

Submission

No 25

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

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DGO Meeting Minutes re: Parliamentary Inquiry into Children and Young People in NSW

- Children in this age group need access to more structured sport activities, of low or no cost, where they can learn appropriate social skills, and benefit from the mentorship of adults not part of their family, such as coaches and volunteers.
- Transition programs from Year 6-7 need to be more extensive and part of the curriculum to ensure that all schools deliver a standard of service to all students transitioning to High School.
- More research on why students succeed or fail as they enter the High School environment. There appears to be a significant link between literacy skills and behaviour and truancy in High School environments.
- Funding of local community projects such as “Hang Night” at Clunes Community Hall. Most communities have access to local halls. More funding is required to employ supervisors of these activities.
- “Active After Schools” program to be expanded beyond After School Care programs.
- Utilising school grounds and facilities out of school hours to develop community programs.
- More preventative programs in Years 4-6 in local schools, such as ACE, Keep Cool, Seasons for Growth, and Rock and Water.
- An increase in School Counsellor time at schools, through an increase of the number of School Counsellors employed by the Department of Education, so they can focus on prevention and intervention programs.
- Community Sports Coaches need to expand their training so that they are not coaching from the adult perspective of “Winning at all costs”, to a child centred model. Rotating children through all of the positions so that they all have a go, rather than the best athletes in the same position week in and week out, allow all participants to have fun and have a rich experience from the sport should be more important than winning.

- The Aunty and Uncle Program requires ongoing reliable and recurrent funding to ensure seamless and ongoing delivery of the program in local communities.
- Bottomless funding is not the answer. Targeted programs through NGO's, such as "Creative Times" in Newcastle, target vulnerable families in the local communities to provide support for children, young people and parents.
- An increase in "after school's" activities groups where schools and parents can refer children with behavioural and/or emotional challenges where they can practice new ways of doing things, increase their self-image, make new friends, learn social skills and so on. Many young people with these needs do not "fit" into already established groups such as Scouts, netball clubs etc.
- More research, education and school programming on Cyber Bullying.
- More research, education and program implementation into mobile phone use, text messaging, internet use, online chat rooms, social network sites such as 'my space' and so on.
- An increase in the funding and research into patterns of drug (particularly smoking) and alcohol use among 9-14 year olds and their families, and the development of more preventative measures to help stop kids engaging in drug taking/ drinking behaviours.