



2002 | 2006

NSW Youth Policy

WORKING TOGETHER | WORKING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



our vision for young people



WHAT WE ARE WORKING TOWARDS

- Young people are included and actively **PARTICIPATE** in their communities
- Increased **ACCESS** to education and training for young people
- More **OPPORTUNITIES** for young people to have fun and develop their potential
- Better **HEALTH** and well-being for young people
- Less risk-taking behaviour and crime among young people
- Communities and services that respond to and **SUPPORT** young people and their families

what is the NSW Youth Policy?

The NSW Youth Policy is relevant to all young people in New South Wales. It outlines how the New South Wales Government will improve young people's lives over the next four years.

our vision

Young people will have opportunities for rewarding and positive lives, now and in the future.

asking young people what they want

Young people have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them, including government policies and programs. It means our policies and programs will be more effective.

From the beginning, young people have been involved in developing this Policy. The NSW Youth Advisory Council consulted with 500 young people in 17 locations across NSW about their concerns and the issues important to them.

Young people have also been involved as members of the working groups that provided advice to the Minister Assisting the Premier on Youth. NSW Government agencies, local government, and non-government organisations in the youth field have also been involved.

The information that we have received from young people forms the basis of this Youth Policy and will drive our strategies and actions over the next four years.



CONSULTATIONS

BATEMANS BAY
BEGA
BROKEN HILL
CAMPBELLTOWN
CONDOBOLIN
GRAFTON / CLARENCE VALLEY
KURRI KURRI
MOREE
NEWCASTLE
PORT MACQUARIE
SYDNEY SUBURBS
UMINA
WINDALE

being seen, heard and valued

what young people told us

- They want to **PARTICIPATE** more in community and government decisions that impact on their lives.
- They are often **UNSURE** about how to do this or lack the confidence to get involved.
- Formal **CHANNELS** for participation don't always work for young people.



'If you're not listened to, you don't feel part of it'

YOUNG PERSON IN CAMPBELLTOWN

what we'll be doing 2002–2006

A key focus for the Government will be to encourage participation by young people in decisions that affect them.

For example, an annual forum will be held to encourage young people to participate in government, politics and community activities.

We'll continue to promote student participation and leadership in schools.

For example, we'll extend the model of the Student Leadership is for Koori Kids program to seven other districts within NSW. We'll also recognise excellence in participation through an awards scheme.

Local government, community and business organisations will be encouraged to involve young people in their planning and operations.

For example, we'll be conducting training based on the Taking Participation Seriously toolkit. The toolkit gives practical advice to organisations about involving children and young people in decision-making.

We'll also support government, businesses and community organisations to develop the confidence and leadership skills of young people.

For instance, we'll be organising **Speak Up Speak Out** to train young people to help others. We'll support leadership and mentoring for young people, specifically young women and Indigenous young people.

Another Government priority will be to promote positive community attitudes toward young people.

We'll be aiming to raise the positive profile of young people through the **Youth Development Framework**. The Framework will promote ways of working with young people which build their abilities and strengths.

TO FIND OUT ABOUT OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED



www.youth.nsw.gov.au
www.kids.nsw.gov.au
www.youthweek.nsw.gov.au
[www.schools.nsw.edu.au/
student support/src](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/student-support/src)
www.volunteering.com.au

WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW

We've listened to young people since the last Youth Policy was released in 1998.

- We've strengthened the NSW Youth Advisory Council, which now reports directly to the Premier on the issues and concerns of young people.
- We've expanded Student Representative Councils in NSW Government schools, which provide a voice for secondary students.

Our work to increase participation of young people in all areas of community activity includes:

- **BUILDING** a register of young people who are interested in sitting on NSW boards and committees.
- **HOLDING** a Premier's forum in April 2002 to encourage young people to get involved in politics and social change.

We have also promoted positive representations of young people.

- We've **HIGHLIGHTED** ways in which youth cultures contribute to contemporary Australia, such as Generate, which promotes the contribution of Middle Eastern and Asian young people to popular culture in Western Sydney.
- We've also held **WORKSHOPS** on young people and the media to encourage more accurate portrayals of young people, which better reflect the reality and diversity of their lives.



learning and earning

what young people told us

- Young people want to be **INVOLVED** in decisions affecting their education, employment and training.
- Getting good advice on employment **OPPORTUNITIES** can be difficult when the world of work is changing so quickly.
- Young people want reliable **INFORMATION** about their working conditions and pay rates.

'Recognition is a big thing. It is really motivating being acknowledged...'

MEMBER OF COMMISSION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S REFERENCE GROUP

WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW

We've been focusing on enhancing literacy and numeracy skills.

- For example, we've introduced basic skills **TESTING** in primary schools and literacy testing in high schools.

We've strengthened connections between young people, their families and communities and their educational institutions.

- For instance, we've introduced **PEER SUPPORT** programs to help young people to have good relationships at school.

We've been active in supporting young people to access employment opportunities.

- We've provided support to young people with a disability moving from **SCHOOL TO WORK** and other opportunities.
- Over 7,800 traineeship opportunities have been made available statewide. We've also funded business skills programs in **REGIONAL** and remote communities, which have made young people more aware of local employment opportunities.

what we'll be doing 2002–2006

We'll be encouraging young people to complete their secondary education or vocational training.

For example, we'll continue to help young people decide what they want to do after school. Funding over four years will assist NSW Government students in Years 9 to 12 to plan their change from school to work.

We'll provide more flexible educational options that meet the needs of young people and employers in NSW.

For example, we'll increase access and educational choices for students in rural and urban communities by establishing more multi-campus colleges – five are set to open in 2002–2003. These colleges mean more subject choices and flexibility for students.

We'll continue to focus on providing NSW students with access to the latest technology and information technology training.

For example, all staff and students in schools and TAFE will be given personalised email accounts and internet access. Now that we've broadbanded access, internet connections will be faster and more reliable.

We'll explore how to increase participation of young women in computing and IT subjects at school. We'll also be offering career development assistance to young people in care, especially if they're interested in the IT industry.

We'll be encouraging young people to remain engaged in their education.

We'll offer additional welfare and educational supports in schools to disadvantaged young people through the **Primary Connect**, **Gateways** and **TAFE Youth at Risk** programs.

We'll continue our support for a range of mentoring programs to meet diverse needs and interests.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT

www.det.nsw.edu.au/eas/youth

[www.schools.nsw.edu.au/
student-support](http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/student-support)

www.tafe.nsw.edu.au/ssupport

www.jobs.nsw.gov.au

www.dir.nsw.gov.au/rights/young

**Young Worker's Bullying Help Line
13 10 50**



having fun and going places

what young people told us

- Having fun, being among friends and having **PLACES TO MEET** is very important to young people.
- Young people want to be **INVOLVED** in planning and running activities.
- Limited finances and lack of transport make it especially difficult for young people to **PARTICIPATE** in activities.
- Some young people think **PUBLIC TRANSPORT** is not safe – especially late at night – and this makes it difficult to get to and from events.
- Young people like to **HANG OUT** with friends in public. However, often they do not feel welcome.



'It is important to have cheap entertainment that is youth-driven'

YOUNG PERSON IN KURRI KURRI

what we'll be doing 2002–2006

The NSW Government will promote youth development.

We'll be funding organisations to deliver innovative youth development programs, such as **BIG hART**. We'll also continue our support for community-based measures to enhance recreational opportunities, including through **Youth Partnerships with Arabic-Speaking Communities**.

We'll support events that are organised by young people.

For example, we'll extend the youth-led **Indent** youth entertainment network further into regional, rural and Indigenous communities.

We'll identify ways of improving access to transport for young people in outlying suburbs and rural and remote locations through community-based options.

For example, through the **Youth Advisory Council**, we'll explore how to improve public and community transport for young people.

We'll promote the right of young people to gather in public spaces and support their participation in the design and planning of public spaces.

For example, **Youth Liaison Officers** will assist young people in public spaces and help create positive connections between them and their communities.

We'll also be sponsoring the development of a **Youth Shopping Centre Protocol** to promote young people's access to, and use of, shopping centres.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES TO HAVE FUN

www.indent.net.au
www.koori.usyd.edu.au/raww
www.makeanoise.ysp.org.au
www.moneystuff.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au
www.streetwize.com.au
www.youthgas.com
Transport Information – 13 15 00
Proof of Age Cards – 13 22 13



WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW

We've supported safe recreational and cultural activities for young people.

- We've funded youth-led and managed entertainment, such as **Indent**. In 2000-2001, 10,465 young people participated in Indent events.
- We've sponsored **YOUTH WEEK** events and competitions, such as the **Silent Cell Film Festival** for young filmmakers, the **Youth Rock** school band competition and the **Freeze Frame** photographic competition.

Addressing the accessibility and safety of public space for young people has been a focus for the NSW Government.

- We've developed an interactive website **Live It. Use it** for all school students, which promotes the safe use of public transport.
- We've issued **Urban Design Guidelines with Young People in Mind** to encourage the development of 'YOUTH FRIENDLY' public spaces. We've also worked with the Youth Action Policy Association to increase young people's access to shopping centres and other public spaces.

feeling good and staying healthy



what young people told us

- Mental health, suicide and injury are the main health **ISSUES** for young people.
- Young people are also **CONCERNED** about the misuse of alcohol and other drugs.
- Young people often don't know where to get help. They want **YOUTH-FRIENDLY** health services and information.
- Young people are concerned that services will not **RESPECT** their privacy.

'Counselling has to be set up so we feel comfortable about approaching it'

YOUNG PERSON IN LISMORE

WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW

We're implementing a youth health policy to assist young people achieve and sustain good health and well-being – Young People's Health: Our Future.

- Preventative health is a major focus of activity. We've encouraged the participation of young people in physical **ACTIVITIES** and have targeted issues for young people, such as sun safety and body image.
- We are working to prevent suicide through **PROGRAMS** and activities under the NSW Suicide Prevention Strategy: *We Can All Make a Difference*.

We've developed accessible resources on health issues.

- For example, we funded Streetwise Comics to produce *Kickin' the Blues*, which highlights issues and concerns for young women about depression and accessing help.
- We've also developed *Smoke Screen*, a smoking prevention resource targeting students in Years 5 to 8.
- The *Innovative Health Services for Homeless Youth Program* provides community-based health and related services for homeless and at-risk young people.

what we'll be doing 2002–2006

We'll continue to listen to young people about their needs and involve them in the development of health policies, programs and services.

For example, two members of the NSW Youth Advisory Council sit on the advisory board to the NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health.

The mental health of young people will be a priority.

For example, we'll run programs to detect mental health problems so young people can get help earlier. This includes the *Getting in Early* framework and the *School-Link* training program.

We'll also be working hard to prevent suicide and misuse of alcohol, tobacco and illicit drugs.

Health workers in NSW will receive training to help them to identify and respond to young people at risk of suicide. We'll continue to implement the *Youth Alcohol Action Plan 2001–2005*, which focuses on health issues and harms created by alcohol misuse. Actions from the NSW Government's 1999 Drug Summit will also continue to be implemented.

We'll aim to improve access to health services for young people.

More alcohol and drug counsellors will be brought on board to work with young offenders in regional areas. Further services and information will be provided for young women in NSW who are pregnant or young mothers.

We'll strengthen partnerships between communities, health services and government agencies.

We'll be developing a *Child and Adolescent Mental Health Inpatient Services Plan* to better integrate mental health services available for young people.

TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW TO FEEL GOOD AND STAY HEALTHY



www.health.nsw.gov.au/youth
www.druginfo.nsw.gov.au
www.nsdcs.nsw.edu.au
www.somazone.com.au
www.reachout.asn.au

Kids Help Line 24 HOURS – 1800 55 1800 OR www.kidshelp.com.au
Mental Health Information Service – 1800 674 200

feeling and being safe

what young people told us

- Young people often don't know where to get **INFORMATION** about their legal rights.
- Young people like to go out in **GROUPS** for safety and fun.
- Fear of harassment and violence can have a strong impact on young people's **INDEPENDENCE** and ability to go out and enjoy life.



what we'll be doing 2002–2006

The NSW Government will continue its focus on protecting young people. For instance, we'll be implementing the **Aboriginal Communities: Protecting Children** program. The program aims to provide community members and child protection workers with skills to promote better understanding of child sexual assault in their communities.

In particular, we'll work to reduce the number of young people who are the victims of assault, robbery or harassment.

For example, the **School Safety and Security Directorate** will examine and implement ways of improving student and teacher safety.

We know that re-offending and risk-taking behaviour is reduced when a young person maintains, or is assisted in re-establishing, links with their family, school and community. We'll continue to develop programs that promote these connections.

For example, we'll improve the life skills and employment prospects of young offenders through vocational training and mentoring.

In addition, we'll implement a new style **Post Release Support Program** for young people leaving detention. It will help young people from rural and remote areas to return to their communities and re-build their lives.

We'll work to reduce crime in local communities and improve relations between police and young people.

For instance, Police and Community Youth Clubs across the state will be given further funding to help young people at risk. The **Beat Graffiti** initiative, which provides positive training and recreational activities for young aerosol artists, will be extended.

We'll improve young people's understanding of their legal rights and their access to legal advice

For example, we'll extend the **Youth Legal Aid Hotline**, ensuring 24-hour coverage over the weekend and on public holidays to young people in police custody.

WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW

A key focus since the last policy was released has been protection of young people in all areas of community life.

- The NSW Government checks the backgrounds of adults working with young people. It has also taken action to reduce bullying and violence in and around schools, and to **PROTECT** young people from injury.

The government has also focused on addressing illegal drug use and related crime by vulnerable young people.

- For instance, we've trialed a Youth Drug Court in Western Sydney. The program **DIVERTS** young offenders from further drug use and re-offending.

We've also worked to improve relations between young people and police.

- Police Youth Liaison Officer positions have been created within 80 Local Area Commands.

We've taken important action to prevent young offenders from entering the juvenile justice system.

- The **Young Offenders Act 1997** allows the use of warnings, cautions and conferencing.
- The Children's Legal Service now represents people under 18 years in cases before the Children's Court.
- A strategy has been put in place to reduce the number of Indigenous young people in the juvenile justice system.

TO FIND OUT MORE



www.kids.nsw.gov.au
For information on Working with Children Checks
www.lawstuff.org.au
www.graffiti.nsw.gov.au
www.police.nsw.gov.au/about/yps.cfm

Kids Help Line 24 HOURS – 1800 551 800 OR www.kidshelp.com.au
Legal Aid Hotline for under 18s – 1800 101 810
Youth Emergency Accommodation Line – 1800 424 800



working together



building partnerships and joint solutions

Government, families and communities need to work **TOGETHER** to ensure that young people have the opportunities to live rewarding lives. Meeting the needs of young people, especially those with complex needs, is not the sole responsibility of the government, families or communities. Solutions are reached by developing **PARTNERSHIPS** and working with young people.

‘The older community needs to...say “Yeah, let’s do it together”’

YOUNG PERSON IN PORT MACQUARIE

WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW

- The Office of Children and Young People **COORDINATES** the development of policies and programs that affect the lives of children and young people in NSW.
- **Better Futures: An Action Framework for Vulnerable Young People in New South Wales** challenges government and non-government agencies to work collaboratively with and to actively **INVOLVE** vulnerable young people.



what we'll be doing 2002-2006

Guided by the *Better Futures Framework*, we'll build a stronger system for regional and local planning of youth services.

A **Better Futures Regional Strategy** will strengthen interventions for 9 to 18 year olds and their families and carers. It will build on and broaden existing services and improve planning and services.

We'll promote collaborative responses to social and economic issues that affect young people in local communities.

These responses will build on the successes of existing strategies and will link to local government and community activities. For instance, the **Cabramatta Youth Action Team** is working on recreation, relationships between police and young people, and youth-specific support services.

'INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE PLANNING AND WORKING OF POLICIES AND SERVICES, THEY HAVE A BETTER IDEA OF WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE WANT'

YOUNG PERSON IN BROKEN HILL

We'll look at innovative ways of improving the service system so that it better meets the needs of young people and is 'youth friendly'.

For instance, the **Aboriginal Child, Youth and Family Regional Strategy** will fund new programs to meet the needs of Aboriginal children and young people and their families and carers.

We'll also support efforts by service providers to provide recreational, community, education, health and support services in a youth-friendly setting.

We'll also develop ways of monitoring and evaluating how well the strategies in this Youth Policy are being implemented.

An action plan will be produced during the 'life' of this Policy.

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TO FIND OUT MORE OR TO VIEW THE DETAILED VERSION OF THE NSW YOUTH POLICY 2002-2006



www.youth.nsw.gov.au

