# YOUTH SECTOR UPDATE

## JULY TO DECEMBER 2009

## INTRODUCTION

This update has two aims: to share information about emerging (and consistent) trends in the youth sector; and to share information relevant to these trends.

Every 6 months YANQ checks in with youth services around the state to see what's happening and what are the main challenges facing young people, as well as their services. This helps YANQ do its job as a Peak body in 3 important ways:

1. **keeping the community and governments informed** and up to date about where we can improve in terms of protecting and promoting young people's rights;
2. **connecting people and organisations** from different parts of the sector who might be trying to figure out how to address similar issues.
3. **spotting emerging trends and identifying areas that need more research** as well as advocating for solutions to address the challenges being raised.

youth affairs network qld

In this Update


INTRODUCTION.....1

ISSUES RAISED: TWO YEAR TREND.....2

ISSUES RAISED: JULY TO DECEMBER 2009.....2

INTERAGENCIES THAT PARTICIPATED.....2

CHALLENGES FACING YOUNG PEOPLE.....3

MISUSE AND ABUSE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL (BINGE DRINKING);.....3

HOMELESSNESS, INSECURE HOUSING AND LACK OF ACCESS TO THE PRIVATE RENTAL MARKET.....4

MAINTAINING A CONNECTION TO EDUCATION AND LEARNING.....6

CHALLENGES FACING YOUTH SERVICES.....9


From July to December, five interagencies around the State responded to our questions, and shared their views on the challenges facing young people and youth services. Below is a summary of the issues raised with YANQ along with some articles and resources that might be relevant and which YANQ published on its website since July 2009.

As always, the information that interagencies provides to YANQ guides our future planning. It is also used to keep policy makers informed about the challenges facing young people and their services in Queensland.

Full details of the information interagencies have shared with YANQ can be found at http://www.yanq.org.au/ycnresults.

## Issues Raised: Two year trend

The charts below briefly show the issues that have been raised with YANQ, via the Youth Consultative Network, for the past two years.

The charts show the number of times an issue was raised with YANQ (by category) during 2008 and 2009. For example, during 2008 and 2009, issues relating to education for young people were raised ten times.

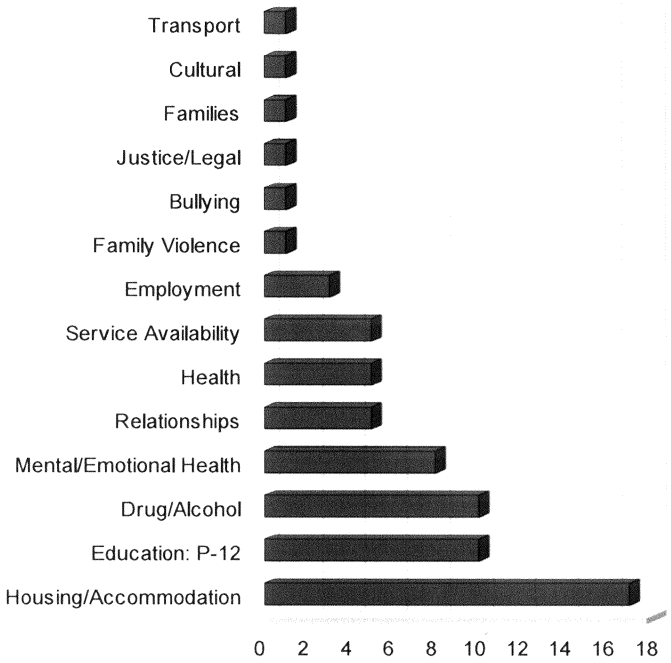


***Chart 1: Issues for Young People 2008-2009***

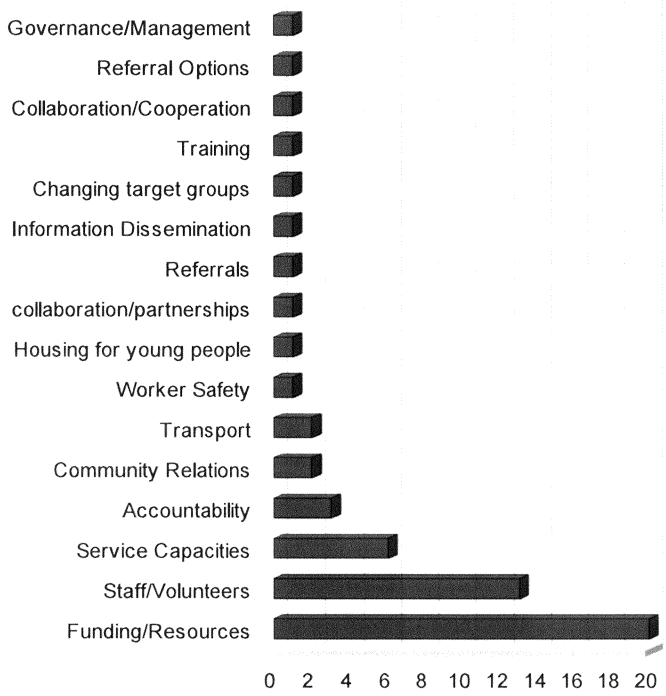


***Chart 2: Issues for Youth Services 2008-2009***

For young people, housing and homelessness continue to be significant issues. Services on the other hand are struggling with funding issues, and as the issues raised in this report (see below) show, this has further impacts of staff and the services capacity to meet demand.

# ISSUES RAISED: JULY TO DECEMBER 2009

## Interagencies that Participated

The interagencies that shared their information with YANQ were as follows:

- Logan Youth Network
- Goodna & Ipswich Youth Interagencies (combined submission)
- South West Youth Network
- Bundaberg District Youth Sector Network

## Challenges Facing Young People

According to the five interagencies, the young people they support are facing a variety of challenges, including:

- Misuse and abuse of drugs and alcohol (binge drinking);
- Homelessness, insecure housing and lack of access to the private rental market.
- Maintaining a connection to education and learning.

Below you will find more detail on the issues raised, along with links to resources or information, published on YANQ's website since July 2009 are relevant to these areas.

## Misuse and abuse of drugs and alcohol (binge drinking);

Both Drug and alcohol abuse (inc. binge drinking) were raised as issues of concern. In response, the South West Youth Network would like to organise forums and peer education training for young people.

Some resources on YANQ's website that are relevant to this issue are below.

### Online Game to Teach Repercussions of Binge Drinking

The Australian Government has developed an online game as part of the *Don't Turn a night out into a nightmare* national binge drinking campaign that encourages teenagers and young adults to think about the choices they make about drinking.

Read more...

### Have your say! Media Reporting on Drugs

At the Drug Policy Modelling Program we are conducting the first ever study in Australia into youth attitudes to media reporting on drugs. Over 1500 young people have already helped out with our Drug Media Survey but we want to hear from more of you.

Read more...

### In their own words: Insights into the concerns of young Australians (Snapshot 2009).

In 2008 Mission Australia conducted its seventh annual National survey of young Australians with over 45,000 young people aged 11-24 years. Issues of concern to young people, 2008 (% in descending order of concern):

- Body image (26.3%)
- Drugs (26.0%)
- Family conflict (25.9%)
- Suicide (24.6%)
- Personal safety (22.9%)
- Bullying/emotional abuse (22.6%)
- Physical/sexual abuse (22.6%)
- Alcohol (20.9%)

Read more...

### Review of the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander community-controlled alcohol and & drugs sector in Qld

At the request of the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council (QAIHC) and Queensland Indigenous Substance Misuse Council (QISMC), the National Drug Research Institute was commissioned to conduct a review of the alcohol and other drugs sector in Queensland.

This report makes 23 recommendations in relation to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Controlled Alcohol and other Drug Sector in Queensland.

Read more...

### Alcohol restrictions in Newcastle reduce assaults

Research by the NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research found that assaults after dark fell by 29 per cent (133 per year) in Newcastle following the impositions on trading restrictions on 14 licensed premises in the city. These findings are detailed in the report, The impact of restricted alcohol availability in Newcastle.

Read more...

### Alcohol tops AIHW list of drug treatment episodes

Alcohol continues to be the number one drug of concern for Australians seeking treatment for drug or alcohol issues, according to a report released on 23 October by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW).

The report, *Alcohol and Other Drug Treatment Services in Australia 2007-08: Report on the National Minimum Data Set*, found that treatment for alcohol issues has continued to increase, with treatment for alcohol comprising 44% of treatment episodes in 2007-08 compared with 38% in 2002-03.

Read more....

## Homelessness, insecure housing and lack of access to the private rental market.

Interagencies pointed to the limited number of emergency accommodation placements, as well as affordable longer term housing for young people. Apparent discrimination against young people in the private rental market was also raised as a barrier to housing for young people. The related issue of poor public transport (making it difficult to find accommodation) was also raised.

In response, services in the Wide Bay Burnett region are compiling data to inform future planning models and services in Logan are organising a forum on the issues. The Logan interagency also called for changes to legislation that would make it easier for young people under 18 to sign contracts for accommodation related services (telephone, electricity etc). The Ipswich and Goodna networks argued that greater support to keep families together was needed.

The resources and information below are relevant to some of these issues.

### Youth Homelessness Matters 2009 Conference Summary

From 12-14 October, the Youth Accommodation Association held its seventh youth homelessness conference at Tweed Heads, NSW.

Audio, powerpoint presentations and summaries of key-note addresses from the conference are now available online at http://is.gd/4tqKX.

Here you will find presentations on a range of topics relevant to youth homelessness including (among others):

- Through the Lens: Early Intervention & Youth Homelessness, Does It Matter Anyway.

- The Future of Youth Work.
- Choices, Change and Decision Making - inviting young people to consider options and choices.
- Ending Homelessness, Housing and Support.
- Navigating the Road Home: National advocacy on the White Paper.
- Street Care: Consulting with Homeless People.

Read more...

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People overrepresented among Qld's homeless

Nearly 27,000 people are homeless in Qld, according to a report released last week by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare.

"Qld holds an unenviable position – having the 2nd highest rate of homelessness (behind the NT)," said QCOSS President Karyn Walsh."The stats show the problem is critical across the board – a 60% increase in people sleeping rough in inner-city Brisbane, a doubling of homelessness in Mackay, and a much higher than average rate of homelessness in older people," says Karyn. The Qld Council of Social Service (QCOSS) welcomes the recently announcement of $200m by the Commonwealth and State Governments to reduce homelessness in Queensland. This comes on top of the Queensland Government's earlier investment which was introduced in 2006.

"The figures in this report are from the 2006 census, so despite new investment, the problem has been growing. Our members are telling us there is an even more urgent and dire need now – there are without doubt more homeless people looking for help than these figures show," said Karyn

Other key statistics in the report include:

- An increase of 2,200 people in homelessness between 2001 and 2006
- Overall increase of rough sleepers from 16% to 19%
- Cairns was the major city (outside of Brisbane) with the highest rate of homelessness
- **At 8%, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were over-represented in the count**
- An increased rate of homelessness in the South-West of the state

Read more...

### Counting the homeless 2006

Counting the homeless 2006 includes eight state and territory reports on the homeless based on information collected from the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006 Census. The reports include statistics on accommodation types, age, sex, Indigenous identification and geographical distribution.

You can download the full set of reports from http://is.gd/1IlGD. For the reports just from Queensland visit http://is.gd/1IlIF.

Read more...

### Hidden Costs in Indigenous Housing Fund

Story from The Australian Online

**NORTHERN Territory government ministers have been warned that the federal government's $673 million remote housing package is likely to deliver as few as 300 houses - less than half the number originally promised.**

Figures revealed in a confidential briefing given last week to Territory government ministers and senior bureaucrats showed the Strategic Indigenous Housing and Infrastructure Program was seriously off-track, with up to 70 per cent of allocated public funds swallowed up in indirect costs, including contractors' fees, fees paid to expensive consultants and government administration fees. A source at the briefing in Darwin last week told The Australian the figures -- which suggested only 30 per cent of the $673m in SIHIP funding would flow to direct costs of refurbishment of housing and the building of new houses -- shocked MPs and bureaucrats.

Fifteen months ago, the federal government announced SIHIP would provide 750 new houses to remote Aboriginal communities in the Territory. So far, not one house has been built.

Read more...

### Outcomes from "Think Big, Talk Loud" in Ipswich

In June 2009 a group of youth workers from government and non-government services in Ipswich got together to share ideas. They discussed some possible solutions to the main challenges facing young people and services in their area. The title of the forum was *Think Big, Talk Loud.*

One of the ideas discussed was the establishment of a **supported accommodation service specifically for parents**.

Read more...

## Maintaining a connection to education and learning.

Disengagement from school, for a variety of reasons was another common concern for youth services. According to the networks some of the factors influencing this include: inflexible/rigid education services; parents not supporting their children to attend school; young people's own caring responsibilities; and bullying.

Goodna and Ipswich interagencies suggested increased family support and early parenting education was part of the solution. Much is being done in the Logan area to respond, including: Beenleigh Together against Truancy Initiative; numerous non-traditional education services in the area (e.g. Get Set for Work through Boystown and Centre Education); and the Federal Government trial in which families whose children are truant will have their social security payments cut. Logan also called for the re-introduction of 'in-school' suspensions.

Some of the information and resources below are relevant to these issues.

### A Snapshot of Queensland's Re-engagement Services

A Snapshot of Queensland's Re-engagement Services (PDF) presents the findings from the Census of 'Re-engagement' Services in Queensland, conducted by YANQ in 2008. The aim of the Census was to learn more about what was available in Queensland to support young people (aged 12 to 18) who were disengaged from Education and Training.

Download the report here (as PDF) or read more on YANQ's website for a summary.

Read more...

### What do students say about flexi schools?

This presentation (powerpoint here and video footage here) was delivered by Prof. Martin Mills and Dr. Glenda McGregor as part of the North East Youth Organisations Network's Discussion Forum, held in February, 2010. Prof. Mills and Dr. McGregor summarise the findings from interviews that were conducted with students of flexible

learning services in South East Queensland.

There is also a written summary of this presentation available on YANQ's website.

Read more...

### Trends in the UK to address disengagement and raise achievement

This presentation (powerpoint here, video here) by Gary Fisher Smith provided an overview of trends in the UK (some of which Australia is following) to address disengagement and raise achievement.

Gary is a teacher at a flexible learning site run by the Salvation Army's Youth Outreach Service in Brisbane, Queensland. The presentation was part of the North East Youth Organisations Network's Discussion Forum, held in February, 2010.

Read more...

### Touching the future: building skills for life and work

*Touching the future: building skills for life and work*, by Johanna Wyn, explores the goals of Australian education and of how schools should prepare young people for work and life.

The book brings together two stories: one relating to the ways in which young people's worlds have changed radically over the last three or four decades; the other relating to the growing gap between the skills that we try to equip young people with, through processes of formal education, and those skills that they need to build a future for themselves.

Read more...

### A New Federalism in Australian Education

This report (PDF) was written by Prof. Jack Keating and published by the Education Foundation, Foundation for Young Australians. The report highlights a number of structural weaknesses in Australia's education system and proposes a path towards a cooperative rather than competitive federalist approach to schooling.

Central to this report is the call for a multi-level, federalist approach to funding that prioritises schools with low completion rates and offers fee relief for low-income families. It recommends additional investment in early childhood education; an acceleration of interventionist programs in the middle years of secondary school to curb school leaving; and a strengthening of upper secondary pathways to further education and training that do not rely solely on academic results. The report also proposes the establishment of a national education regulatory agency to support these actions and reforms.

- Read the full report here.
- Read A New Federalism: At A Glance here.
- Read John Dawkins' review of A New Federalism here.
- Listen to an interview with the report's author, Jack Keating at Inside Story

### Equity in student achievement across OECD countries: an investigation of the role of policies

This paper focuses on inequalities in learning opportunities for individuals from different socio-economic backgrounds and looks at the role played by policies and institutions in shaping countries' relative positions.

Based on achievement data from 15 yr old students, the analysis shows that while Nordic European countries exhibit relatively low levels of inequality, continental Europe is characterised by high levels of inequality - in particular of

schooling segregation along socio-economic lines - while Anglo-Saxon countries occupy a somewhat intermediate position.

Policies allowing increasing social mix are found to reduce school socio-economic segregation without affecting overall performance.

Read more...

### Partnerships not punishment needed for Indigenous Education - Chris Sarra

In his latest blog post, Chris Sarra (Director of the Indigenous Education Leadership Institute) argues that the practice of punishing Indigenous parents for not sending their children to school is "*'Passion Pop' policy at 'Dom Perignon' prices, with 'Pepsi' returns*".

Read more...

### Literacy and Numeracy Resources for the Home

Literacy and numeracy skills are vital to ensuring children have the best chance to succeed in their schooling and life. A new suite of parent resources, *Achieving with Literacy and Numeracy*, has been developed by Education Queensland to assist parents with their children's literacy and numeracy skills.

Read more...

### Notschool.net: An online community for the hard to reach

Source: Education.au

**Notschool.net** is an international 'online learning community' offering an alternative to traditional education for young people who are unable to engage with school or other complementary provisions such as home tutoring or specialist units.

After almost 9 years and 5000 young people, Notschool.net is a full-time alternative provision; successfully demonstrating that young people for whom 'school does not fit' can renew their confidence in learning and gain a range of qualifications that recognise their progress.

Notschool.net provides a model that could be adopted in Australia to help improve retention rates and to help young people otherwise lost too early to the learning process discover the joy of learning through the methods and subjects of their choice.

Read more...

## Challenges Facing Youth Services

According to the five interagencies, youth services are struggling with a number of difficulties, including:

1. Limited funding & Service Capacity Issues – longer term funding needed, and healthier recurring funding packages to help cope with growing client numbers and increased case loads.
2. Worker well-being – staff are fatigued, leading to high staff turnover.

Services discussed how the lack of long-term funding, and the inadequacy of funding generally was inhibiting their ability to meet increasing demand. For example, youth workers in Logan are reporting that they have less time for professional development as more of their time is spent supporting the increasing numbers of clients.

Services in the Bundaberg area also discussed the long waiting lists for some services and limited after-hours support for young people. Similarly, services in South West Queensland raised concerns about the limitations they face providing support to young people in isolated and remote areas.

All of these issues are in turn impacting on workers wellbeing. Services in Ipswich and Goodna pointed out the impact that the high and complex case-loads were having on staff. Services in South West Queensland suggested that a lack of support for staff was leading to high levels of turnover and that vacancies were remaining open for lengthy periods of time.

The information and resources below are relevant to some of the issues discussed above.

### Results of the 2009 Australian Community Sector Survey (ACSS)

The report of the 2009 Australian Community Sector Survey (ACSS) is now available. The ACOSS 2009 was completed by 156 agencies in Queensland who provided information about their activities over the financial years 2006-07 and 2007-08. The information collected provides a picture of the size, shape and experiences of the sector over time and is an important tool for service development, social policy and building sector capacity. In Queensland, 85% of respondents said government funding does not cover the true cost of delivering contracted services

Read more...

### Budget Response and Wage Rise Discussion

In response to the recent State Budget 2009/10, YANQ has highlighted a few key areas for comment. We acknowledge that not everyone can win when it comes to State funding, but there are some areas of particular concern to us. Additionally, we have commented on the new funding for increased wages in the community sector, and where this funding will be directed.

To download the report, click here.

### Australian Services Union – Update on Pay Equity and Funding for Wage Increases

On the 9th of July the Australia Services Union released an update on the Pay Equity Decision and the funding announced in the State Government's June budget. The update answers these questions: "What are the pay increases? Who does the increase apply to? Where is the funding for the increase? Who gets the funding? What are the Union's plans? What should *you* do?"

To read it, click here.

### National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions

The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions will pursue long term reform of schooling through collaborative efforts with the states and territories, to improve educational outcomes.

The National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions is now available on the COAG website via http://is.gd/3ePm4.

Under the National Partnership, the Australian Government will continue funding of $623 million to consolidate its youth and transition programs with new and better targeted programs.

Read more...

### Pay Equity Case Taken to the Commonwealth

The ASU has filed an application for an Equal Remuneration Order in Fair Work Australia. The application was lodged on 11th March 2010. This historic case will determine wage rates for the modern Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010 which came into effect on 1st January 2010.

The ASU made the decision to run a federal case as we wanted our Queensland decision to apply to the whole Queensland community sector and also to apply to the rest of the country.

A key element to this campaign is the need for the State and Federal Governments to fund the outcomes of pay equity. The ASU is aware of inequity in how the state funding was applied and the implementation issues it has caused organisations and employees in Qld. A further issue for local organisations is that they have only received extra funding from the state funding bodies, not the federal government.

http://bit.ly/aNSTlj

### National Compact Launched

The *National Compact: working together* outlines how the Government and Third Sector organisations will work together in new ways based on partnership and respect. The Compact, which was launched recently, can be found at http://www.nationalcompact.gov.au.

### The Youth Sector in Queensland

This report, The Youth Sector in Queensland (PDF), outlines the conduct and findings of two significant research projects undertaken with youth services in Queensland. It presents a summary of themes and possibilities for future actions and research that have emerged from an evidence base that has not previously been documented on the profile and demographics of the youth sector in Queensland.

The Youth Services Workforce Skilling and Training project explored workforce development issues and topics with the Department of Communities and Reconnect funded youth services workforce in south west and south east Queensland. The report also contains interim data generated from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Youth Sector Skilling and Training project in Central, North West, Brisbane and Cherbourg areas of Queensland has also been included.

Read more...