

NSW Youth Advisory Council

***Annual Report
2019-2020***

Office of the Advocate for Children & Young People

Ground Floor, 219-241 Cleveland Street
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

Contents

3.

Foreword

4.

Role of the Council

5.

Administration of the Council

6. Recruitment of the council

7. Membership of the council

8.

Work of the Council

8. Summary of meetings

13. Participation and co-design of events, projects and activities

16. Advice given to ACYP

18. Advice give to external agencies

Foreword

It is with great pleasure to present the 2019-2020 NSW Youth Advisory Council Annual Report. The Council has fulfilled its function as set out in the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014 No 29. This is reflected throughout this report and the variety of activities that the council have been a part of during our term on the NSW YAC throughout 2019-2020 in conjunction with the hard work of the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People.

I would like to thank the members for their work and for the roles they have all played in committing to ensure that we are able to speak on behalf of all children and young people in NSW.

In 2019-2020, the YAC have provided advice to the Government and other agencies in the development and implementation of various policies, programs and initiatives that will continue to affect the lives of children and young people in NSW.

We appreciate your continued support and commitment to working alongside Children and Young People in NSW.



Emily Backhouse
2019 Youth Advisory Council Chair

Role of the Council

The NSW Youth Advisory Council (YAC) is established under the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014. The Council provides young people with the opportunity to participate in the development and consultation of Government policy that concern them.

The Council's functions under the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014 are:

1

Advising the Minister and the Advocate on Government policies and programs concerning young people;

2

Consulting with young people, community groups and Government agencies on issues and policies concerning young people;

3

Monitoring and evaluating legislation, Government policies and programs concerning young people and recommending changes if required;

4

Conducting forums, approved by the Minister, on issues of interest to young people;

5

Providing the Minister and the Advocate with information on issues and policies concerning young people.

Administration of the Council

The Hon. Raymond Williams, MP, Minister responsible for Youth, administered the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014 from January 2017 to April 2019.

The Hon. Bronwyn Taylor, MLC, Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women, and The Hon. Gareth Ward, MP Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services administered the Advocate for Children and Young People Act 2014 from April 2019 to present.

Administration support for the Council was provided by the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People (ACYP). Council members will have met on eleven occasions during their 2019-2020 term:



9/10 February
2019



31 March
2019



5 May
2019



16 June
2019



4 August
2019



22 September
2019



27 October
2019



1 December
2019



2 February
2020



3 May
2020



12 July
2020

Recruitment of the Council

The 2019 Council was appointed following a recruitment day at NSW Parliament House which included 150 children and young people from across NSW. Those in attendance were carefully selected from over 1,000 online applications and were brought together to determine their ability to work meaningfully and collaboratively in a group environment.

The Hon. Ray Williams MP, Minister responsible for Youth attended to encourage hard work and participation on the day and to congratulate applicants. Attendees received training on advocacy and information about the role of the Youth Advisory Council from the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People, Mr Andrew Johnson.

Attendees worked in groups to answer consultation questions about the future of education. Following discussion, groups reported back and presented their recommendations to the Advocate for Children and Young People, Mr Andrew Johnson.



Membership of the Council

The current members of the NSW Youth Advisory Council have been appointed under the Advocate for Children & Young People Act 2014.



Ms Emily Backhouse (Chair)

Mt Annan

20



Mr Lukian Adams

Glebe

17



Ms Isha Ahmad

Oakhurst

15



Ms Taunoa Bugmy

Broken Hill

24



Ms Julie Charlton

Dural

19



Mr Luke McNamara

Turrumurra

14



Mr Tyrell Neergaard

Ballina

13



Ms Vanessa Nguyen

Ruse

17



Mr Jayden Redfern

Terrigal

13



Mr Hamani Tanginoa

Camden

17



Mr Ashish Thapa

Orange

17



Ms Khyati Walia

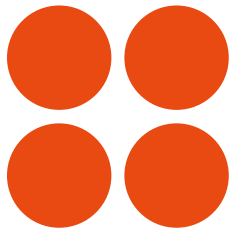
Ashfield

13

Work of the Council

summary of meetings

9th & 10th February 2019



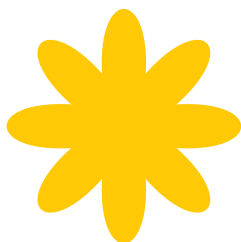
The first YAC meeting began with an introduction to ACYP's expectations and reviewing the YAC Code of Conduct. The Hon. Ray Williams, MP, the Minister responsible for youth, joined part of the meeting and introduced himself. YAC members were given the chance to ask the Minister questions about the YAC. Members also discussed their passions and what motivated them to join the YAC. Members then had the opportunity to review and discuss the NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People, ACYP's work, as well as the soon to be launched Our Local website. Members discussed about the Participation Conference, and MC arrangements were made. They were also trained by the Advocate in facilitation and what to do if problems arose. The ACYP app and the "Roots" anti-bullying program were then introduced to the YAC. Finally, the YAC were filmed for a promotional video about Youth Week 2019.

31st March 2019



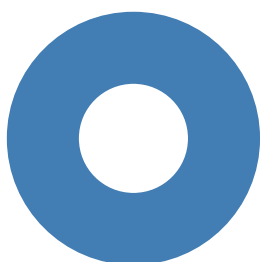
YAC members began with a debriefing on the Participation Conference which they had facilitated. Then, they discussed the upcoming Youth Week Forum and how to facilitate the event. Members then provided feedback on consultation activities for UNCRC General Comment on Children and Digital Media. In Hot Topics, many issues were brought up, including the recent School Strike for Climate and the National Action Plan for Health of Children and Young People, among others. Then, the YAC reviewed the anti-bullying program which was introduced at the last meeting and they reviewed the trial which was to be implemented in selected schools.

5th May 2019



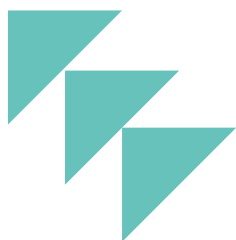
At the May meeting, the YAC discussed the policy briefs on alcohol consumption and illicit substance intake of young people in NSW as well as the National Action Plan for Health of Children and Young People. Hot Topics included mental health being acknowledged as an issue, the language used about children and young people in the national election, climate change protests and road safety issues and programs e.g. No Fatality Friday. The YAC co-designed visual components of the new ACYP website and provided further feedback on the anti-bullying project. Members then went to the State Library and were consulted on the library's new learning spaces for children and young people. The YAC also received cultural training from Steve Widders.

16th June 2019



At the June meeting, for Hot Topics, the YAC discussed Stop Adani, the youth mental health and suicide prevention plan, local school responses to bullying, racism in local schools and dance performances that were happening in Juvenile Justice Centres. They watched a video message from Minister Taylor and discussed the draft NSW Regional Youth Strategy. They provided feedback about the Women NSW online resources and engaged in an ACYP consultation about creating child safe organisations. They conferred about events and activities for NSW Children's Week 2019 and about the anti-bullying pilot program, re-named "Shift". The YAC also provided further feedback on the ACYP website and the Our Local website, after which they participated in a consultation by Spark Strategy.

4th August 2019



The YAC meeting began, as usual, with Hot Topics. Members brought up a number of issues in the news, including the introduction of new public transport routes, long travel times for students, and news segments about youth on the television. Then, they reviewed the SafeWork NSW prototype reporting app and discussed about work safety. Then, members who had attended the Solutions Summit to End Violence Against Children and Young People reported back to the rest of the YAC about the event. Members also received child rights training, and discussed the establishment of a regional youth taskforce and consultations with children in Juvenile Justice. The YAC also reviewed the new ACYP website designs and began brainstorming for Youth Week 2020.

22nd September 2019



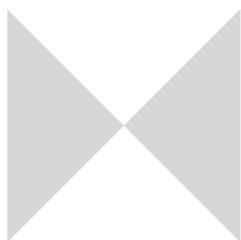
At the September meeting, members discussed a number of different topics. Hot topics that were brought up included another School Strike for Climate, how the budget was only in surplus due to NDIS under spending, and high rates of youth unemployment. The YAC received policy briefs on the NDIS and youth crime, which they discussed. Members who had been to the Melbourne Declaration National Youth Forum about educational goals for young Australians, reported back on the event. The YAC also discussed what elements make video content more appealing to young people. Then, members were consulted about child rights and the ACYP and Our Local landing pages. The YAC also contributed to planning for Children's Week, and reviewed a promotional video for it. The Advocate updated members on the Regional Youth Taskforce, children in detention consultations, and mental health consultations. YAC members also provided feedback on the Youth Week website and the draft ACYP guide on setting up a youth advisory council for organisations.

27th October 2019



At the October meeting, the YAC were updated on the Regional Youth Taskforce and reported on Children's Parliament and the Children's Week Awards. They prepared for a meeting with the Ministers and discussed the ACYP mobile web designs. For Hot Topics, the YAC discussed NDIS, drugs and pill testing and reforms to the education system which included making mathematics compulsory in years 11 -12 but not count towards the HSC and making Aboriginal Studies mandatory from years 7 -10. They conversed about their policy brief about Youth Justice Diversion Programs. After this, they started and worked on the Youth Advisory Council 2019 Annual Report.

1st December 2019



At the December meeting, members discussed Youth Koori Court in hot topics, followed by discussion about their policy briefs on NSW Government responses to climate change and compulsory study of mathematics in years 11 and 12. The YAC were updated on ACYP consultations at Schools Spectacular. YAC members continued planning for Youth Week 2020, making recommendations for the 2020 theme and design competition. Members were then filmed for YAC recruitment and Youth Week promotional videos. The YAC also worked further on their annual report and provided feedback on new concepts and designs for Our Local and Youth Week websites.

As it was the Advocate Andrew Johnson's last meeting, the Chair ran a session allowing members to share their reflections with the Advocate about their time on the YAC and thanked him for the support and guidance he had given them.

2nd February 2020



At the first meeting of 2020, YAC members introduced themselves to the new Advocate for Children and Young People, Zoe Robinson. A variety of hot topics were raised including Greta Thunberg being nominated for a Nobel Peace prize, Indigenous fire management practices and changing the date of Australia Day. YAC members then participated in a consultation for NESA and provided feedback on the proposed changes to the NSW school curriculum. They also provided feedback to Department of Communities and Justice on the usability and design of the Children's Court website. The next session was about NSW bushfires and drought, where members reflected on their own community's experiences and provided feedback on proposed ACYP consultations about disasters. The YAC also reviewed and provided suggestions for a number of other ACYP projects, including the Young Thinking Seminar Series, changes to child rights and advocacy training as well the YAC recruitment event to be held during Youth Week.

3rd May 2020

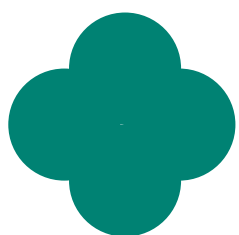


Due to COVID-19 restrictions that were in place, the May meeting was held online. Discussion about coronavirus, its impacts and the COVID Safe app featured in hot topics. YAC members also discussed their policy briefs on the Minimal Age of Criminal Responsibility and fire management practices (back burning and hazard reduction burning).

YAC members then had a session Minister Gareth Ward (Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services). The Minister and YAC members had the opportunity to ask questions and discussed their highlights and priorities for children and young people in NSW.

YAC members then participated in a consultation for a NSW Ministry of Health project with a representative from Sydney Children's Health Network (Westmead). They also provided feedback to ACYP about their proposed online YAC recruitment event; to Department of Education about telepsychology-based school counselling services for students; and to Department of Communities and Justice Review Panel about applications for allocation of technology from young people.

12th July 2020



At the final meeting for the 2019 Council, YAC members discussed the ongoing impacts and challenges facing children and young people due to COVID-19 in Hot Topics. Members also reviewed a designed version of their Annual Report. This was followed by a consultation with Department of Customer Service, where they gave feedback on their experiences of navigating various government and non-government services on their journey of becoming an adult. YAC members then had the opportunity to reflect on their term and shared their learnings with the Advocate. The meeting concluded with a celebratory lunch where the Advocate thanked each member for their contribution and presented a small token of appreciation.

Participation and co-design of events, projects & activities



Participation Conference

In February of 2019, the YAC had the opportunity to facilitate their first conference and to practice their skills in how to run discussion and capture feedback during a consultation. In attendance was over 90 young people and almost 120 adults who participated in discussions and panels surrounding the rights and voices of children and young people.



Youth Week 2019

Youth Week 2019 was the YAC's first major State event, co-designing activities and participating in the largest celebration for people aged between 12 and 24. The Youth Week Forum was held in the Strangers Dining Room of NSW Parliament House on 8th April 2019. 150 children and young people attended the event where the YAC facilitated their table groups to answer a number of consultation questions asked by several NSW Government Departments such as NSW Department of Justice NSW, Women NSW and NSW Health.

The Youth Week Design Competition Awards were given out and the winning designs, printed on slides, were presented to the winners, recognising some influential young people in our society.



Solutions Summit

YAC members MC'd the event. This was an event that focused on ending violence against children and young people. It was a conference for adult decision-makers, with workshops and activities. There were many panel discussions with people in influential positions talking about the issue, as well as a panel of young people. ACYP called upon John Carnochan, a retired police chief from the UK to give the keynote address. The event itself was extremely engaging and informative.



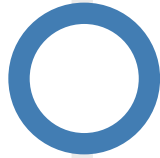
ACYP Website redesign

The ACYP team engaged closely with the YAC to help redesign the ACYP website to make information more accessible and a user-friendly. The YAC also advised on how to make the visuals youth friendly and engaging for children and young people.



Children's Week 2019

YAC members assisted in the planning and design of Children's Week Awards such as reviewing award categories and the shortlist for the creative story writing competition. Members also hosted and presented the awards at the Children's Week Event held at the ACYP office. Some members also participated in Children's Week Parliament held at NSW Parliament House.



Advocate's Farewell

YAC members hosted the farewell event for Andrew Johnson, the outgoing inaugural NSW Advocate for Children and Young People. The event brought together NGOs and government departments to farewell the Advocate and the 2019 YAC Chairperson, Emily Backhouse, thanked him for his contributions on behalf of children and young people and the NSW Youth Advisory Councils over the years.



ACYP Promotional Videos

YAC members were featured in ACYP promotional video content for Youth Week 2019, YAC Recruitment 2020 and Youth Week 2020.



Presentations by YAC members

YAC members gave presentations about the issues their communities each face and how as a YAC and young leaders they are able to make an impact. Two people presented at each meeting giving an insight into the programs, initiatives and issues they have within their communities.



Training

YAC members also had the opportunity to partake in advocacy training, facilitation training and cultural training in order to develop their skills. These were supported by the Advocate, ACYP and Uncle Steve Widders.

Issues put on agenda by YAC members to discuss

Some of the issues YAC members have spoken about and have requested policy briefs about are:



Alcohol consumption and illicit substances



NDIS



Youth crime



National Action Plan for the Health of Children and Young People



Youth justice diversionary programs



NSW Government responses to climate change



Compulsory mathematics in years 11 and 12



Fire management practices – back burning & hazard reduction burns



Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility

Advice given to ACYP



Participation Guide

YAC members found the tips for engagement to be quite relevant and helpful for children and young people to have their voices heard.



Top 10 tips for engaging children and young people

The YAC members were a part of creating the video for top 10 tips on participation with children and young people.



Augmented reality app

YAC members reviewed the app, where they were able to move around the room and listen to what members of the YAC were passionate about.



Anti-Bullying project

YAC members discussed what bullying meant to them, ways to stop bullying and things adults don't understand about bullying.



ACYP Guide to establishing a children and young people's advisory group

This resource was created by ACYP, with consultation from the YAC, to provide a guide to organisations to help develop a youth advisory group. The YAC provided feedback on the important steps to running a successful group.



Child rights posters and website

The YAC provided feedback on content for posters and website about child rights. They shared different views which were feedback to ACYP to include in their planning.



ACYP Disaster Consultations

YAC member provided feedback on ACYP proposed methodology and assisted with wording of consultation questions, as well as making suggestions for sites to visit.



Young Thinking Seminar Series

YAC members suggested topics for future seminars and provided feedback for improving logo and brand name.



YAC online recruitment event

YAC member provided feedback on proposed YAC 2020 recruitment event to be held on an online platform due to COVID-19 Public Health Orders, in lieu of the standard face to face event.



Youth Week Dates 2021

YAC members provided feedback on Youth Week dates for 2021 and recommended a Youth Month to hold events and activities to celebrate the young people of NSW.

Advice given to external agencies



The Hon. Ray Williams, Minister for Youth *19th February 2019*

The YAC met with the Minister responsible for youth, The Hon. Ray Williams, and he welcomed them to the important role. He updated the YAC on the issues the government is working on, such as increasing employment for disability sector as well as removing stigma for mental health and to support Aboriginal communities. Members also discussed with the Minister their passions and what motivated them to join the YAC.



Children and the Digital Environment *31st March 2019*

The YAC provided feedback on consultation workshops for UNCRC general comment on children and digital media the digital environment.



State Library of NSW *5th May 2019*

The YAC met with Pauline Fitzgerald who is a Senior Education Officer at the State Library of NSW, where the YAC provided feedback about the State Library's new learning spaces for children and young people.



Office for Regional Youth *16th June 2019*

The YAC provided feedback on the draft NSW Regional Youth Strategy and suggested improvements to make on the document.



Women NSW
16th June 2019

The YAC provided feedback to Women NSW on the design and messaging of social media posts, for the purpose of raising awareness of online resources supporting young women and girl's online safety.



SafeWork NSW
4th August 2019

The YAC discussed the SafeWork NSW project, and provided feedback on the design of the SafeWork NSW app, suggesting methods to make the app appear more appealing and reliable.



Melbourne Declaration National Youth Forum
13th September 2019

YAC members were given the opportunity to attend The Melbourne Declaration National Youth Forum where they had the chance to have their say on the country's education system and the re-signing of the Melbourne Education Declaration. The YAC mingled with inspiring youth from across the country about issues surrounding education at all levels and how these areas can be improved. Then the youth were given the chance to ask questions to each state's education minister to see what each state's education policies are.



Revenue NSW
22nd September 2019

The YAC provided feedback to Revenue NSW on the design and messaging of 'Fines and You' presentation for schools, and commented on changing animations and background music and making it more relatable to the audience.



NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA)
2nd February 2020

YAC members participated in a consultation for NESA around the proposed changes to the NSW school curriculum.



Department of Communities and Justice
2nd February 2020

YAC members provided feedback to the Department of Communities and Justice on the usability and design of the Children's Court website.



Sydney Children's Health Network
3rd May 2020

YAC members participated in a consultation for Sydney Children's Health Network (NSW Ministry of Health) and provided feedback about what social workers can do in a hospital setting to help children and young people safe and supported.



NSW Department of Education
3rd May 2020

YAC members provided feedback to NSW Department of Education about telepsychology-based school counselling services for students.



The Hon. Gareth Ward, Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services
3rd May 2020

YAC members and Minister Ward engaged in open discussion about their priorities for children and young people in NSW.



Department of Customer Service
12th July 2020

YAC members provided feedback to the Life Journeys team at Department of Customer Service about their experiences of navigating various government and non-government services on their journey of becoming an adult.