

YOUTH ACTION **ANNUAL REPORT** **2018-2019**

ABOUT YOUTH ACTION

Youth Action is the peak organisation representing 1.4 million young people in NSW and youth services that support them. 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:

Respond to social and political agendas relating to young people and the youth service sector.

Provide proactive leadership and advocacy to shape the agenda on issues affecting young people and youth services.

Collaborate on issues that affect young people and youth workers.

Promote a positive profile in the media and the community of young people and youth services.

Build capacity for young people to speak out and take action on issues that affect them.

Enhance the capacity of the youth services sector to provide high quality services.

Ensure Youth Action's organisational development, efficiency, effectiveness and good governance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Youth Action acknowledges and pays respect to the traditional owners of the land, past and present and future, across NSW. We are committed to a positive future for Aboriginal young people and their communities. The Youth Action office is located upon the land of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, and we acknowledge their traditional custodianship.



Youth Action

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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



For almost 40 years, Youth Action has been advocating for young people and youth services to ensure NSW is a place where young people are valued, engaged and supported.

This past year has been no different. Among my highlights was the launch of the Take Action website. A key to empowering the voices of young people is making available the tools necessary to support effective advocacy and this site provides young people across the state a reliable and easy to use guide to affect change on the things that matter to them. Ahead of the election, we also released a detailed publication "A NSW for Young People: Beyond 2019 report" capturing the thoughts and issue most important to the youth sector. This enabled

us to engage all parties across the political divide during the NSW Election to ensure issues impacting young people were on everyone's agenda. My final highlight to share was the opening of the Beyond Stereotype's 3D Mural in Parramatta. Combining graffiti art and augmented reality, this art installation is a dynamic piece of youth engagement open to everyone to experience.

All our achievements throughout the year rely on the support of young people and youth services. Key to Youth Action's success is the dedication and commitment of staff, the support of funders and partners, and the generosity of our volunteer Board. Truly a team effort.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tamika Worrell'.

Tamika Worrell
Chairperson

CEO'S REPORT



This has been 'the year of advocacy' for Youth Action. With both a state and federal election during the year, we spent a great deal of time seeking feedback from the youth sector on the critical challenges facing young people in NSW to take to politicians and

advisors from all sides of politics. Our report "A NSW for Young People: Beyond 2019" set the election agenda for engaging on issues and provided a solid platform for advocating on the youth sector.

The Youth Action team also participated in a series of grass roots events in the lead up to the elections. One that stands out for me was the Take Action workshop in the Bega electorate which featured over 45 young people participating in a Q and A session on issues that mattered to them with a sitting member and two candidates.

While we asked for much more than has been committed to young people and the youth sector so far, it is important to celebrate the fact that out of these two elections, for the first time in over a decade, we have both a Minister for (Regional) Young People in NSW and a Federal Minister for Youth.

Youth Action has welcomed change with many new faces joining our team. This has given us the capacity to bring new approaches to youth services and young people in NSW.

I want to thank my team for their support and focus on making the interests of young people the core of everything we do. There is no doubt the year ahead will hold challenges, yet I am confident Youth Action is well placed to ensure young people and the youth sector continue to feel supported, engaged and valued.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Katie Acheson'.

Katie Acheson
CEO

STAFF AND BOARD

CURRENT STAFF



Katie Acheson
Chief Executive
Officer



Jacqui McKenzie
Policy and
Advocacy Manager



Chris Andrew
Operations
Manager



Kelly Royds
Policy and
Advocacy Manager



Freya Conomos
Youth Sector
Development
Manager



Krissy Stapleton
Western Sydney
Coordinator



Ruth Waterman
Project
Coordinator



Victoria Brown
Events Coordinator
– What's Up West



Lisa Huynh
Administration
Assistant

PAST



Chris Marcatili
Operations
Coordinator



**Courtney
McCloud**
Communications
Coordinator



Angus Megarrity
Youth
Development Lead



Imogen D'Souza
Research Officer



Alice Rummery
Policy and
Advocacy Officer

YOUTH ACTION BOARD

- **Tamika Worrell**
(Chairperson)
- **Francis Dreyer**
(Deputy Chairperson)
- **Chris Brereton**
(Treasurer)
- **Lakin Agnew**
(Secretary)
- **Peter Hope**
- **Tilly South**
- **Penny Lamaro**
- **Alex Long**
- **Rowena Tran**
- **Todd Pinkerton**

INTERNS AND CADETS

This year we worked with 6 young people through our internship program. Our interns worked alongside Youth Action staff and gained valuable policy and advocacy work experience. A huge thank you to the following intern superstars:

- Annie Renouf
- Dippie Dhillon
- Ursula Aczel
- Cassie Ngunah
- Marco Stojanovik
- Zarene Catacutan

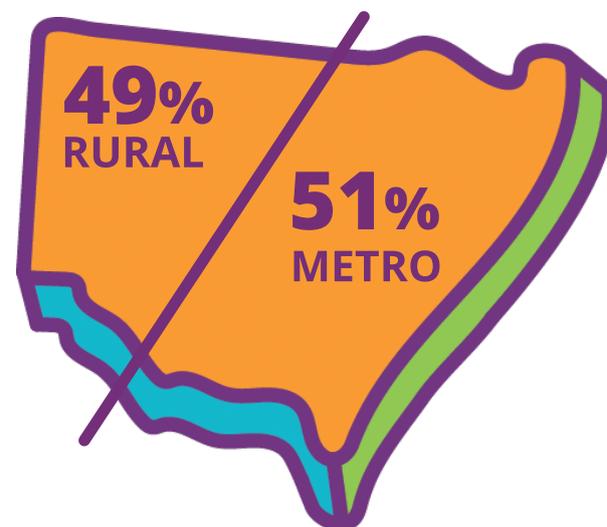
MEMBERSHIP

Our members are at the core of what we do. Representing a diverse range of young people, services, organisations, and individuals from across NSW makes us a strong and productive peak body.

WHO OUR MEMBERS ARE



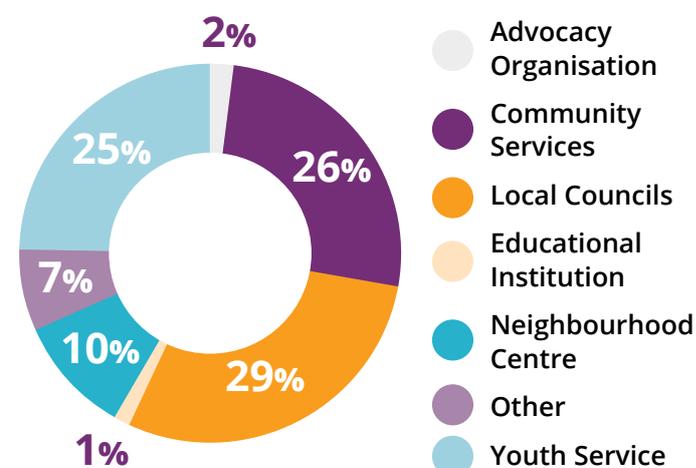
WHERE OUR MEMBERS ARE FROM



WHAT OUR MEMBERS SAY



DIVERSE ORGANISATIONS MAKE UP OUR LIST



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND SECTOR SUPPORT

Our work this year went across representing NSW youth services to all political parties ahead of the NSW 2019 Election to building on youth worker networks and developing resources for the youth sector to support engagement with young people with a disability.

PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS:

- **Local Government Youth Development Network**
Youth Action host a quarterly Local Government Youth Development Network. These meetings provide an opportunity for Youth Development's Officers from local councils to connect, share ideas and learn from each other.
- **Western Sydney Youth Sector Network**
The group engaged actively this year, involving youth workers, health workers and staff from tertiary institutions from across Greater Western Sydney. Quarterly meetings were held with 70 attendees.

CAPE PROJECT

The CAPE NSW project builds on previous iterations of All Together Now's work building social cohesion by engaging young people at risk of engaging in far-right extremism to undermine recruitment by white nationalists. The CAPE project's new focus is NSW is to build the capacity of frontline workers who work with young people to better recognise and identify when vulnerable young people might be at risk of engaging with far-right extremist narratives or being recruited by far-right extremist groups, and to respond and take action.

REGIONAL VISITS

We visited a number of regional areas this year, from Wagga Wagga, Byron Bay, Bathurst, and Wollongong. We met with local services, consulted with local young people around our health and disability projects, and heard about the great work happening in these areas. We look forward to visiting more areas in the next year.

CREATING ACCESS

Along with our project partner People with Disability Australia (PWDA), Creating Access addresses the barriers young people with disability face to accessing services. Consulting with young people with disability and youth workers, we found:

1 in 2 young people with disability said information about the service was hard to understand and was a barrier they experienced when trying to access a youth service

- **100% of young people with disability** who had accessed youth services, had faced accessibility barriers
- **Only 1 in 5 young people with disability** said if they couldn't access a service, they would contact the organisation for support or adjustments
- **56% of young people** said they were not very confident raising concerns about something they are not happy with at a youth service

The pilot project supported 7 youth services across Sydney and regional NSW to become more accessible. These services developed action plans to increase their services accessibility. The learnings from the project will be shared with youth and community services in the coming year.



YOUTH WORK AWARDS

The Youth Work Awards were a sell-out celebration in 2018, highlighting the incredible work done in the youth sector. With 157 nominations across ten categories, it was our biggest night yet recognising contributions to the health, safety, and wellbeing of young people in NSW.

Nominees are listed below, with winners listed in **bold**.

Outstanding Work With Regional Young People

- APM Youth Employment Program
- Axis Youth Centre
- Cowra Information & Neighbourhood Centre Inc (CINC) - Youth Connect
- Miyay Birray Youth Service
- Total College
- **WAGS The Dog Program**

NSW Youth Sector Volunteer of the Year

- Kane Alkoraghooli
- Joshua Gavellas
- Patrick Gleeson
- Jennifer Goodyer
- Thanh Luong
- Lauren McKenzie
- **Graeme Moore**
- Saba Nabi
- **George Najarian – highly commended**
- Syed Haris Omar
- Emily Paul
- Jessica Szakacs

NSW Youth Service of the Year

- **2Connect Youth and Community – highly commended**
- APM Youth Employment
- **BackTrack Youth Works**
- Blacktown Youth Services Association
- Business Education Network (the BEN)
- Caretakers Cottage Youth Crisis Refuge
- Emerton Youth Centre
- Engadine District Youth Services
- Fighters Against Child Abuse Australia
- Inner West Youth Homelessness Service
- Marist 180
- Miyay Birray Youth Service
- Mosman Youth Services
- Mountains Youth Services
- Oasis Youth Support Network – Salvation Army
- Regional Youth Support Services
- Shopfront Arts Co-op
- Singleton Youth Services
- Skillsroad
- Stepping Stone House
- Sydney Drug Education & Counselling Centre

NSW Youth Worker of the Year

- Salmeen Al Haider
- Loren Arnott
- Debbie Clifford
- Glen Crump
- Richard De Martin
- Fernando Drogo
- **Laura Eason – highly commended**
- Fatina Elabd
- Maddy Forwood
- Etienne Gilbert
- Nadia Graham
- Angela Hahn
- Brooklyn Hawkins
- Matt Hooey
- Phillip James
- Dotty Lamaro
- Paul Longobardi
- Christopher Manoski
- Bede Ohuoha
- Leonard Perelini
- Leighton Pollard
- Marcus Potter
- Jemma Richards
- Tracey Russell
- Kylie Sharp
- Viliami Sika
- **Tarissa Staker**
- Keira Taggart
- Blake Tatafu
- Jesica Varela
- Michelle Williams
- Eliza Zanusso

Outstanding Partnership

- Building a Bridge to High School Project
- Drop Zone
- Miyay Birray Youth Service
- Multicultural LGBTQIA+ Support Directory
- RYDON
- **STARTTS Swimming Program**
- Street Smart Project
- Telopea Youth Connections
- The Common Misfits – LGBTQIA+ group
- Young Humanitarians Project
- Youth Insearch / Joblink Plus
- Youth Voice



NSW YOUTH WORK AWARDS 2018



Outstanding Use of Data

- **Burn Bright**
- Fairfield City Council with Andrew Cummings Training and Consultancy
- Mission Australia NSW Specialist Homelessness Youth Services
- Singleton Youth Services and Singleton Council
- Stepping Stone House

Outstanding Work with Aboriginal Young People

- Bularri Muurlay Nyanggan
- Clontarf Foundation
- **Gamarada DBT Skills Coaching**
- Leader in Development – Apollo House
- Miyay Birray Youth Service
- Street Smart Project
- Wings Drop In Centre
- Yaama Aboriginal Programs

Outstanding Work with Diverse Young People

- Belmore Youth Resource Centre
- Headspace – Camperdown
- Holroyd Youth Services
- **City of Sydney's International Student Leadership and Ambassador Program**
- Macquarie Undergraduate Research Internship Program
- Multicultural Neighbourhood Centre Youth Project
- Multicultural Youth Affairs Network
- Nelio Sam
- Planet X Youth Centre / North Sydney Council
- RYSS Early Intervention Team
- STARTTS – Sporting Linx
- Tree of Life
- YESgroup – Western Area Adolescent Team
- YMCA NSW Youth Parliament
- Youthblock Youth Health Service

Outstanding Youth Participation

- **2018 Youth Week Co-Design Process in Parramatta**
- 2Connect Youth & Community
- Burn Bright
- Camden Youth Council's Paws for a Second Initiative
- City of Canterbury Bankstown – Community Engagement
- Cumberland Council
- Fairfield City Council
- Humans of Blacktown – Blacktown Youth Advisory Committee
- Ku-ring-gai Youth Services – Refugee Week Event
- Refugee Youth Peer Mentoring Program
- Sydney Pacifica – Pacific Youth Leadership Program
- Sydney Youth Music
- Youth Insearch Foundation
- Youth Off the Streets – Cultural Support Team

Lifetime Achievement Award

- Lakin Agnew
- **Shane Brown**
- Justin Burke
- Kim Bush
- Natalie Chiappazzo
- **Charlie Coorey**
- Glen Crump
- Kim Janssen
- Samantha King
- Kim Lenard
- Tanya Merrick Powell
- Jim Wood

ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

To ensure the voices of young people are included in conversations that impact them, we collaborate through consultations, information-sharing and training. This work helps young people share their stories and take action on issues that they care about.

Outburst! Western Sydney Youth Action Group:

Outburst! Western Sydney Youth Action Group takes action on issues that affect young people in Greater Western Sydney. It's a group of passionate young people active in their local communities and committed to making Western Sydney a better place for young people. Membership is for young people aged 12 to 25 years who live, work, or study in the Greater Western Sydney. *Outburst!* Is made up of 24 fantastic young people and 3 volunteers who participated in 10 meetings throughout the year.

Training and youth participation: A number of opportunities have been created over the year for young people to be involved in our work and we worked with a range of other organisations to increase youth engagement in local communities.

- Youth Advocacy training in St Johns Park High School, Match Works, Youth Off the Streets, Women's March Sydney and Syd West Multicultural Services
- Internship program led by Policy and Advocacy Managers
- Opportunity to speak to the media on key issues
- Internal Youth Action operational involvement such as sitting on the board, recruitment, MC at events and judging panels
- Consultations about What's Up West including Bankstown Youth Council and *Outburst!* Youth Action Group



YOUNG WOMEN LEAD



15

young women based in Greater Western Sydney developed their social change and leadership competencies

5

workshops delivered

8

guest speakers featured

The Young Women Lead Western Sydney (YWLWS) program was delivered in partnership with Meredith Turnbull Coaching & Consulting to create a supportive network of younger women committed to leading effectively within the Greater Western Sydney community.

ASK FOR HEALTH - YOUTH HEALTH LITERACY PROJECT

55

young people consulted to find out what information they want from a health website

2

project reference group meetings



Young people and youth workers from across the state told us that the health system was confusing and that it was hard to find clear and trustworthy information online. With support from the NSW Ministry of Health, we spent the year developing a new web resource "Ask for Health" to provide young people with information, tools and support to help them navigate the health system. In the next year, we will be launching the website and supporting youth workers to assist young people use the resource.

A NSW FOR YOUNG PEOPLE: BEYOND 2019

In the lead up to the NSW election, Youth Action worked with young people and those in the community to call on political leaders to make 10 fundamental changes to make NSW a better place for young people.

We called on all parties to:

1. Reintroduce real representation of young people in government
2. Improve mental health outcomes for young people
3. Protect young people and care leavers in NSW to grow up healthily, happily and safely
4. Enable all young people to have a safe and affordable place to call home
5. Create an education system that equips young people for their future
6. Achieve excellent and affordable post school pathways
7. Change the story on youth unemployment
8. Make NSW a safe state for young people
9. Keep young people out of prison and make sure it is safe for young people
10. Resource a joined-up NSW Youth Development sector to be accessible to all young people

Through government relations in Sydney, media engagement and community actions in local areas Youth Action were able to see some significant commitments for young people.

CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS?

- **Launched our election platform:** A NSW for Young People Beyond 2019, sent to over 3000 stakeholders across NSW, including Ministers, members of parliament, candidates, members and young people.
- **Briefed ministers, members of parliament and candidates across NSW,** and received pledges to support young people
- **284 emails sent to candidates** across NSW by Youth Action members and stakeholders in the electorate
- **116 people signed** Youth Action's petition to call on the next NSW government to take action for young people in NSW
- **45 young people in the bega electorate** took part 'Take Action' advocacy workshop and then spoke directly to their candidates
- **Our CEO spoke on the DRUM, Triple j Hack and also co-authored a piece** on the Conversation about why the youth vote matters in election.

WHAT WAS OUR IMPACT?

Youth Action secured a number of commitments from NSW Labor, the NSW Liberal and National Coalition as well as the NSW Greens. With the election of a Berejiklian Government here are some of the wins for young people:

✓ Representation of young people

- Minister for Regional Young People
- Shadow Minister for Youth

✓ Improve mental health outcomes for young people

- **\$88 million** for 100 additional full-time school counsellors
- **350 student support officers**
- **\$4.2 million** to pilot a youth aftercare program targeting young people with an identified risk of suicide

✓ Enable all young people to have a safe and affordable place to call home

- **\$61 million** over four years to implement a homelessness strategy.
- **\$1 billion** for homelessness services over the next four years to support vulnerable people

✓ Achieve excellent and affordable post school pathways

- **\$285.2 million** over six years to fund 100,000 fee-free apprenticeships
- **a new \$80 million TAFE campus** for Western Sydney, and a new campus on the North Coast.
- **Commitment included the expansion of Productivity Bootcamp** in Western Sydney and South Coast.

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

This year was critical in bringing together the expertise and experiences of young people and the youth sector to advocate to all political parties for a better NSW.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **45 young people** from across the NSW south coast region came together to pitch their issues to 3 major candidates in the Bega electorate head of the NSW election.
- **9 major reports**, research papers and submissions
- **36 meetings** with MPs, politicians and government departments
- **NSW 2019 Election policy tracker** of youth issues addressed by Coalition, Labor and Greens
- **2 youth advocacy events** empowering young people to engage with decision makers
- **1 online tool** to support youth-led advocacy and projects.

TAKE ACTION

Young people want to make their world a better place but too often experience many barriers before they have a chance to get started.

When we asked young people what would help, they told us they wanted **clear information** and **more ideas for ways to act**, without always relying on adults to for help.

So we invested in young people, and with young people, we created Take Action. Take Action is a new online tool that backs up young people so they can take their passion and turn it into action.

Take Action is a simple, easy to use and gets young people started. It steps users through three sections:

- Things to know: how to use Take Action, Advocacy Explained and Government Explained
- Information on some of the key issues young people told us they care about
- Ideas for making change

It uses a mixture of videos, graphics and text in order to keep everyone tuned in, so it's not all reading.

take-action.org.au/



POLICY & SUBMISSIONS

- Submission to Youth Diversionary Programs
- Submission into the Federal Inquiry into Lowering the Voting Age
- Submission to Inquiry into Jobactive
- Inequality in Australia: A Young Person's Perspective
- A NSW for Young People: Beyond 2019
- Submission to the Their Futures Matters
- Submission to the Melbourne Declaration
- Submission to the special Commission of Inquiry into Ice
- NSW 2019 budget analysis
- Federal 2019 Budget analysis

MEETINGS WITH MP'S, CANDIDATES AND DEPARTMENTS

- Minister Andrew Constance, former Minister for Transport
- Minister Bronnie Taylor, Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women and her Chief of Staff and advisers
- Minister Gareth Ward, Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services and his advisers
- The Hon. Penny Sharpe, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council
- Chris Bowen MP, and his advisers, former Federal Shadow Treasurer
- Terri Butler MP and her advisers, former Federal Shadow Minister for Youth
- Stephen Bali, MP
- Julie Owens, MP
- Jenny Leong MP
- Abigail Boyd MLC
- Dr Joe McGirr MP
- Advisers to the Premier Gladys Berejiklian
- Adviser to Minister David Elliot, former Minister for Corrections
- Adviser to former Minister Tanya Davies
- Adviser to Deputy Premier John Barilaro, Minister for Regional Development, Minister for Small Business and Minister for Skills
- Chief of Staff and an adviser to Minister Sarah Mitchell, Minister for Early Childhood Education and Education
- City of Parramatta Lord Mayor Clr Andrew Wilson
- Michael Coutts-Trotter, Secretary for NSW Department of Communities and Justice
- Gary Groves, Executive Director, Their Futures Matter
- NSW Electoral Commission
- Australian Government Department of Jobs and Small Business

- Advocate for Children and Young People
- NSW Mental Health Commission
- NSW Department of Health
- NSW Department of Industry
- NSW Department of Communities and Justice, formerly Families and Community Services
- Asren Pugh, candidate for Ballina
- Ursula Stephens, candidate for Goulburn
- Patrick Farmer, candidate for Maroubra
- Amanda Keeling, candidate for Ku-Ring-Gai
- Elly Howse, candidate for Balmain
- Lara Quealy candidate for Dubbo
- Lucy Mannering candidate for Oatley
- Mick Holton, candidate for Monaro
- Will Douglas, candidate for Bega
- Leanne Atkinson, candidate for Bega

CAMPAIGN PARTNER WITH:

- A Safe State
- Every Child Matters
- Everybody's Home
- Home Stretch
- Make Renting Fair
- NSW Pro-Choice Alliance
- Raise the Rate
- Stand By Me

COMMITTEES, PANELS CONFERENCES AND WORKING GROUPS

- Advocate for Children and Young People's Violence Against Children Committee
- Association of Children's Welfare Agencies Education OOHCA Advisory Group Forum
- Association of Children's Welfare Agencies Transitions to Independence Forum (TIF)
- Australia and New Zealand Youth Peaks Meeting
- Australian Child Rights Taskforce
- Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) – Consumer Consultative Committee Meeting
- Australian Taxation Office 'vulnerable groups' research
- Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards NSW, Board Endorsed Alternative Education Programs Panel
- COMPACT Alliance
- Department of Community and Justice (formerly Family and Community Services) Safety and Permanency Executive Group
- Department of Finance Social Innovation Council
- Forum of Non-Government Agencies (FONGA)
- Greater Sydney Commission Social Peaks Briefing
- International Day of the Girl, Conference Planning

- Joint Protocol on Out-Of-Home-Care Steering Committee
- Just Reinvest NSW Strategic Committee
- National Respectful Relationships Education Expert Group Meeting
- NCOSS Post-Budget Breakfast
- NSW Budget Lock-Up
- NSW Collaboration on Primary Prevention of Gender Based Violence
- NSW Department of Industry Vocational Education and Training Consultative Forum
- NSW Pro-Choice Alliance
- NSW Women's Alliance
- Productivity Commission Round Table on Mental Health
- SafeWork NSW Stakeholder Forum
- Smart, skilled and hired Local Advisory Committee meeting
- South West Sydney Prevention and Early Intervention Governance Group
- Sydney Collaborative Practice Management Group
- Symposium: Youth Work and other professions in University
- Targeted Earlier Intervention Reform Central Council
- Their Futures Matter
- UNICEF Australia's NSW Youth Summit on Living with Drought Advisory Group
- Western Sydney Nepean Blue Mountains Targeted Earlier Intervention Reference Group
- Womens March Sydney – Youth Forum
- YMCA Youth Parliament
- Youth Justice Coalition
- ZEST Awards 2019 Judging Panel

ONGOING PARTICIPATION WITH PARTNER ORGANISATIONS AND GROUPS

- Aboriginal Child, Family and Community Care State Secretariat (ABSEC NSW)
- Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC)
- CREATE NSW
- DV NSW
- FAMS
- Homelessness NSW
- Local Community Services Association (LCSA)
- Local Government Youth Development Network (Youth Action Lead)
- Multicultural Youth Affairs Network (MYAN)
- NCOSS
- Yfoundations
- YMCA NSW

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

MEDIA

Our media presence is an important part of our strategic goal of putting youth issues on the agenda. With both a State and Federal election, the need to amplify the voices of young people and the youth sector was even more critical to feed into the policy decisions of all political parties. Having a strong media profile means that Youth Action is well placed to deliver the messages we receive from young people, members and the broader youth sector.

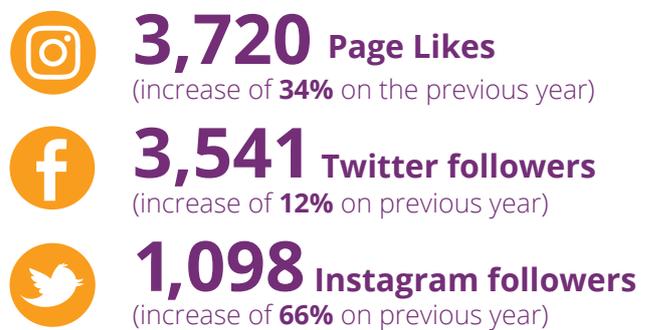


Media highlights include:

- 25 media pieces placing youth on the agenda during **State and Federal Elections**
- 3 media features on the **Beyond Stereotypes 3D mural in Parramatta**
- 4 media pieces on the importance of **youth advocacy**
- 6 stories on the **challenges faced by young people seeking affordable housing**

SOCIAL MEDIA

Youth Action's social media channels continue to strengthen and evolve as important communication streams. This year we have seen significant increases in engagement and with subscribers across all platforms. Social media continues to be a key forum to engage young people, service providers and policy makers while building our visibility and reputation across NSW.



PUBLICATIONS AND YAPRAP



WEBSITE



Young People in Greater Western Sydney **BEYOND STEREOTYPES** **3D MURAL LAUNCH**



The Beyond Stereotypes project was born out of the What's Up West Conference in 2017. Young people told us about experiences of being wrongly stereotyped because they were from Western Sydney. Even in the media today, these stereotypes are outdated.

This meant that young people felt they had to do things to hide where they lived. Young people from Western Sydney felt they were being dismissed and their voices weren't heard. This was particularly felt among young women, those who identify with the LGBTQI+ community, Arab speaking young people, and Aboriginal youth.

1. Young people believe in **the people** of Western Sydney as they are welcoming and accepting
2. **Community**, the Western Sydney community is connected, supportive and friendly
3. **Culture**, the West celebrates and values diversity. Acceptance is a common theme, not only of ethnicity, but also of gender and sexual orientation and different viewpoints and
4. **Place**, young people love the uniqueness of Western Sydney, they said that it is unlike any other place in NSW.

After the conference in 2017, Youth Action put out a survey and asked young people "what makes you smile about living in Western Sydney?" 800 plus responses in the Beyond Stereotypes report found four main things young people loved about living in Western Sydney.

Hearing these stories from young people, as well as seeing the themes emerge from the survey, Youth Action ran two major projects; the Young Women Lead program, and a partnership with the City of Parramatta and Street Art Mural Association to install a 23m long mural in an alley in Parramatta.

With the City of Parramatta's support, augmented reality by the Imagin Room was overlaid on the mural and an app created to access the "virtual" stories behind the project and understand the key themes found in the Beyond Stereotypes survey through stories and videos.

The mural was launched during Youth Week in April, 2019. The Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Cr Andrew Wilson opened the night while other dignitaries joined us to celebrate, including Julie Owens, MP for Parramatta and Julia Finn, MP for Granville.

The Beyond Stereotypes 3D Mural amplifies the voices of young people and sends a clear message to young people in Western Sydney that they are welcome and valued in the space.

