

Submission

No 45

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

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Inquiry into Children and Young People 9-14 Years NSW

Campbelltown City Council has worked closely with other Government agencies, NGOs and local residents to address the needs of the 9-14 age group. The response provided below is drawn from this work, and therefore some aspects of this response reflect findings from the work of all involved.

Terms Of Reference

1. The needs of children and young people in the middle years i.e. between about nine and fourteen years of age.

Response

The nature and regularity of social and recreation activities out of school hours is critical for social, physical and intellectual development in this age group.

Young people require some certainty and consistency in the setting of boundaries and the development of social responsibility. The role of parents and significant adults is paramount in this regard.

2. The extent to which the needs of children and young people in the middle years vary according to age, gender and level of disadvantage.

Response

Families that are unable to provide adequate recreation and social activities because of financial limitations, long working hours or limited social networks are most in need. Establishing effective programs earlier in this age bracket should be the priority. The SEIFA index for the locality in which children and young people live is probably the strongest indicator of need.

3. The activities, services and support which provide opportunities for children and young people in the middle years to develop resilience.

Response

Adequate and regular social and recreation activities out of school hours should be the focus here, along with consistent behaviour guidelines from parents, teachers and leaders of recreation activities. Programs should involve parents in a support role where possible so that parents can model effective behaviours.

Examples:

- The Active After Schools program of the Australian Sports Commission
- Breakfast Clubs
- Homework centres
- The Midnight Basketball program
- School holiday activities for families with children in this age group, including outings to other areas

4. The extent to which changing workplace practices have impacted on children and young people in the middle years, including possible changes to workplace practices which have the potential to benefit children and young people in the middle years.

Response

Working hours that dramatically impact on the time available for child/parent interaction after school or on weekends is a significant concern. Flexible working hours enable parents to match their availability to the most critical times for interaction with their children.

5. Any other matter considered relevant to the inquiry by the Committee.

Response

The primary school to high school transition should be made to be as smooth as possible through partnership arrangements between high schools and their feeder schools.

There should be collaboration between the Department of Education and Training, schools and parents to establish effective programs that deal with school suspensions and problems that can arise from suspensions.