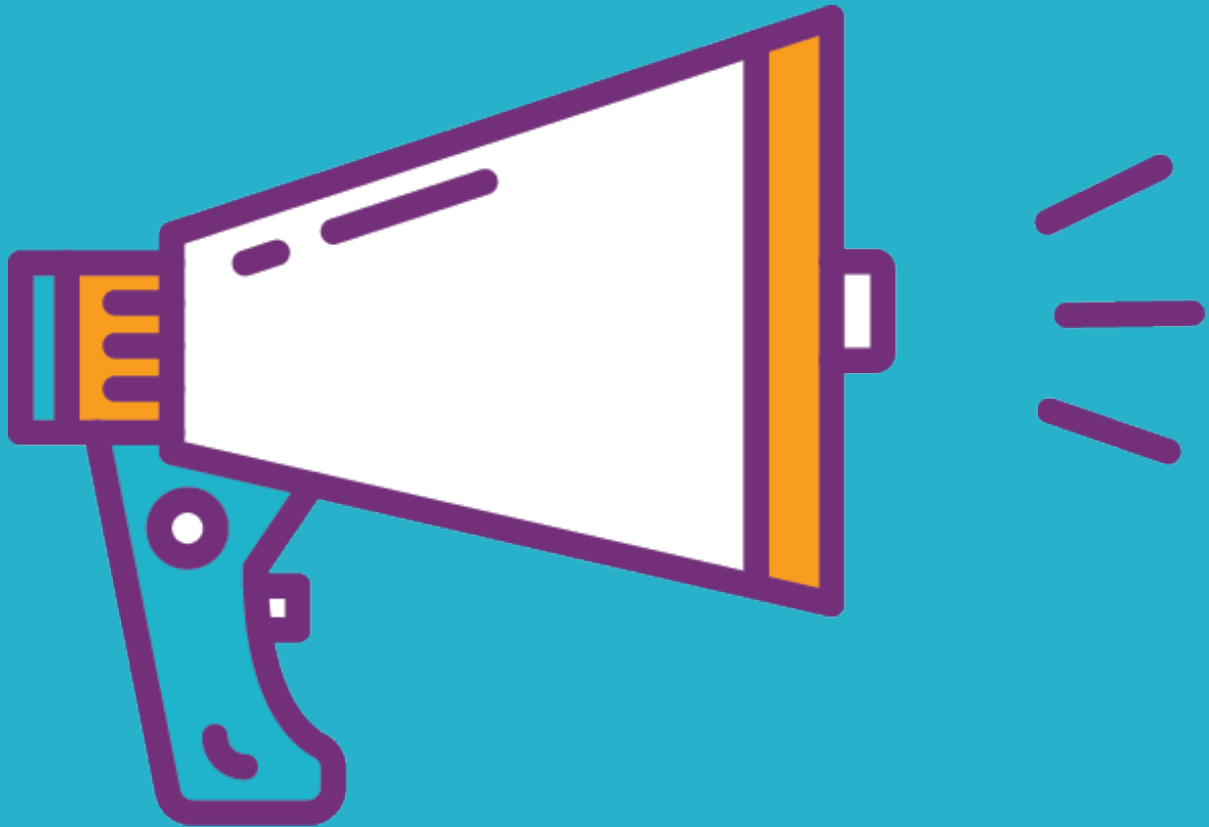


**YOUTH
ACTION**



**YOUTH ACTION
ANNUAL REPORT
2015-2016**

About Youth Action

Youth Action is the peak organisation representing young people and youth services in NSW. Our work helps build the capacity of young people, youth workers and youth services, and we advocate for positive change on issues affecting these groups.

It is the role of Youth Action to:

1. Respond to social and political agendas relating to young people and the youth service sector.
.....
2. Provide proactive leadership and advocacy to shape the agenda on issues affecting young people and youth services.
.....
3. Collaborate on issues that affect young people and youth workers.
.....
4. Promote a positive profile in the media and the community of young people and youth services.
.....
5. Build capacity for young people to speak out and take action on issues that affect them.
.....
6. Enhance the capacity of the youth services sector to provide high quality services.
.....
7. Ensure Youth Action's organisational development, efficiency, effectiveness and good governance.



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Chairperson's Report



On behalf of the Board of Governance, I am proud to present the Annual Report for another big year of accomplishments at Youth Action.

It has been a time of continued development, and Youth Action has reviewed and implemented new strategic directions to ensure we are representing young people and the sector as effectively as possible.

The year included engaging with the Targeted Early Intervention reforms and representing the youth sector throughout that process. It also included some great work amplifying the voices of young people, particularly in the lead up to the federal election. We look forward to continuing the advocacy and engagement in new and innovative ways.

The Board would like to congratulate the team for their commitment to the sector and young people. They have worked tirelessly to make some great accomplishments. Under Katie Acheson's leadership Youth Action has seen, among other achievements, increased membership and strengthened partnerships with government and decision-makers.

Thanks also to our members for their continuing support. They ensure that our work is as representative of young people and the youth sector as possible. We would also like to thank our funders, the Department of Family and Community Services, without whom this important work could not continue.

The year ahead will no doubt present challenges. The Board has every confidence that Youth Action will continue to meet these challenges with the passion and commitment it has shown to young people and the services that support them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'J' followed by a long horizontal line that loops back to the left.

Jon Brew
Chairperson

CEO's Report



What an exciting year it has been for Youth Action – as you will see in this report it is one of our biggest. The team worked hard to push for positive changes in NSW for young people and youth services and we met some fantastic milestones.

One of our proudest achievements of the year was our work in the lead up to the 2016 Federal Election, where we heard from 3,400 young people across the country – one of our most ambitious projects to date. We listened to young people and amplified their voices by sharing the 'Agenda for Action' report with every Federal MP and Senator in the country. On the eve of the election young people and the issues they cared about were a big part of the media story and, with our new toolkit, young people were equipped to engage with the political process and their elected representatives.

The youth sector, as always, played an invaluable role in what was a successful year for positive change for young people. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with so many passionate youth workers who want to see change for the better. Their continued involvement makes sure that our work is strong, grounded and sustainable.

We were excited to celebrate the achievements of the youth sector at our Annual Youth Work Awards, as part of our NSW Youth Work Conference. Over 240 people came together to share knowledge, experience, skills, and ideas to move our sector forward.

With such a big year, I am proud to say that media coverage of youth issues has increased with 182 media stories covering our work. Young people were front and centre in our training, which equipped them with the skills they needed to speak directly to the media on issues important to them.

In the midst of all of this we moved from our home of many years in Kippax St. and made a new home with Fams and LCSA on William St. None of this would be possible without the brilliance of our committed team at Youth Action, and the many interns and volunteers who help us. I am sincerely grateful for the endless support of our exceptional Board of Governance.

It has been a big year for Youth Action and I am very proud of the strides we are making. I look forward to Youth Action pushing even harder to advocate for young people and the services that support them in the year to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katie Acheson', written in a cursive style.

Katie Acheson
CEO

Staff and Board

CURRENT



Katie Acheson
Chief Executive
Officer



Jake Formosa
Project Development
Manager



Natasha Lay
Western Sydney
Coordinator



Dean Williamson
Sector Support
Manager



Jacqui McKenzie
Policy and Advocacy
Manager
(from August 2015)

PAST



Chris Marcatili
Operations
Coordinator
(from August 2015)



Naomi Russo
Communications
Manager
(from May 2016)



Tamika Worrell
Cadet



Ruvi Perumal
Communications
Manager
(to April 2016)

YOUTH ACTION BOARD

- Jon Brew (Chairperson)
- Francis Dreyer (Deputy Chairperson)
- Chris Brereton (Treasurer)
- Lakin Agnew (Secretary)
- Damian Cooper
- Keiran Kevans
- Kate Munro
- Lawrence Muskitta
- Tilly South

INTERNS

This year we worked with 26 young people through our internship and student placement programs. Our interns worked alongside Youth Action staff and gained valuable policy and advocacy work experience.

Membership

The support of Youth Action's members enables us to be a strong and sustainable advocate for young people and the services that support them. Our members include organisations, individuals and young people.

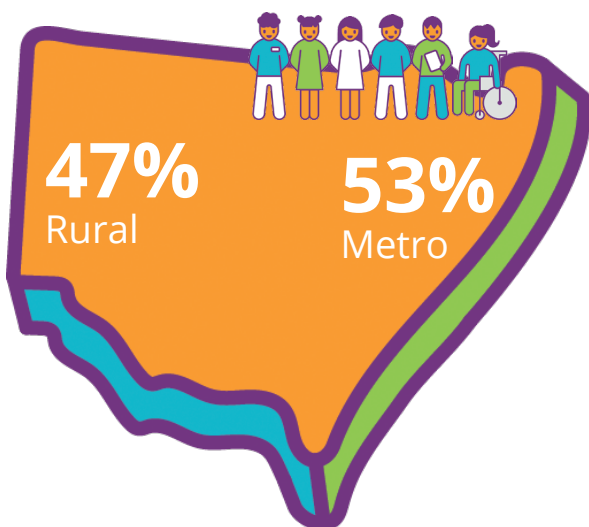
IN 2015-2016 YOUTH ACTION:

- Increased member organisations by five.
- Increased young people members by fourteen.
- Increased individual members by thirty.

MEMBER NUMBERS

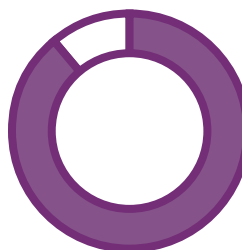


WHERE OUR MEMBERS ARE FROM



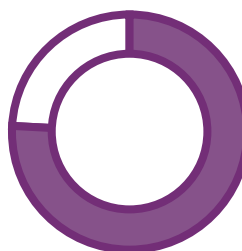
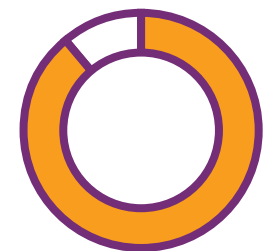
WHAT OUR MEMBERS SAY

90% of members* surveyed say they are **well informed on issues affecting the youth services sector and young people.**



89% of our members* have been involved in our advocacy work.

89% of our members* say they are **happy with the work we've done to represent them.**



76% of our members* report that **Youth Action helps them do their work better.**

68% of young people+ surveyed specified that **they were happy with the work we had done to represent them** while only 1% said they were unhappy with the work we had done.



* Based on the responses to the annual members survey from 105 organisational and individual members.
+ Based on the 93 responses to the annual members survey for young people.

Youth Sector Support and Development

This year the bulk of our sector support work was focussed on the representation of NSW youth services in Targeted Earlier Intervention (TEI) reforms. We also created networks that involved youth workers in further sector development and government reform efforts.

TEI REFORMS

TEI reforms have the power to re-shape the early intervention youth sector in NSW. Youth Action has been a leader in the reform, providing fast and accurate information to our members. We have been heavily involved in several initiatives that have shaped the reforms as well as advocating to ministers and policy-makers.

SHARED OUTCOMES PILOT

The Nepean and Blue Mountains Shared Outcomes pilot was an innovative project that saw Youth Action and Fams awarded a Social Impact Measurement Network of Australia (SIMNA) award. Workers from 10 organisations developed an outcomes framework and collected data from clients for 6 months. Learnings from the pilot were shared internationally (South Africa and New Zealand) and across Australia. This pilot has been fundamental in informing our TEI advocacy, providing learning on a wide range of systemic issues.



Received Social Impact Measurement Network of Australia (SIMNA) Award

Included workers from **10** organisations

LINKING UP THE SECTOR

Youth Action coordinates a number of networks that aim to link up groups of workers or organisations to further the agenda of the youth sector in NSW. These include:

- **District Representatives** – A representative from each district across NSW ensures Youth Action is hearing statewide sector issues and communicating directly with members in the districts.
- **Practice Experts Group** – a group of experts in the various aspects of working with young people provide both fast and deep responses to issues and reforms.
- **Youth Work Development Group** – a group established to support the upcoming development of youth work in NSW.

YOUTH WORK CONFERENCE

In November 2015, youth workers from across NSW joined Youth Action for the NSW Youth Work Conference. Over three days, youth workers discussed the TEI reforms, strengthened their practice and helped shape the NSW youth policy agenda.

131 conference delegates

SURVIVAL TRAINING

Survival Training provides youth workers with the tools and knowledge they need to thrive in their work with young people. In 2015-16 Survival Training was held in Wentworthville and Sydney. As demand for the training has declined, Youth Action is currently evaluating the content.

- 25 youth workers equipped through survival training
- 89% of attendees reported an increase in knowledge/skills
- 94% of attendees were satisfied with Survival Training
- 20% of attendees were rural and regional youth workers

WESTERN SYDNEY YOUTH SECTOR NETWORK

Youth Action supports the Western Sydney Youth Sector Network (WSYSN), an alliance of youth interagencies and youth workers in Greater Western Sydney. In 2015-16, WSYSN focussed on the two priority areas of youth employment and working more effectively with schools.

The Western Sydney Project also delivered and supported the following Sector Support and Development initiatives:

- Blue Mountains Youth Networking Forum
- Parramatta Holroyd Youth Action Team (PHYAT) Planning Day and interagency support

Youth Work Awards



The NSW Youth Work Awards recognises the exceptional work of youth services and youth workers in NSW. The Awards were celebrated at a gala ceremony on Tuesday 3 November 2015. Each of the 58 nominations across 9 categories shared a story of incredible contributions to the health, safety, and wellbeing of young people in NSW.

The 2015 NSW Youth Work Awards were proudly sponsored by the SMC Conference and Function Centre.

INNOVATION IN USING DATA TO TELL STORIES

Fusion Youth

BEST PARTNERSHIP

Glebe After Dark

2Realise Productivity Bootcamp
BUPA Residential Aged Care
Berry
Midnight Basketball Mt Druitt
RYDON (Regional Youth
Development Officers Network)
Safer Celebration
VIP Program

OUTSTANDING PROJECT OR SERVICE WORKING WITH CALD YOUNG PEOPLE

Multicultural Youth Affairs Network

Common Cultures Project
Youth for Youth

OUTSTANDING PROJECT OR SERVICE WORKING WITH ABORIGINAL YOUNG PEOPLE

Marrickville Souths Fitness and Breakfast Club

Wings Drop-in Centre
Fact Tree Youth Service
Getting it Together Services
Ungooroo Aboriginal
Corporation Indigenous Youth
Support

YOUTH WORK VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Kellie Coghlan

Kristy Williams

YOUTH-LED PROJECT OF THE YEAR

Interns Australia

The Bright Minds Project
Care2Change Out of Home Care
Reference Group
Cessnock Youth Entertainment
Committee
Claymore Youth Advisory
Committee: Clean up Claymore
Project
Headspace Youth Advisory
Committees
iGen Youth Opportunities Project
– The Forgotten Lands
“Y, Y Not? Let’s talk about sex”

YOUTH SERVICE OF THE YEAR

BackTrack

Blacktown Youth Services
Association
Byron Youth Service
Caretakers Cottage Youth Refuge
Fairfield City Council – Youth
Community Projects
Launchpad Youth Community
Mountains Youth Services Team
Whitelion Inc.
Youth Solutions

YOUTH WORKER OF THE YEAR

Sue Underwood

Clarinda Masters
Marisa Mya Bouasengphachanh
Yvonne Dengate
Kylie Fitzmaurice
Fran Garcia-Darke
Joanne Homsi
Peter Hope
Shane Kennedy
Annette Lawrance
Adam McKenzie
Angie McMillan
Samey Minkara
Alex Mobbs
Dean Naylor-Clark
Amy O’Neill
Daniel Saeed
Ania Stepien
Adam Wiseman

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Laurie Matthews

Andrew Cummings

Latif Jufri
Anh Nguyen

Winners in bold, highly commended in italics.

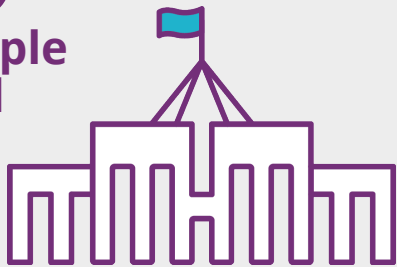
Engaging Young People

In 2015–16 Youth Action amplified the voice of thousands of young people. We offered training on how to run community impact projects and provided avenues for young people to share their views.

FEDERAL ELECTION SURVEYS

In the lead up to the 2016 federal election Youth Action ran two surveys to amplify the voices of young people during the campaign. The first asked young people specifically about their views on the Prime Minister and what they wanted him to know. The second was a broader ranging survey to find out what issues were most important to them in the campaign.

3369
young people
responded
to federal
election
survey.



WHAT'S UP WEST? YOUTH CONFERENCE

In July 2015, more than 200 young people came together at Youth Action's biennial What's Up West? Youth Conference, making it our biggest yet. Young people from across Greater Western Sydney were equipped with the skills and inspiration to enact positive change in their local communities.

200 young
people attending

25
workshops with
16 organisations

TRAINING AND CONSULTATION

Youth Action delivered two workshops at the 2015 NSW Youth Council Conference in Eurobodalla, training 150 youth council members to design and plan projects they could implement to make their communities better places for young people.

Our Youth Consultation Network engaged with 460 peers face-to-face to collect the voices of young people and share them with us. Youth Action trained a further 20 young people to speak to the media on their perspectives on the 2016 Federal Election.



150 youth council
members to design and
plan projects

460 peers
face-to-face to
collect the voices
of young people



OUTBURST! WESTERN SYDNEY YOUTH ACTION GROUP

Outburst! Western Sydney Youth Action Group takes action on issues that affect young people in Western Sydney. Outburst! is a group of 20 passionate young people active in their local communities and committed to making Western Sydney a better place for all young people.

In 2015–16, Outburst! represented young people in Western Sydney in consultations with the City of Parramatta Council and the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The Western Sydney Project also delivered the following capacity-building training sessions for young people:

- ‘Sharing Your Story’ Public Speaking training session – 4 young people
- Workshop Facilitation Skills workshops: 2 sessions, 10 young people
- ‘What is Success?’ Eye on My Future Leadership Workshop, Parramatta – 20 young people
- ‘Young Women Creating Change in Western Sydney’ – presentation for International Women’s Day, Liverpool

FUTURE-PROOFING WESTERN SYDNEY

In partnership with the Committee for Sydney, Youth Action launched the Future-Proofing Western Sydney speaker series. It started a conversation between young people and decision-makers about the future of infrastructure, planning and growth across the Greater Western Sydney region.

The event featured a line-up of local young leaders speaking about education, transport and cultural aspirations for the future of the West. They were joined for a Q&A panel by Federal Member for Parramatta Julie Owens MP, Candidate for Parramatta Michael Beckwith, and Committee for Sydney Chair Michael Rose AM, with special guest SBS’s Andy Trieu moderating. Following the event, one of the young leaders spoke with NSW Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian about transport priorities for Metropolitan Sydney.

FRIEND2FRIEND

Friend2Friend is a youth-led, peer-to-peer mental health initiative designed by Outburst! Western Sydney Youth Action Group and supported by Mental Health Carers NSW (Arafmi). The innovative project equips young people with the skills and resources to tackle mental health issues in their local communities. In 2015-16, Friend2Friend trained 7 young peer facilitators and then ran 4 workshops with 52 participants.



“The workshop has changed how I think about mental health”

“I know where I can go for mental health support”



“I feel more confident in talking about mental health”

“I feel more confident in supporting my friends with mental health concerns”



Federal Election Survey

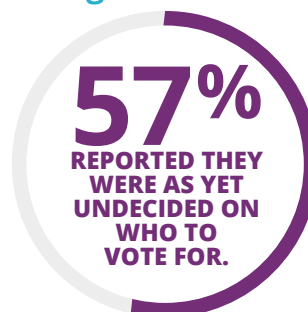
Federal elections are a crucial time for young people to be heard, but they are often sidelined in important discussions. We wanted to make sure that in the 2016 election the issues young people care about were impossible to ignore.

Youth Action partnered with the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) to launch a national youth survey in April 2016.

Over a two-month period almost 3400 young people (aged 12 – 25) shared their hopes and ideas for this election with us. The report, *Agenda for Action: what young Australians want from the 2016 election*, showed extensive data about the issues young people care about, and why those issues matter to them.

WHAT DID WE FIND OUT? YOUNG PEOPLE:

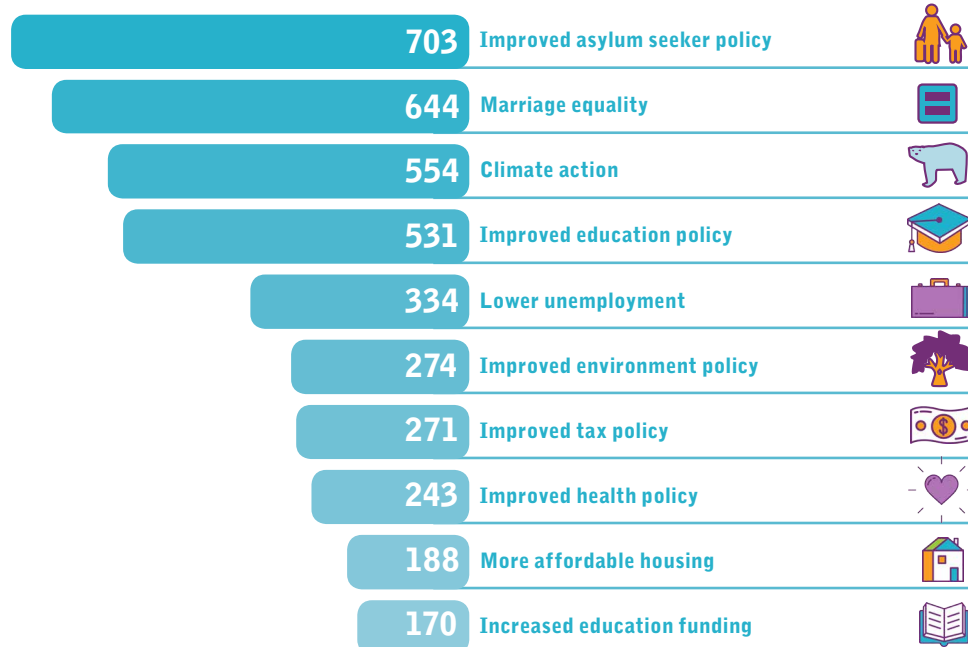
Are often swing voters:



Are politically engaged:



TOP TEN CONCERNS:



WHAT DID WE DO WITH ALL THIS DATA?

Sent report to 3221 stakeholders including young people, organisations, MPs, Senators and more.

Called 214 MPs, Senators and campaign offices

Launched advocacy toolkit and emailed it to **1686** young people.

Policy and Advocacy

Youth Action is committed to highlighting issues that are important to young people and representing their interests to decision-makers.

CONSULTATION

Consultation is essential to us to ensure our policy work is relevant. In 2015, Youth Action asked youth services and young people 'what does the future hold for young people?' The results offered a clear path for our policy priorities for 2015-2017:



Education and training



Work and employment

Housing and homelessness



IN 2015-16 WE ALSO:

Collected the views of over **3600** young people.

Engaged over **120** sector representatives from every FaCS district, in submissions to government.

POLICY PAPERS AND SUBMISSION

Youth Action responded to 5 government inquiries, published 4 independent policy and research papers and tools. These included:

- Review of the Rental Tenancies Act 2010
- Reducing Breakfast Skipping
- Submission to Inquiry of the Sexualisation of Children and Young People
- Response to NSW 2016 Budget
- Domestic, Family & Teen Dating Violence – Snapshot of Research
- Submission to the NSW Blueprint for the Domestic and Family Violence Response in NSW
- Targeted Early Intervention – Response to Government Discussion paper
- Federal Election Toolkit
- Agenda For Action: What young people want from the federal election

PRESENTATIONS

Youth Action shares our research widely to ensure our learnings are communicated not only to our members, but across NSW, Australia and internationally.

In 2015-16 we shared our policy and advocacy work at:

- 2016 Commonwealth Youth Work Conference South Africa
- Ara Taiohi New Zealand Youth Sector Leadership Summit
- Australian Communications Consumer Action Network Conference
- Australian Progress Leadership 2016
- Hawkesbury Youth Interagency Homeless Awareness Event
- Homelessness NSW Conference
- Mary Ward Lecture series
- National Union of Students
- NSW Housing Conference
- Pacific Evidence-Based Youth Development Workshop Fiji
- Regional Youth Development Officers Network Conference 2016
- Unpacking Youth Employment Forum
- Western Sydney Community Forum (WSCF) Breakfast Conversations Federal Election Event

published 9 POLICY PAPERS and submissions

presented at 10 EVENTS nationally and internationally

provided advice and represented young people at 51 MEETINGS AND COMMITTEES

Countless organisations have partnered with us to broaden our reach and make our work more effective. In addition to ARACY, DVNSW, ACYP, and FaMS, we work closely with many others such as our members, NCOSS and other youth peaks to contribute to change for young people.

REPRESENTATION AND ADVOCACY

Youth Action continued to advocate and represent young people and youth sector in a number of meetings and committees, including:

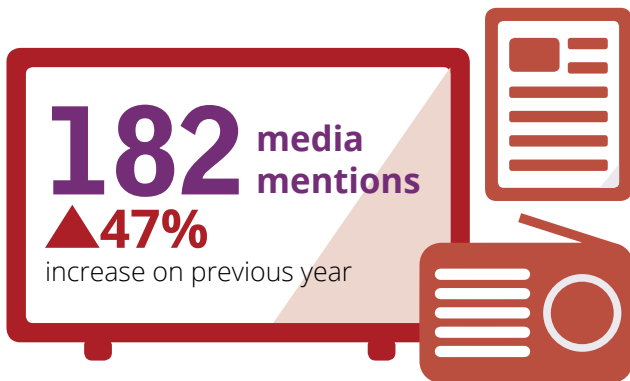
- 1 in 7 Child Poverty Campaign
- Advocate for Children and Young People (ACYF) Consultation
- Australian Competition & Consumer Commission – Consumer Consultative Committee
- Australian Youth Development Index Expert Panel
- Bay's Precinct Community Advisory Panel
- Better Systems, Better Chances ARACY Evidence Review Consultation
- Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW, Board Endorsed Alternative Education Programs Panel
- Children, Young People and Families Alliance
- City of Sydney Youth Network Meeting
- Claymore Youth Advisory Council
- Department of Social Services Forum on Volunteering and Giving in CALD Communities
- Early Intervention Council
- Global Youth Development Index Expert Panel
- Greater Sydney Commission
- Homeshare Panel, including Council on the Ageing, YFoundations, Youth off the Streets
- Housing Affordability Roundtable (Labor)
- Just Reinvest NSW Strategic Committee
- Minister Hazzard's Out of Home Care Forum
- Multicultural Youth Affairs Network (MYAN), launch of the National Youth Settlement Framework
- National Alcohol Strategy
- NCOSS Forum of Non-Government Agencies
- NSW/ACT Young Achievers Award
- NSW Business Council Roundtable on Youth Unemployment
- NSW Shadow Minister Roundtable on Multicultural Young People
- NSW Steering Committee for Anti-Poverty Week 2016
- NSW Women's Alliance
- NSW Youth Advisory Council Selection Panel
- Pathways of Care Longitudinal Study Wave 2 Roundtable
- Point-to-Point Transport Taskforce
- Premiers Advisory Council on Countering Violent Extremism
- Premiers Roundtable on Youth Homelessness
- Safe Home for Life Co-Design for Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains
- SafeWork NSW Youth Advisory Group
- Sector Development Peaks Working Group
- South West Sydney Youth Mental Health Summit
- Steering Committee of the Joint Protocol intended to reduce the contact of young people in residential out-of-home care with the criminal justice system
- Sydney Alliance Penalty Rates Roundtable
- TEI outcomes workshop, peaks group, reforms expert panel and roundtables.
- Trish Doyle MP's Domestic Violence Roundtable – Blue Mountains
- UrbanGrowth Projects Briefing
- Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation
- Western Sydney Co-Designed Services Leadership Group
- Western Sydney Collective Leadership Group
- Western Sydney Community Forum (WSCF) Board
- Western Sydney District Youth Housing Working Group
- Western Sydney Leadership Dialogue 'Out There' Summit
- YEP Policy Maker's Forum & Critical Issues Forum
- YFoundations Planning Group on Domestic and Family Violence
- Youth Frontiers Awards
- Youth Justice Coalition
- ZEST Awards Sponsorship of Outstanding Youth Leader, and Outstanding Youth Led Project

Youth Action had additional meetings with the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Minister Goward, Minister Hazzard, Minister Ajaka, Julie Owens MP, Federal Member for Parramatta, Department of Education, Department of Planning, Urban Growth, NSW Treasury, NSW Police, Barnardos, Uniting, Mission Australia, the Smith Family, YMCA NSW, Sydney Alliance, MYAN NSW, YFoundations, the Advocate for Children and Young People, CREATE Foundation, DVNSW, Teachers Federation of NSW, UNICEF Australia, Western Sydney University, Australian Progress, and City of Sydney. We also met with advisors to the following ministers: Hazzard, Baird, Piccoli, Faruqi, Foley and Burney.

Media and Communications

MEDIA

Youth Action has had another great year of media coverage. We have also focussed on building relationships with reputable broadcasters in order to keep important issues on the agenda.



 **46 members** spoke to media through Youth Action

Media highlights include:

- **34 media pieces** on our Agenda for Action report
- **16 media pieces** on our report regarding Domestic Violence and young people
- **47 mentions** around our call for 'sexting' law reforms in NSW and Australia wide
- Coverage spanning international, national and local outlets including The Project, Marie Claire, Triple J HACK, ABC 24 News, The Australian, Channel 10, ABC Radio, 2GB, Kiis FM, Hills News, BuzzFeed, Junkee, Huffington Post and many more.

WEBSITE

In November 2015 Youth Action launched a new website. The design was intended to be simpler to navigate and it was also a chance for us to review the value of some of the content on the previous site.

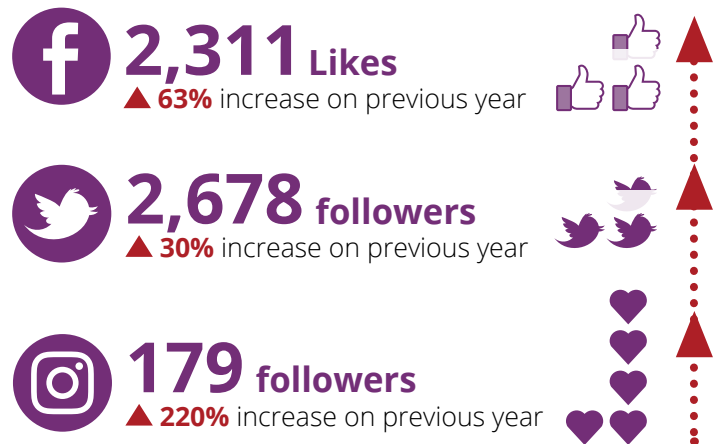


42,688 site visits
▲ **7%** increase on previous year



SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media has played a key role for engaging young people and building our visibility across NSW.



PUBLICATIONS AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

After review, Youth Action has discontinued *Unleash* in its previous format. New pathways for promoting the stories of young people are currently being developed. We also redeveloped our sector newsletter, yaprap.



