



Annual YOGIE Award Winners 2010

Presented by

Ms Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Children and Young People

The Annual YOGIE Awards are a Youth Coalition of the ACT initiative,
proudly supported by the Department of Disability, Housing and Community
Services

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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.

The Youth Coalition is the peak youth affairs body in the Australian Capital Territory and responsible for representing the interests of people aged between 12 and 25 years of age, and those who work with them.

The Youth Coalition is represented on many ACT Government Advisory structures and provides advice to the ACT Government on youth issues as well as providing information to youth services about policy and program matters.

We actively promote the well being and aspirations of young people in the ACT with particular respect to their social, political, cultural, spiritual, economic and educational development.

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About the Annual YOGIE Awards 2010

The Annual YOGIE Awards (the YOGIES) 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. 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 Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, DHCS; and a representative from the community youth 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 below:

Organisation, Service, Program or Project Award Categories

- 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

Individual Award Categories

- Outstanding Youth Worker Award
- Outstanding New Talent Award
- Outstanding Contribution to Young People Award
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Staff Acknowledgement Award (awarded by Youth Coalition staff)

For more about the YOGIES visit www.youthcoalition.net or contact (02) 6247 3540 or info@youthcoalition.net.

ORGANISATION, SERVICE, PROGRAM OR PROJECT AWARDS

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: Bit Bent Belconnen

Bit Bent is a social support group for same sex attracted young people aged 12 – 25 years, which has been running in Belconnen for 8 years. Groups are held at U-Turn Youth Services for 2 hours each week and are facilitated by two volunteers and one youth worker. The volunteer facilitators provide guidance and support while the youth worker provides any additional information and support that the group might require, including emergency relief assistance and referrals to other services. A Bit Bent program is also run out of Woden Youth Centre.

Youth participation is a primary focus of Bit Bent, which aims to assist young people in becoming more confident, active and involved in their community. The past 12 months have seen a significant increase in the level of youth participation.

With their interest in ensuring that promotional material is youth-friendly and relevant, young people engaged in Bit Bent have taken a strong leadership role in promoting the program to young people in the Canberra community, particularly through initiating a poster design competition and developing a new website.

Bit Bent was also recently a finalist in the ACON Honour Awards, an annual fundraising event that celebrates leadership or outstanding success within the GLBT community, after being nominated by one of the young people engaged in the group.

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: Steer Program, Northside Community Service

The Steer Program provides transitional support to children and young people aged 11 – 12 years who are identified as needing intensive assistance in transitioning from primary school to high school. The program, which commenced with 8 young people in 2009, runs over 32 weeks and provides a 24 week structured program with ongoing support.

The program aims to establish ongoing school participation by strengthening personal support networks and enhancing personal resilience, development and leadership skills. It seeks to support young people through innovative support at a key transition point in their lives.

The program is a joint initiative of Northside Community Service and the Police Community Youth Club (PCYC) and was set up in direct response to parent concerns. The Steer Program has a high success rate which can be attributed to the sense of ownership young people have in the program and its ongoing development.

The program was initially implemented in Canberra's Inner North but in 2010, with the support of Communities@Work, expanded to include 5 schools on the southside of Canberra.

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: Community Engagement Team, Centrelink

The Centrelink Community Engagement Team, currently staffed by David Rothschild and Melissa Seymour, aims to build on previous work and relationships from the earlier Centrelink 'Community Contact Unit'. A primary focus of the Community Engagement Team is engaging and supporting customers who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness.

David and Melissa work collaboratively with local service providers in order to assist customers and workers to navigate their way through the social security system. The team also plays a key role in providing training and support to mainstream Centrelink staff that is designed to increase their capacity to respond to homelessness.

The Community Engagement Team provides immediate support and advice to marginalised customers in a flexible manner. The team continues to build partnerships with youth and homelessness service providers in the ACT in order to engage vulnerable customers and inform them of payment eligibility and participation requirements.

The Community Engagement Team sits within the broader Centrelink service and works in consultation with mainstream Centrelink staff and other specialist staff such as social workers, job capacity assessors, multicultural, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and prison services.

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: *Dutch Courage: Young People, Alcohol and Alcohol Related Violence*, Dr Justin Barker and the Youth Coalition of the ACT

The *Dutch Courage* research project and report aimed to investigate the experiences, perspectives and understandings of young people regarding alcohol related violence in Canberra. The Project examined the patterns of alcohol consumption, the value, and role attributed to alcohol and violence in the lives of young people who socialise in Civic.

This was a qualitative investigation that sought to not only obtain the subjective experiences and stories of the participants but also to engage the participants in an analysis of existing theories and models accounting for alcohol consumption and related behaviours by young people. The report is framed by the understanding that young people are capable of reflecting on, analysing and providing insights into their own behaviour and that of others; and situates this against other sets of data.

The findings of the research are specific to the ACT context of young people and alcohol related violence, and highlights the patterns of alcohol related violence for sub-groups of young people, the phases of alcohol related violence, and identifies specific approaches and initiatives that could be implemented in the ACT.

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: School Education Program, Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT)

MIEACT is a community organisation that aims to reduce stigma and discrimination, improve knowledge, and raise awareness about the importance of getting help early. The School Education Program (SEP) supports volunteer educators, who have personal experience with mental illness as consumers or carers, to deliver education sessions to secondary school students.

The SEP delivers an evidence-based and comprehensive governance framework to support their volunteer educators, which is directly related to the positive outcomes that are achieved through the program and the low turnover of volunteers.

Key elements of the framework that support the SEP volunteer educators include: a comprehensive recruitment and training program (including intensive initial training and a six-month follow-up process); accompanying Mentoring Program; access to on-going, free training; reimbursement for volunteers; de-briefing opportunities; feedback loops and information updates; and a flexible and supportive environment.

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

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.

Winners: Fiona Thomson and Lisa Howarth

Fiona Thomson

Fiona currently works at Richmond Fellowship of the ACT as a Residential Youth Worker in the Young Women's Program. Fiona has been working at Richmond Fellowship for 14 years, during which time she has undertaken various roles including Supervisor and Acting Unit Manager.

Fiona is described as having a unique and powerful ability to engage and build rapport with some of Canberra's most vulnerable and difficult to engage young people, and is a strong advocate for the rights of the young people.

She is an incredibly humble worker who has always attributed her successes in supporting young people to the strength and courage she identifies and nurtures in them. Fiona inspires and encourages other workers to strive to improve their own practice, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that young people are supported in making positive changes in their lives.

Lisa Howarth

Lisa has worked as the Youth Advisor for the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) for the past two years. Her role consists of directly supporting disconnected and disengaged young people who are entering, attending and transitioning from CIT; through developing holistic support plans in which young people drive their own educational experiences. Prior to her current role, Lisa worked for CIT teaching horticulture to young people at Quamby Youth Detention Centre.

Lisa is described as truly passionate about engaging the most vulnerable members of the community, and has a particular gift for seeking out and noticing those who would otherwise slip through the cracks.

During Lisa's time at CIT she has had a significant impact on the youth sector and young people. She has contributed greatly to CIT's understanding of the issues facing young people transitioning into an adult education environment and has worked tirelessly to improve the perceptions of young people in the CIT environment.

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: Cephias Arok

Cephias is the youth representative within the Sudanese-Australian Community Association in the ACT Inc, and leads the Sudanese Youth Association in the ACT Inc.

As a volunteer, Cephias works hard to engage Sudanese young people in sport and recreational activities, with the aim of further supporting their settlement into the wider communities of the ACT.

Cephias is held in high regard by his colleagues and peers. His commitment to his role and sound administrative and engagement skills provide significant benefits and wide-reaching support to Sudanese young people in the ACT.

Commendations: Amy Linden and Jess Urquhart

Amy Linden

Amy began her employment with Woden Youth Centre as a disability support worker in the Community Supported Respite Program, before eventually moving to her current position as a youth worker.

Amy provides case management services, community life skills and Party Safe media programs within schools and at the Bimberi Youth Detention Centre. She supervises drop-in, delivers centre based and school holiday activities and has a crucial role in supporting Bit Bent.

Amy is described as having a natural ability to connect, engage and maintain real and trusting relationships with young people regardless of their background.

Jess Urquhart

Jess is a youth worker with the Woden Youth Centre, providing centre-based and school holiday programs, case management services, facilitating community life skills programs in schools and providing information, support and referrals for young people aged 12 - 25 years. She also supervises drop-in, engages and encourages young people to participate in programs. She demonstrates a natural and friendly ability to welcome young people to the youth centre.

Jess was successful in gaining a HealthPact Grant to run a healthier lifestyle choices program, which included running hip-hop classes in conjunction with Kulture Break; and hosting a healthier eating program at the Canberra College. She was also key in establishing a Facebook page for Woden Youth Centre, which has proven to be an excellent way to engage and maintain connections with young people who access the service.

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: Sandra Guillemin

Sandra has been working and volunteering with the Mura-Lanyon Youth Centre for the past 2 years as a youth worker; working 2 days a week and volunteering the remaining 3 days, in order to maintain a close connection to the young people she works with.

Sandra works closely with the weekly girls' group and the Lanyon Youth Committee. She has developed strong connections with young people, their families, and other local community organisations. Young people visit the youth centre from all over the Tuggeranong region to have a chat to Sandra.

Sandra is described as an amazing worker, who has a fabulous and caring attitude towards all young people that come into contact with her.

Commendation: Ben Skinner

Ben has worked with the Canberra PCYC for 5 years, in a range of roles, including administration, as a RecLink youth worker and now as the sports Youth Activities Coordinator. He is also studying to be a personal trainer for the PCYC.

Ben is described as enthusiastic, committed and passionate about working in the community with vulnerable young people, particularly though providing opportunities through sport, recreation and health initiatives. He is vibrant and dynamic, with positive purpose and empathy for the young people he works with.

The PCYC identified the respect that young people hold for him. Outside of his paid work, he also meets with young people, takes them on cricket trips and attends Blue Light Discos, 'cos he wants to'.

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: Rob Large

Rob has been a long-term employee of Tumladen (medium-term youth accommodation) for more than 10 years. During this time he has taken on a number of roles, including coordinator and residential youth worker.

As the service winds up, Rob has been crucial in supporting young people to transition to specialist homelessness services. Previous Tumladen clients often visit the service to catch-up with Rob, and continue to seek his advice as a trusted and respected worker.

In addition to working at Tumladen, Rob also works with young people in the field of special education, where he has worked as a secondary school teacher for a number of years.

Rob is described as having a high level of interpersonal skills, strong values, working respectfully with young people, and having responsive skills that result in positive outcomes for the young people he works with. He is widely respected in the youth sector.

Staff Acknowledgement Award

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

Winner: Margaret Vile

Margaret is the Program Manager Transitions, Careers and Vocational Learning within the ACT Department of Education and Training. Margaret has worked closely with the Youth Coalition during 2010 on a number of projects, including: the Pathways Planning Action Group, the Re-Engaging Youth Leadership Group and the ACT Youth Commitment Steering Committee.

Margaret has been at the forefront of a committed team from the Department of Education and Training to support the youth sector to adapt to a number of changes occurring for young people in relation to education. She has been committed to attending Youth Coalition forums, events and youth services to provide information and support; and the staff team have received positive feedback from many youth workers and services that have engaged with Margaret.

The Youth Coalition staff team would like to acknowledge and thank Margaret for her on-going time, energy and work towards collaborative practice and a sincere commitment to achieving the best outcomes for young people in the ACT.