



# NSW Roundtable on Youth Development

September 2006



NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health





## The Roundtable on Youth Development

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## NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health (NSW CAAH)

The NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health (NSW CAAH) was established in 1998 under the Youth Health Policy, to create better health and wellbeing for young people across the State. Funded by NSW Health and based at The Children's Hospital at Westmead, the Centre works with health care, non-government, education, academic, community and advocacy bodies to ensure better adolescent health outcomes.

NSW CAAH's four key result areas contribute to improving adolescent health:

1. Developing information and resources to increase knowledge and understanding of youth health issues.
2. Professional development and capacity building around adolescent health and development issues.
3. Supporting applied research and promoting better practice in adolescent health care.
4. Supporting advocacy and policy development to increase leadership and action for adolescent health.

Further information about the Centre can be found on the website: [www.caah.chw.edu.au](http://www.caah.chw.edu.au)



# Introduction

In November 2003, the NSW Office of Children and Young People (OCYP) held the first Roundtable entitled *Keeping young people connected to education* to contribute to the Better Futures program, a holistic, cross-government strategy for improving the lives of young people aged 12 -18 in New South Wales. The aim was to consolidate efforts around young people's positive engagement in education.

In 2005, a second Roundtable - this time focusing on youth development - was commissioned by the Communities Division, Department of Community Services (DoCS) to identify good practice and explore ways of strengthening programs concerned with young people's wellbeing.

Several months prior to the event, the Communities Division contracted the NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health (NSW CAAH) to undertake background research on how to strengthen youth development programming, from both implementing and funding agency perspectives. The study *Good Practice in Youth Development: Perspectives from South-East Sydney* (Chiang, Moses & Petersen, 2006) subsequently identified:

- the infrastructure and support required to plan, implement and advance effective youth development projects,
- types of organisational processes which enhance service delivery,
- shared experiences and common issues among the services interviewed.

The findings, based on consultations and a participatory review with eleven youth-specific services in the nominated South-East Sydney Region, provided the Roundtable's framework and basis for discussions.

This report provides a summary of the **Roundtable on Youth Development** activities and outcomes, and delegates' recommendations for advancing youth development in NSW.

## Aim

The Roundtable on Youth Development was commissioned with the intent to strengthen the efforts of government agencies, non-government organisations and other stakeholders in youth development, through networking, information exchange and the sharing of resources. This included:

- Increasing awareness of youth development frameworks, from current national and international perspectives;
- Enhancing understanding of youth development in practice, reviewing 'what works' and in which contexts;
- Hearing what young people have to say about youth development through a youth panel, artworks and other presentations;
- Improving networks and knowledge of youth development initiatives through group discussions and resource displays;
- Developing strategies and identifying steps towards strengthening youth development (at both individual organisation and wider sectoral levels) using group discussion activities.

## Delegates

The Communities Division requested that a number of government human services departments and non-government organisations be invited to the event, and proposed that senior executives nominate an appropriate delegate to attend - the most relevant candidates being those currently managing or implementing youth projects. The invitation list included peak associations (e.g. YAPA, NAAH), Aboriginal services, CALD organisations (e.g. Arabic, Pacific Islander) as well as agencies representing various sectors (health, education, welfare, arts). Forty-eight delegates (including nine young people) attended the one-day event, representing local councils, government departments and non-government organisations, Youth Health Services and Youth peak associations, with the majority of participants from the government sector. An attendance list is provided in [Appendix A](#).

# Introduction

## Program

The Roundtable on Youth Development commenced with a number of short trigger presentations, followed by interactive workshop activities. The four main working themes for the day were:

1. Networking: getting to know about other organisations' youth projects - what they do, how they do it, and useful channels for finding out about them.
2. Good practice: identifying good organisational practices in youth development - sharing common experiences, adapting strategies according to context.
3. Sector advancement: a macro response to youth development across sectors
4. Organisational strategy: developing an organisational plan of action and steps forward.



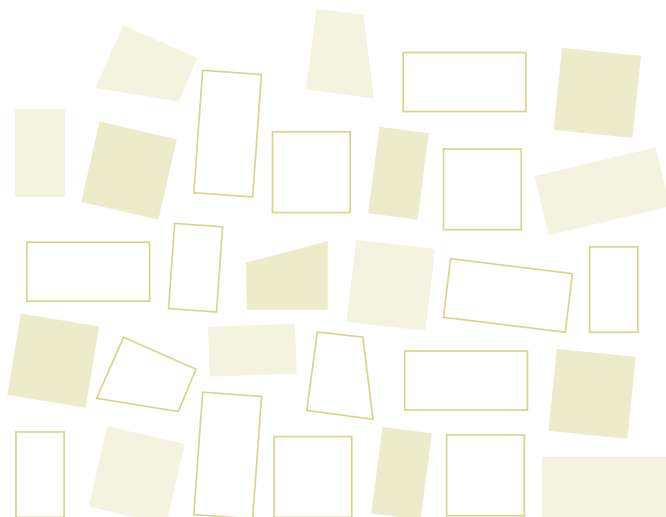
*Youth consultation feedback*

The morning presentations established a shared understanding among participants by focusing on youth development models and frameworks. Groups took part in networking exercises and reviewed research findings, before adding their own strategies and lessons learned (documented in this report).

The lunchtime 'marketplace' gave organisations an opportunity to showcase their own tools, reports and resources, as well as to browse materials from the research consultations with young people. The afternoon sessions focused on the 'big picture' of how to improve youth development across sectors and on a statewide basis. Delegates also developed individual action plans to take back to their workplace.



*Youth consultation mosaics*



*Roundtable registration desk*



# Agenda

Roundtable on Youth Development Agenda  
Friday 29 September 2006  
Dixson Room, State Library of NSW, Sydney

Welcome to country  
*Allen Madden (Metro Local Aboriginal Land Council)*

Introduction to the Roundtable  
*David Bennett (NSW CAAH)*

Opening Speech  
*Sonja Stewart (Communities Division, DoCS)*

What is youth development?  

- National and international perspectives
- An operational model

*Karen Moses, NSW CAAH consultant*

Networking exercise: youth development initiatives

Launch: *Spinning the Web - Better connections between services working with young people* research project

## Morning Tea

What is good practice in youth development?  

- Research findings from *Good Practice in Youth Development Perspectives from South-East Sydney*

*Far Chiang & Alex Petersen, NSW CAAH*

Workshop: Organisational approaches to youth development  

- Experiences, lessons learned & strategies

**Lunch and Exhibitions**  

- **Young people's exhibition - artwork and stories**
- **Youth Development Resources**

Summing up: Organisational approaches session

Young people's panel

Workshop: Strengthening youth development: a sectoral response  

- What can we do differently?

## Afternoon tea

Activity: Strengthening youth development - an organisational response

Evaluation & Closing speech

# Recommendations

Roundtable delegates recommended taking the following actions to improve young people's lives in NSW:

## 1. To reframe young people and the media:

- Increasing positive representation and reporting of young people in the media
- Increasing young people's access to using the media and producing youth programs

## 2. To formalise young people's participation:

- Increasing meaningful and representative youth participation in all areas, and particularly within formal or institutional mechanisms (e.g. all local councils, social plans, Federal and State government policies)
- Improving service providers' attitudes and valuing young people's opinions and participation

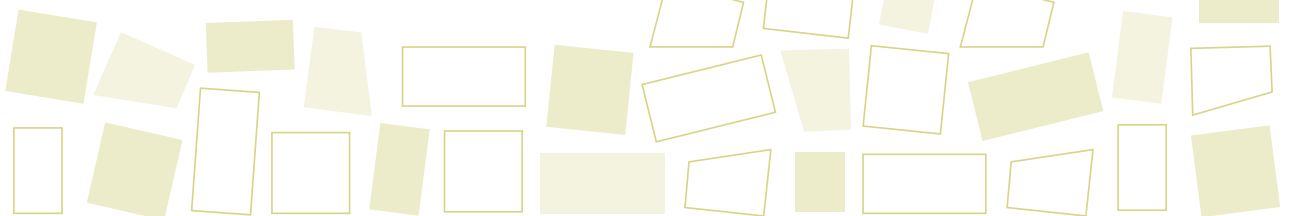
## 3. To improve planning and responsiveness, and longer term vision:

- Broadening the Roundtable's scope to include a leadership role, with direct influence on policy
- Improving planning and coordination through policy linkage (e.g. State Plan with Youth Action Policy/Plan), and government departments drawing on the experience of community-based services in planning
- Investing in infrastructure for programs (both physical and human resources)
- Analysing population trends and needs on a regular basis to ensure equity and access to services (e.g. new arrivals; young people in regional, rural and remote areas)
- Increasing model sharing, knowledge transfer, evaluation and research by working with support bodies (YAPA, NSW CAAH)
- Creating complementary partnerships (co-location, one stop-shops) where this will benefit local young people

## 4. To support young people's development

- Continuing to invest in Better Futures and other holistic, youth-focused initiatives on a long-term funding cycle basis
- Adopting a *whole of community* approach and ensuring that young people's needs and ideas are integrated

"Funding needs to focus on the need of the community, not on the political agenda. [It] needs to be bi-partisan so that it can continue regardless of who's the government of the day." - Roundtable delegate



# Session outcomes



Networking activity

## Activity 1: Networking Exercise

Getting to know about other organisations' youth projects - what they do, how they do it, and useful channels for finding out about them.

*Delegates at each table completed a short profile of their organisation's activities; these were read out and questioned by others in the group.*

Participants reported that this exercise helped them to learn in more detail about programs run by other organisations. There was an overwhelming sense that a multitude of youth development-related initiatives are being implemented in NSW (large strategic government programs, community-based initiatives, informal networks and support groups) although these are not necessarily well coordinated, and locating relevant information is sometimes challenging. Groups listed the range of sources they used, including colleagues, networks or interagencies, media, young people, other services, publications, conferences, trainings, websites, peak bodies.

The session concluded with the timely launch of *Spinning the Web: Better connections between services working with young people* research report.

## Activity 2: Good practice - shared experiences, lessons learned

Identifying good practice in youth development - sharing common experiences, adapting strategies according to context.

*Tables were given a number of indicators and case studies from the research. Participants related findings to their own experience, and contributed additional strategies and lessons learned.*

## Youth participation

### Issues

Although youth participation is widely perceived as being highly important, it is not always a formal or integrated process. Delegates agreed that youth participation can have different roles or purposes (e.g. advising on a project's development compared to actually taking part or engaging in a project). There was considerable debate about whether youth participation should be viewed as a process or an outcome - or both. Context was a significant driver for the type and nature of youth participation. An example of youth participation outcomes can be young people becoming directly involved in, and influencing, service planning. It was felt that there is a need to 'normalise' youth involvement and raise the level of active youth participation.

### Lessons learned

- Attitudes: The spirit of youth development is very important, and should be one of 'with' rather than 'to' young people. It also requires the view that participation is meaningful and empowering, and designed to result in real outcomes or progress.
- Process: Organisations can negotiate with young people and agree on parameters of participation, rather than only offering a few, pre-determined options. Participation will be more effective when it is relevant, carried out in a safe environment, engaging and interesting for young people, and offering them clear roles. Part of the process may involve reconciling 'wants' with what can be realistically achieved.

# Session outcomes



*Clin A/Prof David Bennett, Chair*

## Evaluation

### Issues

Although seen as important for accountability, funding and performance reasons, organisations nonetheless experienced significant barriers when evaluating youth development initiatives. These included workers not being skilled, having to decide whether to allocate scarce resources (time and money) to evaluation or service delivery, difficulties in establishing baselines and outcome measures (due to the often individualised and relative nature of young people's development). In some cases, there were concerns that service clients can be over-evaluated. It was generally felt that the use of participatory approaches could be more widespread. One point of debate was whether evaluation should be carried out by the service itself (internally - because of existing relationships with the client group) or by an outside party (externally - for impartiality). A major concern voiced was that results are not always given back to those evaluated.

"No one evaluation can measure everything."  
- Roundtable delegate

### Lessons learned

**Attitude:** Evaluations need to be meaningful and purposeful; people being evaluated need to know why they are being evaluated, and it is equally important for them to know the results.

**Making it happen:** Funding for evaluation needs to be built into initial project budgets. External partnerships

(e.g. universities or other technical support services) can provide the necessary assistance to design and carry out evaluations.

**Process:** A good evaluation process includes establishing clear reasons for why the evaluation is being performed, and knowing what should actually be evaluated. This often requires building in specific objectives at the beginning of a project, so that measuring is easier later. Taking into account the context, environment and original project objectives, organisations should use different methods to evaluate, and ensure a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods as appropriate. Working with young people requires evaluations to be fun and participatory - this can be done using video and photography, or hosting client feedback days.

## Sustainability

### Issues

A major issue is obtaining ongoing funding for projects; while new projects and short-term initiatives are more likely to be supported by seed funding, ongoing funding to continue these initiatives (especially for infrastructure costs) appears to be far less popular with donors. Pilot projects can establish valuable evidence and lessons learned, but there are too few opportunities to continue and build on these successes. Groups attribute this fall-off to rapid changes in social and political circumstances. Delegates were also concerned about the short-term nature of many funding rounds, which do not allow realistic amounts of time for establishing relationships with communities and implementing projects.

Participants expressed a need for greater advocacy and support in investing in youth-friendly services, as well as more effective interfaces between youth plans and policies under different departments.

### Lessons learned

**Making it happen:** In addition to stabilising their funding, organisations can also enhance their sustainability by co-locating with other services, planning for the short and long term, developing strategic and complementary partnerships (other organisations, corporate sponsors), keeping and supporting staff, and engaging young people in meaningful project roles.

# Session outcomes



## Equity

### Issues

There is considerable diversity within the population of young people in NSW. Some sub-groups may have particular needs and as a result may not access services to the same extent, or in the same way as others. Four main issues were discussed: gender, disability, cultural diversity and regional/rural access. Groups also identified a number of factors affecting equity of access to service: lack of transport for regional and isolated young people, safety, meeting costs (particularly for disadvantaged young people), cultural or religious barriers, and the invisibility of disability.

One key debate is whether targeting particular groups will exclude other groups, or whether targeting is necessary in order to achieve (at least in the short term) greater equity of service use by a more inclusive and representative group of young clients. Similarly, while broad-based initiatives could mean that some young people 'fall through the gaps', participants considered that more narrowly targeted groups run the risk of contributing to isolation, not integration.

### Lessons learned

It is important to take a proactive role in reviewing where inequity exists and working out how to make changes; this is best supported by having a service policy or plan to achieve equity in services. Gender-based groups, running free services, hosting interfaith and diversity

sessions, employing staff from relevant backgrounds and having a mix of specific and general programs can assist services to meet diverse needs and work towards greater inclusiveness in their client group.

Developing greater community awareness of programs is also highly important; promoting projects through community leaders, outreach, other organisations and schools can be valuable channels for reaching a wider audience of young people.

## Accessibility

In many ways, this related closely to equity. Participants emphasised that flexibility and adaptability to young people's needs are key elements of making services accessible.

### Lessons learned

Some of the issues to be considered include making services accessible through outreach, co-locating services to making a 'one stop shop' facility, having services close to public transport, working with town planning (e.g. new housing estates), investing in appropriate buildings, giving youth and community a sense of ownership/partnership.

## Evidence-informed practice

Groups came up with a list of obstacles to finding and using evidence, including time limitations, lack of documentation of projects, a reluctance to share information. Some participants felt there was too much information (not always current or relevant), requiring substantial time to sift through and identify what was useful. Although there has been youth development research conducted in the United States of America, this may not be relevant to the Australian context. The use of evidence, however, did not always result in funding, particularly if it did not match current social or political agendas.

# Session outcomes



## Activity 3: Advancing youth development - across sectors

Groups identified significant issues for strengthening youth development, and developed recommendations.

The key emerging themes were:

1. Reframing young people and the media
2. Formalising young people's participation
3. Improving planning and responsiveness; building long-term vision
4. Supporting young people's development

### Reframing young people and the media

There was a strong perception that young people are often negatively portrayed in the media. Yet there are untapped opportunities for the media to play a constructive role in young people's development.

Participants said that the media could:

- be a powerful channel for getting young people's views heard
- link young people with information on services and other opportunities in their region
- raise young people's profile and provide inspiration for positive youth development through success stories

Some of the longer term strategies suggested included:

- providing media training and mentoring programs for young people in producing radio, television, online and print programs
- developing radio and TV programs with young people as regular producers and presenters
- broadcasting more youth-targeted programs
- improving the links between youth development officers or workers and the media; increasing good news stories and positive reporting



### Formalising young people's participation

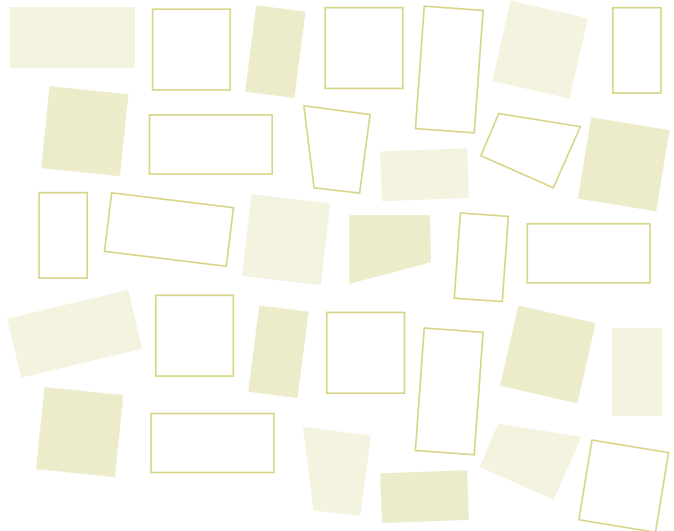
While participants observed an increase in youth participation in various projects and organisations, it was nonetheless felt that *meaningful and representative* youth participation needs to be taken much more seriously and included in formal processes where possible. This also requires a more positive social attitude (in both workers and institutions), and a readiness to value and listen to what children and young people have to say.

"Planning has to be with youth at the heart - not as an afterthought." - Roundtable delegate

# Session outcomes

The recommendations included:

- improving service provider skills in facilitating youth participation, and effectively engaging young people, beyond simple consultation, so as to increase their control and ownership of projects
- increasing the scope and responsibility of youth advisory committees and councils, to involve them more actively in decision-making
- ensuring that each local government area has:
  - a social plan and allocation of resources ensuring youth participation
  - a youth development officer and youth representative body (e.g. a local youth advisory committee) to undertake consultations and lobbying



*NSW CAAH Staff and Youth Panel*

# Session outcomes

## Improving planning and responsiveness; building long-term infrastructure

Equity was raised as a key issue; participants emphasised that all young people need access to youth-friendly health and other services, particularly in regional and rural areas. The overarching need, however, was to build in long-term policy goals and subsequent sustainability in youth programming.

The recommendations were:

### Policy

- Link the State Plan with the Youth Action Policy/Plan
- Ensure that Youth Development is a key approach of the NSW Youth Action Plan
- Continue with the Better Futures initiative, or at least a Families First equivalent for young people
- Develop better linkages between government and community-based services in policy development and planning

### Planning and responsiveness

- Increasing the sharing of models and knowledge transfer between organisations and sectors (including lessons learned, what worked and what didn't)
- Increasing the involvement of bodies such as YAPA, NSW CAAH, NAAH and other partners, to help collate current evidence and identify gaps for research or action
- Analysing population changes within communities (e.g. newly arrived groups, increase in the number of young parents from the baby bonus) and using this information in planning and resource distribution

### Infrastructure

- Investing in buildings to increase stability and facilitate more accessible premises
- Developing long-term funding cycles for more stable and effective programs
- Creating complementary partnerships (co-location, one stop-shops) where this will benefit local young people

## Supporting young people's development

Participants agreed that youth development is holistic and thus covers a wide spectrum of issues. It also needs to be valued as a positive and worthwhile investment (not just as a 'band-aid' or sporadic response to acute problems). Youth development should take place within a whole of community approach, where young people's needs and ideas are also included in mainstream (non-youth-specific) programs, not just in isolation.

Young people need, therefore, holistic programs which provide them with life skills for understanding and managing:

- Education pathways and processes
- Employment and other workplace issues
- Insurance and taxation
- Finance (credit cards, loans, saving)
- First aid
- Legal rights and responsibilities (e.g. dealing with police)
- Health issues and access to services (sexuality, alcohol, drugs, Medicare)
- Driving (defensive driving skills)
- Personal safety (street safety, risk minimisation)
- Personal growth and expression (arts programs)
- Participation in councils and other decision-making bodies

# Youth Panel & Participants

Young people attended the Roundtable on Youth Development as panel members, participants and presenters.

## Rebecca Fowles, Panel Member



- Rebecca is:
- 23 year-old mother of two children.
  - Bachelor of Social Science
  - Cessnock Youthlink Coordinator at Samaritans Youth Services
  - Member: NSW Youth Advisory Council (YAC); National Planning Group & Youth Programs Advisory Committee for Youth Week; NSW Health's Strategic Advisory Committee
  - Chair, NSW Website Reference Group for Youth.NSW

## Anton Jurisevic, Panel Member



- Anton is:
- Year 9 Student, Sydney Boys' High School
  - Member: Young People's Reference Group Member, NSW Commission for Children and Young People

## Karen Moses, Panel Member and Presenter



- Karen is:
- Psychology Master's student, University of Western Sydney
  - NSW CAAH Consultant on the Youth Development Research and Roundtable projects

## Lucas Hejtmanek, Panel Member



- Lucas is:
- Year 9 student at Newtown School of the Performing Arts
  - Member: Young People's Reference Group Member, NSW Commission for Children and Young People; Youth Health Conference 2006 working party

## Abdul Nahi, Panel Member



- Abdul is:
- Year 12 student at Condell Park High School
  - Member: Young People's Reference Group Member, NSW Commission for Children and Young People

# Youth Panel & Participants

Jessica Priebee, Panel Member



Jessica is:

- Year 11 student at Pittwater High School
- Member: Young People's Reference Group Member, NSW Commission for Children and Young People; Local Cultural Planning Advisory Committee

Angelique Vongsaya, Panel Member



Angelique is:

- Member: Multicultural Youth Network, and does advocacy training for young leaders
- Youth Advisor to the Laos Community in Cabramatta

Kimberley Stuart, participant



Kimberley is :

- Trainee Policy Officer, NSW Commission for Children and Young People
- Member: Youth Participation Advisory Committee for the Youth Health 2006 conference - "Youth Health: What's it going to Take?"

Harry Whelan, Panel Member



Harry is:

- Member: Association for the Welfare of Child Health (AWCH) Board; Canterbury Youth Council & Harmony Youth Roundtable; Multicultural Youth Network at the Community Relations Commission

Suraya Turk, participant



Suraya is:

- Member: NSW Youth Advisory Council

Michael Yuen, Panel Member



Michael is:

- Currently studying for a combined Bachelor of Teaching & Arts at ACU
- Member: NSW Youth Advisory Council (YAC); NSW CAAH Advisory Board; Parramatta City Council Youth & Arts Advisory committees

# Youth Panel - selected excerpts

**Chair: What are some of the things which have helped you to develop as a young person?**

'The amount of opportunities the education system and the school has put forward for me. I lived overseas and went to a school where I didn't receive many opportunities... [when] I came here (to Australia) and the school said "Do you want to do debating, SRC (student representative council)?"', I said yes, I'd love to! I'd never been given the opportunity and no-one had ever asked me for my input before, so it was really amazing to do that. Another thing is also meeting a lot of amazing people. If you don't get out there and if young people don't connect with each other, it becomes very hard to become a well-developed, well-rounded young person.' - Jessica

'For me, the most important thing is my family and the support that they gave me from a young age, and the encouragement that I received to get involved in my local community (the Laos community). My parents really tried to drag me to participate in cultural things, and eventually I grew to really love them and see the value that they have in our community! I should say the support that various people get from government in regards to multicultural youth services and organisations trying to support migrant families has had a big impact on the opportunities that were presented through my community to me.' - Angelique



'Everyone's experience is different. For me, it has been education, family, and religious upbringing and getting involved in activities that are out there, extracurricular activities, in sports and so forth to develop those life skills - the interpersonal skills that we all need.' - Michael

'Connectedness, public engagement, physical and psychological competency. Being engaged in the specific governance of your community - you develop community skills with one another. You're empowered - you have the opportunity to have a say.' - Lucas

**Chair: What would you define as 'successful' youth development projects? Do adults and young people see 'success' differently?**

'It's actually quite hard to generalise about what success is. I see that adults themselves see success differently and young people themselves see success differently. Some might say we are successful because we participate in the community, we're offering ideas, articulate, educated and other people might see success as something that is measured by a good career, wealth. People measure success differently.' - Angelique

'Success really is for youth development - a proper integration of youth into society in a way as equals; adults accepting youth as people instead of just seeing someone in the park. There is a little bit of stigma attached to some of the youth. We have been successful on this road but we have a long way to go.' - Lucas



*Youth Panel*

# Youth Panel - selected excerpts



**Chair:** Our study looked at how far young people are given opportunities to give input and make decisions. From your experience, when is it harder to influence things, and why?

'One thing that annoys me that I've heard here today is about young people being "unrealistic". I have worked with young people in youth services... and I think adults are unrealistic in consultations sometimes too. The young people that you are working with - are you giving them all the information? You can't walk in and ask "Well, what do you want to do about this?" It's more about saying "O.K., there is a problem - what do you think are some of the solutions?" and setting parameters.' - Rebecca

'When we give a young person an opportunity to do or say something, we need to take them seriously. When you give a young person a role, you actually follow through with that, and not try to run it in a way whereby it's run by adults or someone higher up in the chain. It's about taking young people seriously. At a local level when we do propose projects, there are some issues that would impinge on us. For example, if we want to hold a sporting event, we should have insurance, the costs, staffing. There are all these factors that prohibit us from holding the event which are beyond our control. In some circumstances, it works against us and there's no real way to effectively work around them.' - Michael

'When you are faced with [an adult saying] "That goal is unrealistic", sometimes it's not and sometimes they discount the fact that [young people] may be totally committed to achieving that goal. In my local district Student Representative Council, we gave the kids in our group an opportunity to say what they'd like to do, what kind of activity they'd like to run. They said, "Let's have a huge skate fest with art stalls and all these sort of things!" Then we went to the local youth development officer and he said "No, you can't do that. Why would you think you could do that? That's a bit silly. Try something small, like a band night". In the end, we all pulled together and said, "No, we'd really like to try this". We got help and we ended up being able to achieve that goal.' - Jessica



**Delegate:** Do you get frustrated with the apathy of a lot of your peers? Do a lot of them not care about what you are doing?

'Definitely. There are always going to be those who aren't interested and disagree. The issue is looking at *why*, what would be prohibiting them from agreeing with us. I guess again providing them with opportunities or taking away the stigma, if there is a stigma attached with what we do.' - Michael

'I had a lot of adults from the media, complaining about how young people are really apathetic and disengaged from the issues. [Young people] may be passionate about things but not wanting to go through the traditional channels that we set out. When I have any frustration with trying to get other young people to be a part of whatever it is that I'm doing, I try to look at it as something that we're doing wrong... maybe something we're doing doesn't really appeal to young people. The reason that we are all up here [today] is because some kinds of issue have struck a chord with us... We just have to find something that strikes a chord with other young people as well.' - Angelique

'There is a lack of education of the issues, the opportunities for young people to be involved. I think there's minimal education of democratic values in schools. If the democratic values of our society are pushed more in the education system, I think we would have a lot more involvement in the decision making of their society.' - Anton

'While there is accusation of apathy in youth, I do have to say ...there is apathy amongst adults as well. 99% of the population don't want to get involved. What we have to do is to concentrate on the people who do actually want to make a difference.' - Lucas

**Delegate:** What do you think are the serious issues facing your generation of young people? What should we, as youth workers, do to prevent these issues from happening or to improve services to address them?

'The thing about youth being disgusting... I think we have to get rid of this stigma.' - Abdul

'Young people are very diverse and youth services - youth have different needs, mental health, education - youth services have to be as dynamic as young people to cater for our needs.' - Michael

# Youth Panel - selected excerpts

'The other day I met a dedicated young person who works for a refuge in NSW and he was talking about the state of emergency accommodation for young people. He was discussing with me the number of refuges that are housing young people and how they are disintegrating... all these refuges are closing down. Young people are supposed to have accommodation, supposed to be looked after until they are 18 and independent - [but] a number of these cases have been dropped before the actual young person becomes 18. He gave an example of a young person whose case was just not looked at anymore once he reached the age of 16. Their case was not followed through.' - Lucas

'There's a lot of frustration driving the actions of young people. The popular media see us as being bad. Frustration and boredom, put together, create a lot of problems and a lot of the issues we see - smoking, drug abuse, alcohol - a lot has to do with boredom. There isn't enough for young people to do. There's the movies, mini-golf, bowling, yeah great. In some areas there's nowhere for kids to go in evenings, so they all hang around the parks and that's what people see. They've got nowhere to go in the evening to amuse themselves. That's a big problem that really needs to be addressed.' - Jessica

'The increased treatment of young people as consumers and they are targeting products and ads at increasingly younger and younger audiences. I think there's a major problem with that.' - Angelique

**Chair: What's your vision for youth development over the next 5 - 10 years? How would things be different from today?**

'When you talk about access, we haven't got a service to access like in metro areas. We are more spread out, making it a lot harder. Young people might be more reliant on their parents for transport and things like that.' - Rebecca

'In Europe, you'll find that many societies incorporate youth into many of their regular activities. It's a very family-orientated society. The adults and the young people will all come together and do activities together. That kind of connection would be extremely beneficial to Australian society, because at the moment there's an advanced degree of separation between children, adults and young adults - and it's not healthy and should be closer.' - Jessica



'In a perfect world, we would love it if young people knew about youth services, but realistically we have to take it back a step. We as young people and you guys as youth workers have to work collaboratively together ... I was at a conference in Bankstown and young people would say, "Hey we need to know what the services are that are available to us. We don't know about how we can get involved in volunteering, we don't know where the local youth centre is". Acknowledge that, and say maybe we need to do something about this. In 10 years time, I want to see young people being really active in their community. I want to see young people getting back into Scouts, getting back into Brownies, doing the extra-curricular activities. As times are changing, technology is coming with us and young people are becoming more disengaged from other opportunities, like sporting events and stuff. Ultimately, in a perfect world - in 10 years' time - I'd love to see young people really empowered to speak up and believe in themselves, to really get up there and voice how they feel about things. I think young people want to do it but they don't know how to go about it.' - Harry

'Outline the need for youth participation at a local and community level. On a national level, I'd like to see the re-establishment of the Minister for Youth by the Commonwealth Government.' - Michael

'In the literature we often see negative indicators [associated with young people]; I'd like to see positive indicators with youth development stuff. Also, I have a sister who is 16 years old. Her friends are having sex, experimenting with drugs, they have serious health issues. Young people these days are being made to grow up a lot quicker than what I remember when I was young... even though I am still young!' - Karen

# Evaluation



The event drew participants from a wide range of services and sectors, each of whom had different needs and levels of experience. While not every session met each individual's needs, the program was varied enough to provide some benefit to all those who attended. Feedback comments show that participants expected the Roundtable to go beyond networking and information sharing, that it would speak directly to leaders, and offer an opportunity to inform youth development policy. Delegates also requested that a Roundtable report be compiled and distributed, in order to consolidate the valuable discussion content.

## Key benefits

The participants valued the NSW Roundtable on Youth Development for the following reasons:

- The youth panel session - an opportunity to directly hear young people's views
- Networking - meeting other services and representatives, and increasing understanding of how others work, sharing ideas
- Interactive process - the group work, interactive activities, participation components

## What did you enjoy most about today?

"The youth panel session was a refreshing break from policy discussions, but still integral and useful for general outcomes of the day."

"Involvement of young people."

"Creative networking / workshop activities. Sharing ideas with others and learning."

"Groupwork and interactive activities."

## Impact on people's work

Most attendees felt that the Roundtable had significantly:

- increased their understanding of and information about various services
- created new networks and a space to share ideas
- provided them with useful resources to guide their work (frequent mentions of the NSW CAAH *Good Practice in Youth Development* and *Spinning the Web* reports available on the day)

## From today's Roundtable, what will help you in your work?

"Finding out what other organisations are doing."

"Strategies for youth participation."

"The Good Practice in Youth Development and Spinning the Web booklets."

Other comments included developing a better understanding of youth development, obtaining new strategies to help with planning (especially around participation and having an inclusive service), hearing young people's views.



# Evaluation

“Finding ways for youth participation in service delivery models.”

“If young people don’t want to be involved, I think there is something we can do as a service rather than thinking that the young people are apathetic. We need to involve young people no matter how busy we are.”

The Roundtable on Youth Development enlisted the support of the NSW Youth Advisory Committee and the NSW Commission for Children and Young People’s Reference Group and an Aboriginal community organisation in involving young people in the event. Although the final panel included young people from CALD backgrounds and regional NSW, some delegates recommended that youth panels should have increased representation from rural /remote and Aboriginal backgrounds, and those ‘less articulate’. There was also a suggestion that the Roundtable be taken to regional and remote communities.



# Appendix A

## Roundtable Attendees

1.	Lakin Agnew	Youth Development Officer	Regional Youth Development Officers Network (RYDON)
2.	Michael August	Service Development Co-ordinator	Office of Community Housing, NSW Dept of Housing
3.	David Bennett	Head	NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health (NSW CAAH)
4.	Elizabeth Callister	R/Director, Student Welfare	NSW Dept of Education & Training (DET)
5.	Evelyn Camilleri	Administration Officer	NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health (NSW CAAH)
6.	Far Chiang	Co-ordinator	NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health (NSW CAAH)
7.	Vanessa D'Souza	Executive Officer	NSW Association for Adolescent Health (NAAH)
8.	Lynda Fletcher	Manager, Regional Strategy, Southern NSW	NSW Dept of Community Services (DoCS)
9.	Rebecca Fowles	Youth Representative	NSW Youth Advisory Council (YAC)
10.	Nadia Garan	Mental Health Project Officer	NSW Transcultural Mental Health Centre (TMHC)
11.	John Gilbert	Community Worker, Children and Youth	Waverley Council
12.	Kylie Gleeson	Community Development Officer, Youth Services	Lane Cove Council
13.	Stuart Hearne	Acting Manager, Student Wellbeing Unit	NSW Dept of Education & Training (DET)
14.	Lucas Hejtmanek	Youth Representative	NSW Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)
15.	Elizabeth Hill	Senior Policy Officer	Crime Prevention Division, Attorney-General's Dept
16.	Fernando Hincapie	Projects Officer, Community Relations Service	NSW Community Relations Commission (CRC)
17.	Peter Hope	Community Project Officer - Youth	Fairfield City Council
18.	Anton Jurisevic	Youth Representative	NSW Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)
19.	Michael Kakakios	Policy Manager	Primary Health and Community Partnerships Branch, NSW Health
20.	Karen Legge	Secretary	NSW Youth Health Council (YHC)
21.	Kathy Livingstone	Co-ordinator	Bondi Beach OSHC Centre
22.	Karen McLaughlan	General Manager	WAYS Youth Services
23.	Fiona Miller	Team Leader Youth Services	Gosford City Council

# Appendix A

24. Kim Moritz	Executive Program Co-ordinator	Point Zero Youth Services
25. Karen Moses	Consultant	NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health (NSW CAAH)
26. Abdul Nahi	Youth Representative	NSW Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)
27. Alexandra Petersen	Project Officer	NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health (NSW CAAH)
28. Jessica Priebee	Youth Representative	NSW Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)
29. Jaclyn Rae	Come in Youth Resource Centre	Come In Youth Resource Centre
30. Stephen Robertson	Director, Policy	NSW Commission for Children & Young People (CCYP)
31. Lisa Ronneberg	Maitland Dungog Youth Development Officer	Samaritans Youth Services Maitland
32. Robyn Rosina	Clinical Director, Adolescent Health and Research	Justice Health
33. Renata Rustowski	Director, Youth Consultation Section	Youth Bureau, Department of Families, Community Services & Indigenous Affairs (FACSIA)
34. Lisa Simone	Director, Community Services & Programs	YWCA
35. Kim Spinks	Acting Manager, Arts Strategy Coordination	ARTS NSW
36. Catherine Spooner	Senior Research Fellow	Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC), University of NSW
37. Sonja Stewart	Executive Director, Communities Division	NSW Dept of Community Services (DoCS)
38. Kimberley Stuart	Trainee Policy Officer	NSW Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP)
39. Suraya Turk	Youth Representative	NSW Youth Advisory Council (YAC)
40. Angelique Vongsaya	Youth Representative	Multicultural Youth Network (MYN), Community Relations Commission
41. Alison Wannan	Executive Director, Community Access	Dept of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC)
42. Amanda Webster	Youth Services Coordinator	City of Sydney Council
43. Harry Whelan	Youth Representative	Multicultural Youth Network (MYN), Community Relations Commission
44. Peter Williams	Superintendent Commander	Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC)
45. Tony Wiseheart	Manager, Youth Strategy & Participation	NSW Dept of Community Services (DoCS)
46. Ken Yap	Projects Officer	NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health (NSW CAAH)
47. Michael Yuen	Youth Representative	NSW Youth Advisory Council (YAC)
48. Michaela Zappia	Project Officer	Youthsafe

