



NSW Youth Advisory Council

Annual Report 2004

**2004**



NSW YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL  
annual report

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## **YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL**

### **NEW SOUTH WALES**

The Hon Reba Meagher MP  
Minister for Community Services  
Minister for Youth  
Level 37  
Governor Macquarie Tower  
1 Farrer Place  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

21 January 2005

Dear Minister

It gives me great pleasure to present you with the 2004 New South Wales Youth Advisory Council Annual Report.

The Council is committed to directly consulting with young people and increasing young people's participation in the community and government. This commitment is reflected in the variety of Council activities in 2004.

In 2004 the Council liaised with a range of youth organisations and provided advice to the Government in the development and implementation of policies that affect the lives of young people in NSW.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read 'MLF', with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

Mathew Ferguson  
Chair

## **Role of the Council**

The New South Wales Youth Advisory Council (“the Council”) was established in 1989, under the *Youth Advisory Council Act 1989* (“the Act”), to ensure that young people participate in the development of Government policies and programs which 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 persons;
- to consult with young persons, community groups and Government authorities on issues and policies concerning young persons;
- to monitor and evaluate legislation and Government policies and programs concerning young persons, and to recommend changes if required;
- to conduct forums, approved by the Minister, on issues of interest to young persons; and
- to collect, analyse and provide the Minister with information on issues and policies concerning young persons.

## **Administration of the Council**

The Hon Carmel Tebbutt, MLC, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Youth, administered the *Youth Advisory Council Act 1989* during 2004.

On 21 January 2005, the Hon Reba Meagher, MP, was appointed Minister for Community Services and Minister for Youth and now has responsibility for administering the *Youth Advisory Council Act*.

The Office of Children and Young People, in the Cabinet Office, provided secretariat support to the Council. On 1 July 2004, the Office of Children and Young People became part of the Communities Division, in the Department of Community Services. The Communities Division now provides secretariat services to the Council.

## **Membership of the Council**

In 2004 the New South Wales Youth Advisory Council consisted of 12 part-time members appointed by the Minister. It received ex-officio and secretariat support from the Office of Children and Young People, The Cabinet Office, until 30 June 2004, and the Communities Division in the Department of Community Services, from 1 July 2004.

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.

This ensures that young people speak for themselves. Members must have experience, skills and qualifications that will enable them to make a positive contribution to the work of the Council.

Council members are appointed in their own right, rather than as representatives of organisations or groups. Generally the Minister seeks a Council that is broadly representative of young people in New South Wales. In determining Council membership, the Minister seeks a balance of people from metropolitan, regional and rural areas; young men and women; young Aboriginal people; young people from non-English speaking backgrounds; and people with experience in a range of youth and community organisations.

#### **Council members in 2004**

Ms Ebony Allen	Ultimo	Age: 19 years
Ebony is a young Aboriginal woman, from Byron Bay, who is now studying a Bachelor of Laws in Australian Indigenous Studies at the University of Technology, Sydney. Ebony has been involved in a range of voluntary activities in her local community and was the Byron Shire Australia Day Young Citizen of the Year in 2003. Ebony is a member of the Premier's Council for Women and is on the Aboriginal Youth Leadership Project Steering Committee.		

Ms Leah Ashley	Hamilton	Age: 22 years
Leah has a Bachelor of Development Studies (Honours) with research experience on the social justice outcomes of development processes. She is an accredited peer mediator and has worked with the International Youth Parliament. Leah is also a member of the Youth Justice Advisory Committee.		

Ms Ace Boncato	Mt Druitt	Age: 19 years
Ace was a member of her school Student Representative Council for four years before completing her Higher School Certificate in 2003 at Randwick Girls High School. Ace is a member of the Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association Management Committee and the Osteogenesis Imperfecta Society. Through her singing, Ace is involved in a range of fundraising/charity events and other activities. Ace is a member of the Advisory Board to the Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health.		

Mr Mathew Ferguson (Chair)	Northmead	Age: 21 years
Mathew is a member of Parramatta City Council's Youth Advisory Committee and the Foundation for Young Australian's NSW Committee. Mathew is a student at Macquarie University studying Commerce/Marketing and a member of the NSW Youth Interagency Taskforce.		



Mr Reynato Reodica                      Doonside                      Age: 21 years  
Rey is a member of the Board of Management of the Youth Action and Policy Association (the peak non-government youth organisation in NSW) and the Young Spokesperson of the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition. Rey is in his third year of a Communications/Law degree at the University of Technology, Sydney. Rey is also a member of the NSW Website Reference Group and represents the Council at NSW State Student Representative Council meetings.

Mr Xian-Zhi Soon                      Revesby Heights                      Age: 19 years  
Zhi completed his Higher School Certificate at Hurlstone Agricultural High School, Glenfield in 2003. Zhi was a student representative on the Steering Committee managing the Department of Education and Training's Anti-Discrimination project. He is now studying a combined Economics/Arts degree at the University of NSW and is a member of the Arrive alive Grant Advisory Committee.

Mr Brad Welsh                      Newtown                      Age: 23 years  
Brad works as a Community Program Officer with the Department of Community Services in Redfern and is a member of the Metropolitan Aboriginal Land Council. He has been studying for a Bachelor of Welfare at the University of Western Sydney. Brad is also a member of the NSW Website Reference Group.

**Ex-officio member**

Mr Tony Wiseheart, Manager, Youth Policy, Partnership and Participation Team, in the Office of Children and Young People, The Cabinet Office, and then from 1 July 2004, in the Communities Division of the Department of Community Services, was the ex-officio member of the Council.

Secretarial support was provided to the Council by Ms Vanessa Merewether.

**Work of the Council**

In 2004 the Council fulfilled its functions as specified under the Act through a range of activities.

The Council directly consulted with young people by hosting a series of Forums, attending seminars, conferences and meetings, conducting research, representing the Council on committees and inviting Ministers and others to Council meetings.

Following an initial meeting with the then Minister for Youth, the Hon Carmel Tebbutt, MLC, Council established a Work Plan under two broad themes: 'Health, Wellbeing and Safety' and 'Unengaged Young People and Youth Identity'.

Council provided advice to the Minister on a range of issues under these themes including:

<u>Health, Wellbeing &amp; Safety</u>	<u>Unengaged Young People &amp; Youth Identity</u>
Workplace Safety	Young People and their Identity
Community Transport	Participation of Unengaged Young People
Health (mental and sexual)	
Career Training	
Road Safety	

### **Youth Forums**

The Government is committed to holding a program of one-day Youth Forums to ensure it is aware of issues of importance to young people, and provide greater opportunity for young people to input into public policy.

In 2004 the Council hosted three Youth Forums on ‘*Young People – Feeling and Being Safe*’ in Grafton, Hurstville and Newcastle, as part of an on-going review of the five strategies listed in *Working Together, Working for Young People*, the Government’s Youth Policy 2002-2006.

Youth Forums included workshops on:

- Driver, Passenger and Pedestrian Safety
- Rail Safety
- Work Safety Issues for Young People
- Personal Safety Issues for Young People
- Barriers to Safer Local Communities for Young People

### **Workplace Safety**

Members were concerned that young people are not aware of their rights and responsibilities in the workplace, including responsibility for Occupational Health and Safety issues.

At the Youth Forums on ‘*Young People – Feeling and Being Safe*’, one of the workshops held at each Forum had a focus on *Work Safety Issues for Young People*. The workshop also addressed young workers rights and responsibilities.

Issues raised by young people at these workshops included:

- Young people being paid at below award rates
- Young people being expected to work unpaid overtime
- Employers failing to provide clear instruction on responsibilities
- Lack of information on rights regarding payment of wages, penalty rates, overtime and minimum health and safety requirements
- Lack of appropriate supervision
- Appropriate on-the-job training for the work to be undertaken

Information was also sought from the Labor Council regarding their work on workplace safety with young people. The Labor Council is developing an interactive, online course on Health and Safety for 16-21 year olds enrolled in TAFE courses. They support a working student network on university campuses focusing on rights in the workplace and also provide Occupational Health and Safety training to industry.

The Office of Industrial Relations, WorkCover and the Office of Fair Trading provided briefings on their work with young people, on employment related issues. As a result, during Youth Week 2005, the Office of Industrial Relations and WorkCover will be holding workshops and a videoconference to engage young people on workplace issues and will also conduct a survey of young people, to better understand their workplace issues.

### **Health**

Council were concerned about young people's access to appropriate mental and sexual health services.

Council investigated:

- Services available to young people, e.g. Kids Help Line
- Young peoples' accessibility to mental and sexual health services
- Programs run by young people for young people (e.g. suicide prevention programs, sexual health and parenting programs)

Professor Michael Tilbury, Commissioner, NSW Law Reform Commission, briefed the Council on the role of the NSW Law Reform Commission and on the issues related to minor's consent to medical treatment in NSW. At Professor Tilbury's request, Council provided comments on the Law Reform Commission's Issues Paper 24, *Minor's consent to medical treatment*.

Council also reviewed *Getting in early – A framework for early intervention and prevention in mental health for young people in NSW*. The framework recognises that mental illnesses such as depression, anxiety and psychosis frequently have their onset during mid-late adolescence and early adulthood.

Aimee Ho Sing and Ace Boncato, represented the Council on the Centre for Advancement of Adolescent Health Advisory Board.

### **Career Education**

Council were concerned that the careers curriculum in NSW schools was not preparing young people properly for the workplace.

The Office of Industrial Relations, the Office of the Board of Studies and the Department of Education and Training's Vocational Education in Schools Directorate, briefed the Council on the current provision of careers advice.

Following these meetings, the Office of Industrial Relations has started work on a Curriculum project with the Department of Education and Training, to develop a teaching resource on rights and responsibilities in the workplace for young people, for use in the new Commerce curriculum and in careers classes.

### **Road Safety**

Council consulted with young people through a series of Youth Forums on '*Young People – Feeling and Being Safe*'. One of the workshops held at each Forum focused on *Driver, Passenger and Pedestrian Safety*.

Council was represented at:

- NSW Country Road Safety Summit, Port Macquarie, May 2004
- Local Government Road Safety Conference, Parramatta, September 2004
- NRMA Youth Road Safety Forum, Sydney, September 2004
- Protecting Lives On Our Roads, Young Driver Safety Forum, Canberra, December 2004

Council reviewed research on young people and safe driving compiled by the Roads and Traffic Authority, The Motor Accidents Authority, the NRMA and the Australian Transport and Safety Bureau.

Council met with the Hon. Carl Scully, MP, then Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing to discuss his Options Paper, *Improving safety for young drivers*. At Mr Scully's request, Council provided written comments by 13 December 2004 on:

- Introducing a limit of no more than one passenger for P1 drivers aged under 26 years old
- Introducing a restriction which prohibits Provisional licence holders under 26 from driving high powered vehicles

At Mr Scully's request, the Council also prepared a further submission on the other initiatives in the Options Paper, for submission prior to the closing date of 28 February 2005.

Minister Scully invited a representative from the Council to participate on the NSW Road Safety Taskforce, when it reviews the comments submitted on the Options Paper in 2005.

### **Identity**

Members were acutely aware that many young people are struggling with issues relating to their identity, particularly in their transition from dependence to independence. Council found at the Youth Forums that many young people were concerned about issues relating to their identity. The

Council is now compiling information on identity, development and leadership issues.

### **Youth Participation**

In Youth Week 2004, the Youth Advisory Council in conjunction with the Government's Youth Inter-agency Taskforce undertook a survey of young people to ascertain how they currently participate in the community and the areas in which they would like to participate.

Council also undertook to review the use of the register of young people with a view to increasing the number of young people appointed to Government advisory boards and committees.

### **Implementation of the Review of the *Youth Advisory Council Act***

During 2003, the Performance Measurement and Review Division of the Premier's Department, carried out a review of the *Youth Advisory Council Act*. The review made recommendations on how the performance of the Council could be improved. The Minister accepted all the recommendations and they were implemented in 2004.

### **Subcommittees**

#### Youth Week

The NSW Youth Week Young People's Committee, a Council subcommittee, advises on Youth Week in NSW.

Mathew Ferguson, Chair of the NSW Youth Week Young People's Committee was also the NSW representative on the National Planning Group for Youth Week in 2004.

The Minister held a reception on 29 March 2004 to launch Youth Week in NSW 2004 and the appointment of the 2004 NSW Youth Advisory Council. The winners of the Youth Week Alert Poster and the Youth Week Temporary Tattoo competition were awarded their prizes, whilst *Teine Sa*, a rock band from Wiley Park Girls High School, played at the launch. During Youth Week in NSW, more than 1000 events were organised with the support of 163 NSW Local Councils.

#### Youth.NSW Website

The [www.youth.nsw.gov.au](http://www.youth.nsw.gov.au) website aims to keep young people in NSW informed about what the Government is doing for young people and where to go for information about issues, services and activities. The website also aims to encourage youth participation and hear young people's ideas on a range of issues.

In May 2004 the Minister approved the establishment of a Website Reference Group as a subcommittee of the Youth Advisory Council. As well as making

recommendations about the Youth.NSW and 2005 Youth Week in NSW websites, the group is also a resource to other government departments in developing appropriate online content for young people.

During 2004, the interactive capabilities of the Youth.NSW site have been used in a number of ways by the Youth Advisory Council, to receive input into issues affecting young people in NSW, including an online version of the NSW Youth Participation Survey and an online forum as an adjunct to the series of youth forums on 'Young People – Feeling and Being Safe'. A Have a Say email alert service has also been established, allowing young people to be notified when opportunities arise to participate via the Youth.NSW website.

### **Meetings with Government Ministers**

In 2004 the Council met twice with The Hon. Carmel Tebbutt, MLC, Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Youth.

The Hon. Craig Knowles, MP, Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, and Minister for Natural Resources, met with the Council, to discuss the proposed Metropolitan Strategy for the Greater Metropolitan Region of Sydney.

The Hon. Carl Scully, MP, Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing met with the Council, to discuss the possible initiatives in the Options Paper, *Improving safety for young drivers*.

### **Council meetings**

In 2004 the Council met on 28, 29 March, 7 May, 19 June, 13 August, 25 September, 12 November and 8 December.

Council met with:

The Hon. Carmel Tebbutt, MLC	Minister for Community Services, Minister for Ageing, Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Youth
Alex Shehadie	Policy Advisor, Office of the Hon Carmel Tebbutt, MLC
Penny Sharpe	Policy Advisor, Office of the Hon Carmel Tebbutt, MLC
Carolyn Neill-Ryan	Media Officer, Office of the Hon Carmel Tebbutt, MLC
Maureen Graham	Project Manager, Community Drug Information Strategy, Premier's Department

Helen L'Orange, Steve Robertson and Alison Orme	Commission for Children and Young People
Kristy Delaney	Executive Officer , Youth Action & Policy Association NSW
Alison Frazer	Community Transport Co-ordinator, Ministry of Transport
Professor Michael Tilbury	Commissioner, NSW Law Reform Commission
Jane Sanders and Lauren Ross	Juvenile Justice Advisory Council
Garner Clancy	Consultant in Youth Crime Prevention
Vanessa Cutcliffe	Centre Manager, Macarthur Square Shopping Centre
Phil Noller	National Property Manager, Lend Lease
The Hon. Craig Knowles, MP	Minister for Infrastructure and Planning, and Minister for Natural Resources
Kate Foy	Director Metropolitan Strategy, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources
Leanne Copping	Media Officer, Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources
Harry Xiao	Year 11 Student, Sydney Technical High School
Chris Martin and Katie Davis-Hall-Watson	Communications Managers, Office of Industrial Relations, Department of Commerce
Ben Barnes, Julie Dalziel and Sam Cuming	Eureka Strategic Research (National Youth Affairs Research Scheme scoping study)
The Hon. Carl Scully, MP	Minister for Roads, and Minister for Housing
Leanne Shedden	Policy Advisor for Roads, Office of the Hon. Carl Scully, MP
Sonja Stewart	Executive Director, Communities Division, Department of Community Services

Paul Murphy	Acting Director, Communities Policy, Communities Division, Department of Community Services
Aimee Said	Website Project Manager, Office of Children and Young People

### **Representation on committees**

The Council represents the views of young people on a number of government and non-government committees.

Council was represented on the following committees in 2004:

▪ NSW Youth Interagency Taskforce (YIT)
▪ Aboriginal Youth Leadership Project Steering Committee (AYLP)
▪ NSW Youth Week Advisory Committee (YPAC)
▪ National Youth Week National Planning Group
▪ Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health Advisory Board (CAAH)
▪ Youth.NSW Website Reference Group
▪ Youth Justice Advisory Committee (YJAC)
▪ Better Futures Round Table – Young Persons Reference Group
▪ Arrive alive Grant Advisory Committee

Council members presented at the following conferences, seminars and forums:

- NSW State Student Representative Council (SRC) Conference
- Grafton Youth Forum, “Young People – Feeling and Being Safe”
- Hurstville Youth Forum, “Young People – Feeling and Being Safe”
- Newcastle Youth Forum, “Young People – Feeling and Being Safe”
- Protecting Lives On Our Roads, Young Driver Safety Forum

Council members attended the following conferences, seminars, forums:

- Canterbury Bankstown Community Harmony Round Table
- NSW Country Road Safety Summit
- Local Government Road Safety Conference
- NRMA Youth Road Safety Forum
- Young Driver Safety Forum, 'Protecting lives on our roads'



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