



Media Release

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Inclusion of young people and youth sector in decision making processes vital to overcome COVID-19 economic tsunami.

New data from a jointly commissioned report shows the economic, educational and social impacts of COVID-19 will have a significant and lasting effect on the lives and livelihoods of young people in NSW. The youth sector has stepped up to respond to the challenge.

The Equity Economics 'A Wave of Disadvantage across NSW: Impact of the COVID-19 Recession' report commissioned by NSW peak social services bodies examines five areas impacted by disadvantage: housing, domestic violence, child protection, mental health and education.

While young people are affected across each of these domains, points of particular concern are:

- **36,085 additional young people to join existing 1 in 4 young people experiencing poor mental health across NSW** with the biggest impact felt by young females. **An increase in death by suicide is anticipated by 11.5 per cent**, an additional 105 suicides a year.
- Mean **NAPLAN scores in Year 9 maths to fall by 4 per cent in 2021** compared to 2019 results, including those with a high proportion of **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to fall over 6 per cent**.
- The Unemployment rate for NSW will peak at **9.5 per cent in January 2021** with almost **double that expected for young people**.
- **130,000 new university graduates to enter worst job market in decades**. These graduates face less jobs, less earning potential and more competition.

Research provides compelling evidence of the societal benefits for greater participation of young people in decision making processes that affect them. Young people and the youth sector have shown incredible resilience during this challenging year and are best placed to lead a positive recovery.

Youth Action CEO, Kate Munro said that while it is known that universally young people will bear the brunt of the economic impacts of the pandemic, improving decision-making processes in NSW by utilising the expertise of young people and the youth sector's lived experience, will lead to better policies benefiting all and ensuring a positive future for the state.

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“The youth sector has a long history of providing vital services and supports in the areas identified in this report. Throughout the pandemic these have become essential services to ensure young people don’t get left behind. There is an opportunity to learn from the wisdom of both the sector and young people about what works to build an efficient, responsive community services system to tackle the challenges ahead.” Ms Munro said.

“The situation is even more confronting for young people who were doing it tough before COVID-19. Those experiencing homelessness, living in poverty, disengaged from education and employment, or with family experiences of trauma, as well as those from socially excluded groups, such as young people with disability, and young people from First Nations and culturally diverse backgrounds.”

“There are many great examples of evidence-based services and programs that with additional investment can rise to meet the increased demand.”

“Young people are engaged, passionate and educated about politics and they are asking to be included in meaningful policy formulation to help improve outcomes for their futures and society as a whole.”

End.

[Access the full report here.](#)

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Youth Action CEO Kate Munro available for media requests.

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