



NSW Youth Advisory Council

Annual Report 2008

2008



NSW YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

annual report

2008

From 1 January 2009, the Secretariat of the NSW Youth Advisory Council can be contacted at:

NSW Commission for Children and Young People
Level 2, 407 Elizabeth St
SURRY HILLS NSW 2010
Telephone: (02) 9286 7276
Fax: (02) 9286 7267
Email: kids@kids.nsw.gov.au
Website: www.youth.nsw.gov.au

ISSN 1446-9316



YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

NEW SOUTH WALES

The Hon Graham West MP
Minister for Juvenile Justice
Minister for Volunteering
Minister for Youth
Minister Assisting the Premier on Veterans' Affairs
Level 13
55 Hunter St
SYDNEY NSW 2000

2 March 2009

Dear Minister

It gives me great pleasure to present you with the 2008 New South Wales Youth Advisory Council Annual Report.

Council is committed to consulting with young people and increasing young people's participation in the community and Government. This commitment is reflected in the variety of Council activities throughout 2008.

On behalf of the Council I would like to thank you and your policy advisor Paul Nunnari for your support and commitment to working with young people.

I would also like to thank the former members of the Council for their work and for the role they have played in ensuring that the Council continues to provide a link between the young people of NSW and the NSW Government.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Amanda Scott'.

Amanda Scott
Chair

Role of the Council

The NSW Youth Advisory Council (“the Council”) was established in 1989, under the *Youth Advisory Council Act 1989* (“the Act”), to ensure that young people participate in the development of Government policies and programs which concern them. The Act defines young people as “persons who are of, or over, 12 years of age and under 25 years of age”.

The Council has the following statutory functions:

- to advise the Minister on the planning, development, integration and implementation of Government policies and programs concerning young persons;
- to consult with young persons, community groups and Government authorities on issues and policies concerning young persons;
- to monitor and evaluate legislation and Government policies and programs concerning young persons, and to recommend changes if required;
- to conduct forums, approved by the Minister, on issues of interest to young persons; and,
- to collect, analyse and provide the Minister with information on issues and policies concerning young persons.

Administration of the Council

The Hon Linda Burney, MP, Minister for Fair Trading, Minister for Youth and Minister for Volunteering administered the *Youth Advisory Council Act 1989* from April 2007 until September 2008.

In September 2008, the Hon Graham West, MP, was appointed Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister for Youth and Minister for Volunteering and now has responsibility for administering the *Youth Advisory Council Act*.

The Communities Division in the Department of Community Services provided secretariat support to the Council in 2008. Mr Eddie Greenaway, Acting Manager, Youth Strategy and Participation, Communities Division, Department of Community Services, was the Ex-officio member of the Council in 2008. Secretarial support was provided by Ms Anthea Wilson and Ms Peta McLean.

Membership of the Council

In 2008 the NSW Youth Advisory Council consisted of 12 part-time members appointed by the Minister. It received ex-officio and secretariat support from the Communities Division in the Department of Community Services.

Under the *Youth Advisory Council Act 1989*, at least half the Council’s 12 members must be under the age of 25 years at the time of their appointment.

Council members are appointed in their own right, rather than as representatives of organisations or groups. Generally, the Minister seeks a Council that is broadly representative of young people in NSW. In determining Council membership, the Minister seeks a balance from metropolitan, regional and rural areas; young men and women; Indigenous young people; young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds; and people with experience in a range of youth and community organisations.

Council members in 2008

Ms Amanda Scott (Chair)

Windang

Age: 22 years

Amanda is a Commerce student at the University of Wollongong and works as the Development Officer for Surf Life Saving Illawarra. Along with Surf Life Saving Amanda also volunteers with Youth off the Streets and Southern Youth and Family Services. Amanda attended the 2020 youth summit held in Canberra last year. Amanda was the *Wollongong Council's Young Citizen of the Year* and *Youth Lifesaver of the Year* in 2005. Amanda was a member of the NSW Youth Advisory Council during 2007. In 2008 Amanda represented the Council on the Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health Advisory Board, the Children and Young People's Health Priority Taskforce, and the Student Volunteering Program Reference Group.

Mr Mohammed Zaoud (Deputy Chair)

Auburn

Age: 21 years

Mohammed is a Commerce student at the University of NSW. He is the cofounder of the HSC Experience - a publication which reached every HSC student in NSW in 2008. Mohammed also voluntarily gives his time to talking with young people at schools in his local area to promote anti-racism. Mohammed was the School Captain of Homebush Boys High School in 2005 and the Vice President of the Student Representative Council. Mohammed has also been a member of the Auburn Youth Advisory Committee and was the *Auburn Young Citizen of the Year* in 2005. Mohammed was a member of the NSW Youth Advisory Council during 2007. In 2008, Mohammed represented the Council on the Student Volunteering Program Reference Group.

Ms Samantha Dawson**South Penrith Age: 21 years**

Samantha is currently studying for a Bachelor of Arts in Media and Communication with a double major in politics and sociology at the University of Sydney. She was the *Penrith Young Citizen of the Year* in 2006 and undertook a Community Harmony Project after attending the NSW Harmony Forum in Youth Week 2006. Samantha was also a member of Penrith MP, Karen Paluzzanno's 2004-05 Youth Committee. Samantha was a member of the NSW Youth Advisory Council in 2007. In 2008, Samantha represented the Council on the Youth Week in NSW Young People's Advisory Committee and the YAPA Youth Participation Project Steering Committee.

Mr Martin Drennan**Bronte Age: 22 years**

Martin is currently studying a Bachelor of Education at the Australian College of Physical Education and a Bachelor of Arts (Sociology) via online learning.

Martin works as a temp/contractor in the area of project administration for numerous sporting and community organisations. Martin is a board member of the NSW Youth Action and Policy Association and a member of the WAYS Youth Services management committee, a youth service operating in Martin's local area. Martin was an early school leaver, leaving school at the end of year ten. Martin is very involved in Surf Life Saving as a member of Bondi Surf Bathers Life Saving Club and involved in coordinating and facilitating a number of youth development programs. Martin was a member of the NSW Youth Advisory Council in 2007. In 2008, Martin represented the Council on the NSW Young Offenders Advisory Council and was the liaison officer to the NSW Student Representative Council.

Ms Tjirra Francis**Dorrigo Age: 19 years**

Tjirra is currently studying Nursing at Southern Cross University. Tjirra was a member of her school's Student Representative Council for six years and is currently a member of her local Aboriginal Land Council. Tjirra was awarded the *RSL Young Achievers Award* for 2007. In 2008 Tjirra represented the Council on the Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health Advisory Board.

Ms Krysten Gers**Broken Hill Age: 18 years**

Krysten has just completed her HSC at Broken Hill High. She is a young carer for her younger brother who has autism. She has been a member of her Student Representative Council for four years and was the Secretary in 2008. She is also a member of Young Carers Australia. Krysten is the Youth Ambassador for Headspace, a National Youth Mental Health Foundation.

Ms Helen Machalias

Armidale

Age: 20 years

Helen Machalias has a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre and English and works part-time as a journalist for Fairfax media. She has worked as a council youth officer, a project officer with Youthlinx, was runner up in the *Zonta Young Woman in Public Affairs Award* and received a *Young Voice of Achievement Award* from the NSW Department of Education and Training for her commitment to the creative arts. In 2008 she attended the *Brightest Young Minds Summit* and worked with the Inspire Foundation as a Cash for Comments Writer and Action Partner. In 2008, Helen has represented the Council on Youth Action and Policy Association Youth Participation Project Steering Committee.

Ms Maggie Malak

Epping

Age: 21 years

Maggie is studying her Certificate IV in Community Services at TAFE and has previously completed a Certificate II and III in Children's Services. Maggie is a member and media representative of Young Carers NSW, Carers Australia and is also a Camp Leader for Young Carer Camps. Maggie has been a young carer since the age of six. In 2008, Maggie represented the Council on the Children and Young People's Health Priority Taskforce.

Mr Matt Petherbridge

Weston

Age: 20 years

Matt is studying a Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing at the University of Newcastle. His passion for music and involvement with the Cessnock Youth Entertainment Committee led to recognition as the 2008 Cessnock LGA *Young Citizen of the Year*. In 2008, Matt represented the Council on the Indent Advisory Committee and the Youth Week in NSW Young People's Advisory Committee.

Mr Tim Quadrio

Eastwood

Age: 23 years

Tim is a student of politics and law at Macquarie University. In 2008 he wrote his honours thesis on 'public policy entrepreneurship' in Australia. Tim was a member of the 2020 Youth Summit, the British Council Advisory Panel and was a judge of one of the Eureka Prizes for science. He has been a member of the Executive Team of the Oaktree Foundation, President of the Hornsby District Student Representative Council, Member of the Australian National Youth Roundtable and was a founding member and then President of the Ryde Youth Council.

Mr Matthew Smith**Oatley****Age: 18 years**

Matthew has just completed his HSC at Caringbah High School. He is Chair of the Hurstville Youth Council of which he has been a member since 2005. Matthew was a member of the anti-racism forum run by Sutherland Shire and Kogarah Councils in 2007. Matthew was selected to work together with other young people on the Cronulla Peace Train project in 2006. Matthew is the Chair of the Youth Week in NSW Young People's Advisory Committee for 2009 and is the NSW member of the National Planning Group for Youth Week 2009. In 2008 Matthew represented the Council on the YAPA Youth Participation Project Steering Committee. Matthew has just started a Bachelor of Accounting at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Mr Michael Yuen**Parramatta****Age: 22 years**

Michael has completed a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Teaching majoring in Literature and Theological Studies at the Australian Catholic University. He is a member of the Parramatta Council's Youth Advisory Committee and Arts Advisory Committee. Michael was Parramatta Council's *Young Citizen of the Year* in 2004 and 2007. Michael was a member of the Youth Advisory Council in 2006 and 2007.

Work of the Council

In developing its Work Plan for 2008, the Council identified 7 issues of importance to young people in NSW. The Council gave priority to: Social Inclusion and Young Muslim People; Cyberbullying; Young Carers; and Young people and the Juvenile Justice System.

The Council reported to the Minister on the following seven issues:

1. Social Inclusion and Young Muslim People (particularly motivators and barriers to volunteering)
2. Cyberbullying
3. Young Carers
4. Young People and the Juvenile Justice System
5. Young Drivers
6. Youth Participation at a National Level
7. Youth Participation within the Planning of Better Futures

In 2008 the Council fulfilled its functions as specified under the Act through a range of activities. The Council hosted forums and youth consultations, attended seminars and conferences, and conducted research to become better informed on these issues to provide considered advice.

Members represented the NSW Youth Advisory Council on a number of Government and non-government committees and presented at various conferences, seminars and forums. Council also met with a range of people who play a key role in addressing the issues identified in the Work Plan.

1. Volunteering: participation & community engagement

In February 2008 the Minister for Youth, the Hon. Linda Burney, met with the Youth Advisory Council and asked for advice to the Government on ways in which the Government can work collectively to break down negative perceptions of young Muslim people. The Minister requested that the Council examine the issues around social inclusion and young Muslim people with particular reference to volunteering. The Minister asked the Council to consult with young people in South Western Sydney, such as Lakemba, Canterbury and Auburn.

In order to become better informed on this issue the Council took a number of steps. This included undertaking literature reviews of relevant information and inviting guest speakers to Council meetings.

The Council met with Kuranda Seyit, Executive Director of the Forum on Australia's Islamic Relations, who spoke to the Council on the intrinsic role of volunteerism in the practice of Islam. The Council also met with Scott Marshall, Diversity Officer at Surf Life Saving NSW, who spoke to the Council about the Surf Life Saving NSW program 'On The Same Wave' which encourages Muslim people to become involved in beach culture and life saving activities.

On Thursday 24 July the Council members undertook consultations with 245 young Muslim people in South West Sydney. Council members visited seven schools in this area, four public and three private. Each of these consultations involved discussing issues related to young Muslim people and volunteering.

Based on the outcomes of the consultation process, research undertaken and information collected from guest speakers the Council drafted a report for the Minister for Youth on this issue. In October 2008 the Council submitted their 'Report to the Minister for Youth on Social Inclusion and Young Muslim People'.

2. Cyberbullying

In February 2008 the Minister for Youth, the Hon. Linda Burney, met with the Youth Advisory Council and asked for advice to the Government on strategies to build awareness of cyberbullying and its affects on young people.

The Council took a number of steps in order to become better informed on the issue of cyberbullying. This included undertaking literature reviews of information that has direct relevance to their work on this issue and attending relevant conferences, events and forums.

In order to consult with young people on the issue of cyberbullying the Council organised a Cyberbullying Online Forum which was held from 6 October to 7 November 2008 and hosted on the Youth NSW website. A total of 65 legitimate users registered for the forum, with the majority of these being young people aged between 12 and 21 years old. 39 of those who registered were female and 24 male (another 2 did not identify their gender).

Based on the outcomes of the discussions on the Forum, research undertaken and attendance at various relevant events the Council drafted a report for the Minister for Youth on this issue. In December 2008 the Council submitted their 'Report to the Minister for Youth on Cyberbullying'.

3. Young Carers

The Council agreed to monitor, and where appropriate provide advice on strategies to better identify and support young carers who are studying in NSW. In order to complete this item of the Work Plan the Council undertook a number of actions, including investigating the available research and statistics on young carers, attending relevant events, inviting a guest speaker to a Council meeting and organising consultations with young carers.

As part of its work the Council undertook an extensive literature review of information relating to young carers in NSW, Australia and internationally. Most important in informing the work of the Council was *Reading, Writing and Responsibility: Young Carers and Education*, a report prepared by the Institute of Child Protection Studies in 2006 which specifically examined young carers and their participation in the education system in Australia.

In order to become better informed on the issue the Council invited Ms Ann-Marie Taylor from Carers NSW to their September meeting. Ms Taylor provided the Council with an overview of the services provided to young carers by Carers NSW, some background on young carers in the community, and advice on how best to approach undertaking consultations with young carers.

A number of Council members also participated in conferences, forums and workshops which further enhanced the council's understanding of the issues relating to young carers.

In collaboration with the Young Carers Team at Carers NSW the Council attempted to undertake face-to-face consultations with young carers in a variety of locations around NSW. The lack of young carer attendance at the face-to-face consultations organised indicated to the Council that they would need to utilise different strategies to consult with this group, including online consultations, surveys and attending Carers NSW organised young carer activities.

In 2008 the Council has been fortunate in having two members who are young carers. These members have provided invaluable personal contributions and information on being a young carer, and they are also connected with other young carers in their local community. They have also been able to bring to the Council their knowledge and experience gained from their connections with other young carers in their local communities and from their broader young carer networks.

Based on their research and literature reviews as well as advice from Carers NSW and the two young carers on the Council a report for the Minister was drafted on this issue. In December 2008 the Council submitted their 'Report for the Minister on Young Carers and Education'.

4. Young People and the Juvenile Justice System

The Council undertook to monitor, and where appropriate to provide advice to the Government on strategies to prevent young people from re-offending.

In particular:

1. The Council undertook to become better informed on juvenile justice issues, particularly in relation to young people who re-offend and the impacts to young people of changes made to Section 22a of the Bail Act (*Bail Amendment Bill 2007*)
2. The Council accepted the recommendation of the 2007 Council that it consult with a group of young people living in a Juvenile Justice centre to better understand the issues they face.

The Council took a number of steps in order to become better informed on juvenile justice issues, particularly in relation to young people who re-offend. This included undertaking literature reviews of information that has direct relevance to young people and the juvenile justice system and inviting guest speakers to Council meetings.

The Council met with Ms Valda Ruis, Acting Deputy Director General, Department of Juvenile Justice, who provided an overview of the Department's operations and functions and answered members questions. The Council also met with Ms Paula Black, Acting Centre Manager, Juniperina Juvenile Justice Centre, who helped prepare the Council for its upcoming consultations with young people in Juvenile Justice Centres.

On 28 and 29 October 2008 Council undertook consultations in three Juvenile Justice Centres, Orana Juvenile Justice Centre (Dubbo), Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre (Gosford) and Juniperina Juvenile Justice Centre (Lidcombe). The Council chose these three centres to ensure that it consulted with a cross-section of the Juvenile Justice population, including young men and women and young people from regional and rural areas.

The Council consulted with a total of 49 young people in Juvenile Justice Centres. This group was made up of 24 females and 25 males and ranged in age from 13 to 18 years old.

Based on the outcomes of the consultation process, research undertaken and information collected from guest speakers the Council drafted a report for the Minister for Youth on this issue. In December 2008 the Council submitted their 'Report to the Minister for Youth on Young People and the Juvenile Justice System'.

In August 2008 the Minister for Youth, the Hon. Linda Burney MP invited the Council to appoint a representative to the Young Offenders Advisory Council (YOAC).

The purpose of the YOAC is to provide independent advice to the Attorney General and Minister for Juvenile Justice on issues, policies and legislation likely to impact on the operations of the juvenile justice system and young offenders and to monitor and review issues, trends and research on strategies for reducing re-offending.

Representation on this panel has the potential to further enhance the Council's understanding of juvenile justice and its affects on young people over time. The Council appointed Martin Drennan as its representative for 2008. The Council will continue to be represented on this Reference Group during 2009.

5. Young Drivers

On the recommendation of the 2007 Council, the 2008 Council included Young Drivers as part of their Work Plan. The Council committed to monitoring, and where appropriate providing advice on issues facing young drivers, particularly the new conditions for L and P plate drivers (introduced in July 2007). The Council also accepted the 2007 Council's recommendation that it monitor the outcomes of the Staysafe Committee Inquiry.

On 18 May 2008 the Executive Officer provided the Council with an update on the Staysafe Committee Inquiry, informing the Council that Public hearings have been held 19 and 20 February with the remaining scheduled for 27 May 2008.

On 25 July 2008 the Executive Officer provided the Council with a further update on the Staysafe Committee Inquiry, informing the Council that the final public hearings were held 27 May and 23 June 2008.

At the 4 December 2008 meeting the Council considered the Staysafe Committee Inquiry Report on Young Driver Safety and Education. The Council considered a number of Recommendations from the report which are relevant to young drivers.

6. Youth Participation at a National Level

The Council were provided with and reviewed '*The Secret Life of the National Youth Roundtable*' to assist in informing their work on this issue.

On 12 & 13 April 2008, Amanda Scott and Tim Quadrio attended the 2020 Youth Summit. They provided the Council with a report on the outcomes of the 2020 Youth Summit.

On 18 May 2008 Ms Gabrielle Burrell from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations attended the Council meeting and sought the Council's views on the proposed role, functions and operation of the Australian Youth Forum. These views were provided to the Australian Government as a contribution to the development of the Australian Youth Forum model and approach.

On 2 October Amanda Scott attended the launch of the Australian Youth Forum in Adelaide. Amanda provided the Council with an overview of the functions and role of the Australian Youth Forum and the AYF Steering Committee.

7. Youth Participation in the Planning of Better Futures

In June 2008 Casey Lovelock, Assistant Project Officer, Communities Division, briefed the council on the Department of Community Services managed Better Futures Program and asked for the Council's feedback on various aspects of the program.

Council were interested in ensuring young people were involved in the planning and development of the Better Futures Program and its projects.

The Council discussed and agreed to incorporate Better Futures into their Work Plan so that they could continue to monitor youth participation within the planning and evaluation of the program.

Subcommittees

Youth Week in NSW Young People's Advisory Committee

The NSW Youth Week Young People's Advisory Committee, is a subcommittee of the NSW Youth Advisory Council which advises the Government on the co-ordination of Youth Week in NSW.

Youth Week in NSW has developed from a small NSW Government initiative in 1989 involving hundreds of young people in a few local events and activities in metropolitan Sydney, into over 900 local events and activities across the state.

In Youth Week 2008, approximately 4,000 young people were involved in the planning and management of more than 900 local level activities and events. More than 220,000 young people participated in these events.

Youth Week in NSW provides young people throughout the state, no matter where they live, with an opportunity to participate in their communities through events, programs, forums and debates. It is organised by young people, for young people in local communities across the state.

Meetings with Government Ministers

In 2008 the Council met with the Hon. Linda Burney, MP, who was Minister for Youth, Minister for Fair Trading and Minister for Volunteering until September 2008. The Council also met with the Hon. Graham West, MP, who was appointed Minister for Juvenile Justice, Minister for Youth and Minister for Volunteering in September 2008.

Council meetings

In 2008 the Council met on 28 & 29 February, 6 April, 18 May, 29 June, 25 July, 31 August, 29 September, 29 October and 4 December.

Council met with:

Sonja Stewart	Executive Director, Communities Division, Department of Community Services
Rey Reodica	Executive Officer, Youth Action and Policy Association (YAPA)
Kuranda Seyit	Executive Director, Forum on Australia's Islamic Relations
Gabrielle Burrell	Director Youth Consultation, Youth Bureau, Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
Valda Ruisis	Acting Deputy Director General, Department of Juvenile Justice
Scott Marshall	Diversity Officer, Surf Life Saving NSW
Anne-Marie Taylor	Carers NSW
Paula Black	Acting Centre Manager, Juniperina Juvenile Justice Centre
Paul Murphy	Director, Strategy and Planning, Communities Division, Department of Community Services
Casey Lovelock	Assistant Project Officer, Communities Division, Department of Community Services

Committees

Council was represented on the following committees in 2008:

- National Planning Group for Youth Week 2009
- Youth Week in NSW Young People's Advisory Committee (YPAC)
- Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health Advisory Board (CAAH)
- NSW State Student Representative Council (SRC)
- YAPA Youth Participation Project Steering Committee
- Indent Advisory Committee
- Children and Young People's Health Priority Taskforce
- Student Volunteering Program Reference Group
- Young Offenders Advisory Council

Conferences, seminars and forums

Council members presented at the following conferences, seminars and forums:

- Money Stuff Youth Forum for Fair Trading Week
- Young People's Participation Seminar, NSW Commission for Children and Young People
- Community Relations Commission (CRC) Youth Leaders Day
- Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health GP Resource Kit Launch
- Public Hearing – Better Support for Carers, House of Representatives Family, Community, Housing and Youth Committee

Council members attended the following conferences, seminars, forums and meetings:

- Diversity and the Volunteer Workforce
- Warming Up Cyberia – Young people and technology
- 2020 Youth Summit
- Supporting Young People in Volunteering and Other Community Participation Projects
- Tobacco Forum
- Can You Hear Me? Anti-Bullying Forum Theatre
- Growing the Volunteer Workforce in Developing Regional and Rural Communities
- National Volunteering Conference 2008
- Cyber Friendly Student Summit
- Launch of the Australian Youth Forum
- NSW Youth Action and Policy Association Rural Issues Forum
- Bring It! Young Carers Forum 2008

Training

Council members undertook the following training:

- Facilitation Skills
- Media



NSW Youth Advisory Council

NSW Commission for Children and Young People

Level 2, 407 Elizabeth St

SURRY HILLS NSW 2010

Telephone: (02) 9286 7276

Fax: (02) 9286 7267

Email: kids@kids.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.youth.nsw.gov.au