

Nobody Chooses to be Homeless

by Rev Wally Dethlefs
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Joe, (not his real name) left home for the final time with a heavy heart when he was just 15 years old. For Joe life at home was hopeless and chaotic. It was a place where hate, violence and abuse were the norm. He had previously left home on a number of occasions, initially when he was just 13. When he could not stay at home he would

stay at friends' houses, sometimes telling his friends' parents about what was happening at home, mostly, however, making up a story in order to sleep over for a night or two.

He'd tried the youth shelter twice before, but it was always full and there was a waiting list. He'd also tried the Child Safety Department a couple of months

Being homeless is difficult for anybody, but for a child or teenager it's a traumatic experience and can often lead to mental health problems.

Joe's story is among far too many that I heard around the country as a commissioner on the recent National Youth Commission Inquiry into youth homelessness – the most significant of its kind in 20 years.



Rev Wally Dethlefs at the release of the report

We held 21 days of hearings in all states and territories. Formal evidence was given by 319 individuals and we received 91 written submissions. Australia will be shocked by our findings which will be released on 8 April; they reveal the problem of youth homelessness in Australia has doubled in less than 20 years for

teenagers.

previously, but they said he was too old. Where could he go that was safe? How would he feed himself?

Joe also wanted to keep going to school. He liked school, but he had no place to wash his uniform, no place to do his homework.

Sadly, there's no help at hand for teenagers like Joe when youth refuges turn away young people every night because there's just no room for them. The youth refuge system in Australia is tragically overstretched. Last year one Brisbane emergency refuge turned away 1187 requests for accommodation. Another Brisbane service for young people with high and complex needs accommodated one young person out of every 10 who requested accommodation. In far North Queensland only three out of every 10 girls who applied for accommodation were successful.

In addition to the serious shortages in supported accommodation assistance for teenagers and young people, the substantial increase in rents means many young people are unable to exit crisis, medium and long-term accommodation or, when they do, it is onto the streets and homelessness.

The housing situation of Indigenous young people is even more desperate. "The situation we find in central Queensland at the moment in Townsville, Rockhampton, Gladstone and Mackay, is putting accommodation beyond the reach of young people," an Aboriginal Youth Housing worker from Central Queensland told the inquiry.

Maybe Joe could have got a job? While unemployment figures have dropped dramatically in the last 10 years, youth unemployment rates are running at about three times the national unemployment figures. The bulk of the growth in employment for young people has been in part-time and

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YANQ believes that the primary culture of Australia is Aboriginal.



We recognise that Aboriginal, Torres
Strait Islander and South Sea Islander people are 3 separate
cultures. We recognise Aboriginal people as the permanent custodians of mainland
Australia and Torres Strait Islanders as permanent custodians of the Torres Strait
Islands that are an integral part of Australia, including those areas of land and sea
whose owners have been wiped out as a result of racist politics and acts. We use
the term custodianship in the context of protection and care for the land. YANQ is
committed to respecting individuals, Murri and Islander communities. We seek to
understand their responses to policies and issues affecting them. We are commit-
ted to learning about their understandings of the impact of decisions on them.
YANQ apologises for the past and present social mistreatments of Murri and Is-
lander people created by colonisation, and is committed to supporting the healing
process.

(Continued from page 1)

casual employment, making it difficult for independent young people to sustain
accommodation in the private rental market. As one homeless young man said at
the Brisbane hearings, "You need to be able to get the job to be able to get the af-
fordable accommodation. You need somewhere to live to be able to get jobs." An-
other told the inquiry, "I got one job when I was on the streets but I had nowhere to
shower. It doesn't work at all."

Is there any good news for young people like Joe? Early intervention programs
like the Federal 'Reconnect' program and Queensland's 'Youth Support Coordina-
tor' program are making a difference in reuniting families, finding accommodation
and assisting at-risk young people to remain in education. In 2001 Queensland had
one of the higher rates of youth homelessness in the nation with 18 homeless young
people out of every 1000. In 2006, this rate was reduced to 11 per 1000 mainly as

The [National Youth Commission's](http://www.nyc.net.au) (NYC) report
Australia's Homeless Youth is the result of the first national independent
inquiry into youth homelessness since the Burdekin Human Rights inquiry
in 1989. The Commission found that:

- Every night 22,000 teenagers are homeless - twice the number there
was 20 years ago.
- One in two homeless youths are turned away from emergency accom-
modation every night because services are full.

Follow the link to read more of this article

<http://www.yanq.org.au/content/view/965/33>

a result of early intervention work.

If Australia can find a billion extra dollars for solutions to water shortages or new
fighter planes for our Air Force, surely we can spend as much on saving kids' lives.
We need to roll out early intervention programs across the country to provide full
national coverage for at-risk young people and their families.

We also need to solve the extreme shortages in existing drug, alcohol and mental
health services for young people. All we have in Queensland is five beds in an
adolescent detox/rehab program for young people and not many more specific ado-
lescent mental health beds. It's time we all faced up to Australia's failed social pol-
icy on tackling youth homelessness; the shameful reality is that there are now
22,000 teenagers - kids aged 12 to 18 -- without a home to go on any given night in
Australia. We must act now. Because one homeless young person like Joe in a
country like ours is one too many.

Why are so many kids being locked up?

74% of the young people in custody in Queensland Youth Detention Centres as at 30 June 2006 were on remand - the outcome of a dramatic upward trend over recent years.

Inappropriately detaining young people in custody puts community safety at risk. Many young people only ever commit a single, minor, juvenile offence, yet evidence suggests that many first-time alleged offenders are remanded in custody. Most children on remand in Youth Detention Centres in Queensland are charged with minor, non-violent offences. Repeated studies have shown that the younger a child is detained in custody, the greater the likelihood that they will re-offend as a juvenile and end up in prison as an adult. Detaining a young person increases their likelihood of future incarceration, and therefore diminishes the chance that they will become a productive citizen.

There is substantial evidence to indicate that detaining young people increases both short and long term risks to public safety.

Detaining unconvicted children or young people not charged with a serious violent offence, is unjust and in contravention of Queensland's human rights obligations. The frequent detention of young people charged with bail violation

or offences which would not normally result in a custodial sentence, is of particular concern.

The most recent available estimate of the cost of keeping a young person in detention was \$567 per day (NSW, 2005). This suggests that it cost in the vicinity of \$57,000 for a single day to keep the 101 young people on remand in Queensland Youth Detention Centres as at 30 June

2006. It further suggests that it costs over \$20 million annually, to keep unconvicted 10 - 16 year olds on remand in Queensland.

All the evidence indicates that preventative and early intervention strategies could be expected to save tax dollars and to enhance public safety - in both the short and long term. The alternatives outlined in the recently release report by the Coalition Against Inappropriate Remand (CAIR) are, at worst, cost neutral. Estimates of the cost of diversionary options have ranged from \$10 per day for a youth justice conference, to \$35 per day for community-based supervision, to \$106 per day for a brokerage program, to \$278 per day for a community placement program.

Current policies and practices are unnecessarily punitive and wasteful. The Queensland Government has acknowl-

greater risk. It proposes concrete strategies which would enable Queensland to reorient its juvenile justice policies to reduce the overuse of detention amongst young people on remand ... and make considerable cost savings.

Remand Reduction Strategies in Queensland

Following from a community forum held by YANQ on 25th October 2007 discussing strategies for reducing the number of young people on remand in Queensland Youth Detention Centres, the Coalition Against Inappropriate Remand (CAIR) was formed. CAIR has four main aims:

1. seeking a moratorium on building new youth detention centre capacity until a social impact assessment has been completed;
2. Undertake research to develop a continuum of responses to address the

rates of remand;

3. Seek support of the broader sector from across the state for the continuum of responses; Work with the Government to advance the responses developed.

CAIR has produced a discussion paper titled "Rethinking Youth Re-

mand and Enhancing Community Safety" (see <http://www.yanq.org.au/content/view/1065/59>). CAIR is currently meeting with various politicians and public servants seeking their support for implementing a raft of recommendations outlined in the report.

If you are interested about the work of this group and would like to find out more email director@yanq.org.au



AYAC Welcomes Australian Youth Forum

13 May 2008

The Australian Youth Affairs Coalition today welcomed the announcement of funding for the Australian Youth Forum (AYF) of \$8 million over four years.

The announcement of this funding delivers on one of the Government's key election commitments for young people to re-establish a peak body for young people and those who support them.

Alan Wu, young media spokesperson, said "The announcement of \$8 million for the AYF is a significant investment in Australia's youth. It recognises the importance of young people in planning for the future and the unique perspective they have on current issues and problems in Australia. We strongly applaud this major investment to create a national peak body for youth affairs and re-open an important dialogue with young people and the sector.

"The funding announced by the Government tonight will provide for a sustainable peak body which is able to engage comprehensively with young people. The commitment of \$8 million is to be applauded as an investment into higher quality advice and expended engagement with young people and the sector in Australia. For this, we congratulate the Government.

As announced by Tanya Plibersek on 3 May 2007, the AYF will be a peak body for youth people and the sector which supports them. The consultation paper released by the Minister for Youth – the Hon. Kate Ellis MP – the AYF would establish a formal dialogue between young people and the Government; advise Government on youth affairs; engage with young people through consultations, forums and conferences; provide professional development to the sector; ensure the youth sector is sustainable and advocate the needs of the sector.

AYAC looks forward to working with the Government through their consultation process in establishing a fully independent peak body to represent young people and the sector which supports them.

If you require any further information about AYAC and the current negotiations for funding of the National Youth Peak, please contact Siyavash Doostkhah, National Representative Council member of AYAC from Queensland on 07 3844 7713 or email director@yanq.org.au



Telstra \$5 Phone Cards

YANQ still has approx 1,150 five dollar (\$5.00) Telstra Phonecards (for use in public payphones) to give to services to distribute to young people with low income who rely on public pay phones for their communication?

Details on eligibility criteria and how to order the phonecards to distribute to young people are set out in the (inserted) *Telstra \$5 Phone Cards* order form.

To order phonecards for your service, please complete and return the order form either by fax to YANQ at 3844 7731 or email the answers to admin@yanq.org.au or contact YANQ Ph 07 3844 7713 or 1800 177 899.

Please note: Distribution will be based on a first-come-first-served basis.

Re-engagement Project Update

new Transitions released

In January 2008 the Youth Affairs Network of Queensland (YANQ) put out a call for papers under the topic, *From Disengaged to Re-engaged - Young People's Right to Education and Training*. Simultaneously we also invited young people to submit their ideas via the 'Re-engage This!' multimedia competition. The outcome of these initiatives is a special, public edition of our online publication **new Transitions**.

You can find this edition at <http://www.yanq.org.au/newtransitions>.

This edition of *new Transitions* - the Re-engagement edition - features some excellent writing and art from an eclectic group of people in the youth sector - youth workers, young people, academics and program coordinators. The papers range from workers opinions based on years of practice to detailed discussion of programs that are working today to maintain or re-engage young people in education.

To read the May 2008 edition of *new Transitions* - The Re-engagement Edition point your web browsers to <http://www.yanq.org.au/newtransitions>.

Census of Services for Young People that are Disengaged from Education, Training & Work

The next step in the [Re-engagement project](#) is to develop a clear picture of 'what's out there' in Queensland to assist young people not in education, training or work to re-engage with education & training.

To do this we have now opened the **Queensland Census of Services for Young People that are Disengaged from Education, Training & Work**.

You can participate in the Census at <http://surveys.yanq.org.au/reengagecensus>.

How You can Help

If you work for a program (in Queensland) that aims to re-engage young people back into education or training, then please fill out the census online at: <http://surveys.yanq.org.au/reengagecensus>. We expect it will take roughly 30-40 minutes.

If you know of a program that aims to re-engage young people back into education or training, then please ask them to fill out the census at the address above.

We understand that asking for 40 minutes of your time is asking a lot. However we hope you will agree however that the information gathered in the survey will be very valuable to YANQ and the sector as we strive to advocate for this group of young people. **Unless we know where we are now, it's difficult to map a way forward to where we should be.**

The information gathered will *NOT* be published in any manner that identifies individual services or workers (i.e. only generalised, collated data will be published).

The census will close on the 31st of August.

Prizes!

Everyone who participates in the Census can go into the draw for one of seven \$25 Australian Book vouchers. The vouchers have been provided thanks to support from [Avid Reader Bookshop](http://www.avidreader.com.au) (<http://www.avidreader.com.au>) in West End and are redeemable at book stores across Australia.

More Information?

For more information about this census, or the Re-engagement project in general please phone YANQ on (07) 3844 7713, skype yanq-ndo or e-mail ndo@yanq.org.au.

Whitefella Education Won't Work

By Jan Ferguson.

First Posted at On Line Opinion Monday, 21 April 2008

Helen Hughes may be right when she says our education system is failing Aboriginal children - many studies have shown that - but she is wrong about the solution. The issue will not be solved by arbitrarily imposing whitefella educational culture on Aboriginal people.

In the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) we work with Aboriginal people in remote communities and understand the critical importance of engaging with them as partners and gaining their support. We understand their knowledge is integral to our research.

Valuing Aboriginal intellectual property is at the heart of our practice and philosophy. That applies to education, which is also part of our business.

From my experience with the CRC and from living in Outback Australia I take issue with Professor Hughes for articulating the solution as getting tough about imposing whitefella culture on Aboriginal people. What she should be arguing is that we need to get a lot tougher about properly organising the delivery of education to remote Aboriginal communities.

What is in place at the moment? It may well be - as Professor Hughes claims - that some Aboriginal children are being denied a "mainstream education" because teachers are tinkering with, or dumbing down, the curriculum to suit so-called Indigenous learning styles. But the fact is that the Northern Territory's Curriculum Framework is applicable in all manner of cultural contexts: it is a mainstream curriculum that all Territory schools must follow.

It is misleading to ascribe the failure to provide a mainstream education to cultural factors when the failure lies in the inability of systems to grasp what they are dealing with. This is not confined to the NT departments, teachers or schools, but there is little evidence yet that there is a coherent and credible plan with long-term strategies to get better results from sustained good teaching in remote

Aboriginal schools.

If we are to make remote education work, we need to engage Aboriginal people effectively and sustainably in a collaborative effort. Culture in schools is part of the main game. It is not an irrelevant cultural sideshow; nor is it antithetical to good teaching and sound curriculum development.

Families in many remote communities want primary schools to be a vehicle for supporting language and culture to reinforce their children's cultural identity as Yapa, Anangu, Yolngu or Bininj. Aboriginal people know how important it is for their children to learn English and arithmetic and become familiar with computers. But they will neither accept nor respond to schooling that is imposed on them at the cost of negating who they are. This puts the lie to the claim of curriculum manipulation by outsiders.

If there is to be a successful partnership with Aboriginal families that will lead to better educational outcomes, then we need to give tangible evidence that we value their cultures as much as we value our own and support them in this. We need to give those cultures the respect they deserve and incorporate Aboriginal people's imperatives in the way we do things with them on their country. We need to collaborate and organise, which means negotiating, listening and learning.

This means a cultural change for all of us. Teachers need a more sophisticated understanding of specific cultural settings before they go out to remote communities. The current system of generalised cross-cultural awareness "training" needs some real meat, a tight focus and solid content. In showing that we value Aboriginal cultures, we should also take greater care to explain our own so that Aboriginal people may start to make some sense of why we do the apparently incomprehensible things we do. We should also think about what Aboriginal people want from our education system.

What Professor Hughes talks about reveals a deeper crisis in the system, one I have directly observed in the field. It is

partly about recruiting teachers who have the intellectual wherewithal, the pedagogical skills and experience and the emotional maturity to survive the rigors of remote community life.

Having recruited them, however, the system seems to have no strategy for retaining experienced teachers in remote communities. The average stay for a teacher in a remote school is seven months. It is possible for a school to see a turnover of as many of 15 staff in a year - regularly, not just as a one-off occurrence.

The crisis is also about the failure to provide appropriate resources - specialist help, a pool of relief teachers, IT support - at a regional level to support students, teachers and school communities. It is about the failure to systematically value, engage and train local Aboriginal staff to take their place in remote schools. It is about inadequate housing and substandard school accommodation with poor hygiene and inferior facilities. Funding from the Australian Government's Intervention may alleviate this. We need to understand this will be a long term process.

If we can fix all of these, plan for the long term and at the same time recognise and value Aboriginal people's contribution, then there is a chance that we can deliver Aboriginal children the education they need and deserve. If we take up Professor Hughes' suggestions, then remote education will remain another failed post-colonial enterprise.

About the Author: Jan Ferguson is the Managing Director of the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre in Alice Springs.



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Youth Services Multi-Employer Agreement Update

The joint campaign by YANQ and the Queensland Branch of the Australian Services Union (the Union) to improve the pay and conditions of youth workers is continuing with a number of activities simultaneously taking place across the sector.

Costings

The organisations that have entered into negotiations are in the process of working out the cost implications to their services for signing up to the Youth Services Multi-Employer Agreement (MEA).

Any organisation that has not yet indicated their interest in the agreement can still do so. If you would first like to work out the (maximum) cost implications, phone YANQ to obtain a copy of the costing tool we developed or you can find it at www.yanq.org.au/mea.

Submissions to Funding Bodies

The Union, with YANQ's assistance is developing a draft submission that each individual organisation can use to request funding increases (to meet the costs of the MEA) from their funding bodies.

Once completed, organisations that wish to sign up to the MEA will first need to use this submission (with their own costings information) to request the funding increases.

Broader Community Sector Wages Campaign

Simultaneously, the Queensland Council of Social Service, with the support of both employer bodies and the Union has embarked on its *Good Work – Decent Wages* campaign. The campaign aims to raise the awareness among members of parliament and

the community generally about the need to address the poor pay and working conditions of staff in non-government human services. This campaign closely complements the move to establish a Youth Services MEA.

It is important that organisations and employees do all they can to support this campaign. Should funding bodies reject individual organisations submissions for funding increases under the MEA (see above), then this campaign will help determine the success of the long-term lobbying campaign that will follow.

More information about the *Good Work – Decent Wages* campaign is available at the QCOSS website – www.qcoss.org.au.

Combined SACS/CASH Award

Last month the Union submitted an application to the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to make a new State Award that would combine the Social and Community Services (Queensland) Award 2001 (the SACS Award) and the Crisis and Accommodation Support Housing (Queensland) Award 1999 (the CASH Award).

Through the application the Union is seeking to restore the original relativities between the different classification levels to what applied when the SACS Award was made in 2001. Since 2001, flat dollar (rather than percentage based) increases have eroded the relativities. If successful, the new Award would introduce significant increases in rates of pay for the higher classification levels of the award.

The new Award however is no quick fix for two reasons:

- The new Award is, at best, a short term fix. Employees that rely on

the Award would, over time, continue to fall behind those that have been able to negotiate regular percentage based wage increases. This is because the Award only ever rises by flat-dollar amounts based on Federal and State minimum wage decisions.

- Organisations that are currently on the Federal SACS Award (a considerable number) will not automatically be able to transfer to the new State Award and thus their employees will not be able to enjoy the benefits of any improvements contained within.

This underlies the importance for employees of being able to bargain with their employers (and more importantly, funding bodies) for ABOVE award conditions. For smaller organisations, Multi-Employer Agreements are an effective way of negotiating above award conditions.

For more information about the Youth Services MEA call Siyavash or David at YANQ on 3844 7713 or Stuart at the Union on 3844 5300.

Show Your Support Join the Union

To have any chance of success in the long or short term, this campaign needs your support. The most effective support you can give is to **Join the Union.**

Call the Union for more information on 3844 5300 or visit www.asuqld.asn.au.

CALD Update

YANQ's Multicultural Development Officer is involved in a number of sub-committees for the Southeast Queensland Intercultural Cities Forum, namely 'Identity and Sense of Belonging' and 'Systemic Advocacy'. While the work of the latter subcommittee may align to general work and purposes that are extant directives of YANQ, potential also exists for the work of the former group to establish connections with YANQ's 2007/8 paper on Multiculturalism, which advocates for an all inclusive model of multiculturalism that envelopes all people in society, not just members of non-Indigenous minority ethnic groups.

YANQ is also working to continue the Eracism project and its related series of events, the launch of the Young Muslim Women in Sports project, and to assist the Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland with its Young Women in Leadership project.

Young Muslim Women's Project

YANQ's report into Young Muslim Women's Participation in Sports and Physical Recreation will be officially launched in the coming months and delegates from the community services sector, the multicultural sector, government and various Islamic communities will be invited to attend. Research for this report was completed in 2007 with funding support for the project obtained from both Multicultural Affairs Queensland and UNESCO. During the following months, and action group was formed to begin implementing the strategies of the report and to date, this group has organised and staged several successful sporting activities which not only served to benefit younger Muslim women, but Muslim women in general, with attendee numbers far surpassing that which was initially expected. Indeed, a number of the strategies from the report have the potential to benefit all women, regardless of their age, religious affiliation or cultural background. At the time of the launch, the report will also be made available on YANQ's website: www.yanq.org.au.

ERACISM

The ERACISM (erasing racism) advisory committee met in early April and approved the proposed events for 2008, which will include: youth essay and art-work competitions, bumper sticker campaigns, call for academic papers, a special YANQ journal issue, a forum, surveys and other data capturing devices. The project maintains last year's theme of 'racism in public space' and continues the preliminary work done in 2007, which included the mini forum held in November. For the purposes of the project, 'public space' has been defined by the young people who attended the mini forum, and includes venues/locales that may be privately owned but publicly used, such as shopping centres, and the South Bank parklands.

Multicultural Viewpoints on Youth Reengagement, and Notes on Terminology in the Sector

YANQ is currently conducting research into the issue of young people's disengagement and reengagement with education and training in Queensland. As part of this project, attendees at the March meeting for the Multicultural Youth Network of Queensland (MYNQ) were presented with draft copies of a survey tool designed to collect data from and about the multicultural sector to gauge need and opinion on reengagement research and advocacy. While the main purpose of disseminating the draft survey through the MYNQ group was to obtain feedback from the attendees on the tool itself, the MYNQ group also discussed YANQ's reengagement project in general. The following is an outline of the MYNQ group's comments, relating both to the survey tool, and to the topic in general.

For the Multicultural Sector (in no particular order):

- Engagement (rather than disengagement or reengagement) is an issue particularly for newly arrived migrants and refugees, and so is the maintenance of an adequate level of educational support.

- Accessing educational or training services (either direct skills acquisition or information about support services) can be achieved through different mediums (eg. Sports clubs, drama, fashion, art). This is a multifaceted recommendation:

◊ By changing the ways things are offered in schools (as in: including more of the kinds of activities listed above as part of every school day or lesson), or

◊ By bringing educational skills into extra curricular activities.

◊ This may also have the benefit of providing people with the opportunity to practice English in a less formal setting, and acceptance in one area of social life that will meld into the others.

- Support at all stages of education and training (eg. Particularised English assistance, especially related to textbooks and classroom English; homework clubs; discussion of career pathways; inclusion of communities and families especially in relation to expectations and pressure put on young people etc.)
- The flexibility of mainstream schools (eg. In deadlines, discipline etc); while this does not necessarily have to be altered, it would be good if at least in the transition period for students (eg. From Milpera to mainstream) students are eased into the rigidity of the mainstream (eg. For two days a week).
- Career pathways: should be informed, realistic, and should also be explained to families and communities, not just the young people.
- Bringing families and communities in, to understand the pressures on the young people.

It should be noted that sports, drama, art and music are often used in educational endeavours for people of non-English speaking backgrounds (NESB) as an English as a second language (ESL) specific method of teaching – and may be suitable for any person attempting to learn subjects being taught in a language

that is not among their native tongues. These are also different methods of learning as recognised by Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences, and are suitable for all people, not just those who are trying to learn via a non-native tongue.

The multiple intelligences are well known to teachers and include:

- Linguistics
 - ◊ Aural – learn by hearing
 - ◊ Oral – learn by speaking
 - ◊ Written – learn by writing
- Logical / Mathematical – learn by numbers or thinking
- Spatial – learn by seeing
- Kinaesthetic – learn by doing
- Musical – learn with music and rhythm
- Interpersonal – learn by themselves
- Intrapersonal – learn by interacting with others

This is not an exhaustive list, and the intelligences have fluctuated over time with each new theorist.

People should take heed that there is potential for workers in the sector to confuse the Multiple Intelligences with ESL-specific methods of teaching, and as such, there is a danger that some might neglect to acknowledge that while some people might be learning via a non-native tongue, they might also learn *best* via methods that do *not* involve sport, dram, art and music etc. For example, person x works in the sector and the minute they want to develop an educational project aimed at young NESB migrants, x immediately thinks sport or music is needed to engage them because of their ESL needs. However, all learning styles should be acknowledged in any program to achieve the best result. *So, while sport, drama etc is a method of engaging people who are learning via a non-native tongue, it is not necessarily related to someone's preferred or best method of learning.* (Indeed, the same can be said of young people in general.) This may also apply to those coming from 'oral cultures' where, although traditionally, knowledge was passed down orally, not everyone has the (cultural) right to speak or to tell such stories. As a result, *someone may come from an oral cul*

ture, but be reluctant to engage in interpersonal activity, even in an educational setting.

In addition, researchers and members of the community services and multicultural sectors should neither dismiss nor neglect to consider the *needs of first and second generation Australians*; these groups have needs too that might not be addressed if a 'multicultural' perspective focuses only on the needs of recent migrants and refugees. Likewise, important insight and input can be accessed through the recognition of opinions of and issues faced by Indigenous Australians, Australian South Sea Islanders, and Anglo-Australians; groups that are often 'forgotten' when it comes to multicultural discussion because of the skewed perception that the term 'multicultural' refers only to new migrants and people with refugee backgrounds.

Furthermore, the term 'community' should not necessarily refer only to someone's ethnic community, but also refers to *community in general* i.e. Our local portion of society. Further to this point, referring to someone as 'ethnic' because they do not fit the mould of the dominant group in Australia is further reinforcing the incorrect notion that 'white' people have no ethnicity, and therefore are the generic, 'normal' prototype from which all others deviate. These are important factors to consider because YANQ's MDO has noticed some workers in the sector referring to others or themselves as 'ethnic', but using the term to mean 'non-white', and using the term 'community' to refer collectively to *any* and all non-white, mono-ethnic communities. In doing so, these people are inadvertently reinforcing notions of the dominant 'white' population groups as described above.

In being mindful about the way we use certain terminology, this does *not* mean we are blindly constricting ourselves to political correctness, but rather, as per the language theory of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, we are instead actively reinforcing and shaping how our world is constructed and interpreted. How would you prefer

construct and interpret the world? As advocates, it is vital that we are aware of how we ourselves use such terminology.

In a like way, we cannot allow terms like 'multiculturalism' to be subverted. Instead we should use this term for its true encompassing meaning, not just as another word to describe non-Indigenous, non-white, migrants and refugees from non-English speaking backgrounds. Multiculturalism: the preservation of different cultures or cultural identities within a unified society, as a state or nation (www.dictionary.com).

I am reminded of a speaker on the final day of the Racisms and the New World Order: Realities of Colour, Culture and Identity Conference in late 2007, who explained how in our increasingly politically correct world, new and elaborate terms are being used to mean exactly the same thing as they did before. This means that while the terms might be changing (and superficially seeming to be less offensive, less constricting) the meaning is staying exactly the same and, rather than serving to construct and interpret the world in more encompassing and inclusive ways, this instead serves to reinforce the old boundaries and perceptions that 'multiculturalism' and 'political correctness' aim to break down. Indeed, there is no use in attempting to be politically correct if the ways you are using these new terms reflect old, ignorant or confined points of view and interpretations.

YANQ has published its model of multiculturalism on its website: www.yanq.org.au, and the MYNQ survey will be released in the coming weeks.

Please contact cald@yanq.org.au if you have any ideas or opinions about these or the issues discussed above, as we welcome your feedback.

Young Refugees – Identity and Wellbeing

By Eugenia Tsoulis OAM,
Executive Director of the Migrant Resource
Centre of South Australia

Western society is very quick to come to the rescue and care for refugees – those it perceives as downtrodden, traumatised and often tortured through war or civil strife. Yet at the same time, it is quick to deflect the problems refugees encounter in their resettlement as related to a deficit *persona*. “*Due to their past experience as a refugee!*” is how some services interpret it.

When refugee families are stereotyped as problematic, it becomes a simple next step to identify them all as suffering from torture and trauma, most bringing with them communicable diseases or having fundamentalist ideas.

In response to school fights where young people of African background are involved, people describe them as: “*The Lost Boys. They come from the jungle – that’s the only way then know how to act*”.

They are stereotyped as school dropouts, in trouble with the police and needing government intervention and care because their families don’t know how to look after them. They are described as not wanting to be Sudanese or Afghani or Congolese, but wanting to be Australian.

The litmus test of our society’s reception of new Australians (specifically young people) is disclosed in their mental health status, which in turn affects their ability to resettle and to participate. Most young refugees want to integrate so they can be the same as other young Australians. They also see young Australians as having freedoms,

material possessions and privileges they don’t have.

Good mental health depends on a young person’s sense of worth and their ability to belong to a family and a group with a cultural heritage that is accepted and celebrated as equal.

Children of different waves of immigrant families have all to a lesser or greater extent had to negotiate a bicultural space. One space is the world they socialise in with its language, culture, family roles and codes of behaviour. The other is the new society they have immigrated to with its new language, education systems and life-style.

Their first world is home where the family tries to preserve traditional values as a way of keeping their cultural identity intact and their children safe. It may be a home where siblings without parents are caring for each other, or a mother is bringing up children on her own, or where a number of family members do not speak English.

Juxtaposed to this is the outside world of school, consumer outlets and entertainment, where it is hard for a young person to bring with them their first world. They become a chameleon to fit in, making up stories to be appreciated or acting out as a way of being noted.

It is a heavy burden and takes considerable resilience for young people to live between two worlds. Yet evidence suggests that over the past 60 years most young people of immigrant and refugee backgrounds have learnt to successfully negotiate this bicultural

world.

A culturally caring society that is characterised by its acceptance, celebration and encouragement of individuals and their community,

supports the growth of a person, rather than continually unpacking their past that causes them to look backwards and remain dependent. Supporting young people’s mental health is celebrating who they are, rather than trying to change them. Nurturing their qualities, experiences and skills without prejudice.

Young people reflect and often act out their pain, anger and frustration at the discrimination towards their families and communities. They are a litmus test of society’s morals and their mental health status is a reflection of society’s health and wellbeing.

At a recent meeting one young Sudanese refugee articulated the feelings of many other young people who have arrived in this country in the past decade.

“Why are we invited to come to this country where we are told we will be safe, where we will not be further attacked, where we can have an education and pursue the same dreams as other Australians? Why are we then told we are not as good as everybody else, we are not wanted? In our old country they abused us with sticks and guns, in our new country they abuse us with words”.

The preceding article was originally published in Multicultural Mental Health Australia’s publication Synergy – The Young Voices Edition 3, 2007 and has been reproduced with permission.

The Youth Consultative Network – for when the issues get too big

Sometimes the challenges that face the young people we work with (e.g. homelessness, racism, poverty) are too overwhelming for them to face alone or even with the help of our services. Together, our services may be able to assist young people out of crisis, but the sad reality is that there are many more waiting for, or currently unable to receive the help that youth services provide.



Image 1: Overwhelmed by Uncle Ariel (from Flickr)¹

So WHAT DO WE DO?

1. We **SPEAK OUT**
2. We **CONNECT** with young people and others in the community speaking out about the same thing
3. Through those connection, we come up with a **PLAN** and put into **ACTION**

YANQ has developed the **Youth Consultative Network** (www.yanq.org.au/ycn) to make this process easier. But it can only work in the long term with your support! Here's how...

SPEAK OUT using the Youth Consultative Network

1. Attend your local youth interagency or network (www.yanq.org.au/networks) and get this group talking about the main challenges facing young people².



Image 2: Megaphone by Indigo Goat (from Flickr)¹

2. Get the group to prioritise (narrow down) all the issues/challenges to six - 3 challenges facing young people and 3 challenges facing their services.

YANQ has developed some resources to help with this that you can find at: <http://www.yanq.org.au/content/view/684/59/> .

3. Once you've prioritised your issues fill out the form at www.yanq.org.au/ycnform³.

If enough (10 or more) networks send this information to YANQ then we will make sure that the relevant decision makers (in Government or elsewhere) are informed. We'll even post their responses on our website for you.

YANQ will also pull together a brief response ourselves to the issues that the networks raise as we can. While we can't respond to every issue, we will try our best to get you some up-to-date information about as many of the issues as possible.

CONNECT with others

Every 6 months YANQ will prepare a report detailing all of the issues and challenges that networks and interagencies across the state are raising. You can use this report to connect⁴ (<http://www.yanq.org.au/content/view/996/47/#fn4>) with other networks identifying similar issues and share ideas about how to address the challenges you have in common.

Come up with a PLAN and put it into ACTION

If your network, either on its own or with others, is taking steps to address other significant challenges facing young people or youth services, let us know. Simply e-mail bulletin@yanq.org.au and we can share your ideas with others and by doing this help raise the profile of your actions and connect you with more resources.



Image 3: Networking by paal (from Flickr)¹

YANQ is already doing this on two issues that have been identified through the Youth Consultative Network - the lack of support for young people disengaged from education and training (www.yanq.org.au/reengage), and the challenge of recruiting and retaining staff in the non-government human services (www.yanq.org.au/mea).

For More Information

Contact YANQ's network Development officer on 07 3844 7713 or via e-mail to ndo@yanq.org.au.

Notes

1. Some rights reserved see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en>.
2. If there isn't an interagency or network near you, talk to your colleagues and set one up (and let us know).
3. If you're a new interagency, you'll have to let us know you exist before you can use this form.

Are kids in State care being chemically restrained?

Since releasing its landmark report *Queensland Children at Risk – The over Diagnosis of “ADHD” and the Overuse of Stimulant Medication* in 2002, YANQ has been concerned about the use of medication on children in care of the state.

YANQ's advocacy and lobbying in this area led to the inclusion of a research question in Commission For Children and Young People's investigation into the view of children and young people in care. The first report was released in 2006 confirming that there was validity to YANQ's concerns as 6% of children under 4 years in care had been on ADHD medication. This figure jumped to 14.1% for children between 5-8 years and 15.6% for young people aged 9-18.

The 2008 report *Views of Children and Young People in Residential and Foster Care* was released in early May and the statistics confirm that the situation is getting worse. The percentage of children under 4 on ADHD medication remains at an alarming and unacceptable 6% and an almost 4% jump in the number of children aged 5-8 years on medication. The number of young people aged 9-18 on medication has also grown to 17%.

YANQ is concerned that drugs for ADHD are being used merely to suppress challenging behaviours, rather than treat any identifiable illness or disease. The challenging behaviours of young people in care are entirely normal and expected given the traumatic experiences that many, if not all, have been exposed to. Rather than restraining these young people through the use of powerful psychotropic drugs, these young people require intensive and ongoing behavioural support to help them cope with the unique challenges they face. Unfortunately, as our members inform us, the best many young people in care

can expect is a prescription with no ongoing behavioural or other therapies that address the underlying cause of their challenging behaviours.

As well as medications for ADHD, children and young people in State care are also using a range of anti-psychotic, anti-depressant and sleeping disorder medications.

YANQ has written to the Minister for Child Safety and the Commissioner for Children and Young People and Child Guardian expressing our utmost concern about the alarmingly high rates of young people in care being diagnosed and prescribed drugs for ADHD and as we cannot see any evidence suggesting improvements we now have called for an independent investigation into this matter.

To ensure that young people in care receive the best support possible YANQ believes that a range of issues needs to be independently investigated. Specifically, YANQ is calling for an investigation into the availability of ongoing and intensive behavioural (non-drug) support for young people in care, along with an investigation into the viability of introducing a universal family support service to reduce the demand on the acute end of the child protection system.

If any youth sector members are aware of concerning levels of diagnosis or medication of children and young people in your region, we strongly urge you to send us an email (admin@yanq.org.au) with relevant information on the matter.

YANQ has a range of resources about ADHD on our website www.yanq.org.au/celebrate

Creating opportunities for children and young people in care

CREATE is an Australian not-for-profit organisation that seeks to connect and empower children and young people placed in out-of-home care. It also improves the care system through a combination of activities, programs, training and policy advice.

CREATE is unique in that it is one of only a handful of organisations in the world, and the only organisation of its kind in Australia, expressly established to advocate on behalf of children and young people in care. CREATE believes in the spirit of participation and as such is run by, with and for children and young people in care. CREATE works in partnership with Australian child and family welfare sector stakeholders including state and federal governments, community organisations, Indigenous groups, church and welfare agencies and foster carers. The organisation also works closely with the corporate and philanthropic sectors and general public to improve young people's opportunities and outcomes.

Visit www.create.org.au

Create your future – new website!

CREATE Foundation has launched a unique, national website for young people who have experienced being placed in out-of-home care. This site helps them progress towards independence. It includes inspiration and blogs from young people who have successfully 'landed' as adults. Information about housing, education, employment, transport, finance, your rights, health and leaving care in every state and territory is loaded into a single site.

Visit www.createyourfuture.org.au



Queensland Rehabilitation Laws—What a Farce

In Queensland you can be fit to work in the Supreme Court but not fit enough to volunteer on a management committee of an incorporated association!

In 2002 YANQ became aware of an anomaly in Queensland Laws relating to *Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1986* and the *Association Incorporation Act 1981* which state that if a person is convicted of an offence and sentenced to a period greater than 30 months imprisonment, the person can not be rehabilitated and is ineligible to serve on the management committee of an incorporated association.

The discovery of the above farcical laws led to the resignation of Debbie Kilroy from the management committee of YANQ in 2003. Debbie was the president of YANQ for 4 years and had a long history of working with marginalised young people in various settings. Debbie worked tirelessly for many years assisting young people directly with their issues and advocating for systemic changes needed to reduce disadvantage and marginalisation amongst young people.

Debbie herself has gone through many ups and downs in her life. She was in and out of youth detention from age 13. She was convicted and sentenced to 6 years in prison at Boggo Road in 1989.

Debbie was in prison when the Goss Government came to power in the late 80's and embarked on a range of prison reforms under the leadership of then prison director Keith Hamburger. The significant shift in Queensland Government's approach to rehabilitation and educational programs allowed Debbie to undertake studies during her time in prison and she successfully completed a Bachelor of Social Work from University of Queensland. After her release from prison, Debbie was instrumental in establishing the women's prison support and advocacy group Sisters Inside.

In recent years Debbie undertook fur

ther studies, this time in the area of law. She successfully completed her studies in 2007 and later in the year lodged her application to become a practising lawyer with the Supreme Court. Debbie's application was supported by many respected and imminent community members including District Court Judges, Magistrates, retired Supreme Court Judges, former Governor, criminologist and academics. At her admission ceremony in Brisbane on 12th December 2007, Chief Justice Paul de Jersey said Ms Kilroy's post-jail life showed why rehabilitation was an important part of the criminal justice system.

But unfortunately it seems that 20 years on, the Queensland Government is now more interested in the cheap politics of Law and Order, nurturing a secretive system and taking more and more rights away from prisoners. It's not that hard to work out why we currently have such a high recidivism rate and why we need to build bigger and bigger prisons to accommodate our failings.

Since Debbie had to step down from the management committee of YANQ five years ago, a number of advocacy organisations have been exchanging correspondence with the Office of Fair Trading and the Attorney General's office with the aim of amending these laws. We have had several meetings with relevant stakeholders and at one stage the Attorney General even asked YANQ to draft legislation changes. With assistance from volunteers from the legal profession YANQ did draw up a number of alternatives and submitted them for consideration by the Government.

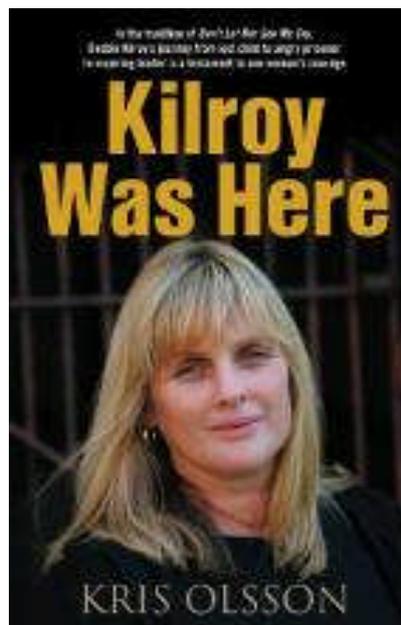
The *Review of the Association Incorporation Act* in 2005 provided an opportunity for the Government to consider these changes and although the issue was clearly raised by YANQ and other organisations submissions to the Review, the Office of Fair Trading failed to bring in necessary amendments when the new Act was introduced in the Parliament in

November 2006.

Debbie is now practising law and her achievements have been recognised by being awarded an Order of Australia for services to the community in 2003 and the 2004 Australian Human Rights Award.

It's high time for the Queensland Government to review the *Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1986* and the *Association Incorporation Act 1981* to ensure dedicated people like Debbie Kilroy can contribute to the society and are not pushed and kept in the margins.

Copies of Debbie Kilroy's biography Kilroy Was Here, are available directly from www.sistersinside.com.au for \$15 (including postage). The book normally retails for \$32.99. Proceeds go towards a scholarship fund for the disadvantaged



Representing children and young people's best interests

Legal Aid Queensland is playing an important part in Queensland's child protection system. Legal Officer and Child Protection Unit coordinator Katrina Smith explains the role lawyers play in this process.

Child protection lawyers, or 'separate representatives', work to ensure decisions made by courts and tribunals are in the child's best interest.

Separate representatives are funded by Legal Aid Queensland and can only be appointed after receiving specialised training.

They are appointed by the Children's Court or the Children Services Tribunal to present evidence about a child's views and wishes and to provide an independent opinion, particularly where conflict has built up over a long period of time.

"I think we complement the work done by child safety officers," Ms Smith said.

"If I'm doing my job well I can make a difference in a child's life, and that's really important to me"

"We're certainly both working towards the same end goal, which is making sure decisions are made that keep children safe and working to ensure that through appropriate case planning, children's long-term care and development needs are met."

Ms Smith said child safety officers could ask the court or tribunal for a separate representative to be appointed to help with a particular case, or alternatively, the court or tribunal could appoint one directly.

"We are usually appointed where the department is applying for long-term guardianship, where someone is contesting the order, or where there is a complicated family structure, allegations of significant harm or ongoing friction between the department and the family that would benefit from an independent view point," she said.

Ms Smith said people often confused separate representatives with lawyers

who provide 'direct representation' for children – where the lawyer is instructed by the client and must do what they are told.

"As a separate representative, you are there to represent the child's best interests, and sometimes what a child wants and what's in their best interests are two different things," she said.

"So while we take the child's views and wishes into account and raise them during negotiations or put them before the court, we are ultimately responsible for making recommendations that will lead to the best outcomes for the child."

Separate representatives make recommendations after considering all the information available about the child's situation, including the case file, material collected by the department and independent reports.

"Under the Act we are required to attend family group meetings and we're able to talk to other professionals working with the family, like school teachers or counsellors, to help us bring together all of the relevant information before we make recommendations," she said.

Last financial year more than 400 separate representatives were appointed to assist children involved in child protection proceedings across the state.

If a separate representative has been appointed, they must be invited to family group meetings and kept informed about any significant events occurring to the child or the family, like medical problems, placement breakdown or new notifications.

Ms Smith said separate representatives were always looking to improve the services they provide in child protection matters.

"We have processes in place so people can provide feedback or make a complaint and I would encourage people to give us feedback on separate representatives or any other legal practitioner funded by Legal Aid Queensland," she said.

And while being a separate representative is a challenging job, Ms Smith said the hardest part wasn't working with stressed children and families, but not knowing how things turned out in the long run.

"If I'm doing my job well I can make a difference in a child's life, and that's really important to me."

"I'd like to follow up in a few years and see how the children and young people are going, but at the same time I always say to families I hope they will never see me again, because it means things are on track and the family is doing well."



Katrina Smith coordinates Legal Aid Queensland's Child Protection unit, which includes separate representatives who represent children's best interests in child protection cases. The unit also provides advice for children and young people. Katrina has dedicated her career to helping people with family law problems, having worked in private practice and for Women's Legal Service before joining Legal Aid in 2005.



Contact Legal Aid Queensland (for the cost of a local call) on 1300 65 11 88 or visit www.legalaid.qld.gov.au

A voice for young people



It's a question Queenslanders should ask themselves — "How are we treating our children and young people?" And, particularly — "How are we treating them when they come into contact with the legal system?"

As Legal Aid Queensland's Youth Advocate, this question concerns me, especially about disadvantaged and marginalised children and young people. This group is most at risk of being swept under society's

carpet and renounced as lost causes before they're even old enough to vote.

Because we collectively impact on the lives of these children — from the policies we support to the laws governing how they are treated — we have an obligation to ensure the decisions we make on their behalf are informed, unbiased and free from the influence of the highly politicised court of public opinion.

That's why Legal Aid's Youth Access Strategy has been working to address the issues children and young people face when they come into contact with the law. As Youth Advocate, I hope to maintain a proactive approach to systemic advocacy and reduce the barriers that hinder young people from having their legal needs met. These barriers include legislation, policies, guidelines and processes that impact on children and young people's rights.

I believe there should be a particular emphasis on the rights of children and young people in the child safety, juvenile justice and education systems.

If societal standards fail the child or young person, they fail us all. How we treat our children and young people today influences how they, and indeed our communities, will be shaped in the future.

Catherine Moynihan is Legal Aid Queensland's Youth Advocate and works from the Brisbane office. Her role as Youth Advocate allows her to give young people a voice in the justice system and enhance resources available to lawyers who help children and young people. With a career firmly established in youth work, her roles have included working with Brisbane's Youth Advocacy Centre and in child protection in the UK.

Uneven Ground: Mapping the terrain for LGBT young people

This new report from the Queensland Association of Healthy Communities (QAHC) discusses the current issues for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) young people and the service providers who work with them.

The report was created following a consultation process with almost 140 community members and over 90 organisations.

The report:

- Highlights issues faced by LGBT young people as well as issues facing workers and organisations when working with these clients.
- Identifies projects, services and sources of information which can help you in your work with LGBT clients, and which you can refer LGBT young people to.
- Serves as a good introduction to some of the issues connected to working with LGBT young people, for new staff and those new to the area or the client base.

Download *Uneven Ground: Mapping the terrain for LGBT young people* in PDF from http://www.qahc.org.au/files/u112/Uneven_Ground.pdf.

Progressing the Issues

One of the significant issues that the report highlights is the discrimination faced by LGBT young people in schools. For instance, the report mentions that a high proportion of young people disengaged from school because of persistent harassment or abuse stemming from homophobic elements within the school community. QAHC has formed a committee of interested organisations and individuals to consider strategies to address the particular issues faced by LGBT young people in schools.

YANQ is participating in this group because the issue is directly relevant to our own 'Re-engagement' Project (www.yanq.org.au/reengage).

For more information about this report, or the committee investigating responses to discrimination within schools, contact QAHC on 3017 1777 or via their website at www.qahc.org.au.

CHANGING ROLE OF JPET:

Getting JPET back on track

Written by Georgie Ferrari, YACVic, Sally James, MCM, George Giuliani, Jobs Australia.

The Job Placement, Employment and Training program (JPET) is a federally-funded program that assists young people who face significant barriers to employment and community participation. JPET is a federally funded programme whose role has slowly shifted over the last two years, coinciding with its move from the former Department of Family and Community Services to the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. With these changes, providers are concerned that their expertise in working with young people is not being fully utilized and that their capacity to engage and assist disadvantaged young people to achieve outcomes will continue to be diminished.

Concerns have been raised by YACVic, Melbourne City Mission (MCM – a large JPET provider) and Jobs Australia (the peak body for employment related not-for-profits) around the restructuring of the JPET programme. YACVic, MCM and Jobs Australia fear that the subtle shifts in funding and operations are undermining the very strengths of the programme.

The most significant concerns around the JPET programme restructure are around:

- The introduction of Participation Reporting as a requirement of JPET service provision.

As part of the new funding arrangements, JPETs are now required to report on the participation of young people to Centrelink. Young people's payments are tied to these reporting arrangements, so that if a young person does not attend consecutive meetings with their JPET worker, their youth allowance may be stopped or reduced. The use of this participation reporting (PR) as an 'engagement tool' is problematic. The very nature of the target group requires flexibility in design of engagement strategies. JPET providers were selected on the basis of their expertise with the young people they assist. Such expertise is more than capable in determining the best way to engage a particular client and when and how to use the right balance of carrot and stick. The current PR system does not allow the level of discretion and flexibility that is necessary to engage this vulnerable client group.

- A shift in the program balance away from a pre-employment model towards one that focuses mainly on economic outcomes.

Under the new arrangements, the service providers feel like priorities of the JPET programme have changed. An increased emphasis on achieving economic outcomes has replaced a more holistic emphasis on addressing barriers to employment, and the role of education and skills development. These pre employment elements of education and skill development must be addressed as a pathway toward achieving sustainable social and economic outcomes, and programme priorities must reflect this.

- The partnership arrangements between the Federal Government and providers, established at the commencement of JPET, have become overly contractual and cumbersome.

Providers are reporting a significant shift in the nature of the relationship between government and service providers. Previously, service providers and the government had a partnership approach, whose benefits have been lost with the introduction of contract compliance framework. The provider – department relationship has become one of distrust; rather than supporting providers to deliver the best service possible.

- The increasing and onerous level of administration and associated costs now required delivering the program.

Historically JPET funding has always been comparatively low in contrast to other DEWR programs, partially due to the pre-employment status of the program and the equal weighting of social outcomes and economic outcomes. These already low funding levels are being stretched with the introduction of more administrative requirements. The extra requirements as part of the new emphasis on compliance, activity agreements, PRs and EA3000 have all been introduced without any recognition of the increased workload and associated cost.

There has been no indexation increase in the 2006/09-contract period, nor have there been any funding adjustments to offset the extra administration requirements. This has resulted in a significant net reduction in the

level of program resources, further exacerbated by the diversion of resources to administration tasks and functions. The end result is that workers have less time to assist clients, which will ultimately lead to a reduction in service provision and consequently a reduction in quality outcomes.

These changes are having, and will continue to have, a negative impact on the capacity of JPET providers to engage with and achieve outcomes for vulnerable young people.

The overwhelming view of JPET providers is that the particularly complex needs of disadvantaged young people is best addressed by specialist youth focused services. This view is supported by the various DEWR reports on the less than satisfactory levels of access to the Job Network by disadvantaged youth.

To get JPET back on track, YACVic, MCM and Jobs Australia have called for a full, federal review of the JPET program. A review would need to include:

- Analysis of current research in pre-employment programs for vulnerable youth
- An assessment of best national and international practice in the field
- A thorough consultation with current providers and more broadly youth services
- Feedback from past and current JPET clients
- The impacts of the compliance and penalties regime
- Comparisons with similar programs in Australia and internationally
- A means of measuring 'distance travelled' for those who have yet to achieve an economic outcome.

Updates about the federal government's response to this call will be published in future editions of *Yikes*. For more information about this, contact Georgie Ferrari, CEO YACVic, email gferrari@yacvic.org.au

The preceding article was first published in Volume 5, Edition 6, December 2007 of *Yikes*, the newsletter of YACVic and is re-produced with permission.

Regional Queensland

Bundaberg and District Youth Forum

Contact: Anne McWhirter
Bundaberg Community Development Inc
PO Box 2252, Bundaberg Q 4670
Ph: 07 4153 3066 Fax 4151 1813

Email: annem@bcd.org.au

Meets the second Tuesday bi-monthly (first meeting for the year is February) from 9.30-11.30am at Impact Make Your Mark, 106-108 Bargara Road Bundaberg.

Cairns Youth Service Network

Contact: Tanya Simpson
A/Youth Development Officer
PO Box 359, Cairns Q 4870
Ph: 07 4044 3016 Fax: 07 4044 3830
Email: t.simpson@cairns.qld.gov.au

Meets last Thursday of every 2nd month at Cairns City Library, Abbott Street, Cairns.
Contact Tanya for times for meetings as they alternate.

Cairns Drug & Alcohol Interagency Network

Convenor: Diane Forsyth
Contact: Margaret Bradley, Addiction Help Agency Cairns Inc, 211 Lyons Street, Westcourt Q 4870
Ph: 07 4051 6262 Fax: 07 4051 6890
Email: admin@addictionhelpagency.org.au
Contact Margaret for meeting times and venue.

Central and North Burnett Community Services Network

Contact (1): Lauren Pattie,
Community Development Officer,
Monto Neighbourhood Centre
Ph: 07 4166 1733 Fax: 07 4166 1061
Email: cdomonto@bigpond.com

Contact (2): John Sharp
Mundubbera Community Development
Ph: 07 4165 4690 Fax: 07 4165 3143
Email: mcda@burnett.net.au

Meets first Monday of the month 10am-3pm (venue changes).

Central West Youth Network

Contact: Peter Clark
Anglicare Central Qld Barcardine,
PO Box 47, Barcardine Q 4725
Ph: 07 4651 2161 Fax: 07 4651 2352
Mobile: 0409 053 304
Email: pclark@anglicarecq.org.au
Contact Peter for further details.

Charleville Youth Interagency

Contact: Sally Vetter
South West Healthy Communities Program
PO Box 689, Charleville Q 4470
Ph: 07 4654 3055 Fax: 07 4654 3022
Email: ahpo@swhcp.org
Meets 10am the third Thursday of each month at Charleville Neighbourhood Centre.

Emerald Shire Youth Rep

Contact: Pamela White, Youth Development Officer
Emerald Shire Council PO Box 21, Emerald Q 4720
Ph/Fax: 07 4982 8393 Mobile 0427 820 540
Email: youthofficer@emerald.qld.gov.au
Contact Pamela for details of local youth networks.

Gladstone Youth Interagency

Contact: Andrea Hughes

Gladstone Regional Council
PO Box 29, Gladstone Q 4680
Ph: 07 4976 6300 Fax: 07 4972 6557
Email: andrea@gcc.qld.gov.au

Meets first Wednesday of the month (excepting school holidays) 12 noon at the Community Advisory Service, 142 Goondoon Street, Gladstone

Hervey Bay Youth Sector Workers Network

Contact: Sue Lawler
Hervey Bay City Council
PO Box 5045, Hervey Bay Q 4655
Ph: 07 4197 4330 Fax: 07 4197 4303
Email: suel@herveybay.qld.gov.au
Meets last Tuesday of each month 10.30 am. Contact Sue for venue.

Innisfail Community Sector Network

Contact: Kath Barnett,
Community Development Officer
Ph: 07 4030 2255 Fax: 07 4061 6005
Email: barnettk@jsc.qld.gov.au
Meets fourth Thursday of every second month 1pm at Parish Centre, Rankin Street, Innisfail

Mackay Youth Connections Network Inc

Contact: Nikki Hughes, Secretary
Ph: (07) 4968 4436 Mobile: 0431 289 009.
Email: ydo@mackay.qld.gov.au
Meets third Tuesday of the month 10.30am Mackay PCYC

Maryborough Interagency Network

Contact: Debra Moore, Community Development Officer, Maryborough City Council
Ph: 07 4190 5822
Email: debra.moore@maryborough.qld.gov.au
Meets last Thursday of the month from 9am at the Maryborough Neighbourhood Centre

MICAT (Mt Isa Combined Action Team)

Contact (1): Alison Martens, Secretary
Ph: 07 4744 4891 Fax: 07 4745 4573
Email: alison_martens@health.qld.gov.au

Contact (2): Shelly Howe, Treasurer
Email: showe34@eq.edu.au

Meets twice per school term. Details can be obtained from either of the above contacts.

Rockhampton Youth Interagency Network

Contact: Sara McCartney
Relationships Australia
Ph: 07 4926 9726 Fax: 07 4926 9954
Email: smccartney@relateqld.com.au
Meets third Friday of the month 9.00-10.30 am at CQ Youth Justice Service Centre 155 Alma Street, Rockhampton.

Roma Community Services Interagency

Contact: Roma Neighbourhood Centre
PO Box 1028, Roma
Ph: 07 4620 1000 Fax: 07 4622 1448
Email: romanc@romanc.org
Meets every six weeks on a Monday from 11.30am.
Contact the Neighbourhood Centre for details

Sarina Interagency Meeting

Contact: Margie Ward
Sarina Youth Centre PO Box 219, Sarina Q 4737
Ph: 07 4943 2962 Fax: 07 4956 1508
Email: youthcentre@mcs.net.au
Meets first Wednesday of every second month. For additional information, please contact Margie on the

above details.

South Burnett Community Network

Contact: South Burnett Community Development Worker, PO Box 300, Kingaroy Q 4610
Ph: 07 4162 5711 Fax: 07 4162 5121
Email: sbcdp@bigpond.net.au
Meets first Tuesday of the month 10am-12 noon Wondai Council Supper Room.

South West Youth Network

Contact: Tim Wilson, Manager – Community Capacity & Service Quality, Department of Communities PO Box 2427, Toowoomba Q 4350
Ph: 07 4699 4222
Email: tim.wilson@communities.qld.gov.au
The group meets quarterly and covers the Darling Downs and South West Qld Region from Toowoomba south to the NSW border, west to the Northern Territory border and north to Taroom and Crow's Nest. It is made up of youth workers from non-governmental organisations, local councils and a small number of government departments. Meetings are held at a different location each time. Contact Tim for details.

The Youth Network NQ Inc

Contact: Clea Alcorn
Ph: 07 4775 7183
Email: clea.alcorn@thesmithfamily.com.au
Meets third Thursday of the month 9-11am at Von Steiglitz Room, Thuringowa Library. (NB March meeting will be 13th due to Easter holidays).

Toowoomba Youth Organisations Network (TYON)

Contact: Ed Bradbury
Education Qld PO Box 38, Toowoomba Q 4350
Ph: 07 4616 9105 Fax: 07 4616 9100
Email: Edward.Bradbury@deta.qld.gov.au
Meets occasionally. Main activity through email discussion (TYON@discussions.eq.edu.au). Contact Ed Bradbury to join discussion list or for details.

Warwick Youth Network

Contact: Pam Burley, Community Youth Worker
PO Box 26, Warwick Q 4370
Ph/Fax: 07 4661 7166
Email: pburley@warwick.qld.gov.au
Meets quarterly. Contact Warwick Youth Service for meeting details as dates & venue vary.

Whitsunday Youth Focus Network

Contact: Wendy Olsen, Youth Services Officer
Whitsunday Regional Council
Ph: 07 4945 0216 Fax 07 4945 0222
Email: wendyolsen@whitsundayrd.qld.gov.au
Contact Wendy for Network details.

Interagency Meetings

current as at May 2008

South East Queensland

Beaudesert Shire Youth Network

Contact: Youth Development Officer, BeauCare
Ph: 07 5541 4391 Fax: 07 5541 3654
Email: youth@beaucare.org.au
Contact Youth Development Officer for meeting details as venue, days & times vary.

Brisbane Inner Urban Youth Interagency

Contact: Libby Butler
Ph: 07 3407 0208
Email: libby.butler@brisbane.qld.gov.au
(after 13/6/08 contact gerard.dowling@brisbane.qld.gov.au)
Meets 10-12 noon first Wednesday of the month. Contact Libby Butler for details.

Brisbane South Youth Interagency

Contact: Suzanne Perry
Brisbane South Youth Justice Service,
306 Ipswich Road, Buranda
Ph: 07 3406 2801
Email: Suzanne.Perry@communities.qld.gov.au
Meets quarterly, contact Suzanne for details.

Brisbane Southside Indigenous Youth Interagency

Contact: Suzanne Perry or Robert Cooper
Brisbane South Youth Justice Service
Ph: 07 3406 2802
Email: Suzanne.Perry@communities.qld.gov.au or Robert.Cooper@communities.qld.gov.au
Contact Suzanne or Robert for meeting times and venue details.

Caloundra City Youth Services Network AND Sunshine Coast Youth Partnership

Contact: Jody Tunnickliffe
Sunshine Coast Youth Partnerships
Locked Bag 5010 Caloundra
Ph: 07 5413 9218 Fax 07 5413 9299
Mobile 0407 733 298
Email info@sunshinecoastyouth.com
Contact Jody for meeting times and venues.

Youth Caboolture Area Network (YCAN)

Contact: Francis Mills, Youth Planner
Moreton Bay Regional Council – Caboolture District
Ph: 07 5420 0225 Fax: 07 5420 0350
Email: Francis.Mills@moretonbay.qld.gov.au
Meets third Wednesday of every month 12.30-2.30pm at Level 3, 33 King Street, Caboolture

Gold Coast Family Connections

Contact: Tracey Wood (Reconnect Gold Coast)
PO Box 364, Nerang Q 4211
Ph: 07 5500 4211
Email: gcfc@bigpond.net.au
Web: www.reconnect.org.au
Meets 9am-11am every first Thursday of the month. Contact Tracey as venues vary. This network is open to any service provider or individual that works with youth and families in the Gold Coast Region.

Gold Coast Youth Network

Contact: Sylvia Roylance
Gold Coast Youth Services,
PO Box 740, Burleigh Heads Q 4220
Ph: 07 5572 0400 Fax: 07 5575 2607
Email: gcyouth@bigpond.net.au
Meets last Wednesday of the month 10.30am-12.30pm at Dept. of Communities Youth Justice Service Centre at Mermaid Beach.

Goodna Youth Interagency

Contact: Bryon Mulligan, Project Coordinator

Ipswich Community Youth Service,
PO Box 1034, Ipswich Q 4305
Ph 07 3812 1050 Mobile 0438 549 942
Fax: 07 3812 2971
Email: projects@icys.net
Meets third Tuesday of the month from 1.30pm at the Goodna Arts and Cultural Centre, 33 Queen Street. All youth & community service providers welcome.

Inala Youth Interagency (LARGEFLY)

Contact: John Riggsby-Jones
Inala Youth Service PO Box 141, Inala Q 4077
Ph: 07 3372 2655 Fax: 07 3372 2710
Email: largefly@iys.org.au
Meets 12 noon second Thursday of the month at downstairs meeting room, Community Health Centre, Wirraway Parade, Inala.

Ipswich Youth Interagency Group

Contact: Nicole Turner, Youth Community Development Officer, Ipswich City Council
PO Box 191, Ipswich Q 4305
Ph: 07 3810 6658 Fax: 07 3810 6741
Email: NTurner@ipswich.qld.gov.au
Meets first Tuesday of the month 12.30pm at alternate venues throughout Ipswich region.

Lockyer Service Providers Interagency

Contact: Neil Williamson, Laidley Community/Youth Development Worker
Laidley Shire Community Care Assoc. Inc
Ph: 07 5465 1889
Email: neil@lscqa.org.au

OR

LINC - Ph 07 5462 3355
Email: lincgaton@bigpond.com

All meetings commence at 1.00pm.
Laidley meetings held 27 May, 19 August and 11 November at Laidley Community Centre, 13 Mary Street (opp The Bus Stop).
Gatton meetings held 8 July, 30 September at Gatton Baptist Church, 12 William Street (opp Police Station)

Logan Youth Networks

Contact: Jason Reid, Community Services Branch,
Logan City Council PO Box 3226,
Logan City DC 4114
Ph: 07 3412 5029 Fax: 07 3412 3444
Email: jasonreid@logan.qld.gov.au
There are quarterly Youth Manager Meetings and quarterly Youth Info Exchange Meetings - Contact Jason Reid for details.

Maroochydore Youth Interagency Meeting

Contact: Jody Tunnickliffe
Sunshine Coast Youth Partnerships,
Locked Bag 5010 Caloundra
Ph: 07 5413 9218 Fax 07 5413 9299
Mobile 0407 733 298
Email info@sunshinecoastyouth.com
Contact Jody for meeting times and venues

Nambour Youth Interagency

Contact: Lyn Harris, Youth Support Coordinator
United Synergies
Ph: 07 5442 4277
Email: nambouryouthinteragency@yahoo.com.au
Meets once each school term; dates for meetings & venues are advised prior to meetings.

Northern Sunshine Coast Interagency Network

Contact: Deb Purdon
United Synergies
Ph: 07 5442 4277
Email dpurdon@unitedsynergies.com.au

Meets once per term in Noosa Shire.

Northern Gold Coast Interagency

Contact: Veronica Cox (Studio Village)
Ph: 07 5529 8253
Email: svcc@cirruscomms.com.au
Meets last Tuesday of every month 11am-1pm at Studio Village Community Centre, 87 Village Way, Studio Village

Pine Rivers Youth Service Providers Network

Contact: Jodie Hampson, Community Development Officer, Moreton Bay Regional Council, Pine Rivers District
Ph: 07 3480 6469 Fax: 07 34806353
Email: jodie.hampson@moretonbay.qld.gov.au
Meets second Monday bi-monthly 1-4pm (lunch provided) at Unit 4A, 199 Gympie Road, Strathpine. (Moreton Bay Regional Council, Pine Rivers District, Community Development office)

Redcliffe Youth Service Providers Network

Contact: Jacqui Pedersen
Moreton Bay Regional Council - Redcliffe District
Ph: 07 3283 0285 Fax: 3883 1723
Email: jacqueline.pedersen@moretonbay.qld.gov.au
Meets second Wednesday of every second month 3pm at Redcliffe Area Youth Space.

Redlands Youth Network

Contact: Janet Camilleri, Youth Development Officer, Redland City Council
Ph: 07 3829 8233 Fax: 07 3829 8891
Email: Janet.Camilleri@redland.qld.gov.au
Meets third Monday of the month 3-4.30pm at Redland Community Centre, Loraine Street, Capalaba. Venue to be advised for April, July and October meetings. Contact Courtney for meeting calendar.

Service Providers Action Group for Youth (SPAGY)

Contact: Belinda Kau, Youth Information and Referrals Officer, Picabeen Community Assn Inc,
22 Hoben Street, Mitchelton
Ph: 07 3354 2555 Mobile 0408 001 299
Fax: 07 3355 4222
Email: viro@picabeen.org.au
Meet last Monday of each month from 2.00-4.00 pm at Picabeen but venue does rotate occasionally. Contact Belinda for meeting details.

The Hinterland Youth Services Network

Contact: Anna Heriot, Community development Coordinator, Hinterland Community Development Assn of Caloundra PO Box 1213, Maleny
Mobile 0418 720 515
Email: hcdaworker.anna@gmail.com
Contact Anna for meeting times and venues

Tweed Shire Youth Network

Contact: Margaret Strong
Ph: 02 6670 2262
Email: MStrong@tweed.nsw.gov.au
Meets bi-monthly on 2nd Wednesday of the month 10am-2pm. Venue rotated throughout shire. Contact Margaret for details.

North East Youth Organisations Network (NEYON)

Contact: Kelly Nelson, Acting Coordinator
Visible Ink Zillmere
Youth Team Brisbane City Council
Ph: 07 3407 8102 Fax: 07 3407 8100
Email: Kelly.Nelson@brisbane.qld.gov.au
Contact Kelly for meeting details.

Youth Affairs Network of Queensland Inc

Who are we?

The Youth Affairs Network of Queensland (YANQ) Inc is the peak community youth affairs organisation in Queensland. Representing over 400 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.

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 responsive to the needs of young people. Your membership and support is vital in providing a voice for young people's issues in Queensland.

Who can join?

Full Membership

Membership of the network may be granted to youth organisations, Youth Workers and young people in the non-government youth sector who have agreed to support the objects and values summary of the network and paid the prescribed fee and completed the relevant application form.

Subscriber

Any other individual or organisation interested in the work of the network is entitled to become a subscriber after submitting the relevant fee.

Become a member...and make a difference!

Keep up to date

- Free newsletter quarterly, Network Noise
- Free In fact sheets distributed regularly
- Discount on other YANQ publications, such as Transitions
- Information on-line at our website
- Access to library resources
- Free-call 1-800 line for regional members.

Make valuable contacts

- Participate in youth policy development
- Join YANQ's working parties
- Receive support and information for your regional and issues-based networks
- Contribute to our newsletter.

Access professional development

- Discounts at YANQ forums and training events
- Discount at YANQ's Biennial State Youth Affairs Conference

YANQ Aims

Working together to improve the quality of life of young people in Queensland and thereby improve the quality of life of society.

YANQ Objectives

- To promote the interests of the youth sector particularly the interests of disadvantaged and marginalised young people, throughout Queensland.
- To enable the participation of young people, particularly disadvantaged and marginalised young people, in the Network and wider community.
- To advocate with and for young people, particularly disadvantaged and marginalised young people.
- To lobby to achieve long term social change in the interests of young people particularly disadvantaged and marginalised young people.
- To support and encourage the development of new means of meeting the rights and needs of young people, particularly disadvantaged and marginalised young people.
- To contribute to the development of the youth sector through networking, research and information provision.
- To develop policies on issues affecting the youth sector.
- To ensure that the Network has adequate resources to properly address issues affecting the youth sector.
- To function in a manner consistent with the Values and Vision of the Network.

Join today!

Simply fill in the application form, detach and return it to YANQ with your membership fee payment. For more information please call us on: (07) 3844 7713 or 1800 177 899 (available for regional Queensland)

Summary of our 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 practicing 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.