



Yogie Award Winners 2016

Presented by

Rachel Stephen-Smith MLA

Minister for Disability, Children and Youth

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



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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 2016

The annual Yogie Awards (the Yogies) recognise, celebrate, promote and reward outstanding practice in working with young people in the ACT and surrounding area. They also highlight the exceptional commitment, talent and innovation that exist in the youth sector. In 2016, we are celebrating thirteen years of the Yogies.

The 2016 Yogies will be presented by Rachel Stephen-Smith, MLA, Minister for Disability, Children and Youth. Awards are presented in 11 categories that recognise the work of groups and individuals, with young people, workers, individuals, programs and services invited to provide nominations.

This year sees a change in criteria for several awards, reflecting the changing work of the youth sector. It also sees the inclusion of a new award category, the Youth Work Champion. This award honours a youth worker who not only positively contributes to young people, but who actively pursues opportunities to grow their knowledge and improve their practice, as well as contributing to the sector through advocacy and/or support of other youth workers.

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

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

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

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

Innovation in Service Delivery 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: Sotka Yuha Young Warriors Society Program

The Sotka Yuha Young Warriors Program was developed at Lanyon High School in 2015. It was formed in response to a need for a program focussing on positive role modelling and building resilience with young men who did not connect with sports programs.

The aim of the program is to improve social and emotional wellbeing, with expected outcomes of improved self-esteem, resilience, connectedness, confidence, emotional regulation principles, increased empathy, goal setting, social skills, assertiveness, identity development, and positive self-talk. The Sotka Yuha Young Warriors Society Program was created from the traditional knowledge and spiritual teachings of the Oglala Lakota people, a Siouxan Native American nation, led by Mila Haske, an Oglala Lakota man. Mila Haske shares the cultural practices of the Oglala Lakota people as a way to encourage personal growth, explore masculinity, and develop identity whilst encouraging positive community participation.

Commendation: LGBTQIA+ and Allies Prom, YWCA Canberra

The LGBTQIA+ and Allies Prom was hosted by YWCA Canberra, for young people aged 12-25 years who identify as LGBTQIA+ or as an ally. The event was developed in response to a call for more inclusive events from the A to Z Group (a gender and sexually diverse group). The Prom provided a safe and inclusive space for Canberra youth to celebrate and be themselves.

Commendation: Teen Start-Up, Lighthouse Business Innovation Centre

Teen Start-Up is a program where students aged 12-18 years are taken through the innovation development process from idea to execution. Each event has a different theme, and students work together in teams to come up with an idea for a product or service that they believe provides a solution to a problem their generation will face in the future. The event concludes with the students pitching their concepts to a panel of judges. During the program students can access mentors, tools and technology to inspire their thinking.

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: Young People and Gambling Project, Youth Coalition of the ACT

The Young People and Gambling in the ACT pilot project began in September 2015, and aims to gain a clearer understanding of the perspectives of young people aged 18-30 on gambling related harm. The project is funded through the ACT Problem Gambling Assistance Fund and is being delivered by the Youth Coalition of ACT. The project works closely with a range of stakeholders and in partnership with ClubsACT.

The project team engaged primarily with young people, as well as industry and community sector representatives, academics, counsellors and psychologists. Research was conducted through interviews, focus groups, public events, a survey and social media.

The project team engaged young people from the outset, in research design, data collection and analysis, as well as the design of awareness raising materials resulting from the research. This was through focus groups, interviews, consultative queries, and a youth reference committee. The project team worked extensively to recruit and engage with young people from diverse backgrounds, such as local and international students, apprentices, sports people, industry staff, and public servants, to hear their perspectives.

Findings from the research helped guide the development of a trial awareness campaign (including a website, digital stories and other materials) around harmful gambling among young people. For the final stages of the pilot project, the team will continue to work with young people to evaluate the website and communications materials, and ensure these resonate with them.

Very few research or awareness raising projects in Australia have focused on young people and gambling, or engaged with young people on this topic in a participatory way. Therefore, the results of this project are not only unique for its focus, but also its approach to attempting to engage young people in multiple steps of the project. The project has collected unique and valuable research data, as well as tested some trial campaign materials, which will provide useful information for future campaigns.

Excellence in Organisational Practice Award

This award recognises an organisation, service, or program that has demonstrated excellence in supporting and developing their staff.

Winner: Comorbidity Project, CatholicCare

CatholicCare's Comorbidity Project is a capacity building initiative aimed at increasing the skills of CatholicCare staff and services to better support individuals with co-occurring drug and alcohol and mental health conditions, also known as comorbidity.

The Comorbidity Project has a dedicated project officer who conducts research into best practice, contributes to organisational policy, and facilitates activities to build the knowledge and confidence of staff by implementing practices within service delivery programs to prevent individuals with comorbidities falling through the gaps.

Over the last 18 months the Comorbidity Project brokered in specialist Alcohol and Other Drug and Mental Health training for CatholicCare staff, as well as staff from external service providers. Additional capacity building activities have been coordinated through the Comorbidity Project, such as training for youth mental health & homelessness staff to conduct Alcohol & Other Drug Screening, the establishment of a Comorbidity Peer Consultation Group, and running the 9th Annual Comorbidity Interagency Day.

Commendation: Child Youth and Family Programs, Woden Community Service

The Child, Youth and Family portfolio at Woden Community Service is committed to employee development and support, in order to ensure that all staff members feel comfortable in dealing with any situation that arises in their day to day job. In addition to regular training, staff undergo fortnightly supervision and weekly meetings. Team catch ups over coffee or hot chocolate are held regularly, ensuring that communication channels are always kept open at all levels.

Staff are actively encouraged to join committees, working groups, and boards, in order to learn from others in the sector, and develop personally from these experiences. Woden Community Service has introduced a rewards and recognition program that rewards and recognises outstanding employees from each service line every three months, as well as starting a healthy work place initiative in partnership with the ACT government.

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: The Street University, Ted Noffs Foundation

The Street University is a youth development project created by the Ted Noffs Foundation. The Street University aims to connect with young people who would not normally engage with mainstream education, and encourage young people to create community.

The Street University provides workshops and activities that incorporate creative use of art, music, dance, hair/beauty/nail and make-up artistry, theatre, multimedia, writing, life skills development, and technology & design in a highly visible youth friendly venue located in Civic interchange. Workshops are also available as outreach programs in collaboration with other community services and schools.

The Street University's primary objective is to provide a place for young people to get together, and form positive communities. The service is wholly guided by what the young people who access the space want. In this way, The Street University provides a service that constantly changes and adapts to the young people who walk through the doors.

The Street University delivers workshops and bridging programs to further education, and is designed for young people who are not engaged with mainstream education. Young people not only contribute ideas for workshops – they also have the opportunity to design their own workshops and run them for other young people. This sharing of skills and knowledge increases their confidence, helps develop new skills, and can lead to employment and entrepreneurial opportunities.

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: Andrew Hill, Anglicare (Woden YET)

Andrew is a Youth Engagement worker, employed by Anglicare and working with the Youth Engagement Team based at Woden Youth Centre. His role includes engaging with young people who access the drop in space at Woden Youth Centre and through outreach, and providing case work and supported referrals.

Andrew is passionate about supporting and empowering young people to achieve all they can. He easily forms positive relationships with young people and demonstrates a strong commitment to them. Andrew always takes the time to sit and have a chat with all young people who access drop in, who often ask where he is if he is not rostered on.

Andrew joined the youth sector after a career change from building, and has hit the ground running. He has shown a willingness to develop as a youth worker, by seeking training opportunities, asking questions, taking on board feedback and including it in his practice, supporting his peers in their work and always putting his hand up to be involved in projects where he can broaden his knowledge and offer his support to young people.

Andrew is a vibrant, passionate and happy youth worker who has found his calling in the youth engagement sector. Andrew is often heard saying “I love my job” and “I have the best job in the world”. He is not shy of getting involved in anything and everything he can. As well as his paid role as a youth worker, Andrew volunteers his time at a local church, coordinating youth activities and mentoring young people.

Andrew’s great strengths are being able to engage with young people, both in the centre and whilst performing outreach, as well as working to a professional standard, showing maturity beyond his short career.

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: Tracy Brown, headspace Canberra

Tracy Brown (Uhle) has worked with young people in various roles for over 24 years. She is the current Youth Mental Health and Community Worker at headspace Canberra. Her early career was in Youth Justice, followed by a brief stint in the public service before taking on a role at headspace Canberra. She has had several roles at headspace, including individual intake and clinical work, community awareness and public education, group work, and being the 'driver and guide' of the headspace Youth Reference Group.

Tracy has a wonderful way of working with young people from all different backgrounds and experiences. When she works with young people she is fully engaged in where they are at, providing individuals and families with the support they need. Tracy also runs the headspace Youth Reference Group, providing members with mentoring and guidance, and supporting them to take on ambitious and innovative projects. Her guidance has developed this group into one of the most successful and productive Youth Reference Groups in the headspace network.

In her time at headspace, as the service has expanded and evolved, Tracy has observed the need for new skills, and is committed to her ongoing personal and professional development. Despite her busy work and personal life she has undertaken further studies to become a qualified counsellor, and to be able to facilitate family workshops. She continually updates her practice as the needs of young people and the sector evolve, including adopting technology that enables young people to better access help and information

After all this time in the youth sector Tracy maintains enthusiasm for her day to day work. She has a wealth of theoretical knowledge, many years of practical experience, good humour and a big welcoming personality that she brings to her work with young people. Tracy is well respected by colleagues, and her support and advice is often sought by others.

Outstanding Contribution to Young People Award

This award recognises an outstanding individual who rarely receives recognition for their integral work which supports young people and/or the youth sector.

Winner: Dr Rebecca Jacobs, The Junction Youth Health Service

Rebecca is a General Practitioner working at The Junction Youth Health Service. 'Dr Bec' has a special ability to connect with the most vulnerable people in our community. To the young people who access The Junction she has become more than just a GP – she is their ally, mentor and a reliable constant in their lives. She supports young people in all aspects of their lives including medical, physical, mental and social health needs.

Dr Bec's extensive wealth of knowledge and varied experience, as well as her passion for working with young people, sees her support the most vulnerable and at risk young people in the ACT and surrounds. She works hard to gain the trust of her patients who often return to seek her guidance. Dr Bec is a kind and passionate GP who doesn't believe in backing down. She freely and non-judgmentally gives her knowledge, experience and support to young people on a daily basis. In addition to the support she provides to the young people in our service she is an invaluable part of the medical and youth work team, providing support and knowledge to the whole Junction Youth Health Team.

Commendation: Alan Tongue

A former NRL player, Alan currently works with the NRL as a one-community ambassador delivering programs to schools, football clubs and communities across Australia and New Zealand. Alan developed 'The Aspire Program' to teach young people how to build healthy and respectful relationships, and is a great mentor for young people, teachers and youth workers.

Commendation: Sophie Hope

Sophie is a young Canberran who is actively involved in the ACT community, as a fierce mental health advocate and dedicated volunteer. She is a volunteer with headspace Canberra and on the National headspace Reference Group, the RSPCA, the Refugee Action Committee, and has supported the Youth Coalition's advocacy work regarding Mental Health over several years. Sophie is also the creator and organiser of the Mind the Gap Festival, a performing arts showcase which raises funds for local youth organisations.

Outstanding Youth Worker Award

This award recognises an individual youth worker who has demonstrated their exceptional commitment to supporting young people through their ethical, participatory, and strength-based practice.

Winner: Summer Will Leiper, Oasis

Summer has been a Youth Worker at Oasis for over 7 years, working within emergency accommodation services as a shift worker. Summer is currently based at the Oasis service in Tuggeranong where she has worked since its opening in 2012. Summer is passionate about young people, and goes the extra mile to develop programs and resources to benefit the young people in the service, as well as to raise awareness of the issue of homelessness in her own time.

Summer has shown real enthusiasm for her own professional development and has completed a Bachelor of Psychology and Bachelor of Social Work during the 7 years she has been at Oasis, as well as attending a wide range of training opportunities available within the sector throughout that time.

Summer is always the first person to volunteer her time to take on extra tasks and projects as well as to implement new ideas within the service. For example, she developed a “Board of Opportunity” where she keeps young people informed about affordable rental options, jobs, courses and other things that may be of interest. Summer has been a key part of the Couch Project since its inception in 2014, a campaign that raises awareness of youth homelessness as well as much needed funds for local services. For the past 3 years, Summer has dedicated many hours of her own time attending schools and other groups to speak about the issue of youth homelessness and in particular the hidden form of homelessness, couch surfing.

Commendation: Shaun Hodson, Harrison School

Shaun has been the Youth Worker at Harrison School for four years, working with students from years 5-10. He is a well-respected member of the Harrison School community and has built strong relationships with all staff and students.

Shaun always makes himself available when students need advice or support, has developed and implemented a number of innovative programs for the students at Harrison School, and works hard to ensure students are linked in with other community supports where necessary. He constantly goes above and beyond to make a positive difference in the lives of young people.

Youth Work Champion

This award recognises an individual youth worker who, while demonstrating excellence in supporting young people, has also displayed an outstanding commitment to developing and improving their individual practice and the work of the youth sector.

Winner: Nicky Link, CREATE Foundation

Nicky has been working as the community facilitator for CREATE Foundation for close to 2 years. In this role he has demonstrated his natural ability to engage with children and young people, connecting them to services and programs and providing these young people with numerous life opportunities.

Since returning to Canberra four years ago, Nicky has also worked for a local church where he mentors young leaders and young men who are going through difficult periods of their life. This includes undertaking weekly visits to young men in prison. He has also worked at the Youth Coalition of the ACT, as coordinator for National Youth Week.

Nicky often goes 'above and beyond' in his work with young people, and his support, positivity and commitment is evident in his interactions with them. He is genuine in his care and connections with young people, and several young people he has supported over the last two years have enrolled to study youth or community work, naming Nicky as their inspiration. He is someone who is happy to inspire, develop, then 'let go' – while continuing to support the young person's journey from a distance.

As well as his excellent work with young people, Nicky is a lifelong learner, always working to improve his individual practice. He has a curious mind, and uses a range of technologies such as podcasts, TED Talks, blogs and YouTube channels, as well as good old fashioned books, to both expand his thinking and share new ideas with others.

Nicky is an asset to the youth sector because of his strong networking skills, and interest in understanding issues and advocating for them. Nicky has been a regular attendee of the Youth Worker Practice Network sessions, where he both learns and contributes, always asking questions and sharing his insight with new youth workers. Nicky is willing to think outside of the box and look at how things can be done differently, or where new partnerships and links can be developed – a skill which goes a long way in the community sector, whilst always focusing on ensuring good outcomes for young people.

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: James Hall, The Chronicle

James Hall is a writer for The Chronicle. This year he has written several articles which highlight the positive work that the community sector is doing for young people. His articles highlight people who are working hard to make Canberra a better place for young people, and who are contributing significantly to the lives of young people. James should be commended for his positive writing and for making sure the broader community knows of the work that is being done by the community sector.

Commendation: Adam Shirley, ABC Radio

The 666 ABC Canberra radio program, Drive with Adam Shirley, consistently highlights issues of concern and relevance for young Canberrans. As a radio presenter, Adam Shirley is always considered, well-researched and genuinely cares about raising the profile of young people in the ACT and issues that affect them.

Over the last 12 months, the youth sector has been approached by the producers of the program to be interviewed about a range of relevant topics, including youth mental health, welfare, voting and youth homelessness. 666 ABC Canberra is one of the most popular radio stations in the ACT and the demographic of listeners is predominantly older. The commitment to highlighting youth issues on the Drive program helps to raise the profile of youth issues to the wider ACT community.

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: Aunty Agnes Shea, OAM

Well known to the Canberra youth and community sectors, Aunty Agnes Shea is a highly respected elder of the Ngunnawal Aboriginal people of the Australian Capital Territory.

A foundation member of the United Ngunnawal Elders' Council and a member of the ACT Heritage Council, Aunty Agnes' work toward improving non-Indigenous Australians' understanding of Aboriginal culture has been of great value to young Canberrans, and the ACT youth sector.

Aunty Agnes' significant community involvement is indicative of her commitment to helping young people and fostering respect between the many cultures of people in the Canberra region. As one of the Ngunnawal elders who performs the traditional Ngunnawal Welcome to Country, Aunty Agnes has also been an important partner over many years for the Youth Coalition of the ACT.

The Youth Coalition staff were united in their appreciation and recognition of Aunty Agnes as a champion of young people, their families and community.



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The Annual YOGIE Awards are a Youth Coalition of the ACT initiative, proudly supported by the ACT Government Community Services Directorate.

