



The Hon. John Ajaka MLC
Minister for Ageing
Minister for Disability Services
Minister for Multiculturalism

DIS/14998
(LAC12/092)



Reference: A1067993

Ms Rhonda Miller
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly
NSW Legislative Assembly
Parliament House
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Miller

Thank you for your letter to the Premier of 9 December 2014 regarding report No. 4/55 of the Committee on Children and Young People – *Volunteering and Unpaid Work Placements Among Children and Young People in NSW*.

I am pleased to provide you with the NSW Government response to the Committee's report.

Yours sincerely



JOHN AJAKA MLC
Minister for Multiculturalism

**NSW Government Response to the Committee on Children and Young People
Report 4/55 'Volunteering and Unpaid Work Placements Among Children and Young
People in NSW'.**

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Commission for Children and Young People, in its forward work program, works with NSW Education and Communities to review Government funding for youth programs in NSW.

Response: The Advocate for Children and Young People is responsible for developing, with the relevant Minister, a three-year whole of government strategic plan for children and young people aged 0 -24 years. The strategic plan will help inform the purpose and focus of youth programs in the future.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Commission for Children and Young People works with the Minister for Citizenship and Communities to consider State-level recognition of school student volunteering, and to promote volunteering to young people, for example, through reinstating the Premier's Student Volunteering Awards program.

Response: The 2012 NSW Volunteering Strategy contained a commitment to launch a volunteer recognition program to complement the existing Volunteer of the Year Awards and the Department of Education and Communities' Student Volunteering Awards.

The NSW Premier, The Hon Mike Baird MP, launched the Premier's Volunteer Recognition Program on 2 March 2015. The Program will enable student volunteers and adults volunteers to be recognised.

The six levels of the Premier's Volunteer Recognition Program are:

- Level 1 for those up to the end of Year 9
- Level 2 for those up to the end of Year 10
- Level 3 for those up to the end of Year 11
- Level 4 for volunteering effort by those up to 40 years of age
- Level 5 for those who have more than 25 years of volunteering experience
- Level 6 for those with a lifetime of volunteering experience (beyond 40 years).

Unlike the earlier Premier's Student Volunteering Program, the new Premier's Volunteer Recognition Program will not be restricted in scope to NSW public school students and will include students who volunteer in vocational education or university contexts.

Certificates of recognition for the Premier's Volunteer Recognition Program will be presented annually and a permanent record of the nominations will be preserved at www.volunteering.nsw.gov.au.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Commission for Children and Young People works with NSW Education and Communities to consider schemes that recognise young people's volunteer work, with consideration being given to the definition of volunteering to ensure that young people with personal commitments are not unfairly excluded.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Commission for Children and Young People develops a strategy, in consultation with young people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-English speaking backgrounds, geographically and socially isolated young people, and disadvantaged and at-risk young people, to assist them to engage in volunteering activities.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Commission for Children and Young People, in conjunction with NSW Family and Community Services, and in consultation with other relevant NSW Government agencies, considers a scheme to assist young people with meeting the costs of volunteering activities, including the provision of free or discounted public transport to and from volunteering commitments.

Response to recommendations 3,4 and 5: The Premier's Volunteer Recognition Program will acknowledge and celebrate the volunteer work of young people while in education (*for more information see above in response to recommendation 2*).

In addition, a new Student Volunteer Mobilisation Campaign has been launched to encourage students in NSW to volunteer. The mobilisation campaign will build on the extensive volunteering and service learning that is already a feature in schools and many other learning environments. Students may participate at: <https://www.facebook.com/nswvolunteer>.

Further, NSW Volunteering, in partnership with the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People, will engage directly with children and young people across the State in 2015 to better understand how to remove the barriers to volunteering and extend the benefits of participation to more young people. This engagement will inform future volunteering policy, including any additional specific measures to encourage and assist young people to volunteer.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the Commission for Children and Young People works with NSW Family and Community Services to develop a best practice guide for organisations in developing volunteering opportunities for young people, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Response: The Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People, in consultation with key stakeholders, will develop a best practice guide for organisations who wish to attract and retain young people as volunteers.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that the Commission for Children and Young People works with NSW Industrial Relations, in consultation with key stakeholders, to develop a code of practice for internships and other forms of unpaid work.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the Commission for Children and Young People works with NSW Industrial Relations, in conjunction with key stakeholders, to develop a best practice guide for internships and other forms of unpaid work, and promotes the guide to workplaces and young people.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the Commission for Children and Young People, as part of its Three Year Strategic Plan, conducts research into the prevalence and composition of internships and other forms of unpaid work in NSW and its impact on young people

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the Commission for Children and Young People works with NSW Industrial Relations, in consultation with key stakeholders, to conduct a review of the regulations that apply to the internship broker sector, to inform the development of clear guidelines for the sector.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the Commission for Children and Young People, in conjunction with NSW Industrial Relations and other key stakeholders, develops a campaign aimed at educating young people about their rights in the workplace.

Response to recommendations 7,8,9,10 and 12: As a first step, the Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People will review current research into the prevalence and composition of internships and other forms of unpaid work in NSW and its impact on young people. The Office of the Advocate for Children and Young People will then determine whether further research into this area would be beneficial. The need, form and content of specific, additional measures to improve opportunities and experiences for young people undertaking internships and other forms of unpaid work (such as a code of practice, best practice guide, guidelines and an education campaign) will be informed by this work.

Private and non-government sector employers in NSW are covered by the national workplace relations system. For these employers, and individuals undertaking internships and other forms of unpaid work with them, the Fair Work Ombudsman provides guidance and advice. Specifically, the Fair Work Ombudsman has produced facts sheets on student placements, unpaid work generally, and unpaid work in particular industries (i.e. the hair and beauty, hospitality, print and broadcast media, and professional services industries). The Fair Work Ombudsman also have a best practice guide for young workers and an employers' guide for employing young workers. These resources, and other information and advice about workplace rights and obligations, are available online at www.fairwork.gov.au or by contacting the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the Commission for Children and Young People works with NSW Industrial Relations, in consultation with key stakeholders, to develop an amendment to the Industrial Relations Act 1996 to include an exception for vocational placements.

Response: NSW Industrial Relations will consider the proposed amendment and advise the Minister for Industrial Relations accordingly.