



Community Engagement and Communications
Department of Territory and Municipal Services
GPO Box 158
Canberra City ACT 2601

29 April 2010

To the Department of Territory and Municipal Services (TAMS), ACT Government,

On behalf of the Youth Coalition of the ACT (Youth Coalition), I would like to thank the ACT Government for the opportunity to input into the Discussion Paper: *Drug Driving in the Territory: An Overview of Issues and Options* (the Discussion Paper).

About the Youth Coalition of the ACT

The Youth Coalition is the peak youth affairs body in the ACT. Comprised of 90 members, programs, and individuals the Youth Coalition is responsible for representing and promoting the interests and wellbeing of people aged between 12 and 25 years 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.

A key role of the Youth Coalition is the development and analysis of ACT social policy and program decisions for young people and youth services. The Youth Coalition facilitates the development of strong linkages and promotes collaboration between the community, government and private sectors to achieve better outcomes for young people in the ACT.

Response to the Discussion Paper: *Drug Driving in the Territory: An Overview of Issues and Options*

The Youth Coalition has reviewed the Discussion Paper, and commends the ACT Government for clearly articulating the complexity of this issue, and for providing key stakeholders with the opportunity to provide comment. As outlined in the Discussion Paper, the mechanisms for addressing the possible implementation of drug driving testing in the ACT will require considerable time and investment to formulate.

The Youth Coalition is concerned that the development of drug driving testing in the ACT may be based upon similar systems implemented interstate. While the Youth Coalition supports the development of evidence-based initiatives, any further discussion or development of this initiative must be based upon a comprehensive analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of these interstate schemes.

In addition, the ACT is highly unique in its demographic, socioeconomic and geographic profiling, highlighting the importance of considering these factors in further discussions.

Additional Comments

In addition to the importance of using an evidence-based approach, the Youth Coalition would like to highlight some key concerns to inform further discussion:

- The likelihood of 'youth profiling', in which law enforcement agencies may target young people, youth events and locations where young people are likely to be. There are likely to be immediate and secondary consequences as a result of targeting young people.
- The potential opportunities for looking at more community based approaches and responses, such as night bus services, better education around the dangers of drug driving, and counselling options, for example.

The Youth Coalition recommends that the ACT Government continue to engage with key stakeholders in further discussions on this topic, including young people and the youth sector.

We would like to again thank the ACT Government for providing an opportunity to provide comment on the Discussion Paper, and welcome the opportunity to continue to participate in the process.

Please do not hesitate to contact me on (02) 6247 3540 or at director@youthcoalition.net if you wish to discuss this letter further.

Sincerely,

Emma Robertson
Director
Youth Coalition of the ACT