



**NSW Youth Advisory Council
Annual Report 2012**

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The Secretariat of the NSW Youth Advisory Council can be contacted at:

Office of Communities

Level 11, 323 Castlereagh Street

Haymarket NSW 2000

Telephone: (02) 8762 9844

Email: yac@yac.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.youth.nsw.gov.au



**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 2012 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 2012.

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

Ms Astha Rajvanshi
Chair
NSW Youth Advisory Council

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 Victor Dominello, MP, Minister for Citizenship and Communities and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs administered the *Youth Advisory Council Act 1989* from January 2012 to December 2012.

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 Anthea Wilson.

Membership of the Council

In 2012 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 2012 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 2012

Mr Robert Barrie Ambarvale Age: 19 years

In 2012 Robert was in his first year as a Business and Law student at the University of Western Sydney. Robert was active in his school community at Thomas Reddall High School through projects including peer support and mediation, the Parents and Community Committee and the NSW Student Representative Council in 2009. Robert was also involved in community activities including the Macarthur Youth Solutions Youth Advisory Group and Rotary youth camps. Robert participated in the NSW Ministerial Round Table on Cyber-Bullying, was the YMCA Youth Parliament Member Wollondilly and now works on the organising committee. Robert was the Master of Ceremonies for the 2012 Campbelltown Youth Forum.

Mr Dev Bhutani Kellyville Age: 21 years

In 2012 Dev was a third year Business and Law student at the University of Technology Sydney and worked part-time for a law firm. He was also Vice-President (Conferences) of the United Nations Youth Association of NSW. Dev was UNICEF Australia's Youth Ambassador in 2011 and was on the 2009 UNICEF Youth Advisory Committee. 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. Dev was Deputy Chair of the Youth Advisory Council in 2012.

Mr Rhett Burraston Airs Age: 21 years

In 2012 Rhett was working part-time as an Aboriginal youth worker for Campbelltown Family Support Services. He has previously worked casually for WorkVentures and NSW Sport and Recreation as a casual sports instructor. He has been a member of various committees in his local area advising on youth and Aboriginal issues. In 2010 Rhett walked the Kokoda Track as part of his participation in the Jobs Australia Foundation's Aboriginal Youth Leadership Program. Rhett has participated in the Max Potential Program and Oxfam Australia's Indigenous Youth Leadership Program: ChangeCourse. He also participated in the National Congress of Australia's First Peoples Party Youth Forum on Constitutional Recognition. Rhett is a young parent with a 19 month old daughter and a six year old step daughter.

Ms Emma Byrne Uranquity Age: 22 years

Emma commenced a Bachelor of Laws degree in 2012 and worked part-time as the Project Coordinator for *Champions ACT* a youth health promotion campaign. Emma has a Bachelor of International and Global Studies from the University of Sydney. Emma was the Wagga Wagga Young Citizen of the Year in 2009 and represented Australia at the Harvard International Model United Nations (UN) Competition in Boston in 2010. In 2012 Emma participated in the Kokoda Youth Leadership Challenge. Emma was Chair of the NSW Youth Advisory Council and Chair of the NSW Youth Week Young People's Advisory Committee in 2012.

Mr Daniel Conifer

Warwick Farm

Age: 21 years

Daniel is a young Aboriginal man. In 2012 he completed his third year of a Journalism degree at the University of Technology Sydney. As part of his degree he had an internship with ABC Radio which involved him working full-time for 12 weeks of the year. He also worked casually as a video-journalist with SBS, ABC and National Indigenous Television (NITV). Daniel attended East Hills Boys Technology High School and was Dux of the school and School Captain in 2008. He had been a member of the Liverpool Youth Council since 2008 and was its Chair in 2012. Daniel was also President of the UTS Sydney Debating Society engaging international students in improving their spoken English.

Ms Rosemarie Costi

Riverview

Age: 19 years

Rose completed her Higher School Certificate at Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College, North Sydney in 2011. She had a "gap year" in 2012 and worked casually at Steve Costi Seafood's at Northbridge and travelled overseas. Rose was College Captain in 2010-11. In 2009 and again in 2010 she was part of a school program working with Aboriginal people in communities in the Central Desert. Rose has also been a volunteer with Vinnie's Van providing sandwiches to homeless people in Sydney.

Ms Delfina Dimoski

Kanaooka

Age: 21 years

Delfina completed her Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Wollongong in 2012 and worked part-time in the University's Office of Community and Partnership as a senior mentor in the IN2UNI mentoring program. In 2012 she was also an Elite Football (Soccer) Referee and represented NSW at Nationals and danced with a Macedonian folk dancing group called Makedonija Wollongong. Delfina has been associated with the Dapto Lions Club for five years and is the Club's Youth Ambassador. In 2009 Delfina was the Illawarra Young Volunteer of the Year.

Mr Nathan Inwood

Bathurst

Age: 19 years

In 2012 Nathan was studying for an Advanced Diploma in Event Management. In 2011 he completed a Cultural and Community Services Traineeship with Bathurst Regional Council. Nathan works for the Bathurst Regional Council on a range of sporting and cultural projects and manages a range of Council websites. Nathan has been a member of the NSW Youth Week Young People's Advisory Committee since 2011.

Amna Karra-Hassan

Auburn

Age: 24 years

Amna has completed a Certificate IV in Skills for Career Development and Human Rights Education and Advocacy. Amna is the co-founder of the Auburn Tigers Women's Australian Football Club and is committed to increasing the self-esteem and confidence of young women through sport, espousing principles of social

inclusion and respect. She is also passionate about women's rights and social justice. Amna works for the Australian Federal Police in the Community Liaison Team.

Mr Alexander Leighton Newcastle Age: 18 years

Alexander completed his Higher School Certificate in 2012 at the Hunter School of the Performing Arts. Alexander was a member of the Gloucester Shire Council Indent Committee and the State Student Representative Council in 2010. He has spoken at the Newcastle Community Drug and Alcohol Action Team's Forum on Alcohol Related Violence and in 2012 was a speaker at the Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health's Forum on Young People with Diverse Sexualities. Alexander's experience in 'coming out' in a rural high school gives him a firsthand knowledge of a range of high profile youth issues, including bullying, social isolation and use of the internet.

Ms Marie Nemani Kogarah Age: 15 years

In 2012 Marie was a Year 10 student at North Sydney Girls High School. She was president and co-president of various school groups, a Student Representative Council Executive and a UNICEF Australia Youth Ambassador where she is involved in numerous fundraising initiatives for disadvantaged children. Marie has previously been a member of her local Youth Advisory Committee where she was involved in a range of local level and state level youth activities.

Ms Melissa Wolfshoerndl Richmond Age: 18 years

In 2012 Melissa was a first year Bachelor of Community Welfare student at the University of Western Sydney. She has been a long-term volunteer youth leader at Bridgewater Youth and Hawkesbury Community Outreach Services Youth Service and a volunteer peer sexual health educator. Melissa was a member of the Youth Action and Policy Association's Western Sydney Youth Forum and the NSW Youth Week Young People's Advisory Committee. She was the Hawkesbury City Council's Young Citizen of the Year in 2011 and 2012. Melissa has been appointed as a University of Western Sydney Student Representative.

Ex-officio member

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

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 2012 the Council and WorkCover NSW co-hosted a forum on young worker safety at Parliament House as part of Youth Week 2012. The forum was attended by 80 young workers from across NSW.

Council members visited Dubbo, Wellington, Narromine, Peak Hill, Gilgandra, and Dunedoo and hosted a series of consultations with more than 120 young people from these communities.

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 six issues.

1. Young people's engagement and participation in the community, with Local Government and with the NSW Government.

The Minister asked the Council to build on the work of the 2011 Council and provide advice on strategies to increase young people's engagement and participation in their community, with their local council and with the NSW Government.

At the request of the Council, the Minister raised the issue of local government engagement with young people with the Minister for Local Government. In May 2012 the Minister and the Minister for Local Government issued a joint Ministerial Circular M12-03, *Councils Engaging Young People*, encouraging all local government councils to engage with young people as part of their review of their Community Engagement Strategies.

The Council has suggested to the Minister that local government councils may not fully appreciate the benefits of engaging with, and involving young people.

The 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. The Council noted that successive NSW Governments have developed a whole-of-Government youth policy or strategy.

2. Improving digital communication with young people, including safe use of the Internet

The 2011 Council provided the Minister with advice on ways in which the NSW Government can better engage young people through digital mediums, particularly the Youth.NSW website.

The 2012 Council continued this work, focusing on strategies for digital engagement. The Council provided the Minister with advice on strategies to reduce internet risk-taking and on strategies to better engage young people through digital mediums.

Strategies to reduce internet risk-taking

The Council invited the NSW Privacy Commissioner, Dr Elizabeth Coombs to its 3 July 2012 meeting to discuss privacy issues and safeguarding young people against the risks associated with social media.

Dr Coombs spoke about the lack of awareness among young people, and in the community in general, of how personal information can be harvested and stored for use in identity theft many years later. She noted that information published 'on-line' has a 'digital eternity'. Dr Coombs asked the Council to continue to work with her on safeguarding young people against the risks associated with social media.

The Council's representative on the Board of Studies Student Advisory Group raised 'privacy awareness in schools' as an issue for the Student Advisory Group to discuss with the Board of Studies.

The Australian Human Rights Commission sought the Council's advice on implementing its *Cyberbullying and the Bystander Project* aimed at engaging young people who witness cyberbullying in intervening on behalf of the person being bullied.

Strategies to better engage young people through digital mediums

The Council undertook to become better informed on how the Government currently communicates with young people, and on what the Government wants to communicate to young people.

The Council reviewed a range of mechanisms being used by the Government to communicate with young people and discussed what they considered as matters the government would like to communicate to young people. The Council identified the merits of a website to provide young people with information about community events, activities and decision making processes.

Ms Pheona Twist, Director, Corporate Communications, Office of Communities met with the Council on 3 July 2012 to discuss the re-development of the Youth.NSW website. The Council Chair and Deputy Chair met with Ms Diane Bradley, Manager, Corporate Communications, Office of Communities and Ms Sibylla Macdonald, Web Manager, Corporate Communications, Office of Communities on 3 December 2012 to further discuss the re-development of the Youth.NSW website.

The Council assisted the Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) in the revision of their participation tool kit: *Citizen Me! Engaging children and young people in your organisation*. The tool kit was launched at Parliament House on 19 September 2012. An additional resource is due for release in 2013 and will focus on online engagement.

3. Young driver's issues

The Council has provided advice to the Government, through the Minister responsible for youth affairs, on the licensing of young drivers for many years.

On 19 March 2012 the Minister for Roads and Ports, the Hon Duncan Gay MLC announced a new course for learner drivers to improve their safety and on completion reduce the required log book hours. Cabinet established a board of independent road safety experts and an advisory panel to make recommendations on the design of the course.

The Minister also announced that further options to assist learner licence holders in remote, lower socio-economic and Aboriginal communities to meet learner driver log book hours would also be considered.

The Council accepted an invitation for the Chair to represent the Council on the advisory panel. The Chair made a presentation on behalf of the Council to the Board of Road Safety Experts on 18 April 2012.

At the Board of Road Safety Experts' request, the Council made a further presentation and submission on 6 June 2012.

The Chair also participated in Safer Drivers Course Advisory Panel Workshops on 6 June and 10 July 2012. The Board of Road Safety Experts' advice and report was forwarded to the Minister for Roads and Ports.

The Council has also been an active member of the Centre for Road Safety's Advisory Council, established to provide advice on road safety initiatives and policies including the development of the New South Wales Road Safety Strategy 2012-2021.

4. Identifying and addressing the barriers arising from young people's issues with their identity

The Council felt that knowing who you are enables a young person to make better life choices. Members felt that young people won't be so concerned with fitting in if they know themselves better. The Council noted that Identity and Belonging are critical to feeling a sense of community and that improving a sense of community is one of the targets of Goal 24 in the *NSW 2021 Plan*.

The Council agreed to consult with young people and people who work with young people to gain a better understanding of the breadth of the issue.

The Council held its 15 August 2012 meeting in Dubbo and met with Mr Aaron Jackson, Student Support Officer, Dubbo College and Mr Geoff Mann, local ABC radio broadcaster, lifetime resident of Dubbo, and a member of the State Council of Youth (a forerunner of the Youth Advisory Council) in 1979 & 1980. The Council spoke with Mr Jackson and Mr Mann in preparation for their consultations with young people in Dubbo, Wellington, Narromine, Peak Hill, Gilgandra, and Dunedoo.

In the evening Council also met with members of the Dubbo Youth Council to seek their views on issues of importance to them.

On 16 August Council members visited Dubbo, Wellington, Narromine, Peak Hill, Gilgandra, and Dunedoo and hosted a series of consultations with more than 120 young people from these communities. Those attending the consultations talked about how they see themselves, and how they contribute and connect with their communities. The issues raised and the views expressed by the young people who participated in the consultations was passed on to the Minister.

Following the protests by young Muslims in Sydney on 15 September 2012 the Minister wrote to the Council seeking the Council's input on strategies to address the issues that arose from the protests.

Mr Mathew Ferguson, Acting Director, Community and Regional Engagement in the Office of Communities attended the Council's 7 October 2012 meeting and briefed the Council on the South West Sydney Action Plan (SWAP) being managed by the Community Relations Commission (CRC) and the Office of Communities. The SWAP is a partnership of state and local government agencies working with communities, and particularly with young people, focusing on strengthening community harmony across the South West Sydney region.

Council members participated in the CRC's *Religion and Youth* forum for young people aged 18 to 30 years on 21 October 2012. The forum aimed to promote a candid dialogue regarding concerns that can create conflict in young people, and to attempt to identify the over-riding values that unite them as Australians.

The Council noted that a longer-term approach aimed at addressing the underlying issues is required to follow the forum. The approach would be to work with young people living in Western Sydney to identify the cultural, religious, and social barriers preventing better engagement in their communities and develop strategies to address these youth engagement and identity issues.

5. Young worker safety

In April 2012 the Council and WorkCover NSW co-hosted a forum on young worker safety at Parliament House as part of Youth Week 2012. The forum was attended by 80 young workers from across NSW and looked at strategies to better inform young workers about work safety issues.

The Council was concerned that many young workers, including those attending the forum either hadn't heard of WorkCover or didn't know what it does. The Council noted that participants were generally unaware of their rights and responsibilities if injured at work.

The Council believes that building greater awareness of the issue among young people is paramount to lowering the number of young people injured at work.

The Council is pursuing the opportunity to work with WorkCover NSW to better focus its strategies for communicating with young workers.

6. Patient confidentiality for young people accessing local health services in country towns where the young person is known to the medical centre staff

The Council met with the NSW Privacy Commissioner, Dr Elizabeth Coombs in July 2012 and raised the issue of patient confidentiality for young people accessing local health services in country towns where the young person is known to the medical centre staff. A number of young people in the Riverina who took part in the 2011 Council's consultations said they would not consult a local doctor because of the lack of patient confidentiality.

These young people were aware of circumstances where staff in medical practices who process Medicare accounts and file medical records did not adhere to patient confidentiality protocols.

Dr Coombs advised that under the *Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (HRIP Act)* general practitioners have a legal obligation to ensure patient privacy and that this also applies to any staff, medical or otherwise who have access to patient records. Dr Coombs informed the Council that she is responsible for administering the HRIP Act which includes awareness raising, community outreach work and education.

The Council Chair met with the Deputy Privacy Commissioner, Mr John McAteer on 20 November 2012 who outlined strategies being implemented to better inform non-medical staff in local health services in country towns of their confidentiality obligations.

Subcommittees

Youth Week in NSW Young People's Advisory Committee

The NSW Youth Week Young People's Advisory Committee, is a subcommittee of the 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 2012 more than 3,500 young people were involved in planning and managing more than 850 events and activities across NSW. More than 80,000 young people participated in these 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 Victor Dominello, MP, Minister for Citizenship and Communities, Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on two occasions. The Chair also met separately with the Minister.

Council Meetings

In 2012 the Council met on eight occasions: 19 & 20 February, 10 April; 3 June; 3 July; 15 August; 7 October and 20 November. The Council met with:

Name	Title
Mr Reynato Reodica	Chief Executive, Youth Action and Policy Association NSW
Ms Meredith Turnbull	Adaptive Projects
Dr Elizabeth Coombs	NSW Privacy Commissioner
Ms Pheona Twist	Director, Corporate Communications, Office of Communities, Department of Education and Communities
Mr Aaron Jackson	Student Support Officer, Dubbo College
Mr Geoff Mann	ABC Radio presenter, Dubbo and Member, NSW State Council of Youth, 1979-80
Mr Mathew Ferguson	R/Director, Community and Regional Engagement, Office of Communities, Department of Education and Communities

Committees

The Council was represented on the following committees in 2012:

- Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health Advisory Board
- Advisory Panel to the Board of Independent Road Safety Experts
- Road Safety Advisory Council
- Student Advisory Group to the Board of Studies
- Clinical Excellence Commission's Citizen's Engagement Advisory Council
- National Planning Group for National Youth Week
- Youth Week in NSW Young People's Advisory Committee
- Online Youth Engagement Project Steering Group

Conferences, Seminars, Forums and Meetings

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

- 2012 NSW Student Representative Council, Wednesday 21 March
- Young People without Borders Launch, Friday 23 March
- The Commission for Children and Young People to contribute to the development of the Online Participation Tool Kit, Friday 23 March
- Youth Week Work Place Safety Issues Forum Parliament House, Wednesday 11 April
- Multicultural Youth Network, Youth Networking Evening, Monday 16 April
- Board of Road Safety Experts, Wednesday 18 April
- Privacy Awareness Week Launch, Friday 27 April
- Hunter Institute Mental Health Consultation, Wednesday 9 May
- Australian Human Rights Commission, Cyber Bullying and the Bystander Project meeting, Friday 11 May
- Board of Road Safety Experts, Wednesday 6 June
- First Safer Drivers Course Advisory Panel Workshop, Wednesday 6 June
- The NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health's Safe and Effective Use of Technologies to Promote Young People's Wellbeing: A Better Practice Guide meeting, Wednesday 27 June
- Second Safer Drivers Course Advisory Panel Workshop, Tuesday 10 July
- Aboriginal Youth Forum, Ministerial Taskforce Strategy, hosted by the Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations, Wednesday 25 July
- Friendship & Dialogue Iftar Dinner, Wednesday 1 August
- Community Relation Commission's Youth Leaders Day, Tuesday 28 August
- Youth Action and Policy Association's SHIFT THIS Forum, 26-28 September
- Community Relations Commission's Religion and Youth Conference, Sunday 21 October

- Minister Dominello's meeting with young people who attended the Youth Action and Policy Association's SHIFT THIS Forum, Thursday 25 October
- Deputy Privacy Commissioner, Mr John McAteer, Tuesday 20 November.
- Ms Diane Bradley, Manager, Corporate Communications, Office of Communities and Ms Sibylla Macdonald, Web Manager, Corporate Communications, Office of Communities, 3 December.

Training

Council members undertook the following training:

- Meeting Processes



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