



Yogie Award Winners 2015

Presented by

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Minister for Children and Young People

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*The Yogie Awards recognise, celebrate, and promote
outstanding practice in working with young people
in the ACT and surrounding area*



ACT
Government

Community Services

The Youth Coalition of the ACT acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional owners and continuing custodians of the lands of the ACT and we pay our respects to the Elders, families and ancestors.

We acknowledge that the effect of forced removal of Indigenous children from their families as well as past racist policies and actions continues today.

We acknowledge that the Indigenous people hold distinctive rights as the original people of modern day Australia including the right to a distinct status and culture, self-determination and land. The Youth Coalition of the ACT celebrates Indigenous cultures and the invaluable contribution they make to our community.

About the Annual Yogie Awards 2015

In 2015, we celebrate twelve years of the Annual Yogie Awards (the YOGIES). These awards recognise, celebrate, promote and reward outstanding practice in working with young people in the ACT and surrounding area. The YOGIES highlight the exceptional commitment, talent and innovation that exist in the youth sector.

The YOGIES are presented annually by the ACT Minister for Children and Young People. Awards are presented in 10 categories that recognise the work of groups and individuals, with young people, workers, individuals, programs and services invited to provide nominations. This year sees the inclusion of a new award category, the *Youth in the Media* award, which recognises an outstanding media article or program that has positively promoted or represented young people in the ACT.

A judging panel determines the winners, with the exclusion of the Staff Acknowledgement Award. The judging panel is comprised of a representative from the Youth Coalition; a representative from the Community Services Directorate; and a representative from the youth and community sector. The winner of the Staff Acknowledgement Award is identified by the Youth Coalition staff team.

The YOGIES are an opportunity for youth and allied services to promote their initiatives, programs and workers to the sector and the community as a whole.

This booklet contains information about each award winner. The award categories are:

- Outstanding Achievement in Youth Participation Award
- Innovation in Practice Award
- Collaboration for Change Award
- Excellence in Research and Evaluation Award
- Excellence in Organisational Practice Award
- Outstanding Youth Worker Award
- Outstanding New Talent Award
- Outstanding Contribution to Young People Award
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Youth in the Media Award
- Staff Acknowledgement Award (awarded by Youth Coalition staff)

A commendation may be awarded when a nomination has been received that the judging panel believe deserves recognition.

Outstanding Achievement in Youth Participation Award

This award recognises an organisation, service, program or project that has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to developing meaningful partnerships with young people.

Winner: Project Yum, Amaroo School

Project Yum is a student led project developed at Amaroo School in response to the growing epidemic of childhood obesity. Project Yum is student led, with ideas and concepts prototyped and actioned in conjunction with the facilitating teachers. The program empowers older students to demonstrate leadership and management skills to the younger cohorts and also enables a range of students to be involved. The team use 'Design Thinking' strategies to prototype their idea, and then are provided with strong support from the teachers to implement them.

Some of the practical projects initiated by Project Yum within the school to encourage healthy eating include:

- the planting of a range of fruit trees within the playground that will provide free, healthy produce for students to pick and eat themselves (whilst also demonstrating the importance of sustainable and practical farming techniques);
- increased consultation between students and the school canteen to ensure that snacks offered and foods served are tasty, nutritious and affordable; and,
- the development of Project Yum as a senior elective, ensuring that students will be able to link this important learning to their curriculum studies and other subjects such as science, food technology and horticulture.

The hallmark of the Project Yum initiative is its student leadership and governance, with the ideas and processes all devised by the students for the students.

Innovation in Practice Award

This award recognises an organisation, service, program or project that has demonstrated exceptional 'thinking outside the square' to create beneficial change for young people.

Winner: Computer Clubhouse, YWCA Canberra

The YWCA Computer Clubhouse is a creative out-of-school learning space that provides young people with access to high tech digital tools, cutting edge technology, and industry mentors, and ultimately fosters pathways into careers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The YWCA Canberra Computer Clubhouse has a unique global connection to Computer Clubhouse programs in 19 other countries, giving Clubhouse members a chance to interact and collaborate on projects with other members from around the world.

The Clubhouse Network holds a Teen Summit biannually, where members are selected to participate in a week long conference in Boston, USA. The Summit tackles social issues surrounding the communities of the members, and gives them an active leadership role through this process. The Clubhouse model is effective due to constant networking with both local and international companies. Partners include but are not limited to Microsoft, Lockheed Martin Australia, The Snow Foundation, Dimension Data and the AIE.

The Computer Clubhouse allows its members to explore science, technology, engineering, arts, and maths (STEAM) fields, nurturing and developing technical skills and interests. One young member has remarked: "the Clubhouse is really cool because you get to do new things every day".

Commendation: Create Your Moves Dance Party

Create Your Moves is a simultaneous dance party that aims to raise funds and awareness for young people living in out of home care. After hearing stories of what it is like for children who grow up in care, 10 year old Jasmine Bagnall was inspired to set up Create Your Moves. Supported by her mum, Kim, Jasmine was heavily involved in the planning and networking which promoted awareness of her idea, and brought together the people from different sectors and government directorates needed to make her idea a reality.

The first Create Your Moves Dance Party was held on 20 November. The event was broadcast live through Funky Kids Radio, and five schools participated in the inaugural Dance Party. Plans and infrastructure are in place to run more events in the future and see it grow nationally each year. One of the great things about Create Your Moves is that it is helping to better inform school communities of the issues that some children and young people face, which is a great way of reducing stigma.

Collaboration for Change

This award recognises an organisation, service, program or project that has demonstrated an outstanding collaboration or partnership in their community as a means to achieving positive outcomes for young people.

Winner:

Gungahlin Youth Drop In

Partners: Barnardos, Canberra PCYC, Harrison School, The Smith Family, Y.Engage - Anglicare & Northside Community Service, YouthCare Canberra - St John's Care

The Gungahlin Youth Drop In was created to help with specific gaps in service that were identified in the Gungahlin region, including no youth specific activities, and no physical presence of a youth centre, as well as the need to improve collaboration and communication between community services working across the Gungahlin region and ACT schools.

The Gungahlin Youth Drop In runs one afternoon a week during school terms at the Harrison School Gymnasium, and offers young people the opportunity to access youth workers from a range of youth specific community services, as well as sporting and recreational activities. The youth services involved also provide food and safe transport to and from the Drop In.

Each organisation involved has contributed different skill sets, ideas, and practical support to the Gungahlin Youth Drop In, which has ensured its successful beginning. There is now interest in the model being rolled out in other schools & regions, and the relationship between ACT schools in the Gungahlin region & the Youth sector has improved through this program. Feedback from the School Principal at Harrison is that “the program is fantastic and has brought value to the students and the relationship between the community sector and Harrison school”.

Excellence in Research and Evaluation Award

This award recognises an organisation, service, program or project that has conducted research and/or evaluation for the advancement of knowledge in youth affairs and/or the improvement of practice with young people.

Winner: **Passing the Message Stick: Talking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People about Services for Children and Young People, ACT Human Rights Commission**

In 2014 the ACT Human Rights Commission undertook a community engagement activity designed to gain a more detailed understanding of the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community's views about which services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in the ACT work well, and which services don't work so well, as well as gathering ideas for service improvement. This research was carried out through a series of informal conversations with a broad cross section of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

As a result of these consultations, the report "Passing the Message Stick" was released in March 2015. The report details the areas for development, encouraging experiences from the ACT, and similar initiatives from communities around Australia across eleven key themes.

Excellence in Organisational Practice Award

This award recognises an organisation, service, or program that has demonstrated excellence in organisational development as a means to achieving positive outcomes with young people.

Winner: **Youth Participation Projects,
Youth Coalition of the ACT**

In 2015, the Youth Coalition of the ACT has strengthened their youth participation focus across a number of different projects, including the *Mental Health: Perspectives of Young People aged 12-25 in the ACT* report, the *Just Sayin'* event during National Youth Week and the *Youth Media Team* pilot project. Through these projects, the Youth Coalition promoted, supported and enabled young people to share their perspective on the issues that are important to them in a variety of new ways.

For example, the *Just Sayin'* event in National Youth Week involved seven young people sharing their perspective on issues they are passionate about to an audience of decision makers, including politicians, their advisers and community sector leaders. The Youth Coalition did not prescribe the topics, but instead worked closely with the young speakers to develop their presentations.

As well as supporting and enabling young people to share their perspectives and promote their views, the Youth Coalition is using these projects to develop and demonstrate best practice in youth participation.

Outstanding Youth Worker Award

This award recognises an individual youth worker who has advanced the rights and wellbeing of young people by advocating for systemic change, supporting young people to access full membership of society and to be decision-makers in their own lives.

Winner: Zack Bryers, St John's Care

Zack is the only outreach youth worker for St John's Care, under the YouthCARE Canberra program. Zack is on call 24/7 for the young people he works with, and rarely has an early Friday night as he is checking the young people he is working with are safe for the weekend. Zack outreaches to the most vulnerable, usually homeless or at risk of homelessness, toughest to engage, missing, young people in Canberra.

Zack has a focus on building good relationships from the start. His heart is to serve our community, and while supporting young people, the positive relationship he builds with them also enables him to call them to account for their behaviour, and sets a positive expectation for all of the young people he works with. While establishing good communication with parents or carers, Zack always takes a strength based, young person centered approach, working toward the best outcome for the young person.

Zack has a very strategic, client focussed, determined and disciplined attitude to working with and for young people that is camouflaged by a chilled out, cruisy and relaxed presentation.

Commendation: Michelle Kilgower, Oasis Youth Support Network

Michelle is the Team Leader & Case Manager of the Oasis Youth Emergency Accommodation Network service in Tuggeranong. Michelle leads a team of youth workers to support homeless young people, providing emergency accommodation and case management to help them to address any barriers they are facing, and to access safe and affordable long term housing.

Michelle has a strong background working with vulnerable young people, with over 15 years' experience within the community sector, including youth services, disability programs and the employment sector. Michelle provides holistic case management to the young people at Oasis, looking at what they would like to achieve and helping them work towards their individual goals.

Since starting with Oasis in 2014, Michelle has revitalised the Tuggeranong service, inspiring her team with her strong client focus, and using her prior experience to establish strong links with the young people & their local community.

Outstanding New Talent Award

This award recognises an individual youth worker, youth work trainee or volunteer that has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to improving the wellbeing of young people.

**Winner: Kieran Purves,
CatholicCare Canberra & Goulburn**

Kieran first started with CatholicCare as a part-time trainee with the Youth Housing Support Service team while working towards a Certificate IV in Youth Work. He took this opportunity to learn from staff across all the CatholicCare youth programs including STEPS, Youth and Well-being, and Reconnect, and is now a Youth Housing Support Specialist.

Kieran constantly seeks professional development opportunities to increase his knowledge and awareness so that he can better support young people. Many people would know Kieran is an enthusiastic person who enjoys puns and telling jokes, but what is not always noticed is that he is a quiet achiever who works hard to support the young people he works with. He has a maturity and awareness of people and situations that allow him to develop positive relationships with a wide variety of people, including disadvantaged young people and service providers.

Kieran has also developed positive and effective working relationships with a wide variety of services in the ACT, enabling him to be a strong advocate for young people. He is unobtrusively confident in his approach to the support he gives to young people and to other staff in the broader homelessness team.

Commendation: Stacy Rheese, Woden Community Service

Stacy is the 'Wrap Around' youth worker at Woden Community Service. In her first 6 months in the youth sector, Stacy has gone above and beyond what is expected of her, working with over 45 young people whilst facilitating mental health, resilience, and self-esteem groups within primary and secondary schools. Stacy is an extremely strong advocate of young people and has worked tirelessly in her role to support the young people that she works with. She has worked closely with the Youth Engagement Team, ACT Policing, and other agencies and services such as CAMHS, CYPS, ETD and The Junction, in order to get the best possible outcomes for the youth people she is assisting.

Stacy is always looking for ways to better her youth worker practice and is outstanding and professional in her service delivery. Stacy has received lots of positive feedback from external agencies, as well as from the young people and parents of the young people she is working with.

Outstanding Contribution to Young People Award

This award recognises an outstanding individual who works to improve the wellbeing of young people in the ACT.

Winner: Natasha Drumgold, YWCA Canberra

Natasha Drumgold is a Youth Engagement Officer with YWCA Canberra, based at the Mura Lanyon Youth & Community Centre in Tuggeranong. Her role includes oversight of a number of youth programs run at the centre, and delivery of youth programs in local schools, including Lanyon Literacy, Y-Aspire, and Nutrilicious.

Natasha developed Y-Aspire in 2012 to support girls in the early years of high school (years 7 & 8) who are at risk of disengaging from school. She spent six months researching and developing the program, which was piloted in 2013. Y-Aspire is an early intervention leadership program to support girls at risk of disengaging with education. The strengths-based program builds skills and confidence that will assist them in their journey through high school and beyond. It addresses the issues of identity, personal skills and skill building, body confidence, respectful relationships and career pathways. Y-Aspire focuses on helping girls build a strong connection to schooling through an integrated learning program. It has now been delivered 21 times to 259 girls, with demand from schools unflagging.

Natasha is an unwavering champion of the young people she works with, and her talent passion, and excellence in practice are recognised by young people, her colleagues, and her community.

Commendation: Mason Hudson, Eternity Church

Mason Hudson is the youth pastor at Eternity Church. He is genuine in every aspect of his work, and tirelessly assists, empowers, mentors and inspires the young people he works with. Mason runs weekly youth events on Friday nights which are attended by over one hundred young people. His role also involves mentoring young people, and through implementing the “Rookie” program, he empowers young people to have a voice and embrace life, while they learn practical skills and gain work experience.

Through mentoring Mason has had a lasting impact on many young people’s lives. By openly sharing his own personal story, Mason encourages young people to move past the limitations and setbacks that weigh them down. His emphasis on connection, helping others, and embracing life has resulted in countless young people recovering from depression, anxiety and self-harm. He is a talented public speaker, and runs the breakfast club at Melrose High School to connect with and support students.

Lifetime Achievement Award

This award recognises an outstanding individual who has consistently demonstrated a commitment to supporting and improving the wellbeing of young people in the ACT.

Winner: Siobhan Cosgrave, Barnardos Australia

Siobhan Cosgrave has a longstanding career in the youth sector, beginning as a residential youth worker in 1988. Throughout her career she has worked in a variety of frontline, education, policy, and managerial roles. As a manager she has coordinated professional, practical, responsive, outcomes focused services, which have gained recognition for their excellence in supporting young people and their commitment to collaboration.

Siobhan is a lifelong learner, with degrees in Community Health and Education, and Professional Writing from the University of Canberra. She is currently studying a Masters in Social Work at the Australian Catholic University, while also working as the manager of Our Place, a youth homelessness service jointly run by Barnardos Australia and Anglicare.

Beyond the facts of Siobhan's outstanding career, what is harder to capture is the positive effect she has had on her colleagues and the young people she has worked with over the years. Siobhan is happy to write a tender, take a client to an appointment, advocate on their behalf, clean a flat, write a report or conduct a group learning session. Each task is performed with her considerable intelligence, her relaxed disposition, her wit and her formidable steely resolve. Siobhan is a fantastic role model to her clients, her co-workers and her employers.

Youth in the Media Award

This award recognises an outstanding media article or program which has positively promoted or represented young people in the ACT.

Winner: **Matthew Raggatt, Canberra Times**
“Survivor shares paintings of anorexia years”
“Canberra anorexia survivor Rachael Stevens’ courage recognised with National Youth Awards finals spot”

These two written articles shared the hope and positivity of one young person's story of getting through times of incredible darkness. Matthew Raggatt's initial articles on Rachael Stevens shared her story without underplaying the extensive challenges she faced, encouraging other young people to see the bright future that can lie beyond the all-consuming despair of anorexia and depression. The focus in the follow up article on the work that Rachael does in schools has brought awareness of the need to support young people and help them find hope.

Schools, parents, young people, and the broader community have been educated about the importance of supporting young people through eating disorders, depression, and anxiety, while also showing that young people are complex, thoughtful, creative and incredibly resilient, with much to offer their communities.

Commendation: **Megan Gorrey & Tom McIlroy, Canberra Times**
“Canberra’s young get their say – and some love – during National Youth Week”

While acknowledging that there are many issues and challenges that young people face, this article does not present young people as powerless, or victims, but as active participants celebrating what they have to offer and connecting with community. Megan Gorrey & Tom McIlroy's article encapsulates not only issues such as mental health, homelessness, and education, but also community connection, young people's voice, cultural diversity, and how young people and the broader community connect and relate.

Staff Acknowledgement Award

This award is selected by the Youth Coalition staff team, and acknowledges an individual or group who have significantly contributed to young people in the ACT, the youth sector, and the work of the Youth Coalition of the ACT.

Winner: **Youth Worker Practice Network
Steering Group**
*Participants: Bryan Duke, Jamie Gray,
Michelle Vaessen-McLean, Nicole
Townsend, Ryan Harris*

The Youth Worker Practice Network is a Community of Practice for frontline youth workers in the ACT, coordinated by the Youth Coalition of the ACT. The Steering Group was formed this year to provide strategic guidance for the implementation and development of the Youth Worker Practice Network, and is comprised of experienced youth work practitioners from a variety of youth services and community organisations.

The Youth Coalition staff team have nominated this group for the 2015 Staff Acknowledgement Award in recognition of the expertise they bring to the sector, and their willingness to go above and beyond the duties of their individual workplace roles. The steering group members have volunteered their time to plan and facilitate the member sessions, and promote the Network to the youth sector.

The Youth Coalition staff team would like to acknowledge and thank Bryan, Jamie, Michelle, Nicole, and Ryan for their time, energy, and commitment to developing the Youth Worker Practice Network, for the important role they each have in supporting youth workers from all areas of the sector, and the young people of our community. We look forward to working with this group to further develop the Youth Worker Practice Network in 2016.



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The Annual YOGIE Awards are a Youth Coalition of the ACT initiative,
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