

The Youth Coalition's Policy Platform is a key document that informs and guides the organization in its work. The Policy Platform also documents a range of issues facing both young people and those who work with them in the ACT and is a resource that can provide an overview of particular issues and topics to those who have an interest in youth affairs.

The 2007 Policy Platform is the Youth Coalition's third Policy Platform and build upon previous platforms adding 12 more policies, bringing the total number of policies to 35. The platform has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders including our members, youth services and young people.

One of the most significant changes in this platform is the centrality of a human rights framework underpinning policies throughout the platform. The introduction of the *Human Rights Act 2004* has made a significant contribution to the development of government legislation and both government and community sector policy. While the Human Rights Act does not include social, cultural and economic rights, this platform does include these rights as human rights are interconnected and interdependent and the ability to enjoy social and political rights is dependent on the ability to enjoy social, cultural and economic rights.

A rights based approach to working with young people and young people's interactions with society is a valuable and constructive approach to considering young people and the issues they face. We believe that everybody in the community has a responsibility for the promotion and protection of human rights for everybody in our society and that young people face specific challenges to exercising their rights through systemic discrimination, disadvantage and restrictions in our society. Therefore, young people human rights need special attention and increased protection. For this reason, this platform has human rights as an underpinning framework throughout the whole document.

We intend that this platform is useful in documenting the current state of youth affairs in the ACT and providing constructing responses to the issues faced by young people in the ACT. We would like to thank all the young people, youth workers and other stakeholders who have worked with us in developing this platform.

Meredith Hunter
Director