

Submission

No 102

## INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE 9-14 YEARS IN NSW

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*City of Canterbury*

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*City of Cultural Diversity*

**NSW Parliamentary Inquiry  
Children and Young People 9-14 Years in NSW**

Committee on Children and Young People  
Parliament House

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Inquiry into Children and Young People 12-14 Years in NSW**

The NSW Parliamentary Committee on Children and Young People is a current joint statutory committee, established 1 Dec 2003 and re-established 21 June 2007.

The relevant Committee function for the reception of this submission is to examine trends and changes in services and issues affecting children, and report to both Houses of Parliament any changes that the Joint Committee thinks desirable to the functions and procedures of the Commission for Children and Young People, under the provisions of the *Commission For Children And Young People Act 1998*;

Consultations were carried out by the City of Canterbury's Belmore Youth Resource Centre at a Youth Forum in May 2006, with young people aged 12-18 years, the needs of young people were identified and noted and recommendations were submitted to Canterbury City Council for inclusion and implementation in Council's Social Plan.

This submission is a contribution by the City of Canterbury to the deliberations of the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry - Children and Young People 9-14 Years in NSW, by the Joint Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly Committee on Children and Young People.

#### **1. ACCOMMODATION**

Most young people live at home with their families, however this is not an option for some who may be in abusive, unsupportive relations or facing family breakdown or hardship. Finding private or alternate accommodation is extremely difficult for young people. Private accommodation is often not an option because of cost, particularly for those who are still involved in full time study, but also because of supply and demand. Also because of their age, they may not have the appropriate references to gain accommodation and might be forced to live in substandard conditions. Young people without stable accommodation are at a much higher risk of having employment, health and drug & alcohol related problems.

#### PRINCIPLE

**Young people have a right to access accommodation that is safe, secure and affordable and where possible links with other appropriate services that improve their quality of life.**

#### ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Young people need to know what accommodation services are available and accessible for them.

## 2. COMMUNITY ARTS

Community art provides opportunities for young people to participate in the development of their own culture and community by:

- developing skills, opportunities and resources for artistic expression in the community; and
- encouraging self-determination in the management of those resources.

#### PRINCIPLE

**Young people have the right to participate in cultural and artistic pursuits that maximise the opportunities for self expression.**

#### ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Need a forum where works of talented young people can be displayed, and excellence rewarded by the community.
- Need to recognise multicultural art and encourage its development.
- Need for more programs and workshops to encourage and enhance the talents of young people in the area of Community Arts.

## 3. EDUCATION

Education is an issue of great importance to young people as it provides opportunities for young people to fulfill their aspirations and improve their life chances as they move into adulthood. Providing appropriate access to education and training is particularly significant in the City of Canterbury, given the current rate of youth unemployment.

## PRINCIPLE

**Young people have a right to access a range of educational opportunities which will maximise their learning and assist them in personal and career development.**

## ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Need for more after school homework assistance programs, spaces and facilities for young people to study particularly for those young people of CALD and those with inadequate study conditions at home.
- Poor awareness of courses offered at TAFE and Universities.
- Need for greater links between Council, schools and the community to ensure that information about courses and services continue.
- Need for more work experience programs inside and outside of schools.
- Need for a greater youth focus in both school and community libraries.
- Need to promote inter-school activities and programs to build social capital between young people in the City of Canterbury.
- Need for more cultural awareness in schools.
- Need to up skill teachers in classroom management including skills to appropriately engage with disruptive and unruly class room behaviour.
- Need for peer mentoring programs with schools and local youth services.
- Need for alternative and interactive education strategies and programs within and external to schools.
- High number of young people disengaged from educational institutions.
- Often young people who are not in recognised education or employment hold carer position in the family.

## 4. EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

With youth unemployment in City of Canterbury at 15.1%, employment issues and income security is a high priority for young people. As an increasing number of people compete for jobs it is often young people with low formal education and little experience who fare the worst in the battle for jobs. Young people need to feel there is hope and if they cannot find work then government measures are needed that will ensure they receive adequate income support and training to pursue a safe healthy life.

#### **PRINCIPLE**

**Young people have the right to meaningful employment and training appropriate to their needs.**

#### **ISSUES IDENTIFIED**

- Need for job support services for unemployed young people and/or young people at risk of leaving educational institutions. These would incorporate training facilities and counseling services. They should particularly target disadvantaged young people such as those of CALD background and young people with disabilities.
- High number of young people disengaged from employment and training opportunities.
- Lack of employment opportunities for young people under 16
- Need for improved links between local business and young people.
- Need for local opportunities for work experience and traineeships.
- Poor understanding of workers rights, entitlements and responsibilities especially in the light of new Industrial Relations laws.
- Need for more support services to help young people adapt to the new Job Network and receive information to better access these services.
- Need for better promotion of employment and training opportunities for local Young People.
- Need to continue support career days in Canterbury LGA and increase opportunities for young people to access information on tertiary studies.

#### **5. ENVIRONMENT**

Many young people have expressed an interest in environment and conservation issues. This interest has particularly been developed where school programs exist. Often young people feel that they are powerless to change anything and do not see the potential for local action.

#### **PRINCIPLE**

**Young people have a right to a healthy environment and opportunities to participate in the management of local environmental issues.**

#### ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Need for programs to be developed to deal with local issues, e.g. cleaning up of Cooks River and tree planting.
- Need to stop further pollution of Cooks River and reduce the present level of pollution.
- Need for more programs that raise awareness of environmental issues and the role of local action.

## 6. HEALTH

In this context health refers not only to absence of disease and illness, but to the complete health of a young person i.e. physical, emotional, mental, spiritual and social well-being. Consequently a whole range of issues discussed elsewhere in the policy can and do effect the health of young people.

#### PRINCIPLE

**Young people have a right to live in an environment that promotes good health and to information and services that can assist this.**

#### ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Need for more information and programs to educate as early intervention programs on drugs, alcohol and sexual health related issues.
- Need for programs to improve self-esteem and develop living and social skills as this relates to many aspects of a young person's life.
- Need to inform young people and their parents, teachers, workers of the availability of accessible health services in the city of Canterbury.
- Youth health services need to be non-judgmental, confidential, free and accessible to all, with particular attention paid to disadvantaged youth.
- Need to maintain Youth Health services locally.
- Need to maintain Counselling and Therapeutic services for young people and their families.



## 7. INFORMATION

Access and availability of information was seen as a key issue affecting the lives of young people. Often services exist but young people do not know about them, or even how to find them. Likewise they are often not aware of their rights and responsibilities which can also lead to missed opportunities. Information for young people needs to be in a form that is clear, concise and acceptable to them.

### PRINCIPLE

**Young people have a right to relevant, free and accessible information about matters which affect their lives.**

### ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Need to ensure information and promotional efforts utilise the internet.
- Need to establish processes to ensure ongoing flow of information between Council and young people.
- Information needs to be taken to young people using mobile information displays that can visit schools, youth centres etc. with information on youth issues.
- Need for Belmore Youth Resource Centre to act as a central information/referral point for young people.
- Need for information which caters specifically to the needs of young people.
- Need to inform young people of transport options in our City.
- Need to encourage young people using our railways by reducing cost of transport.

## 8. LAW, JUVENILE JUSTICE AND SAFETY

This section covers people who range in age from 12 to 24 years old, some have the legal status of children and some are considered adults. As young people move through this period their rights and responsibilities change and they need to be aware of this. Much has been written on the need for innovative ways to deal with young offenders to prevent re-offending.

Young people are also often victims of crime and may be exposed to risky behaviours and also require education and appropriate information to tackle safety issues. This section then also focuses on the safety issues identified by young people and workers with youth and their suggestion on how council can support the safety of our youth.

#### **PRINCIPLE**

**Young people have a right to be treated justly and to have their rights and responsibilities recognised.**

**Young people have the right to feel safe from crime and be informed and consulted about issues concerning their safety.**

#### **ISSUES IDENTIFIED**

- Need to improve police/youth relations and raise police awareness of issues affecting young people.
- That internet usage and safety issues are addressed with young people.
- Need to encourage alternative forms of transport to motor vehicles
- Need for legal education and advocacy programs that are youth specific and accessible.
- Need to address the issue of young people and the media, and focus on positive media coverage.
- Need to encourage a respect of road rules and reading of road rules.
- Need to improve lighting in parks, train stations, public toilets and lane ways.
- Need to address underage drinking and smoking habits of young people.

## **9. LEISURE AND RECREATION**

Participation in recreation, including sport, can assist individuals to develop, gain skills and take part in social expression. Leisure is also gaining increasing importance as an increasing number of long term unemployed look for constructive ways to use their time.

#### **PRINCIPLE**

**Young people have the right to an accessible and stimulating variety of recreational and leisure facilities and programs.**

#### ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Need for more sporting/recreation facilities that are flexible to suit changing trends e.g. basketball and skateboarding.
- Need to ensure services and facilities are accessible to all and not dominated by one group.
- The continuation of school holiday programs for 12-24 year olds that are accessible to low income groups.
- Need for accessible supervised venues that are available at night and weekends as this is the time when young people require them.
- Need for additional youth specific services in Canterbury LGA.
- Need for activities or programs that encourage involvement for disadvantaged groups.
- Facilities need to be accessible to young people with disabilities.
- Need for a greater variety of organised sport for young people in the City of Canterbury.
- Need for additional youth centres in different areas of Canterbury LGA.
- Need to increase the accessibility of recreational facilities to young people.

#### 10. YOUTH PARTICIPATION

It is imperative that in initiating or encouraging the development of services for young people, that every effort be made for young people to participate. This participation can take many forms from identifying needs to evaluating services. Meaningful participation can only take place with adequate resourcing and training, but the skills young people gain from this process will enable them to take a more active role in many areas of their lives.

#### PRINCIPLE

**Young people have a right to be consulted about decisions that affect their lives, and be valued as members of the community.**

#### ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- Need to make young people feel part of local community.
- Need for Youth Council to raise their profile amongst young people and create links with other youth committees throughout the area.
- Need for young people's contributions to the community to be recognised.

- Need to encourage young people to access the youth services available to them.
- Need for a more positive youth representation within the wider community.

## 11. ACTIVITIES, SERVICES AND SUPPORT

Support Services include a wide range of community services, which inform and assist people meet their own needs. They include a range of services and programs.

- Neighbourhood/Community Centres and Community Development programs
- Children Services
- Child Protection and Family Support Services
- Migrant Settlement Services
- Social Security, Centrelink- income support and emergency relief services
- Disability Support Services
- Home and Community Care Services
- Community Information Services

These services may cater to a particular target group or area within the City, but generally aim to support people or families function effectively in the community. They do this by helping them meet specific material, financial, emotional, socio-cultural or information needs.

Services in this section overlap with those in other parts of the Social Profile, particularly sections on *Health, Law and Justice*, some *Housing* services (e.g. youth refuges, women's refuges) and *Transport* (e.g. community transport).

### SUPPORT SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

There are 3 **Neighbourhood centres** located at Earlwood, Lakemba and Riverwood. These centres provide a range of support services and activities such as English classes, neighbour aid, emergency relief, gentle exercise classes for seniors, etc. These services attract State and Federal funding to employ staff but rely heavily on volunteers for their day-to-day operations.

**Carrington Centre** a joint partnership between Canterbury Council and the Ageing and Disability Department. The building provides accommodation for Home and Community Care (HACC) services plus other general services. A meeting room is also available.

**Belmore Youth Resource Centre** a Council facility that assists and accommodates programs that provide services to young people in the Local Government Area (LGA). Services include; Barnardos Programs, Canterbury Multicultural Youth Health Service, Circuit Breaker and the Canterbury City Council Youth Support Worker/Adolescent and Family Counsellor.

**Children’s Services – Breakdown of Childcare in the Region**

Type	Centres	0-2 year places	2 year+ places
<b>Occasional Care</b>	1	5	25
<b>Family Day Care</b>	3	165	135
<b>Pre Schools</b>			
Government	2	0	89
Community-based	7	0	253
Private	5	0	139
<b>Long Day Care</b>			
Council	4	30	135
Community-based	7	30	198
Private	33	97	1246
<b>Vacation Care</b>	14	0	105
<b>Outside School Hours Care</b>	23	0	670

**Child protection services** are shared between two NSW Department of Community Services offices located outside the city at Strathfield and Redfern. The Jannawi centre also provides a specialist community-based child protection program at Wiley Park. Brighter Futures at SDN Riverwood also provide support to families ‘at risk’ with their early intervention program. Canterbury Child, Adolescent and Family Health Service and the Child Sexual Assault Unit at Riverwood also provide these services.

The Canterbury **Family Support Program** provides counselling and practical support to families in crisis is located at the Carrington Centre, Lakemba. A **Women’s Counselling and Support** service is situated in Campsie.

The Families NSW initiative focusing on early intervention programs and support for children aged 0- 8 funds several programs in the Canterbury LGA. These are the Canterbury and Child Family Interagency, two Schools as Community Centres, one bilingual family worker at Jannawi, Volunteer Home Visiting Program and training and development .

The Canterbury Bankstown **Migrant Resource Centre** (Campsie) providing migrant settlement, community development and information services in conjunction with a wide cross-section of ethnic communities in the area including, Italian, Spanish, Palestinian, Lebanese, Eritrean, Indonesian, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Somalian. Other services include – Southern Sydney Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service, Pacific Families Program, Youth Mentoring and African youth programs.

Major **Ethno-specific support services** and community-sponsored centres are available for Arabic (Lakemba, Roselands, Punchbowl) Chinese (Campsie), Greek (Lakemba), Vietnamese (Campsie), Korean (Croydon Park, Campsie), Pacific Islander (Campsie) residents. There are also smaller **ethno-religious organisations** offering support and information services often on a voluntary basis.

Offices of **Centrelink** are located in Campsie and Lakemba.

Church groups such as St Vincent's De Paul (Campsie) and Uniting Church (Lakemba) Salvation Army Community Welfare Centre at Campsie Park offer support and emergency relief for families while St Vincent de Paul at Hurlstone Park provides Emergency material aid (clothing, food, money).

**Disability services** tend to be organised on a regional basis and focus on specific disabilities. Activities for specific groups are at Belmore, Campsie (3), Lakemba, Riverwood, Roselands, and Punchbowl. There is also a living skills centre at Canterbury and respite care at Campsie, Croydon Park, Lakemba and Roselands.

Council has established a Disability Access Committee to improve access in the community for residents who have a disability. The chairperson of the committee is the Mayor of the City of Canterbury and the committee is made up of residents with disabilities, carers and representatives from disability organisations and service providers. The committee meets monthly to discuss issues and carry out projects of importance to residents of the Canterbury area.

Home and Community Care (HACC) available to frail aged Canterbury City residents, people with disabilities and their carers. Services include: Canterbury Community Options, Respite, Home Care, Community Nursing, Community Transport and Shopping Services, Home Modification and Maintenance Service, Meals On Wheels, Aged/ Dementia Care, Neighbour Aid Services (Arabic Aged, Canterbury City Community Centre, Home Visiting, Multicultural and Riverwood Neighbour Aid).

**Accommodation Services** available include a small number of supported accommodation services for people with a mental or intellectual disability and homeless young people.

Canterbury has the following accommodation services available.

- Three medium to **long term youth accommodation** services located at Campsie, Earlwood and Punchbowl.
- Thirteen **group homes for people with an intellectual disability** supported by the NSW Department of Community Services.
- Four units managed by one service, as well as other **refuge accommodation available to women**, which is located outside the area. This accommodation is limited in availability and number.

**Community Information Services** are provided by Council libraries, neighbourhood centres, community organisations, ethno-specific groups, and government departments. A Mobile Information Service is also operated by Canterbury City Council.

Numerous **community groups** scattered across the City offer support and information services in conjunction with local religious and ethnic organisations.

Canterbury City Council runs four Outside School Hours Care Services which cater for children age 5-12 years during before/after school and vacation periods. To prepare for this inquiry, staff who work at these services were consulted regarding the needs of children and young people 9-12 years of age.