

# 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Award Winners 2013

In conjunction with the ACT Youth Affairs  
Conference 2013

27 November 2013



Presented by Ms Joy Burch  
Minister for Disability, Children and Young People



**ACT**  
Government  
Community Services

The Youth Coalition of the ACT acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional owners and continuing custodians of the lands of the ACT and we pay our respects to the Elders, families and ancestors.

We acknowledge that the effect of forced removal of Indigenous children from their families as well as past racist policies and actions continues today.

We acknowledge that the Indigenous people hold distinctive rights as the original people of modern day Australia including the right to a distinct status and culture, self-determination and land. The Youth Coalition of the ACT celebrates Indigenous cultures and the invaluable contribution they make to our community.

# About the Annual YOGIE Awards 2013

In 2013, we celebrate ten years of the Annual YOGIE Awards (the YOGIES). These awards recognise, celebrate, promote and reward outstanding practice in working with young people in the ACT and surrounding area. The YOGIES highlight the exceptional commitment, talent and innovation that exist in the youth sector.

The YOGIES are presented annually by the ACT Minister for Children and Young People. Awards are presented in 10 categories that recognise the work of groups and individuals, with young people, workers, individuals, programs and services invited to provide nominations.

A judging panel determines the winners, with the exclusion of the Staff Acknowledgement Award. The judging panel is comprised of a representative from the Youth Coalition; a representative from the Community Services Directorate; and a representative from the youth and community sector. The winner of the Staff Acknowledgement Award is identified by the Youth Coalition staff team.

The YOGIES are an opportunity for youth and allied services to promote their initiatives, programs and workers to the sector and the community as a whole.

This booklet contains information about each award winner. The award categories are below:

## **Organisation, Service, Program or Project Award Categories**

- Outstanding Achievement in Youth Participation Award
- Innovation in Practice Award
- Collaboration for Change Award
- Excellence in Research and Evaluation Award
- Excellence in Organisational Practice Award

## **Individual Award Categories**

- Outstanding Youth Worker Award
- Outstanding New Talent Award
- Outstanding Contribution to Young People Award
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Staff Acknowledgement Award (awarded by the Youth Coalition staff team)

## **Commendations**

A commendation may be awarded when a nomination has been received that the judging panel believe deserves recognition.

# ORGANISATION, SERVICE, PROGRAM OR PROJECT AWARDS

## **Outstanding Achievement in Youth Participation Award**

This award recognises an organisation, service, program or project that has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to developing meaningful partnerships with young people.

### **Winner: headspace ACT Youth Reference Group, headspace ACT**

headspace ACT provides support, information and assistance for young people aged 12 to 25 years who are experiencing emotional or mental health issues and/or a substance use issue. The headspace ACT Youth Reference Group is comprised of 11 young people, aged between 16 and 25. The Youth Reference Group contributes to the development of headspace ACT's service and the promotion of youth mental health. This involves providing advice and recommendations on issues such as the design of the new headspace centre, staff recruitment, event design and management, competitions and projects. Members of the Youth Reference Group have partnered with headspace on community awareness at events such as National Youth Week, Groovin' the Moo, The Yard, Amaroo Expo, headspace ACT's fifth birthday event, and Ed-space sessions. In addition to providing advice, the members of the Youth Reference Group have access to training and skills development in areas such as: youth mental health first aid, dealing with people in difficult situations, brain development, self-harm and mental health in the media. The young people who participate in the Youth Reference Group have formed strong bonds with one another, and enjoy both the opportunity to contribute to and learn from headspace ACT.

## **Commendation: Alternative Programs, ACT Education and Training Directorate**

Alternative Programs assists young people disengaging from school to re-engage with education, training, and/or vocational education. Alternative Programs seeks to address the barriers young people may face in attending education and to provide opportunities to access vocational training, transition pathways, and career guidance and exploration. A variety of vocational training is offered, such certificate-level training in construction, community services, disability, security, business, as well as CIT Taster Programs for Year 11 and 12 students in fitness, beauty, glazing, animal care, tourism, and business. Young people also have access to industry training such as Clubstart Café Skills, Responsible Service of Alcohol courses, White Card, and Asbestos Awareness training. Alternative Programs has made a significant impact with its work at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre; providing careers advice once a term, work experience, and training opportunities in hospitality, bricklaying, and horticulture. Another notable success is Alternative Programs' partnership with Auswide to deliver the Pace It Program to students from the Woden School. The program runs for two days a week, over eight weeks, and enables students to learn work safety and customer service skills, as well as developing confidence, self-esteem and independence. Since June 2009, Alternative Programs have supported approximately 600 young people.

## **Innovation in Practice Award**

This award recognises an organisation, service, program or project that has demonstrated exceptional 'thinking outside the square' to create beneficial change for young people.

### **Winner: Youth Law Centre ACT**

The Youth Law Centre provides free and confidential legal advice, information, referral and assistance to young people aged between 12 and 25. Assistance with a wide range of legal issues is provided in person, over the phone, and by email. The Youth Law Centre also presents legal information and referrals for young people by providing outreach programs at high schools, colleges, universities, and youth centres, as well as attending youth festivals and exhibitions. The Youth Law Centre has created a number of resources to assist young people by providing reliable information on a range of legal issues. Information about emerging issues such as the use of technology, sexting, and cyberbullying are made easily accessible to young people through the creation of the *Below the Belt* mobile app. This app was developed in response to a growing concern that young people are unaware of the law when it comes to taking and distributing sexually suggestive or naked photos. Similar topics are also covered in the *Youth Law Matters* handbooks, which also includes information of topics such as employment, alcohol and drugs, Centrelink payments, and housing.

### **Commendation: After Hours Bail Support Service, Office for Children, Youth and Family Support**

The After Hours Bail Support Service aims to assist young people who are aged between 10 and 17 who have come to the attention of the police or are placed on a court order. The After Hours Bail Support Service is a diversionary program, and it has a number of functions in response to the rising number of young people remanded for short periods in custody and the need to reduce recidivism. The workers within the service have assisted young people by discussing options with police, which may lead to young people being formally cautioned instead of arrested or young people being released into the community instead of being remanded. The workers also find accommodation and offer support to young people who are not able to return to natural supports, as well as providing assistance to young people to understand and abide by the conditions of their court orders. In the last 15 months, the After Hours Bail Support Service has supported 226 young people, and there have been 34 young people diverted from custody over this period. Since the AHBSS started in October 2011, there has also been a decline in the numbers of young people in Bimberi Youth Justice Centre and the average number of nights spent in custody by young people.

## **Collaboration for Change**

This award recognises an organisation, service, program or project that has demonstrated an outstanding collaboration or partnership in their community as a means to achieving positive outcomes for young people.

### **Winner: Emergency Accommodation Network, Salvation Army Oasis Youth Network & Canberra Youth Residential Service**

The Salvation Army Oasis Youth Network and Canberra Youth Residential Service have been partnering since April 2012 to deliver the Emergency Accommodation Network (EAN). The EAN operates in four clusters across the ACT, with each regional cluster consisting of three properties. The EAN has provided flexibility for young people in need of emergency accommodation, and provides both accommodation and skill development opportunities that support young people through the continuum of homelessness. The model supports young people to increase their confidence and ability to participate in the community, and ultimately break the cycle of homelessness. Young people are accommodated close to their schooling or employment, which assists in the maintenance of their access and participation. Since forming the partnership, both Salvation Army Oasis Youth Network and Canberra Youth Residential Service have collaboratively undertaken structural, administrative and operational changes to ensure the successful establishment of the EAN. Both organisations are committed to sharing their knowledge, and learning to implement consistent service delivery across the EAN to achieve the best outcomes for young people experiencing homelessness.

## **Excellence in Research and Evaluation Award**

This award recognises an organisation, service, program or project that has conducted research and/or evaluation for the advancement of knowledge in youth affairs and/or the improvement of practice with young people.

**Winner: Experiencing Out-of-Home Care in Australia: the Views of Children and Young People, CREATE Foundation**

The CREATE Foundation is the peak consumer body for children and young people with a care experience. It is the only organisation of its kind in Australia, expressly established to advocate on behalf of children and young people in care. During 2012, the CREATE Foundation surveyed over 1000 children and young people across Australia about their experiences of care. The survey was designed to provide a national evidence-based benchmark for how the out of home care system was faring in 2013 from the point of view of the children and young people within in. This research informed the development of the CREATE Foundation's report card entitled *Experiencing Out-of-Home Care in Australia: The Views of Children and Young People*. The ultimate goal of the CREATE Foundation's publication is to allow the voices of children and young people with a care experience to be heard by decision makers, and to be a force for change in the out-of-home care system.

**Commendation: Identity and Meaning for Vulnerable Young People Project, Institute of Child Protection Studies**

The Identity and Meaning for Vulnerable Young People Project was undertaken by Debbie Noble-Carr at the Institute of Child Protection Studies, ACU. The project was motivated by the lack of local research on how the current service system in Australia does, or should, support young people in a search for positive identity and meaning. Therefore, the project sought to understand the role of identity and meaning in the lives of vulnerable young people, and to explore the implications of this for the way we support vulnerable young people. The qualitative study interviewed 24 vulnerable young people in the ACT aged between 15 and 25 years. These in-depth interviews sought to explore young people's life experiences, with particular reference to how they view themselves and make sense of the world and their place within it. Local youth and community services also participated in a focus group to discuss how they perceived their role as youth workers. A full report was published as a result of this study, and an issue of the ICPS Research Practice Series was also based on the project findings.

## **Excellence in Organisational Practice Award**

This award recognises an organisation, service, or program that has demonstrated excellence in organisational development as a means to achieving positive outcomes with young people.

### **Winner: After Hours Bail Support Service, Office for Children, Youth and Family Support**

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# INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

## **Outstanding Youth Worker Award**

This award recognises an individual youth worker who has advanced the rights and wellbeing of young people by advocating for systemic change, supporting young people to access full membership of society and to be decision-makers in their own lives.

### **Winner: Braithe Thomson, Youth Services, Communities@Work**

Braithe Thomson has worked in the youth sector for 13 years, in Canberra, Sydney and overseas. Braithe is a passionate advocate for young people, and promotes the need for the youth sector to listen to young people and responding with groups and programs that young people want. Young people find him easy to approach, and Braithe's sense of humour allows him to build rapport and make young people feel comfortable. He has worked to provide life skills and drug and alcohol counselling and information to young people in schools. While at the Ted Noffs Foundation, Braithe played a key role in starting the CALM program, which supports young people aged 13 to 21 who are experiencing alcohol and other drug, comorbidity or criminal issues. Braithe was instrumental in planning and implementing two National Youth Week music events over the past two years. These events received fantastic feedback from young people. Braithe's Communities@Work colleagues regard him as having a deep sense of social justice, and credit him with shaping their workspace and culture into a highly productive and enjoyable place to work.

**Commendation: Aaron Pakula, Reconnect Program,  
CatholicCare Canberra and Goulburn**

Aaron Pakula has worked in the Reconnect Program at CatholicCare Canberra and Goulburn for almost five years. Aaron uses an assertive outreach model to engage with young people aged 12 to 18 who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, and their families. Aaron has continually demonstrated creative ways to engage with the young people to assist them to stabilise their accommodation and improve their engagement and relationships with their family, schooling and their natural resources. Aaron has a strong commitment to young people in the ACT, and creates relationships and provides support in creative ways. Aaron will set up meeting appointments in young person friendly environments, such as local football fields, schools, cafes, pool rooms, and dodgeball courts so that the young people he meets with feel comfortable. He will use conversations about his body artwork to engage young people in discussions about safety, self-care and positive decision-making. Aaron's colleagues recognise his integrity and honesty, and his commitment to ensuring that power is shared between the young person he is supporting and himself.

**Outstanding New Talent Award**

This award recognises an individual youth worker, youth work trainee or volunteer that has demonstrated an outstanding commitment to improving the wellbeing of young people.

**Winner: Arianne Wright, Family Tree House, Conflict  
Resolution Service**

Arianne Wright is the Team Leader of the Family Tree House program. This program assists young people aged 15 to 20 who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, due to family conflict. Arianne works directly with families who are in the program, and also provides supervision to two Family Support Workers. Previously working in a youth work model, Arianne worked hard to build up her skills in mediation and working with both young people and families. Arianne finds ways to empower young people and their parents. She has developed activities and strategies for families, and takes the time to tailor every intervention for the individuals she is working with. Arianne's colleagues credit her as an integral part of the Family Tree House team. She is resilient in the face of adversity, and committed to the young people and families that Family Tree House support. Her colleagues admire her positive attitude and willingness to learn.

## **Commendation: Emma Gibson, Canberra PCYC**

Emma Gibson has displayed considerable initiative and determination in her role as a caseworker for Canberra PCYC. Emma's first connection with Canberra PCYC was during a student research project, and upon graduation Emma started to work with PCYC as a Tots Tumbling program facilitator. Emma then moved into case managing and casework. Recently, Emma started her own all-girls gym program to help address the needs of Canberra PCYC's female clients. Her colleagues appreciate her positive attitude, passion, and her heart for working with vulnerable young people.

## **Commendation: Liz Pallas, Communities@Work**

Liz Pallas is new to both the youth sector and to Canberra. However, in the short period that she has been working as the Youth Engagement Officer at The Hub, Liz has shown great innovation and an aptitude for working in the youth sector. Liz formed strong links with five local high schools in the Tuggeranong region, and developed a weekly outreach in conjunction with the Tuggeranong Hyperdome. Liz was instrumental in setting up a barista course for the Connect 10 students from Lake Tuggeranong College, in partnership with the YWCA. Liz's colleagues admire her commitment to making programs inclusive for all young people, as well as her leadership and positivity.

### **Outstanding Contribution to Young People Award**

This award recognises an outstanding individual who works to improve the wellbeing of young people in the ACT.

## **Winner: Moo Klue Di Gay, Multicultural Youth Services ACT**

Moo Klue Di Gay consistently exceeds expectations as a bi-cultural worker for Multicultural Youth Services. He acts as a liaison between the Karen community and Multicultural Youth Services, organises weekly sporting competitions for the Karen community, and contributes to broader community development at Multicultural Youth Services. Moo Klue organises sporting events on Saturdays and Sundays, and organised the first National Caneball Championship. Moo Klue has also advocated for the rights of young women to participate in sporting activities, and organised for the young women to play Badminton. As well as working with the Karen community, Moo Klue also assists the Mon and Chin communities, despite the significant tensions between these ethnic groups. As a result of Moo Klue's tireless work, Multicultural Youth Services has significantly increased the number of referrals it receives for casework, meaning that young people at risk are linking in with support services.

## **Lifetime Achievement Award**

This award recognises an outstanding individual who has consistently demonstrated a commitment to supporting and improving the wellbeing of young people in the ACT.

### **Winner: Denise Brassler, Youth Education Program & Youth Connections, Anglicare**

Denise Brassler is respected for her longstanding commitment to young people, and she continues to dedicate herself to improving the rights and outcomes of young people in the ACT. Having worked in the youth sector for approximately two decades, Denise has supported many young people to re-engage in their education, obtain a qualification, transition into meaningful work, maintain a tenancy, or raise a family. Many of the young people that Denise supported while she managed the Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre regard her as welcoming, outgoing, down to earth, and non-judgemental. She is able to work with a diverse range of clients, and willing to go out of her way to help people. Denise is particularly passionate about working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait young people, and is working proactively to close the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. At Anglicare, Denise continues to work with young people in education, encouraging and supporting them to complete their studies, and providing individualised solutions to assist young people reach their goals and overcome barriers.

### **Staff Acknowledgement Award**

This award is selected by the Youth Coalition staff team, and acknowledges an individual who has significantly contributed to young people in the ACT, the youth sector, and the work of the Youth Coalition of the ACT.

#### **Winner: Jayson Perrin, Melba Copland Secondary School**

Described by his peers as, 'unique and irreplaceable', Jayson is well known in the ACT youth sector and the broader Canberra community. Jayson is understanding, flexible, responsible, a mediator, prepared to help, committed, humorous, and, most importantly, a mentor for disengaged young men. He has worked in a range of organisations, including Anglicare, Richmond Fellowship, and CanFACs, and has been the youth worker at Melba Copland Secondary School for a number of years. If you haven't heard of the range of programs that Jayson has implemented at Melba Copland, including the Choppers Program and Melba Pride Painters then you haven't been to a Youth Coalition Forum, read the local papers, or listened to local radio.

The Youth Coalition staff team have nominated Jayson for this award in recognition of his willingness to go 'over and above' for young people and the youth sector. Jayson always puts his hand up to participate in and support sector events. He has been a generous and reliable support to the sector for many years. In particular, Jayson has assisted events and activities such as National Youth Week, Youth Homelessness Matters Day, and the YOGIES. From organising young people to perform, lending his sound equipment, transporting chairs, people, and equipment, and encouraging other school based youth workers to get involved - Jayson is one of those workers that brings it all together. Just ask the 1424 members of his Facebook page, Hey!!!! Thats my Youth Worker".

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