

**Submission
No 153**

COMMUNITY SAFETY IN REGIONAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Organisation: Women's Shelter Armidale

Date Received: 31 May 2024

The Women's Shelter Armidale (WSA) welcome the opportunity to make this submission to the Legislative Assembly's Committee on Law and Safety Inquiry into *Community safety in regional and rural communities*. We commend the Committee for making the issues of young people in regional NSW a priority and the Women's Shelter Armidale believes that the inquiry provides an important opportunity for regional communities to share their experiences and explore the solutions they know have impact in their towns in the Northern Tablelands.

About the Women's Shelter Armidale

The Women's Shelter Armidale was established in 1977 and provides domestic and family violence specialist responses and Specialist Homelessness Services to our community.

The shelter currently provides a range of services including crisis accommodation; complex case management; early intervention workshops for schools and therapeutic prevention workshops for community; Specialist therapeutic children's and youth services ; leading community consultation on program co-design; partnership with Primary Health to improve medical referral pathways for victims of domestic & family violence; and providing specialised advice to police and legal support services in matters involving domestic violence.

Our aim is to ensure the provision of holistic wrap-around services to all women and their families who live with, or are at risk of, violence in their homes. Our objectives include:

- Client-centred case management that focuses on the client's own priorities as a professional trauma-informed response
- Strong advocacy against housing debt and other barriers to safe housing
- Growth and expansion of our services to enable community members across our region to access services that help keep them safe
- Engage and partner with community to prevent and respond to family violence, unhealthy relationships and homelessness

As an organisation, the Women's Shelter Armidale is always looking for creative and innovative ways to support our community. In looking to better support young people, who make up around half of our case load, and reducing their interactions with the law and child protection systems, WSA undertook to provide a forum for the sharing of ideas and expertise in providing services that support young people.

Regional Conference – “Understanding Young People Doing It Tough”

On May 28-30 May 2024, our conference brought together leaders and practitioners from Government and Non-Government organisations across the Northern Tablelands to explore collaborative public health approaches to supporting young people doing it tough in a regional area. I have attached a copy of the program for attention.

Over 100 delegates attended the conference including representatives for the Department of Education, Hunter New England Health, Regional NSW, and DCJ Child Protection and Youth Justice; along with a large proportion of NGO providers in the region.



Establishment of a Youth Hub in Armidale.

On the first day of our conference, we were delighted for Transport NSW to unveil plans to refurbish and repurpose a currently unused asset for the Women's Shelter Armidale to deliver a Youth Hub and Resource Centre.

The building is situated a very short distance from the public high school and close to transport terminals. The Hub will deliver a range of psychosocial supports and activities including counselling, skills training, and crisis accommodation.

Consultation with Young People

As part of setting up the hub and to ensure that the voices of young people were a part of the conference, we conducted consultations with over 100 young people in Armidale Secondary College and targeted consultations with over 20 young people doing it tough. It was clear that all young people talked about having more activities and spaces for young people in Armidale. Further, they needed activities after hours and a safe place for them to "hang out". They also recommended that the community conducted more youth specific activities to bring young people together particularly outside school hours. They are also calling for more training in life skills including more information about employment opportunities and how to apply for those positions. This was also consistent in what the upcoming report Key Tenets found.

Although we are unable, before submissions close, to provide a full report on the outcomes of the conference and the consultation done with young people in the region, I would be grateful if I could submit this information to you in the coming weeks for the benefit of your committee.

The Women's Shelter Armidale thanks the Legislative Assembly's Committee on Law and Safety for the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry into Community safety in regional and rural communities.

For more information, please contact:

Penny Lamaro
Chief Executive Officer
Women's Shelter Armidale Inc
127 Beardy St Armidale NSW 2350



28 – 30 May 2024

Armidale Bowling Club

Understanding **YOUNG PEOPLE** doing it tough

Understanding the complex and interlocking issues of homelessness, violence against children and young people, cultural safety and trauma Informed mental health supports.

Key Speakers include:

Carolyn is a proud Anaiwan and Gumbaynggirr woman, born and raised in Armidale and a mother of 3 beautiful daughters. Carolyn has over 30 years experience in the education sector having been Principal at Minimbah Aboriginal School then manager at Winanga-Li Aboriginal Child Centre before moving into her current role with Department of Education as Aboriginal Attendance Officer. Education is her passion and she is driven by a desire to inspire and develop others.



**Carolyn
Briggs**



**Gill
Calvert**

Gill was the inaugural NSW Children's Commissioner from 1999–2009. She was also responsible for coordinating government action for children and importantly refocusing government attention on the importance of the early years. She started her career as a family therapist with children and their families and the importance of listening to children and families experience has underpinned her lifelong commitment to children and their wellbeing.

CEO YFoundations, Trish has an extensive background in homelessness and domestic abuse policy, research service design, and service system reform in both the Australian and UK contexts. She has worked across a broad range of sectors, including the NSW State Government, UK Government, peak bodies, non-government/frontline service providers and charities.



**Trish
Connolly**



**Allira
Cutmore**

Allira is a proud Gamilaroi woman from Moree, NSW. Allira has worked in the health and community services sectors for over 20 years in rural and remote settings in NSW and the Pilbara, Western Australia. A qualified Social Worker, Allira believes her Aboriginality has been her greatest asset, providing her the unique advantage of working through a cultural lens. Most recently, Allira has worked as a Mental Health clinician at Headspace in Armidale.

Bruce is an Anaiwan man with connections to the Kamilaroi people. Bruce has worked in various roles supporting young people, initially as Teachers Aid before working with the Youth Refuge and as Manager of the Post Release Support Program for young people exiting custody. He then joined the Clontarf Foundation and the Aboriginal Education Assistant role at Armidale Secondary College. A move to the Oorala Centre at UNE allowed him to continue to assist Aboriginal people, young and old before returning to the Youth Justice space as Assistant Manager at the Armidale Youth Justice Community Office.



**Bruce
Dennison**



**Andrew
Johnson**

Andrew brings 30 years experience at senior level at the national and international level. He was the UN Representative for Save the Children, and led Save the Children's global strategic plan on violence against children and young people. He held the position of CEO in the Australian Republican Movement, Australia Council of Social Service, as well as the inaugural NSW Advocate for Children and Young People. He was adjunct Professor at New York University developing and teaching courses on child rights and Human Rights

Understanding YOUNG PEOPLE doing it tough

ARMIDALE, NSW

Key Speakers continued:



Christine Knudsen

Christine has more than 20 years of humanitarian experience across the NGO community and U.N. system. She served as the Executive Director of Sphere, and more recently as the Emergency Director of U.N. Habitat based in Nairobi, working previously with UNICEF on Humanitarian Partnerships. Earlier in her career, she worked closely with InterAction as co-chair of the Protection Working Group while serving as a senior child protection officer with Save the Children. She has also served in the field with both UNHCR and Catholic Relief Services, and has been deployed globally throughout her career.

Belinda has over 30 years' experience working in the community services sector and has a strong awareness of the evolving context of national, state and local policy in relation to planning, service coordination and service delivery. Belinda, over the past 25 years, has been responsible for the successful growth of TFSS and its service delivery to clients across the New England region. Belinda is committed to raising awareness and issues specific to rural communities and is committed to bringing these issues to the forefront of all the work she does.



Belinda Kotris



Penny Lamaro

Penny has over 20 years' experience across both government and community sector dealing with women, children and young people doing it tough. She is currently the CEO for the Women's Shelter Armidale Inc. Prior to this role, Penny worked in youth homelessness for nearly 10 years, during which time she managed the Youth Refuge, and founded 'WAGS The Dog Program' a highly successful dog therapy business. Penny is currently the Chair of Youth Action, the NSW peak body for young people and youth services.

Andrew is an experienced Chief Executive Officer with a demonstrated history of working in the non-profit organization management industry. Skilled in Nonprofit Organizations, Social Enterprise, Corporate Social Responsibility, Youth Development, and Government. Strong business development professional graduated from Cambridge Institute of Education UK. Andrew led St Luke's service provider, CEO of ACWA and President of ACOSS.



Andrew McCallum



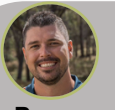
Kim McLoughry

Kim McLoughry is the Chief Executive Officer of Regional Youth Support Services. Kim has recently celebrated a milestone of 30 years working at RYSS. Kim has led projects including the Wyoming Youth Centre, Labrinth Youth Café in Gosford, Parkside Multi Service Youth Facility, "Donnison's on the Park" Youth Restaurant, Youth Art's Warehouse, THE BUS Mobile Outreach Youth Centre, and recently the One3One Youth Hub.

Anthony Shannon is the Director Early Intervention, Volunteering, Youth & Carers, Child & Family, Strategy, Policy & Commissioning at the Department of Communities & Justice. Anthony has held a number of positions leading state-wide targeted earlier intervention, child protection and homelessness reforms, and at District level, managing NGO disability and community services funding, community development and sector partnerships.



Anthony Shannon



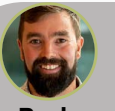
Reece Sheumack

Reece is a Proud Gomeroi man from Gunnedah NSW. He now works with Corrective Services NSW overseeing the Aboriginal Space for Community Corrections North district. Reece has a passion for utilising peoples lived experiences as an intervention moving forward, working to build upon our strengths and abilities to work towards reducing the risk of reoffending. This in turn provides a internal mentoring program for young emerging Aboriginal youth who may be disconnected from their community, culture and identity.

Sarah was the Head of Child Safeguarding and Protection at the Centre for Sport and Human Rights, UN representative for ChildFund Alliance, senior advisor for Global Partnership to End Violence Against Children and global advisor for child protection in development for Plan International. Sarah has provided her expertise to FIFA, Safe Sport International, ChildFund Alliance and Plan International to develop a toolkit, policies, positions and establishing processes for keeping young people safe.



Sarah



Rydr Tracy

Rydr currently works predominantly as the Head of Education and Strategic Priorities at Life Skills GO. Rydr has a career focus on strategic change that improves life outcomes for young people. Building on a successful career in primary education, culminating in elevation to Director of Strategic Priorities in the Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation and then Director of Strategic Delivery – Learning Improvement. He has been working in collaboration with UNICEF in East Africa and the Pacific, leading and designing programs focused on improving adolescent life outcomes.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

DAY ONE

28 MAY 2024

9am - 12.30pm

Pre-Conference Workshops

Stream One -

Andrew Johnson, Managing Director, Thrive Intl.
**UTILISING A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH IN
PROGRAM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION.**

When Australia committed to ensuring the findings of the Royal Commission into childhood sexual abuse were actioned, one of their key recommendation remains under-implemented. Recommendation 6.4 – all institutions should uphold the rights of the child.

This training assists practitioners to understand the history of the human rights and child rights movements, and develop an understanding of how these rights translate into everyday practices. How to use rights based approaches to improve outcomes for your organisation, clarify purpose, increase engagement in the organisation as well as promote a safe and respectful environment. The training draws upon what children and young people and other populations of socially excluded populations, from around the world, say what they need from organisations to assist them to thrive.

Stream Two -

David Widders, Widders Consultancy
**ABORIGINAL CULTURAL AWARENESS
WORKSHOP**



Cultural awareness training will provide staff with introductory awareness to build broader and deeper relationships and collaborations with Indigenous Australians.

This interactive workshop will provide staff at all levels with an introduction to Indigenous history and culture, and an opportunity to share and learn stories from personal and work experiences.

- Understand Aboriginal history and culture in Australia and how it affects current work practices and Aboriginal people in today's society
- Understand how to enhance engagement with Indigenous people through communicating effectively and changing behaviours and attitudes
- Recognise the impact of words and behaviour through sharing and learning of stories

1.30pm

David Widders, Deputy Mayor Todd Redwood & Penny Lamaro

Welcome to Country & Conference Opening

2.30pm

Trish Connolly: YFoundations
**The major issues facing young people
experiencing homelessness**

3.30pm

Panel: Trish Connolly, Scott Dodd and Bruce Dennison
Multi-system Young People

4.30pm

Day 1 Close



(02) 6772 5911

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www.womensshelterarmidale.org/conference

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CONFERENCE PROGRAM

DAY TWO

29 MAY 2024



9.00am

Sarah Stevenson: Senior Safeguarding Advisor
Global lessons in better practice in safeguarding for children and young people.

9.30am

Andrew Johnson: Thrive International
How to better respond to young people as victim/survivors of violence.

10.30 Morning Tea

11.00am

Panel: Gill Calvert, Andrew MacCallum, Belinda Kotris
Key approaches for young people who are survivors of violence.

12.15pm

Kim McLoughry: Regional Youth Support Service
Lessons learnt on hubs in regional NSW

1.00 Lunch

2.00pm

Working group sessions
Utilizing WHO approaches to reduce violence against young people

3.15pm

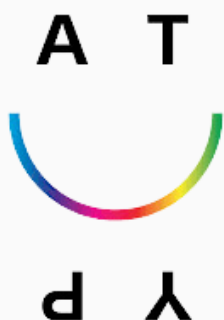
Feedback from Working groups

3.30 Afternoon Tea

3.45pm

Anthony Shannon: Department of Communities & Justice with Kim McLoughry: Regional Youth Support Service with
Interim findings of consultation with young people in Armidale and 'Key Tenets of programs that successfully engage young people' Report

Reception, Dinner & Drinks



We warmly invite you to join us for a night of celebration, networking and a memorable performance by the talented crew from the
Australian Theatre for Young People.

When: 6.30pm

Where: Main Auditorium, Armidale Bowling Club

2 course dinner with
Wine, Beer & Soft drinks included



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CONFERENCE PROGRAM

DAY THREE

30 MAY 2024

9.00am

Christine Knudsen: Interaction
What can we learn from working with young people in emergencies settings

9.45am

Rydr Tracy: Life Skills GO
The importance of empowering youth voice on mental health

10.15am

Mark Davis: STARTTS
Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors

10.45 Morning Tea

11.00am

Panel: Allira Cutmore, Carolyn Briggs & Reece Schumack
What do we need to learn for mental health and wellbeing for First Nations young people?

12.30pm

Penny Lamaro: Women's Shelter Armidale
Next Steps

Post Conference Workshop - 1.30pm

Andrew Johnson, Managing Director, Thrive Intl.
PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES

Learn about how to best engage with the people that you serve. This training has been developed to help government and non-government organisations, with a particular focus on educational settings and NGO's, meaningfully and effectively involve children and young people and/or socially excluded people in their decision making.

It highlights the importance of seeing clients as partners with the organisations in the decision making process. Clients can participate in organisational decision making in many ways, including one-off consultations, sitting on boards and committees, recruiting staff, councils and advisory groups and participating in and undertaking research. The training walks people through the different options and processes and assists the organisation to determine when and where to involve the people that they serve, and importantly maximise their input.

