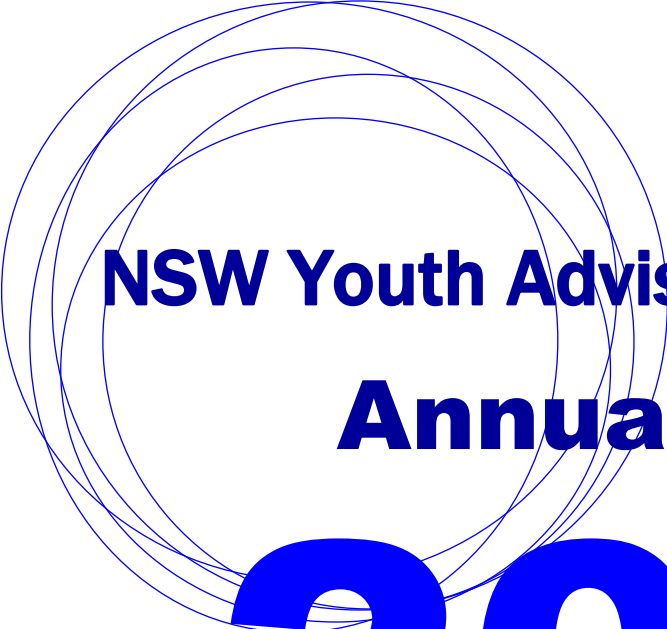




**NSW Youth Advisory Council
Annual Report**

2011



NSW Youth Advisory Council Annual Report

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YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

NEW SOUTH WALES

The Hon. Victor Dominello MP
Minister for Citizenship and Communities
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Minister

It gives me great pleasure to present you with the 2011 NSW Youth Advisory Council Annual Report.

The Council has carried out its functions in accordance with the *Youth Advisory Council Act 1989*. This is reflected in the variety of Council activities throughout 2011.

I would 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

Emma Byrne
Chair

Role of the Council

The NSW Youth Advisory Council was established in 1989, under the *Youth Advisory Council Act 1989*, to ensure that young people participate in the development of Government policies and programs that 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 people
- to consult with young persons, community groups and Government authorities on issues and policies concerning young people
- to monitor and evaluate legislation and Government policies and programs concerning young people, and to recommend changes if required
- to conduct forums, approved by the Minister, on issues of interest to young people
- to collect, analyse and provide the Minister with information on issues and policies concerning young people.

Administration of the Council

The Hon Peter Primrose, MLC, former Minister for Youth, administered the *Youth Advisory Council Act 1989* during the term of this Council from January 2011 to March 2011.

In April 2011, the Hon Victor Dominello, MP, was appointed Minister for Citizenship, Communities and Aboriginal Affairs. Minister Dominello administered the *Youth Advisory Council Act 1989* during the term of this Council from April 2011 to December 2011.

During 2011, administrative responsibility for the Council was held by the Office of Communities in the Department of Education and Communities. Secretariat support was provided by Ms Cat Wright from January 2011 to June 2011 and Ms Anthea Wilson from June 2011 to December 2011.

Membership of the Council

In 2011 the NSW Youth Advisory Council consisted of 12 part-time members appointed by the Minister.

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. In 2011 all members of the Council were under the age of 25 years.

Council members are appointed in their own right, rather than as representatives of organisations or groups. The Minister seeks a Council that

is broadly representative of young people in NSW. In determining 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 2011

Mr Robert Barrie	Ambarvale	Age: 18 years
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Robert completed his Higher School Certificate at Thomas Reddall High School in Campbelltown in 2011. He has been active in his school community through a range of projects including peer support and mediation, the school's Parents and Community Committee and the NSW Student Representative Council (2009). Robert also contributes to the work of community organisations such as the Macarthur Youth Solutions Youth Advisory Group. Robert was involved with the NSW Ministerial Round Table on Cyber-Bullying, and was the Youth Member of Parliament for Wollondilly as part of the YMCA Youth Parliament.

Mr Dev Bhutani	Kellyville	Age: 20 years
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Dev is a second year Business and Law student at the University of Technology Sydney and works part-time for a law firm. Dev is currently United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) Australia's Youth Ambassador and was on the 2009 UNICEF Youth Advisory Committee. He is also Vice-President (Conferences) on the Executive of the United Nations Youth Association of NSW. In 2010, Dev was involved in the 'Count Me In!' program, travelling in regional NSW prior to the federal election, encouraging young people to enrol and vote.

Ms Emma Byrne	Uranquity	Age: 21 years
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Emma completed a Bachelor of International and Global Studies at the University of Sydney with a major in Government and International Relations. In 2011 Emma represented Australia at the Harvard International Model United Nations (UN) Competition in Boston. In October 2010, Emma was a delegate to the National Youth Summit coordinated by the UN Youth Association. In 2011, she was named the Wagga Wagga Young Citizen of the Year. In addition to being Chair of the NSW Youth Advisory Council, Emma is a member of the NSW Youth Health Policy Advisory Group, the NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health's Advisory Board, and was a keynote speaker at the recent Australian & New Zealand Adolescent Health Conference. Emma was Chair of the NSW Youth Advisory Council in 2011.

Mr Mitchell Dahlstrom	Moree	Age: 19 years
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Mitchell studied for a Bachelor of Social Science by distance education at Southern Cross University in 2011. He now works as the Community Engagement Officer with the Aboriginal Employment Strategy, North West NSW office in Moree. Mitchell is also the Publicity Officer for the Moree

Plains Shire Youth Council, Chairperson of the Community Drug Action Team, Treasurer of the Men's Shed and a Member of the Relay for Life Committee. In addition, Mitchell actively contributes to the work of a number of committees, including the Aboriginal Interagency, Crime Prevention Committee, Youth Interagency, Barwon Local Area Command Aboriginal Consultative Committee and Aboriginal Education Consultative Group.

Mr Mitchell Harland Dubbo Age: 18 years
Mitchell completed his Higher School Certificate in 2010 at Dubbo College Senior Campus. He was previously a member of the Dubbo City Youth Council and maintained an active position on the Student Representative Council throughout his schooling life. He is currently a member of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW and is also a Youth Ambassador for the Ministry for Peace Australia. Mitchell has been a member of the NSW Youth Week Young People's Advisory Committee, the YMCA Youth Parliament. Mitchell has also participated in charity events such as Relay for Life, Shave for a Cure and Movember.

Amna Karra-Hassan Auburn Age: 23 years
Amna is currently studying for a Masters in Islamic Studies at Charles Sturt University and the Islamic Sciences Research Academy. Amna is committed to increasing the self-esteem and confidence of young people through sport, espousing principles of mutual respect, commitment and determination. Amna is the co-founder of the Auburn Tigers Women's Aussie Rules football team which was awarded the Mayoral Encouragement Award at the 2011 Sports Awards. In 2011, Amna was named Youth of the Year at the Mission of Hope, Australian Muslim Achievement Awards.

Ms Jennifer Iloski Paddington Age: 23 years
Jennifer was a third year Social Science & Innovation Management student at the University of NSW. In 2011 she has worked as a peer educator and currently works as a disability support worker. Jennifer's previous experience of homelessness has helped her to see ways to improve access to opportunities for young people. This year, she worked with Bondi Youth Accommodation to launch the Green Light Movement, a learn-to-drive program for young people who don't have the family support to learn how to drive.

Sarah Kerkham Malua Bay Age: 17 years
Sarah was a year 11 student at Batemans Bay High School in 2011. She volunteers as a reader to assist young and older students at her school. Sarah is a member of the Batemans Bay High School Senior Executive Council and holds the position of Secretary and Communications Officer. She is also a member of the Eurobodalla Shire Youth Council which has involved her in many community events. Sarah was selected to attend the 2010 Rotary Youth Program of Enrichment and the Model United Nations Assembly in 2011 for her area.

Mr Ricky Leong	Ryde	Age: 21 years
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Ricky is currently studying a Bachelor of Commerce at the University of Sydney and works for the NSW Department of Finance and Services. Ricky has been a member of the NSW Youth Week Young People's Advisory Committee, Ryde Youth Council and Ryde Youth Week Working Council. He has also participated in the West Ryde Redevelopment Committee and was the 2008 Ryde representative on the YMCA Youth Parliament. Ricky's volunteering efforts have resulted in him receiving a City of Ryde Volunteer Recognition award. Ricky is also involved in his university community through the United Nations Society.

Ms Stephanie Nehme	Blacktown	Age: 18 years
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Stephanie completed first year of a Bachelor of Business at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) in 2011. Stephanie is also employed at Price Waterhouse Coopers Accounting Firm as a Cadet. She is actively involved in her local council, Blacktown Youth Advisory Sub-Committee, and her university. In 2011 was elected to the UTS Students' Association as Haymarket Convenor. Stephanie was Deputy Chair of the NSW Youth Advisory Council in 2011.

Ms Maydina Penrith	Griffith	Age: 23 years
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Maydina is the first National Indigenous Football Coordinator for Football Federation Australia, which oversees and supports all Indigenous football programs in Australia. Maydina has been active in the NSW and national youth-led community for over nine years through her involvement in the Creative Riverina Youth Team, The Foundation for Young Australians, NSW Youth Participation Action Committee and Griffith Youth Advisory Board.

Mohamed Taha	Lidcombe	Age: 20 years
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Mohamed was a third year Communications and Law student at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) in 2011, he also works for the Australian Football League (AFL) as a Multicultural Development Officer to assist migrant and refugee communities access AFL. He is the President of the UTS Muslim Society and regularly writes for Reportage Online, a magazine of the Australian Centre for Independent Journalism. He also works for the Together for Humanity Foundation where he speaks at schools alongside Jewish, Christian, Atheist and Indigenous presenters promoting inter-religious understanding and fostering positive experiences of diversity. He is the producer and co-host of a community youth radio program called the Y Factor. Mohamed was named 2011 Auburn Young Citizen of the Year.

Ex-officio member

Ms Jacki Hayes, Director, Policy, Communities NSW acted as Ex-officio member of the Council in January 2011 and Mr Stephen Robertson, Sydney Regional Co-ordinator, Communities NSW acted as Ex-officio member of the Council in February 2011.

Mr Tony Wiseheart, Manager, Youth Strategy and Participation, Office of Communities, Department of Education and Communities was the Ex-officio member of the Council from April 2011 to December 2011.

Work of the Council

Under the *Youth Advisory Council Act 1989*, the key functions of the Council are to provide advice to the Minister responsible for Youth Affairs on issues affecting young people in NSW and to consult with young people and conduct forums on issues of interest to young people.

In 2011 the Council consulted with young people on a range of youth issues through small group discussions and a Facebook forum. The Council hosted a series of youth consultations with more than 300 young people in the Riverina, Illawarra and Western Sydney regions. These consultations involved specific groups of young people including young people who have experienced homelessness, young people from rural and regional areas and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Council members met with key officials to increase their understanding of youth related policies and initiatives. Council members also undertook research on key youth related issues.

Council members attended and presented at various seminars and conferences, and members also represented the Council on a number of Government and non-government committees.

The Council reported to the Minister on four issues.

1. Young People's Engagement and Participation in the Community, their Local Council and with the NSW Government

The Minister asked the Council to provide advice on strategies to increase young people's engagement and participation in their community, with their local Council and with the NSW Government.

To inform its work, the Council consulted with a broad cross-section of young people, particularly those who may not otherwise have had a say, as part of a process to identify opportunities to develop and support more effective youth participation in the community and with government.

The Council conducted a series of 14 consultations with more than 300 young people from Griffith, Temora, Ariah Park and Wagga; young people from Riverina TAFE; in Wagga Juvenile Justice Centre; young Muslim people in Western Sydney; the Community Relations Commission's Multicultural Youth Network; young people in the Illawarra who had experienced homelessness and young people from local government youth advisory councils in Wagga and Fairfield. The Council also hosted a forum on Facebook.

The young people consulted identified a wide range of matters which inhibited their participation in the community and with government.

In summary:

- Many young people either lack opportunities to participate or are unaware of opportunities to participate in the community and with government.
- Many young people are unaware of existing information, programs and networks or where and how to access information, programs and networks which are not easily accessible through the internet.
- Many young people have limited access to transport, because of where they live, or the cost of transport, which can limit the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities.
- The restrictions placed on some transport concessions for young people in education and training can limit their capacity to participate in the community in the evenings and on weekends.
- Some young people were reluctant to get more involved in the community as some community activities are not supported across the whole community. For example, environmental activities may have a political dimension or work in relation to mental health can have a stigma attached, and these young people were concerned about the risk to personal safety and disapproval of peers and others from engaging in these types of community activities.
- Many young people felt that they were not valued by the broader community - that there is a lack of respect for, and trust of, young people and what they can and do contribute to the community.
 - consistent with this view, some young people felt they are taken for granted and that there is little recognition of what they currently contribute and that volunteer awards programs only recognise young people's volunteering in traditional adult-run organisations.
- For many young people under 16 years, parental restrictions, or the need for parental approval and support to participate in the community and in community activities was a barrier.
- For some young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, the obligations owed to parents, extended family and their cultural or religious community can limit, and in some cases prevent, their engagement with the wider community.
- Few communities have youth-friendly spaces or youth centres where young people can meet without being asked to move on.
- With regard to volunteering, comments included that:
 - many young people are time poor, and because of work and study commitments are not able to volunteer when the volunteer-engaging organisations need volunteers.

- some volunteer-engaging organisations only want to engage young people on menial tasks, such as door-knocking, and don't want them to fully participate in the organisation.
- restricting young people to lesser roles in volunteer-engaging organisations was often justified in terms of young people not having appropriate qualifications or experience.

The young people consulted in Wagga Juvenile Justice Centre identified additional barriers:

- Feeling more comfortable and safer in the Juvenile Justice Centre than back in their community – a feeling which can be interpreted as akin to institutionalisation.
- Difficulty fitting back into the community, particularly if the police and community members expect them to reoffend.
- Poor literacy and numeracy skills which make it difficult to obtain employment.

The young people consulted also identified a number of ways they thought the Government could encourage young people's participation in the community. Young people's suggestions included:

- Appealing to young people's interests by focusing on skills development and career development opportunities which can arise from participation.
- Better promotion, advertising and marketing of opportunities for young people to participate in their local community, as many young people are unaware of opportunities to participate.
- Better informing parents and carers of the benefits of young people's participation in the community as some young people indicated that they were required to focus on their studies rather than get involved in other activities.
- Encouraging local government to better engage with young people, as many young people felt their Council did not want to involve them, even when the matter directly concerns them.
- Support for the development of more easily accessible youth friendly and/or youth specific facilities.

The broad consensus from the consultations was that young people want to be involved and they want to feel connected to and supported by their community.

Youth Engagement and Participation in Local Communities

Council Members reviewed the issues raised by young people through the consultation process and their suggestions on how the Government could encourage young people's participation in the community. The information

gathered was used to inform the Council's advice to the Minister regarding strategies to improve young people's participation in their local communities.

Youth Engagement and Participation with Local Government

The Youth Advisory Council was concerned about the opportunities available for young people to engage with, and be involved in local level decisions which affect them.

As part of the Government's funding of Youth Week in NSW, all 152 local Councils agree to engage with young people in the development and running of Youth Week events and activities. The Youth Advisory Council has identified this as an opportunity for local government to build a relationship so that young people can have ongoing involvement in local government level decision making which affects them.

Youth Engagement and Participation with NSW Government Agencies

Successive NSW Governments have developed a whole-of-Government youth policy or strategy. Council identified the value in building on the Government's NSW 2021 Plan to better inform young people of what Government provides and to ensure that Government agencies implement the Government's commitments to youth engagement and youth participation.

2. Using Digital Technology to Engage with Young People

The Council reported to the Minister on how the Government uses digital mediums, particularly the Youth.NSW website to engage with young people.

Mr Bruce Williams, Senior Community Education Officer, Media and Communications, Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP), attended the Council's 29 April 2011 meeting and briefed the Council on CCYP's work on digital engagement with young people.

In June, two Council members attended CCYP's *Youth Matters - Online engagement with young people* Planning Workshop designed to inform the development of a Government youth digital engagement strategy.

Further to this workshop, Mr Gregor Macfie, Director, Policy and Research, CCYP attended the Council's 29 September 2011 meeting to provide an updated briefing on the development of the strategy.

CCYP subsequently invited the Council to join the Steering Committee being established to guide the development of the project.

3. Holistic Approach to Health- Focus on Dental Health

On 29 April 2011 Mr Peter List, Project Officer, Centre for Oral Health Strategy, NSW Health, briefed the Council on projects and policies relating to young people's dental health including oral health problems and on public and private services available to young people. He briefed the Council on

- the NSW Child Dental Health Survey

- NSW Oral Health Strategic Directions 2011 – 2020, and
- Healthy Mouths Healthy Lives – Australia’s National Oral Health Plan 2004 – 2013

He also briefed the Council on specific programs for young people:

- Homeless and ‘at risk’ youth (HARY) project – a pilot partnerships project between two Youth Health Services and an Oral Health Service.
- National Dental Foundation Volunteer Events – targeting highly disadvantaged young people referred through youth services.
- Medicare Teen Dental Plan – a means tested annual voucher available to the parents/guardians of 12 to 17 year olds for use at private or public dental clinics.

The Council provided advice to the Minister for Healthy Lifestyles through the Minister for Citizenship and Communities on opportunities for particular groups of young people to access dental health services.

The Minister for Healthy Lifestyles advised the Council of:

- the establishment of the NSW Dental Health Taskforce and its particular interest in the improvement of oral health outcomes and access to dental services for children and young people in ‘out of home’ care and
- that the Centre for Oral Health Strategy will liaise with the Council regarding future initiatives targeting the oral health needs of young people.

4. Holistic Approach to Health- Focus on Mental Health

The Council supported the Government’s commitment to establishing a Mental Health Commission and provided input on the aspects related to young people.

Advice on other Youth Related Issues

Aboriginal Child, Adolescent and Family Social Emotional and Wellbeing Policy.

NSW Health, Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Programs, sought the Council’s input on the draft *Aboriginal Child, Adolescent and Family Social Emotional and Wellbeing Policy*. The Council provided comments on the draft policy, highlighting the importance of engaging young Aboriginal people in its development.

Young Driver Issues

The Minister sought the Council’s advice on issues related to the licensing of young drivers. The Council provided advice building on the 2010 Council’s work on young drivers.

NSW Volunteering Strategy

The Volunteering Unit, Office of Communities, Department of Education and Communities sought the Council's input in the development of the draft NSW Volunteering Strategy. The Council provided feedback on the draft Strategy and agreed to seek young people's views on barriers to young people volunteering as part of its consultation on barriers to youth participation.

Juvenile Justice

The Council was asked by representatives from Juvenile Justice NSW to provide input into a Departmental consultation on preventing youth crime, managing ex-offenders and preventing crime escalation. The Council highlighted the importance of engaging young people in detention on this issue.

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. It advises the Government on the coordination of Youth Week in NSW.

Youth Week in NSW is a joint project with all 152 local government Councils. In 2011 more than 4,350 young people were involved in the planning and management of more than 800 events and activities. Almost 100,000 young people participated in the activities and events.

Youth Week focuses community attention on young people and issues which are important to them. Young people throughout the State participate in activities and events, ranging from forums and debates to art exhibitions and sporting activities.

Meetings with Ministers

The Council met with the Hon Peter Primrose, MLC, Minister for Small Business, Minister for Volunteering, Minister for Youth and Minister Assisting the Premier on Veterans' Affairs. The Council also met with the Hon Victor Dominello, MP, Minister for Citizenship and Communities, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

Council Meetings

In 2011 the Council met on eight occasions: 28 January; 6 March; 29 April; 8 June; 18 August; 29 September; 30 October and 25 November. The Council met with:

Name	Title
Reynato Reodica	Chief Executive, Youth Action and Policy Association NSW
Peter List	Project Officer, Centre for Oral Health Strategy, NSW Health

Bruce Williams	Senior Community Education Officer, Media and Communications, NSW Commission for Children and Young People
Jacki Hayes	Director, Policy, Office of Communities, Department of Education and Communities
Ian Archer-Wright	Senior Project Manager, Volunteering Unit, Office of Communities, Department of Education and Communities
Corinne Fagueret	Senior Project Officer, Youth Strategy and Participation, Office of Communities, Department of Education and Communities
Natasa Mitic	Senior Policy and Research Officer, Division of Local Government, Department of Premier and Cabinet
Gregor Macfie,	Director, Policy and Research, NSW Commission for Children and Young People
John Hubby	Chief Executive, Juvenile Justice NSW, Department of Attorney-General and Justice
Kay Elphick	Director, Policy and Government Relations, Juvenile Justice NSW

Committees

The Council was represented on the following committees in 2011:

- Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health Advisory Board
- NSW Student Representative Council
- Road Safety Advisory Council
- Online Youth Engagement Project Steering Group
- NSW Fair Trading Money Stuff Competition Judging Panel
- Youth Week in NSW Young People's Advisory Committee

Conferences, Seminars, Forums and Meetings

Council members attended and/or presented and/or facilitated at the following conferences, seminars, forums and meetings:

- Multicultural Youth Network, Networking Evening, 8 March 2011
- Foundation for Young Australians, Indigenous Youth Leadership Initiative Consultation, 8 June 2011
- NSW Government Online Youth Engagement Project, Planning Workshop, 15 June 2011
- 2011 State Student Representative Council Conference, 2-5 August 2011
- Youth Health 2011 Conference, 9-11 November 2011
- Award Ceremony, Transcultural Mental Health Centre TranSCRIBE 2011 Young Writers' Competition, 10 November 2011
- NSW Government Online Youth Engagement Project, Steering Group Meeting, 17 November 2011
- NSW Youth Council Conference, 25-27 November 2011

- NSW Child Protection and Wellbeing Interagency Conference, 29-30 November 2011
- Sydney Region Student Representative Council Conference, 8 December 2011
- Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Youth in Transition Project Meeting, 12 December 2011

Training

Council members undertook the following training:

- Facilitation Skills
- Media Skills



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