



Annual YOGIE Award Winners 2011

Presented by

Ms Joy Burch MLA
Minister for Community Services

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

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

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 is 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 2011

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, 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 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 the Youth Coalition staff team)

Commendations

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

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: Youth Music Events: Woden Youth Centre, Woden Community Services

Woden Youth Centre music events commenced in 1989 and have continued to develop and grow over 12 years. The objective of the music events is to ensure young people are involved in all aspects of the events to have true ownership of them, and to provide bands and young musicians supported opportunities to enhance and further develop their abilities to coordinate events and to raise their own and other's bands profiles. Woden Youth Centre has developed partnership with many other groups to support their music events including the Narrabundah College and Canberra College music programs.

Young people involved in the music events have developed, and continue to develop, skills in event management including, but not limited to, organising line-ups and the timing of the event, stage production, promotion and performance. These experiences help to build a skill base for young people wishing to enter the events/entertainment industry.

The LIFT OFF Band Competition, now in it's 3rd year, is growing in success due in part to a team of committed people who support young people by providing their expertise, and time to share their knowledge with aspiring musicians. With amazing prizes on offer thanks to building partnerships, these competitions are an excellent opportunity for young people to get involved with, with the 2010 winners of LIFT OFF, Atlantis Awaits, being signed to a record label and recording their first professional studio album in 2011.

Commendation: Youth Week Program - Jervis & Wreck Bay, Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, Community Services Directorate

The CSD, through the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, worked in partnership with beyondblue, Indigenous Hip Hop Projects, ACT Policing Crime Prevention Team, Chief Minister and Cabinet Directorate Centenary of Canberra team, Jervis Bay Primary School, Vincentia High School, Office for Children, Youth and Family Support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Unit to host a week-long event during National Youth Week in the Jervis/Wreck Bay region. This event reached over 1500 vulnerable and at-risk young people who live in an isolated, regional area of the A.C.T. It was also able to give these young people experiences they would not have been able to have without the partnerships made to support it.

The National Youth Week Program focused on helping young people reach out, be confident, stay connected (or be re-connected) to their community, peers, education and services through the delivery of the Indigenous Hip Hop Projects (IHHP) program based on youthbeyondblue key messages, look, listen, talk and seek help. ACT Policing Crime Prevention Team also held information sessions on personal safety and decision making and sporting activities. These programs provided opportunities for young people to connect with services and police in a practical an engaging way. The end of the week finished with a BBQ dinner and dance party with all of the community attending. This was the first time young people from Vincentia High School had attended a dance party at Jervis Bay Primary School.

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: Suburban Challenge, Environmental and Sustainable Development Directorate

The Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate's (ESDD) interactive schools program, initiated through Mark Metters, promotes youth initiative and environmental education while introducing concepts of sustainable suburban planning over six weeks, meeting once a week (double lesson).

The 'How to build a sustainable suburb' program educates upper primary and secondary students on how sustainable suburbs are planned and built and how suburbs can change to reflect different challenges, including climate change. It is a hands on, practical approach to sustainable development that raises students awareness of how planning is based around the environment.

The program is unique in many ways as it allows students to self discover the built environment by planning, analysing, consulting and constructing their own sustainable suburb using 3D models and is free of charge. Working in teams of four, students use large custom-designed topographic maps to work through the six stages of sustainable suburb development: Plan it using site investigation ensuring sustainability, Explore it by doing an impact assessment, Build It by putting in elements of a suburb including parks and housing, Name it using ACTPLA naming guidelines, Change it to understand how suburbs change over time, and Present it to share learning with peers, parents and others.

Aside from building their own suburb, the students say the most exciting part of the program is presenting their ideas to parents, peers and the wider community. Their enthusiasm, knowledge and engagement with the project often draws their parents and the community into the planning debate.

Commendation: As Eye See It Project, ACT Children and Young People Commissioner

The As Eye See It Project is a black and white photography project for children and young people in the ACT who have experienced Out of Home Care. There were a total of 28 participants ageing from 4yrs – 18yrs, who were given a creative opportunity to share their lives, stories and their experiences with the community, creating community awareness about Out of Home care in the ACT.

The ACT Children & Young People Commissioner employed two young people who have both experienced out of home care themselves, to co-facilitate the project. This gave the team a unique advantage in engaging the interest of the participants as well as supporting them and their carers throughout the project.

The project highlights the significance of foster and kinship care, and the impact carers have on a child or young person's life. The As Eye See It project places the Out of Home Care system in the spotlight, which may lead to positive changes in community attitudes, dispel myths, and possibly encourage an increase in foster carers in the ACT. The As Eye See It Project also works to create an opportunity for the participants to channel their thoughts and experiences, both positive and negative, into a creative outlet that can be as subtle or as descriptive as they wish. The project requests carers and family members support and nurture the participants through the project, providing opportunities for them. The exhibition at the end of the project enables the participants to share their work with the community, and to see their work displayed professionally, giving them a sense of pride and achievement

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: Our Place – Youth Integrated Accommodation and Education Program

Our Place is a collaborative project between Barnardos, Anglicare, DHCS and Rotary. Based on the Foyer model developed in the UK, Our Place is an innovative project providing a high standard of affordable accommodation to young homeless people in the ACT who are engaged in education, training and/or training related employment.

The project has operated from a collaborative perspective since its inception and is one of the few community based projects being delivered by a staff team made up from different agencies, in this case Barnardos and Anglicare. The collaborative perspective is mirrored in all areas of the project, from the shared living arrangements the young people are accommodated in, the group activities they participate in and weekly dinners where the diverse cultural mix of the residents is reflected in the meals that are prepared.

At a staff level members from both agencies are represented in both the case work and management staff, including senior management. The project is overseen by a governance committee made up of a range of representatives including Rotary and the Community Services Directorate. Further collaborations are planned at this level with business and education providers.

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: Younger Mum's Project, Institute of Child Protection Studies

In 2011 a group of Australian Breastfeeding Association volunteers completed a research project looking into the information and support younger mothers need to initiate and continue with breastfeeding. The methodology included a literature review, three focus groups with young mothers in Canberra, and discussions with relevant workers with the aim of the project being to improve younger pregnant and parenting women's access to appropriate breastfeeding information and support services.

The insights and experiences of the younger mothers involved in the project provided a lot of information that will assist in advocating for adequate provision of breastfeeding support and information to the group. This will support an increase in the rates of younger mothers breastfeeding and improve their experiences of it.

This project is an example of how research can be done within the community sector to address important issues for a marginalised group. It provides an avenue for young people's voices to be heard and highlights ways forward that can improve the health of young mothers and their children.

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: CatholicCare Canberra and Goulburn

CatholicCare has been delivering services to people in the Canberra and Goulburn region for over 50 years. CatholicCare currently services over 50 contracts, including many specific services for young people. These programs include Mental Health programs like STEPS and Youth and Wellbeing; Counselling services through FACES and a Student and Parent counseling service; Alcohol and Other Drug Programs, Grogwatch; Youth Homelessness support services, Homelinx and Reconnect; Youth Connections, an Education, Training and Work program; and, the CatholicCare Migration Service, supporting new arrivals.

CatholicCare recognises the need and desire for ongoing development for their staff in order to improve service delivery, skills and sense of achievement for staff and to retain highly skilled workers in the community sector. CatholicCare supports ongoing learning in a number of ways. These include Professional Development planning, the provision of high quality supervision for staff, In-house training including training in working with young people who have co-morbid support needs, providing Study Leave for staff on a pro-rata basis along with 'no interest' loans for staff engaged in tertiary studies and CatholicCare employ staff without qualifications on traineeships to enable them to gain on the job skills, experience and study at the same time. This initiative has included the recruitment of people with personal experience in a variety of backgrounds to value add to their roles.

CatholicCare has supported numerous staff in gaining Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Post Graduate qualifications. The organisation has also supported psychology internships. Their commitment to developing the skills and knowledge of their staff, to improve their work and outcomes with clients demonstrates excellence.

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: Merin Ahern, Belconnen Community Services

Merin Currently works at U-Turn Youth Services, Belconnen Community Services (BCS), as a Youth Connections Outreach Worker. Merin's role is to support disengaged or disengaging young people to re-engage in education, training or employment. This is undertaken through individual case management and facilitation of group activities; Merin facilitates a number of self-esteem and personal development courses within BCS and Belconnen Schools. Merin actively promotes opportunities available to young people in the Belconnen Youth Centre, including Road Ready and business courses; she also facilitates many social opportunities and holiday programs with the youth centre.

She has been described as an outstanding young person, with a passion about working in the youth sector. She has the ability to address a student's social emotional and intellectual needs and maintains connections with young people after they exit short-term programs and courses; this continuing connection supports young people to remain more connected with a pathway than they would have otherwise.

Merin has established strong links with schools in the Belconnen area, along with collaborating with other agencies such as the AFP and the ACT Chamber of Commerce to improve outcomes for young people at risk of disengaging. She has also established the Belconnen youth Network, which meets quarterly to bring stakeholders in the youth sector together to ensure their needs of young people are met through collaboration. Merin has made a difference to many young people who are at risk of disengaging from education and training.

Commendation: Donna Harrison, Outreach Worker, Lowana Youth Services

Donna is an outreach worker with Lowana, responsible for managing their transitional accommodation including boarding house accommodation with 6 beds, a block of 5 Flats and a common room at Goreen Street in Ainslie, along with various other clients residing in properties across ACT. She provides case management for over 20 young people, along with supporting tenancy management, on-going teaching of living skills, provision of common room resources including 'Foodbank', and, general emotional support, advice and guidance.

She works tirelessly in advocating to Housing ACT and other tenancy managers with or on behalf of young people, and was instrumental in achieving some successes in adding security to units for young people to live in safely. Donna was also the primary worker from Lowana involved in the set up of an Exiting Detention program for young people leaving Quamby/Bimberi, the aim of which is to provide supported accommodation to encourage stability and less recidivism. Donna has championed the needs of this program to the funding body and other organisations whenever it was evaluated that adjustments to the program must be made, including the location of the accommodation places and the eligibility requirements for young people to access the program.

Lowana consistently receives very positive feedback from young people Donna has worked with, and it has been said by co-workers that her dedication to young people and experience in working to

address youth homelessness is inspiring and has motivated some to follow her example. Donna has been working to address youth homelessness through Lowana for 9 years now and is still passionate in her work.

Commendation: Leigh Hares, Case Coordinator, Turnaround Program

Leigh has brought to Turnaround with him a diverse range of skills from working in education inclusion and disability support services. He has worked for Turnaround for almost 2 years and in that time has demonstrated and modelled for others strength-based, client centered practice.

Leigh has worked with young people who have been considered to be “lost” to the system and on many occasions has been truly able to assist them to turn their lives around by seeing in them the spark of strength, nurturing this, and demonstrating a faith that all things are possible. He has provided consistent support regardless of the young person’s circumstances, in a completely accepting and non-judgmental way.

Several of Leigh’s clients have been able to overcome difficulties with numeracy and literacy, through his patient encouragement and support to access tutoring. Leigh has a gentle wisdom that translates very well in providing guided support to young people, allowing them to make their own informed choices. He has been able to assist young people to believe in their own capacity and overcome labels that may have become the debilitating factor in their lives.

The Turnaround Program is most proud about the client, family and peer feedback they receive from those who have worked with him. These are testimony to his integrity and dedication to making the lives of young people more enjoyable to them

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: Margy Duke, Parenting Outreach Program, Barnardos

Margy was employed in the Parenting Outreach Program at Barnardos in March 2011, to set up and run a supported playgroup for young Aboriginal mothers, 'Koori Playgroup', in addition to providing outreach support to young homeless families in the community. Margy is a part time worker for Barnardos, wife and full time mother of 5 children. Margy is a proud Dhungutti woman and a well-known talented Aboriginal Abstract artist both here and internationally

The group Margy facilitates is of huge benefit to participants, they have developed strong support networks and are embracing the opportunities provided through the group. The children are thriving being in an environment that is set up to cater for their learning needs, and parents are encouraged and taught to stimulate and play with their children during the sessions. The group is made up of young mums, some as young as 18 years, most with Care and Protection orders on their children, some children in long term care or having episodic removal of children, some working on children being successfully restored to their care, all struggling to develop the skills and supports to parent, maintain housing and live successfully.

The Parenting Outreach Program struggled in keeping a supported playgroup running for the particular target group. They sought a facilitator who could manage the group dynamics, organise appropriate activities, transport, and healthy food, in addition to providing strong leadership and a caring, supportive ear to some very challenging young women. Margy jumped into the role with enthusiasm and quickly demonstrated her excellent skills. The group is now running very efficiently and effectively with a healthy turn out each week. In fact, it is now hard to get some of the young women to go home after groups.

Commendation: Moo K'lue Di Gay (Eagle), Multicultural Youth Services

Eagle has been a bicultural worker with MYS since November 2010. This role includes consultation with the local Karen community to support development and implementation of MYS projects that meet the needs of young Karen people. He has been a youth representative for the Australian Karen organization, ACT Branch, and has organised traditional dance classes and cane ball practice for young people, which he continues to teach. He also volunteers his own time to support Karen young people in Canberra in a range of other capacities like providing school orientation for new arrivals and giving free interpreting services.

Eagle has linked a number of young people to MYS for ongoing case management, who, without his introduction and encouragement, may not have had the confidence to get support. He has inspired both young people and their parents to take up music and cane ball at MYS with a large number of young people, parents and children taking up these activities. Feedback to MYS is that parents would have been reluctant to let their children participate, without Eagle being involved. He is a committed worker who will spend hours on the phone so that everyone understands and appreciates MYS youth programs and builds trust for parents to allow their young people to participate.

Eagle encouraged his community to allow three youth representatives to attend the International Refugee Conference at UNSW this year, at which he spoke about educational issues for young people from a refugee background. Eagle has also encouraged his community to maintain their culture and has arranged parents to run language and culture classes at MYS. He is highly respected within and outside his community, and is very genuine in his commitment.

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: Lorne Lenz, Social Worker, Oasis Youth Residential Service

Lorne has worked within Oasis Youth Residential Service's crisis accommodation refuge for over 5 years. His role is to provide case management, support, advocacy, and emotional and transitional support to the young people accessing the service. Lorne consistently works to improve and maintain the various supports that himself and Oasis provide and strives to obtain the best possible results.

Lorne builds excellent rapport with clients and his focus is always on clients getting the support they need to transition to independence, and is also able to make sure the refuge has a 'homely' feel to it while simultaneously ensuring safety protocols are kept. He is able to identify the strengths in young people and helps them work towards seeing this also. Lorne is effective in his work due to his respect for others, his open mind and ability to look at situations from a client's perspective. Clients that have left the service often return or call to speak to Lorne as they are comfortable with him and he always makes time for them.

Lorne's co-workers have said he makes the work environment enjoyable, always smiling and happy to be at work, that he has a passion for the work he does and it shows. He is always happy to share his experiences and knowledge with other staff to help them grow in the workforce.

Commendation: Helen Vlandis

Helen works at Melba Copland Secondary School and is a Careers advisor, but it has been said that Helen is so much more than her job description gives her credit for. Helen is a community team player, always meeting the needs of students at all levels of education, age and maturity.

Helen is very well known throughout every kind of working industry and has a very high reputation for having students ready to start their work experience and training from the first day including going to the trouble of finding them transport and getting them lunch and morning tea and making sure all the OH&S requirements have been met to an industry standard.

Helen has strong connections with many networks to support options for students, including the AFP, Defence, Universities and Trade Schools. She also fortnightly maintains a College newsletter, and, attends and speaks at both campuses of Melba Copland Secondary School about careers info. Helen engages guest speakers, applies and participates in community grants and encourages participation in community programs along with providing individual counselling to students. Helen has a very high level of experience in working with families to help support a student who is facing risk; she never gives up on a student and gets them results that will help them the rest of their life.

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: Sharon D'Elboux, Our Place Youth Integrated Accommodation and Education Program

Sharon has helped set up this new program in its first year, along with taking on the role to match mentors to the "mentees" who live in the accommodation at "Our Place". This is a different field for Sharon who has been mainly working with young people in an outreach capacity. Her years of experience with the young people of Canberra, makes her well placed to provide support and guidance to the enthusiastic mentors.

Sharon has worked in the Transition Program for fifteen years (minus a couple of years to have two children) and during this time she has proved herself to be a caring, effective, nurturing, patient, professional, resilient and humorous youth worker. Over the years Sharon's unflagging enthusiasm and unqualified acceptance of young people has allowed her to make a real impact on their lives. Sharon has the unique ability to engage, direct, cajole, advise, advocate, empathise, listen, counsel and empower young people whilst appearing to be just a friendly person who wants to have a catch up. To have someone so experienced to help young people with incredibly challenging and complex issues can only benefit the homeless young people of the ACT.

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: Kate Cvetanovski, Northside Community Services

Kate is Senior Manager of the Youth, Family and Housing Services at Northside community Service, and has held this position for over two years. Along with providing leadership to her teams, she has developed innovative programs and partnerships, and continues to advocate for better outcomes for young people.

Kate has a deep understanding of assertive outreach approaches to youth work, and works effectively within this approach to engage, empower and support 'hard to reach' young people. Some of Kate's successes in work and leadership include the development of many programs for young people in partnership with other organisations, such as, the winner of 2010's Yogie Award for Innovation in Practice, the Steer program.

Kate is generous with her time and skills in participating in forums and learning opportunities with colleagues from other agencies, including sector development work such as practice frameworks and outcome measures. She has also driven partnerships that Northside Community Service are now engaged in including with the AFP, Corrective Services, Centrelink, ACT Housing, local schools, training bodies and many community organisations.

Kate has also been instrumental in supporting the development of collaboration opportunities between the Youth Coalition and Families ACT, the peak body for family support services in the ACT. The Youth Coalition staff team would like to acknowledge and thank Kate for her time, energy and work towards collaborative practice, engagement of vulnerable young people and a sincere commitment to achieving the best outcomes for young people in the ACT.

