

**Department of Local Government and Communities**

**Submission to the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee**

***Inquiry into Building Resilience and Engagement for At-risk Youth***

***through Culture and Sport***

**May 2016**

The Department of Local Government and Communities (Department), including the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI), welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry into Building Resilience and Engagement for At-risk Youth through Culture and Sport. The Department's role is to make a difference for local communities. This includes encouraging and supporting young people aged 12 to 25 years to engage in community life, strengthening parenting and enriching the lives of children and families, and strengthening and supporting cultural diversity in the community.

The Department notes the Terms of Reference are to specifically enquire into the use of sport and culture as mechanisms for engaging and building the resilience of at-risk youth. The Department funds and supports a broad range of early intervention, prevention and capacity building programs which may include sport and cultural activities; most are not specifically targeted to at-risk youth however they may include activities for at risk and vulnerable groups.

**INVESTING IN WESTERN AUSTRALIAN YOUNG PEOPLE: DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITIES' INITIATIVES**

The State Government's vision is for a bright future where all young Western Australians can participate, contribute, feel connected, be well and be supported to achieve their full potential. It aims to achieve this through:

- a range of initiatives that support family life;
- services and programs for young people; and
- developing places and spaces – real and virtual – that are youth friendly and safe.

Strong and healthy family, school, home and community environments are critical to helping young people develop appropriate ways to assess and manage risk.<sup>1</sup> The Department partners with the community services sector to provide activities and programs that create environments in which young people can thrive. This includes supporting and encouraging young people to participate in community life by funding targeted and universal services that provide sustainable, structured, long-term family and youth development programs

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<sup>1</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Wellbeing (2011), *Young Australians: their health and wellbeing*, Canberra; Child and Adolescent Health Service (2011), *Health and Wellbeing Profile of Young Western Australians*, Department of Health, Perth.

and activities, and assist young people and/or their families to cope with challenges and the transition to adulthood.

### **1. Supporting family life**

The degree to which families are capable of providing a stable and supportive environment varies. Family functioning can be affected by a number of factors – some beyond the control of family members – including changes in family circumstances, relationships between individual family members, parenting skills and confidence, parental employment and financial stability.

In 2015-2016, the Department has provided more than \$22.8 million in funding to the community services sector for services and programs that support parents, children and families including in the following areas:

- Parenting – providing information, assistance and support to families with children aged pre-birth to 18 years.
- Rural Early Education and Care Services – sessional or occasional early education and care services in regional areas, many of which have limited or no alternative child care options available.
- Financial Counselling – services that enable individuals and families to become more financially capable and improve their ability to manage their financial situation. Services include direct support and community education. Services are provided on a State-wide basis.
- Individual and Family Support – programs and activities that assist individuals and families to respond to specific, self-identified issues or challenges, and connect them with community support networks and other resources.
- Community and Neighbourhood Development – which provide opportunities for individuals and families to develop skills and knowledge, improve their wellbeing, build their self-esteem and personal development, and expand their connection to the community.
- Grandcarers – support services helping grandcarers to manage the challenges of parenting by building their knowledge, skills and confidence and linking them to social support networks and relevant community resources. It includes the Grandcarers Support Scheme, which is an annual support payment to grandparents who have full-time responsibility for raising their grandchildren.

Major funded services include:

- Ngala – to provide early parenting and early childhood services that support and guide families through the journey of parenting;
- Meerilinga – to work with children, their families, early childhood professionals, planners and the community to raise the status of children in Western Australia;

- CLAN WA – to work alongside Western Australian families to help build resilience by supporting parents with issues including relationships, reducing isolation or the impact of mental illness;
- Citizens Advice Bureau WA – to provide a mediation program for family and some civil matters, legal advice and referrals about a range of family, civil and criminal matters, and a legal advice bureau with a volunteer solicitor;
- Anglicare WA and UnitingCare West for the Metropolitan Financial Counselling Service, involving a partnership of 10 organisations to deliver financial counselling services; and
- Wanslea – to provide support services for grandcarers.

The Department is also involved in collaborative projects to develop local solutions to improve early years outcomes. This includes:

- The Connecting Community for Kids partnership with WACOSS, Woodside, Cities of Cockburn and Kwinana, focussed on better coordinating existing investment in early years service delivery to improve early years outcomes as measured by the Australian Early Development Census.
- The development of a Centre for Parenting Excellence to encourage best practice parenting services, monitor parent support needs and evaluate outcomes.
- An OMI Major Programs grant of \$50,000 to Save the Children Australia for the It Takes a Village: Good Families project, which supports vulnerable mothers and children from CaLD backgrounds to engage with the community, build capacity, reach development milestones and transition successfully to school.

## **2. Services and Programs for Young People**

In collaboration with young people, youth organisations and the community services sector, the Department funds, provides and supports services, programs and initiatives that encourage and support young people to engage in community life by:

- promoting the wellbeing and positive images of young people;
- supporting opportunities for young people to reach their full potential as respected and contributing members of the community;
- facilitating young people's participation in the planning, development and implementation of services to meet their diverse needs.

### ***Promoting wellbeing and positive images***

Youth is a time of rapid change and transition, and a critical period for supporting people to establish positive health and wellbeing behaviours. Being well enables young people to participate and engage in education, employment and the community, which helps them to develop resilience. Early intervention and prevention measures during this period of transition can enable young people to establish the behaviours needed for life-long wellbeing.

The Department supports young people to achieve lifelong health and wellbeing by funding and providing early intervention and prevention programs and services, including:

- More than \$315,000 (2015-16) to Youth Focus for its Youth, Family Support and Counselling program, working with young people aged 12 to 25 years to help them overcome issues such as depression, anxiety, self-harm and suicidal thoughts through free counselling and other mental health services.
- More than \$60,000 (2015-2016) to yourtown (formerly Boys Town) for the Kids Helpline free phone and online counselling and information service.
- Funding for early intervention and prevention programs through the Youth Activity Grants program. In 2015-2016, grants of up to \$5,000 were provided for the following projects:
  - Diabetes Association of Western Australia camp for teenagers with Type 1 Diabetes;
  - FNTS Movement, auspiced by the Western Australian AIDS Council Inc, Collective Action Project for CaLD young people looking at issues including mental health, sexual health and relationships;
  - headspace Fremantle, auspiced by the Youth Affairs Council of WA Inc., for a Fremantle Mental Health Week awareness event;
  - City of Canning Freaky Friday Healthier Lives event;
  - Zero2Hero Inc. Camp Hero which includes an accredited SafeTALK suicide awareness program;

- Local Drug Action Groups Inc 2016 Communities in Action: Challenging Drinking Culture State Conference;
- The Australian-Asian Association of Western Australia Inc. Financial Literacy Workshops for Young CaLD Women, empowering them to become more financially responsible;
- The Shire of Kulin Camp Kulin Drop-In Zone project creating positive diversionary activities for young people in a safe environment;
- Creating Freedom Australia, auspiced by St Vincent de Paul Society (WA) Inc., Expressival 2015, to empower youth experiencing disadvantage and homelessness.
- All Round Community Health and Community Care Ltd. Steps for the Future four-week life skills and resilience program; and
- City of Perth Projector Bike project, a series of film workshops using a theme based around the Act-Belong Commit message of social inclusion.
- OMI will provide Relationships Australia Western Australia Inc. with \$300,000 funding over three years (2015-2016 to 2017-2018) for the A Shared Future capacity building program, which will work with young people and communities to reduce economic, social and cultural isolation, and provide the knowledge and skills to counter extremist influences.
- OMI funded 20 CaLD young people to undertake the Youth Focus youth mental health first aid training program.

Community respect for young people is important, along with recognition that some common negative stereotypes about young people do not apply to the majority. Positive interactions with the wider community and respecting, recognising and celebrating the positive contributions young people make are important to their wellbeing and protect them against the risk of social exclusion.

The Department supports the promotion, celebration and recognition of young people by funding and delivering a range of programs, events and initiatives, including:

- Funding and grants for National Youth Week. Delivered in partnership with Propel Youth Arts, NYW is an annual celebration of the positive contributions of Western Australian young people. This included:
  - \$71,000 in grants for 73 projects developed and delivered by young people;
  - \$54,000 in funding to Propel Youth Arts; and
  - an interactive online events calendar hosted on the Department's website.
- Partnership with and sponsorship of \$15,000 to the Youth Advisory Council of WA for the 2015-2016 WA Youth Awards, which recognise Western Australians aged 12 to 25 years for their contribution to the community, as well as individuals and organisations that work with and support the State's young people.
- Funding for activities that showcase the artistic and creative talents of young people. In 2015-2016, grants of up to \$5,000 were provided for the following projects:

- Town of Port Hedland Awesome Art 2016 Creative Challenge project. A series of creative workshops on photography, visual arts, film making and drama to create artworks which will be displayed at a community exhibition and the Creative Challenge Exhibition.
- The Town of Port Hedland North West Skate Fest project. Young people from the JD Hardie Youth Zone will partner with the Youth Involvement Council, Wirrika Maya Aboriginal Health Service, South Headland Youth Space and local schools to host the first ever youth skate competition. It will give young people the opportunity to showcase their talents in front of the wider community.
- The Shire of Morawa Youth Circus Skills and Performance Program, which will engage young people in a series of circus skills workshops. At the end of the project participants will showcase their skills at a community event that they are also responsible for planning and implementing.
- OMI grants of up to \$5,000 for the following projects showcasing the artistic and creative talents of young people from CaLD backgrounds:
  - Mirrabooka Harmony Day event which provided opportunities for young people to develop new skills and talents through their participation in performances, competitions and event coordination;
  - Australian Asian Association of WA Harmony Week 2016 for CaLD youth, for a series of small events, culminating in a large event, allowing young people from 22 new and emerging communities to showcase their culture through performances; and
  - Aveley Primary School Parents and Citizens Association 'It's a Small World After All', event showcasing the school's ethnic diversity through performances by students and cultural groups.

***Supporting young people to reach their full potential as respected and contributing members of the community***

Social and community participation and engagement delivers a number of positive benefits to young people including influence over and ownership of their community, development of networks and social capital, and wellbeing and life satisfaction. Other benefits to the community and young people include increased trust, greater capacity for collective action and decision making, and the development of transferrable skills that are positively associated with good education and employment outcomes, and reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour.

The Department funds, supports and delivers a range of programs, events and initiatives that support young people to reach their full potential and contribute to their community, including:

- More than \$2.7 million in funding for, and the administration of, the Cadets WA program. More than 8,000 young people participate in 200 cadet units, which provide a

range of activities that develop leadership and life skills, and a sense of community responsibility and service.

- The Youth Participation Kit, a series of publications for young people and organisations which provide advice on how to maximise young people's input and contributions to community life.
- Providing advice and information to local governments about how to engage with young people, including the establishment of Youth Advisory Councils to involve young people in decision making on local matters.
- Leading the reform of youth mentoring in Western Australia, resulting in the establishment of the WA Youth Mentoring Network, and the development of the WA Youth Mentoring Strategic Framework and publications on best practice in youth mentoring.
- Funding for leadership and skills development programs through the Youth Activity Grants program. In 2015-2016, grants of up to \$5,000 were provided for the following projects:
  - Australian Youth Climate Coalition State Training Camp WA which will engage young people in a range of workshops including how to communicate effectively, the logistics of planning and running successful events and how to build effective teams;
  - The Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Australia Youth Award Leader Project, which will give young people the opportunity to take part in leadership workshops that will enable them to become Youth Award Leaders who mentor young people through the Duke of Edinburgh Award Program.
  - The City of Armadale Young Women's Development Project for young women aged 13 to 17 years, which aims to build leadership skills whilst creating active citizenship by enabling participants to be involved with local community services, mentoring, and cultural workshops.
  - The Youth Affairs Council of WA Inc Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network WA Catalyst Youth Summit, to build the leadership skills of multicultural young people living in Western Australia (part funded through OMI's Community Grants Program).
  - The Shire of Nannup Strive Forth project three day leadership development camp.
  - The West Australian Youth Mentoring Network, auspiced by The Smith Family, WA Youth Mentoring Network Mentor Summit.
- OMI Major Projects funding of:
  - \$20,000 to the WA Football Commission for the Welcome to AFL project, which focuses on developing CaLD youth capacity through leadership development and mentoring;
  - \$49,250 to the Youth Affairs Council of WA for the Shout Out project, training young CaLD people in public speaking, storytelling and media liaison, which will enable them to speak out against marginalisation.

### ***Facilitating participation in the planning, development and implementation of services***

Like social and community participation, civic engagement delivers a range of positive wellbeing outcomes to young people, and benefits to the community. Civic engagement allows people to have direct input into policy, planning and decision making. This may be through both formal and informal political processes, such as council or community meetings, protest meetings, petitions, voting and regular commitment to non-profit organisations.

The Department funds, supports and delivers a range of programs, events and initiatives that facilitate young people's civic engagement and participation, including:

- The Panel is an online avenue for young people aged 12 to 25 years to have their say on important issues through surveys, discussions and workshops that focus on youth issues and help shape events, programs and policies for young Western Australians.
- Youth Advisory Councils (see previous section).
- Youth Mentoring reform project (see previous section).
- Youth Participation Kit (see previous section).
- Annual funding of \$27,000 to the YMCA Perth Youth and Community Services Inc to deliver the Western Australian Youth Parliament, which educates and builds the confidence of young people to contribute the views of their electorate at a state level. Young people comment on government policy and make recommendations, as well as being provided with opportunities to develop and present legislation in Parliament.
- Youth Friendly Communities grants (2015-2016) of \$10,000 for regional local governments to engage young people to plan and develop communities. Grants were awarded to the Shires of Ashburton, Dandaragan, Goomalling Kondinin, Pingelly, Quairiding and Victoria Plains, and the Cities of Albany and Mandurah.
- Funding the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network WA (MYANWA) to host the Catalyst Youth Summit, a youth-led event to skill CaLD young people to identify and advocate on issues to key decision makers. OMI continues to support Catalyst delegates to develop and deliver their projects, including reporting back to key Ministers and stakeholders.
- OMI youth leadership development workshops on event management, media training, public speaking and presentation skills, facilitation skills and project management.
- In partnership with OMI, YACWA secured \$45,000 in funding through the Department of Finance Fostering Partnerships program, for a project to build the capacity of not-for-profit service providers to better work with CaLD young people.
- OMI provides guides and training to support State Government agencies, local governments and not-for-profit service providers to better engage with people from CaLD backgrounds, including:
  - *Engaging Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities: A Guide for the Western Australian public sector;*



- *Implementing the Principles of Multiculturalism Locally—A planning guide for WA local governments; and*
- *the Diverse WA online cultural competency training program.*

### **3. Strategic Projects**

The Department funds and supports projects and partnerships to develop collaborative local solutions to improve outcomes for young people. This includes:

- A \$478,958 Social Innovation Grant (2014-2016) to Save the Children Australia for the South East Corridor Youth Partnership Project (YPP), a collective impact initiative focused on supporting the area's most vulnerable children and young people. The aim of the YPP is to improve collaboration between federal, state and local governments and the community to develop and deliver localised responses to at-risk young people.
- Key achievements and outcomes have been:
  - the formation of the Youth Leadership Roundtable (YLR), bringing together thirteen young people provide the 'youth voice' to the project. The YLR organised the Youth Summit held on 15 April 2015 and attended by more than 100 young people and over 90 official observers. The 'Speak Out for Change: Youth Voices on Youth Issues' report made 58 recommendations on youth issues;
  - the establishment of Youth Collaborative Action Networks (CANS) in Armadale, Gosnells/Canning and Belmont, which bring together key local stakeholders to develop collaborative approaches to youth services, as well as to identify current trends and issues, critical gaps, barriers and opportunities.
- A five year (2013-2018) Service Agreement (\$84,329 in 2015-2016) to Southcare for its Aboriginal Family Support service, which offers information, support, advocacy and referral services to Aboriginal families and single people living in Como, Karawara, Kensington, Manning, Salter Point, South Perth and Waterford. Its services support families to overcome hardship and crisis by developing the skills and connections need to become and remain stable and functioning.
- A \$487,427 Social Innovation Grant to St Patrick's Community Support Centre Limited for the South West Metropolitan Partnership Project (2013-2016). The Partnership is a group of 80 not-for-profit and government human service providers, business and community members in the Cockburn, Fremantle and Melville working collaboratively to provide all individuals and families in the South West Metropolitan region with the opportunity to enjoy quality of life. One of its priority projects is supporting vulnerable and at risk 8 to 13 year olds to establish the behaviours needed for life-long wellbeing through improved school attendance, increased resilience and wellbeing, participation in the community, and feeling safe and supported in their community.