). YANQ will endeavour to share any of the outcomes from this forum that may be relevant to other areas.

Making the Argument for Public Transport

Services and inter-agencies that are involved on lobbying for this at a local level, might find the following resources useful:

The Rockridge Institute has summarised the arguments in favour of public transport in chapter 7 of their book, *Thinking Points* (see the "Transit for All" section). The arguments they put forward broaden the issue out from the narrow need to get people to work or education, to one of environmental protection, public health, job security and national security.

In 2003, the then Executive Director of the Brisbane Institute wrote this article, arguing for better public transport for South East Queensland.

The Dusseldorp Skills Forum has a page on their website dedicated to the transport issue. The page includes examples of existing projects and other resources. You can find it at <http://www.dsff.org.au/transport/>

Education

One inter-agency has again raised concerns regarding a lack of services for young people under 15 that are disengaged from school. As many readers will be aware, YANQ has been conducting a small piece of research into this issue (though looking at a broader age range) and is currently in the process of analysing the findings and writing the research report. This will be released as soon as possible.

Regarding the concerns that schools are not aware of the range of community services available to their young people, the strategies suggested by inter-agencies in their submissions² are all good ones. In addition, the

¹ These being: Queensland Shelter, Queensland Public Tenants Association, Queensland Disability Housing Coalition, Queensland Youth Housing Coalition and the Queensland Community Housing Coalition.

² i.e. in the submissions for the 1st Quarter of 2007. See http://www.yanq.org.au/index.php?option=com_wrapper&Itemid=46 and click on the

interagency may consider making contact with the local District Youth Achievement Plan (DYAP) committee. This committee may also be interested in ways of bringing schools and community services together and have further ideas or strategies. You can find your nearest DYAP committee by contacting the ETRF contact in your area ([download contact list here](#)). If the contact list is out of date, phone Education Queensland on 1300 650 220.

Mental Health

As many readers will be aware, a coalition of youth and mental health organisations (including YANQ) staged a Youth Mental Health Summit in Queensland earlier in the year in March. The report from the Summit will be available shortly and will be announced in [YANQ's E-mail Bulletin](#) and on the websites of [YANQ](#) and the [Queensland Alliance](#).

Anger Management

One interagency expressed a need for more anger management programs for young people.

YANQ will raise this within the Youth Violence Taskforce; however we urge individual services to raise this directly also. The Youth Violence taskforce is examining ways of reducing violence amongst young people. Submissions to the taskforce can be made at <http://www.police.qld.gov.au/Forms/YouthViolence.asp>. For more information visit <http://www.police.qld.gov.au/News+and+Alerts/campaigns/gangGroupViolence.htm>.

In the short-term, services that want to develop their own programs or strategies may find the following two websites and articles useful:

- [Reachout](#) – why people get angry and some tips on managing anger.
- [SA Children's, Youth and Women's Health Service - Managing your angry feelings](#).

Employment

Labour Underutilisation

Regarding the issue of a high casual/seasonal employment, this is backed up by data from the Centre for Full Employment and Equity ([CoffeeE](#)) at the University of Newcastle. In a report from February they argue

“that the labour market continues to create part-time jobs which are not matching the desires of the workforce. Total CLMI labour underutilisation (which adds official unemployment to hidden unemployment and underemployment) is estimated at 8.7 per cent in February 2007”

Union for Fast-Food and Retail Workers

An interesting development in the area of youth employment is the establishment of a union for young workers in the fast-food and retail industries. The union is called Unite and, unfortunately, it only supports young people employed in these industries in Victoria. However the approach it is taking to address low-wages and casualisation may be applicable elsewhere.

For details see <http://www.unite.org.au>

“Quarterly reports” link for details.

Response to Matters Relating to Organisations

Funding – Youth Week Funding

YANQ wrote to the Office for Youth on the 8th of January this year regarding the specific concerns raised about the funding model for National Youth Week. In the letter we asked a number of questions about the reasons for changing the funding model, the consultations that were done prior to the change and the costs of the launch of National Youth Week in comparison to the overall funding provided. As at the time of writing YANQ has not received a reply to this letter.

Funding – General Lack of

YANQ continues to raise this issue with the Government and other stakeholders. Most recently we raised it at a meeting of statewide youth organisations hosted by the Office for Youth. We have also raised it with QCOSS to ensure the issue is included in their annual State Budget Submission.

Also, a quick reminder about the Full Cost of Service Delivery project being lead by QCOSS and supported by a number of other peaks, including YANQ. You can find details at:
<http://www.qcoss.org.au/Article.aspx?type=news&d=660>.

Cooperation/Collaboration

Under this category four interagency identified difficulties in working collaboratively with other agencies, or a need for more training/information.

Some of the research into network structures may be helpful. One such research report that may be written by researchers from QUT, UQ and California State University entitled "Network Structures: Working Differently And Changing Expectations". The article explores networks as a mechanism for working collaboratively and explores some work done in the Goodna region to tease out what the authors see as the key lessons. The full report can be downloaded from QUT at: <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/archive/00004819/>

Arguably, some of the factors that make for good interagency apply to more specific collaborative projects also. Therefore, the "Making Great Interagencies Kit", published by the Western Sydney Community Forum may be useful. It may be downloaded here, on the Community Resource Network's website.

In 2002, QCOSS and the School of Management at Griffith University conducted some research into "Effective Community Business Partnerships". During the research they also spoke with many organisations that had experience of community-community partnerships. Some of the learnings outlined in the research report from this project may also be useful. The report is available by contacting QCOSS on (07) 3832 1266.

Suggestions re Training Needs

Standards for Community Services

Community Door Website

The Queensland Government's Community Door website provides some information that may assist services that are working to ensure they conform with the new standards. You can find the relevant web-page at: <http://www.qld.gov.au/ngo/servicestandards/doc/>.

QCOSS Resources

The Queensland Council of Social Service SNGO implementation team has developed a DVD broadly outlining the matters covered in the half day Standards Preparation Workshops which they delivered in late 2006 and early 2007 throughout Queensland. The focus of these workshops was to assist organisations funded

by the Department of Communities to prepare themselves for the Standards for Community Services which are expected to be finalised by mid 2007.

The aim of the DVD is to capture this content and make it available to organisations who were not able to attend the workshops. In particular, the DVD has been developed to inform management committee members within these organisations. The DVD is broken up into digestible chapters which are suitable for viewing at management committee meetings or similar gatherings.

More details including how to obtain the DVD are available at:
<http://www.qcooss.org.au/Article.aspx?type=news&d=2138>.

Self-Harm

The universities of Queensland, Sunshine Coast and Monash have received a grant to develop a best-practice training tool for professionals working with young people that self-harm.

To develop the kit, they need the assistance of young people and professionals that work with them.

The developers of the training tool are seeking young people and professionals who work with, or have work contact, with young people who self-harm to participate in either focus group discussions or interviews.

If you are interested or would like more information contact Tracey Kay on (07) 3365 5283 or e-mail to: t.kay@uq.edu.au