

Peak Perspectives



This newsletter is a joint initiative of the Youth Coalition of the ACT, the peak body for youth affairs and young people in the ACT; and Families ACT, the peak body for the family support sector in the ACT.

It aims to provide current information and news to workers and services relating to the implementation of the new Child, Youth and Family Services Program in the ACT.

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1. About this Newsletter

Peak Perspectives is a joint initiative of the Youth Coalition of the ACT and Families ACT. The Youth Coalition is the peak body for youth affairs and young people aged 12 – 25 years in the ACT. Families ACT is the peak body for the family support sector in the ACT.

This monthly newsletter aims to provide workers and services with an overview of the current and relevant changes occurring in the transition to the Child, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP).

Each issue of *Peak Perspectives* will provide an update on key changes and activities related to the CYFSP, such as funded service models, ACT Government initiatives, and peak activities. It also introduces a topic for discussion each month that the Youth Coalition and Families ACT has identified as a key issue.

2. Messages from the Peaks

Youth Coalition of the ACT

As we start the week that will see the 'official start date' of the CYFSP I would like to acknowledge the sector for the extraordinary amount of time, dedication, passion, and hard work that has gone in to engaging with this significant change process.

The last couple of years have not always been easy, as everybody has grappled with how to put together an integrated service system that best supports children, young people, and their families.

We are now moving to the next phase of transition and development work, and I believe that it will again be that passion, dedication, and commitment from the sector, services, and workers, that will be called upon to ensure that we are building an effective and successful system.

Emma Robertson, Director



Youth Coalition of the ACT and Families ACT

Families ACT

With 1 March rapidly approaching I would like to emphasise that the new service system is a 'work in progress'.

We need to remember that change on this scale will take time to implement and then time to refine.

There are many competing demands for our attention at the moment, and as a result we are all feeling under pressure.

Let's remember that nurturing working relationships and paying extra attention to communication are essential elements in making the new Child, Youth and Family Services Program a reality.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the CYFSP breakfast on Thursday.

Will Mollison, Executive Officer



3. Update on the Child, Youth and Family Services Program

This update seeks to provide an overview of key changes and activities occurring in the transition to, and implementation of, the Child, Youth and Family Services Program (CYFSP).

About the CYFSP

The first issue of *Peak Perspectives* provided a comprehensive overview of the history and composition of the CYFSP, including providing a list of preferred providers. Issue 1 can be accessed at www.youthcoalition.net.

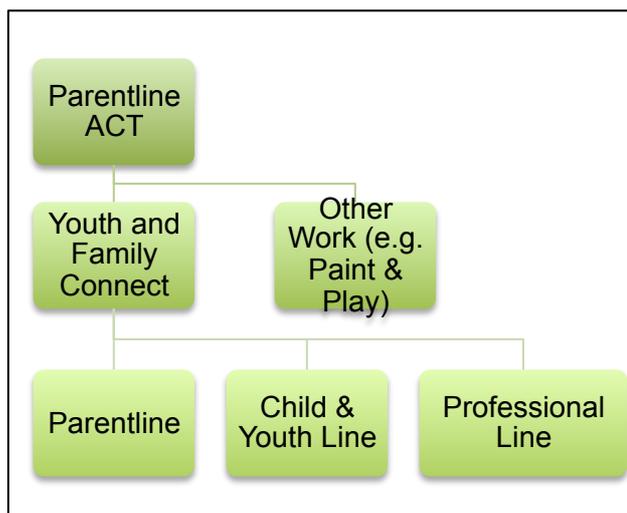
The CYFSP will officially commence on 1 March 2012, and will significantly change the scope of the youth and family support sector, with many new services opening and some existing services closing their doors. Service providers are currently in a transition period, which will continue through the coming months, as services recruit new staff and develop their programs.

Update on the Information, Engagement and Coordination Service

See also Discussion Topic at Item 5.

The Information, Engagement and Coordination Service will be the primary intake and assessment service for the CYFSP when contacted by community members or other services. It will undertake initial assessments with children, young people and their families; and identify appropriate courses of action. This could include telephone support or service referrals.

Parentline ACT are coordinating this service, which is called **Youth and Family Connect**.



At the CYFSP Planning Day on 8 February 2012, Parentline ACT presented on their anticipated activities, and provided an opportunity for participants to explore the aspects of the service that relate to referral processes.

Youth and Family Connect are in the process of developing an interim referral document to be used in the early days of the CYFSP, which will articulate different pathways. This will be circulated this week.

Youth and Family Connect will also be trialling an interim Common Assessment Tool, which may be based upon Belconnen Community Services's amended Common Assessment Framework.

In response to service enquiries about which phone numbers to include on service brochures, Youth and Family Connect advise that each service/program should include their own contact details on promotional material, along with a reference to Youth and Family Connect. Examples of this include:

- *For more information on services for young people, call the Youth Support Line on (02) 6162 4718; or,*
- *For more information on services for families, call Parentline on (02) 6287 3833.*

In addition, Youth and Family Connect are also undertaking or planning the following activities:

- Recruitment of a specialist communications officer to develop a Communications Strategy;
- Exploring methods to maintain an up-to-date database of services/programs for children, young people and families in the ACT;
- Meeting with network coordinators;
- Establishing an advisory group;
- Establishing a stakeholder group (including a possible youth stakeholder group);
- Exploring models of data collection (to be developed by July 2012);
- Establishing online counselling; and,
- Providing training to staff.

Key contact details for Youth and Family Connect include:

- Parentline: (02) 6287 3833
- Youth Support Line: (02) 6162 4718
- Youth and Family Connect Professional Line: (02) 6287 3822
- Larissa Dann (Manager of Parentline ACT): pss.manager@iimetro.com.au
- Suella Jarvis (Coordinator of Youth and Family Connect): 0450 960 907 or suella.parentline@iimetro.com.au

Key Documents

The Office for Children, Youth and Family Support (OCYFS) are in the process of developing a number of key documents to support the development and implementation of the CYFSP. These documents are being developed with input from the CYFS Directors' Group, and include:

- Records Management Policy;
- Principles and Elements of Case Management;
- Principles and Standards of Supervision; and,
- Brokerage Guidelines.

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT is pleased that the CYFS Directors' Group is being provided with opportunities to comment on the draft documents.

However, we are concerned that these documents are not being developed in relation to the Practice Framework Project. The Practice Framework Project will develop a tool that integrates theoretical and philosophical approaches with practice knowledge, and will provide a credible and tested evidence base.

The Practice Framework Project will provide a sound basis from which to develop these key documents of the CYFSP.

Evaluation Framework

The Institute of Child Protection Studies (ICPS) has been engaged by the ACT Government to develop an evaluation package for the CYFSP. This will include:

- One day training in evaluation for program managers: This training will explore the types and approaches of evaluation; ethical issues; the implementation of the CYFS Framework; management of stakeholder groups; the importance of data; and performance measures / outcomes. The training will be held before the end of the 2011/2012 financial year.
- Half-day Program Logic Workshop: This workshop will explore why and how activities lead to outcomes; and assist participants to determine what the purpose of evaluation is.
- Evaluation Sub-Committee: Following the previous training opportunities, individuals will be invited to participate in the Evaluation Sub-Committee for the CYFSP, which will assist in defining a Terms of Reference for the CYFSP Evaluation Framework.

For more information about the Evaluation Framework, contact the Institute of Child Protection Studies on (02) 6209 1225.

Changes to Existing Service Reporting

OCYFS have reduced reporting requirements for Youth Services Program and Family Support Program services for the reporting period of January to 29 February 2012, in acknowledgement that this period of transition is a busy time for services.

Services will only be required to submit a quantitative report (including the service hours) and financial report for this 8 week period; due on 30 March 2012. Services will not be required to produce a Case Management report.

For more information contact Alison Lawrence on (02) 6205 0733 or alison.lawrence@act.gov.au.

Transition Process

The ACT Government has instigated a number of initiatives and processes that aim to support the transition to the CYFSP:

- Three Planning Days have been held with CYFS preferred providers between November 2011 and February 2012, with the most recent held on 8 February 2012. It is anticipated that a follow-up meeting will be held after the commencement of the CYFSP.

- A reduction in reporting requirements for services for the January – February period (see above).
- The CYFS Directors' Group: The next meeting will be held on 28 February 2012, from 3 – 4.30pm.
- The CYFS Practice Leadership Group: The next meeting will be held on 26 April 2012.
- Distribution of Communiqués and 'Q and A' fact-sheets: OCYFS have released 4 communiqués that aim to provide the youth and family sector with regular updates about the transition to the new Framework. These communiqués have been accompanied by a 'Q and A' factsheet with information for services. For more information or to be added to the distribution list, contact jeremy.chalmers@act.gov.au.
- Transition Guidelines: These were distributed to services on 16 December 2011, and provided information on the services that would be available during the transition period from December 2011 to March 2012. To obtain a copy of the Transition Guidelines, contact alison.lawrence@act.gov.au.
- Communication Strategy: In addition to a draft Communication Strategy and factsheet for young people about changes occurring to services; OCYFS are currently in the process of finalising a fact-sheet for families about the changes.

Transition Services

Some additional / special support services have been established during the transition period to provide support to children, young people and their families.

ADDITIONAL / SPECIAL TRANSITIONAL SERVICES		
Service	Provider	Comments
Intensive Case Management	Barnardos	Barnardos has negotiated to deliver this service during the transition period for high-risk clients, though they will not have to be referred from Care and Protection or Youth Justice.
Staff Recruitment Project	Families ACT	Families ACT is providing information on staff vacancies and recruitment action to assist in the transition process (see Peak Activities for more information).
Information, Engagement and Coordination Service	Parentline	This transitory service will offer the IECS in a scaled-down model, including the provision of telephone information and support; and provide an active holding service where required (see update on IECS for more information).
Therapeutic Services	Relationships Australia	Relationships Australia commenced provision of therapeutic services in December 2011, and will accept referrals from outgoing services.
Low Complex Case Management	The Smith Family	The Smith Family can provide low-level case management to young people and their families over January and February, available to young people transitioning from outgoing services.

Key Contacts in OCYFS

Ms Leanne Power, Director,
Strategic Projects, OCYFS
(02) 6205 2465
leanne.power@act.gov.au

Ms Sue Mickleburgh, Acting
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Purchasing
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susan.mickleburgh@act.gov.au

Ms Alison Lawrence, Senior
Contract Manager, YFSP
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Mr Jeremy Chalmers, Program
Officer, YFSP
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jeremy.chalmers@act.gov.au

Ms Morgan Eddey, Program
Officer, YFSP
(02) 6207 6306
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Ms Danielle Farlow, Program
Officer, YFSP
danielle.farlow@act.gov.au

4. Peak Activities

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT are working together closely to support workers and services to transition to the CYFSP. This includes providing information and resources, undertaking specific projects, being a communication point between the ACT Government and the sector, and engaging in advocacy and policy.

This section of *Peak Perspectives* seeks to provide an overview of the activities that the Youth Coalition and Families ACT are undertaking in relation to the CYFSP.

Invitation to ACT Child, Youth and Family Services Program Breakfast

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT extend an invitation to workers and services to attend a light breakfast to mark the 'official start date' of the CYFSP.

We recognise that services will still be in a transition phase for some time, and would like to provide this opportunity to acknowledge the work that is being undertaken to deliver a new suite of services to children, young people and families. Frontline workers, managers, directors and support staff are all welcome to attend.

Date: Thursday 1 March 2012
Time: 8 – 9.30am
Venue: Youth Coalition of the ACT, 46 Clianthus St, O'Connor
Cost: Free
RSVP: By Wednesday 29 February 2012 to erin@youthcoalition.net.

Bus Tour Induction Project

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT have received project funding to implement the Bus Tour Induction Project, which aims to increase the knowledge and understanding of frontline workers and program managers of the new service system provided under the CYFSP.

This Project will initially be implemented during March and April 2012 and is based on the model currently utilised by the Youth Coalition to implement the 'Comorbidity Bus Tours' of youth, mental health, and alcohol and other drug services. The Bus Tours will take workers to visit key CYFSP services in the ACT.

Directors of CYFSP services have already been invited to provide information to support the implementation of the Bus Tours Project, including when and how many staff will be participating in the tours; and whether their programs would be happy to participate as host services.

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT are currently in the process of recruiting a project worker to implement the project; with the first bus tour to commence during the week of 5 March 2012.

For more information on this Project contact Emma Robertson on (02) 6247 3540 or director@youthcoalition.net.

Dedicated Webpage for CYFSP

The Youth Coalition recently published a webpage on its website dedicated to the implementation of the CYFSP. The new pages include background information about the CYFSP, details about the work being undertaken by the peaks, key ACT Government documents, employment opportunities and upcoming events and activities.

For more information, visit www.youthcoalition.net.

Peak Meetings with OCYFS

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT meet regularly with OCYFS, including fortnightly meetings with the Senior Manager of Strategy and Purchasing within OCYFS. Ms Janelle Wheatley recently left this role for a position in ACT Health, and Ms Sue Mickleburgh is acting in this position.

During February 2012, the peaks have met with senior staffers within OCYFS on a number of occasions, including:

- Ms Christine Nolan on 15 February 2012: Items discussed included the need to prioritise activities to be progressed by the CYFSP, support for Youth and Family Connect, and OCYFS' relationship with the sector.
- Ms Sue Mickleburgh on 15 February 2012: Items discussed included a briefing on CYFSP activities to date, and CYFSP service contracts.
- Ms Christine Nolan and Ms Leanne Power on 20 February 2012: Items discussed included identifying ways forward for the Practice Framework Project (see below for more information), and key priorities for the CYFSP over the next two months.

Update: Recruiting for Practice Framework Project

The Practice Framework will support service providers to implement key elements of the new Service Delivery Framework. It is a tool that integrates theoretical and philosophical approaches with practice knowledge and research / evaluation evidence to inform practice that will best support positive outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Families ACT has the sad news that Kate Butler has resigned from the position of Project Manager on the Practice Framework Project. Consequently, this Project has been paused while a new staff member is recruited.

Families ACT is recruiting for a qualified and experienced researcher / practitioner to deliver this Project and pilot the framework. The focus of the pilot is to monitor the usefulness of the Framework in working with vulnerable clients, and to assess the extent to which it is a viable tool in supporting service providers to implement key components of the ACT Government's CYFSP Delivery Framework.

The position is part-time, for a fixed term of 7 months, ending in September 2012, at \$88, 000 per annum (pro-rata).

For a position description or further information contact Will Mollison on familiesact@frsa.org.au or 0402 718 579. Applications close 12 March 2012.

Update: Staff Transition Project

Families ACT is leading a collaborative project with the Youth Coalition that seeks to provide staffing information to services in relation to the transition to the new Framework. This Project seeks to communicate information about in-coming and out-going staff positions to support the potential movement of staff between agencies.

A template was distributed to services in November 2011 that allowed agencies to identify vacancies and commencement dates. At 22 December 2011, 7 organisations had responded. For more information contact Will at familiesact@frsa.org.au.

5. Discussion Topic: 1 March 2012

This key date, '1 March 2012', engenders a range of responses from youth and family support services, as the official starting date for the new Child, Youth and Family Support Program.

Workers and services from the youth and family support sector, and also the health, housing, justice, and broader community and government sectors, have expressed concern, apprehension, uncertainty and disappointment in relation to the start of the CYFSP. They have also expressed optimism, anticipation and a commitment to 'making it work'.

On the morning of Thursday 1 March 2012, the Youth Coalition and Families ACT are inviting workers and services to attend a breakfast, to mark the official start of the new Program. However, we acknowledge that during this time – and over the coming months – services will continue to be in a transition period, as the sector starts to design, develop, test, implement, adjust and readjust the various components of the CYFSP.

With most services still in contract negotiations, developing service models and looking to recruit staff, 1 March 2012 will not mark the start of a complete and fully built service system. Rather, it will allow workers and services to begin building the blocks of the new service system, after spending many months talking about its design.

The Youth Coalition and Families ACT have observed that there appear to be some misconceptions that the centralised Information, Engagement and Coordination Service, *Youth and Family Connect*, will be fully functioning on 1 March 2012; and that it will 'solve' many of the gaps in the CYFSP Framework, on behalf of the sector (such as referral pathways and waiting lists).

The peaks consider that it is not, nor should it be, the role of *only* Youth and Family Connect to solve systemic problems for the youth and family support sector. Parentline ACT, as the coordinator of Youth and Family Connect, are developing an interim process for intake, assessment and referrals to be used in the early days of the new Program while a longer-term model is being developed by the sector. They have committed to a collaborative, considered approach to developing and implementing a service model that is effective and useful for workers and services.

In order to work towards an effective service system, it will be the role of staff, services and the sector to work together constructively to assist in the development of this model, and to address the systemic gaps in the Framework that will arise over the coming months.

The next months will be a time for prioritising the work of the CYFSP and working on foundational aspects of the Framework to ensure a supported transition and access to services for children, young people and their families. Key projects such as Families ACT's Practice Framework Project, and the Institute of Child Protection Studies' evaluation package, will be valuable tools in developing effective guidelines and measurements for the CYFSP.

If you have any feedback, comments or questions relating to this topic that can inform the peaks' work in this area, contact erin@youthcoalition.net or familiesact@frsa.org.au.

6. Key Contacts

Staff at Families ACT

Mr Will Mollison, Executive Officer
0402 718 579
familiesact@frsa.org.au
Availability: Monday - Thursday

Vacant Position
Practice Framework Project
Manager

Staff at the Youth Coalition of the ACT

Ms Emma Robertson, Director
(02) 6247 3540
director@youthcoalition.net
Availability: Full Time

Mr Dave Corby, Office Manager
dave@youthcoalition.net
Availability: Mon & Tues
afternoon; Thurs & Fri

Ms Adelaide Jones, Policy and
Development Officer (Housing,
Education and Justice)
adelaide@youthcoalition.net
Availability: Full Time

Ms Erin Barry, Policy and
Development Officer (CYFSP and
Organisational Development)
erin@youthcoalition.net
Availability: Mon, Wed, Fri

Ms Katrina Campion, Sector
Development Officer (Bus Tours
and Training) and Youth Week
Coordinator
katrina@youthcoalition.net
Availability: Tues, Wed &
alternative Thurs & Fri

Ms Ashlin Flanagan, Policy and
Development Officer (Multicultural
and Mental Health)
ashlin@youthcoalition.net
Availability: Mon – Fri, 11am –
2pm



Youth Housing Homelessness Sector Reform

This addition to *Peak Perspectives* focuses on the changes occurring in the ACT youth housing and homelessness sector.

The Youth Coalition advocates for a whole-of-government approach to supporting young people and their families. While reform of the youth housing and homelessness sector is not being implemented by the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, the Youth Coalition recognises that the changes occurring to each of these sub-sectors of the youth sector will have a significant impact on the scope of the broader youth sector.

Funded Services

The outcome of the tender to provide youth housing and homelessness support services in the ACT has been announced, and preferred providers are outlined below. These services will commence by April 2012, but transition and funding will begin in March.

Preferred Providers for Youth Housing and Homelessness Support Services		
Service	Provider	Description
Housing Support Service	CatholicCare Canberra and Goulburn	To support a minimum of 150 (per annum) young people aged 15 – 25, at risk of or who have experienced homelessness. The HSS will provide tenancy support as well as support for them to access other services.
Crisis Mediation Service	Conflict Resolution Service	To support a minimum of 20 (at any one time) young people aged 15 – 20 (consideration outside this age range is possible), to prevent them from entering homelessness. The CMS will provide conflict resolution during, and following the initial crisis situation including family conferencing, mediation and safety planning. The service will also identify natural supports for the young person.
Emergency Accommodation Network	The Salvation Army and Canberra Youth Residential Service	To support a minimum of 24 (at any one time) young people aged 16 – 25 experiencing homelessness. The EAN will provide a 'safety net' where all other accommodation options have been exhausted. It will operate in a cluster system of three houses in each region and have the capacity to accommodate couples, siblings or other groups.
Friendly Landlord Service	Barnardos Australia	To support a maximum of 80 (at any one time) young people aged 16 – 25, who are at risk of or have experienced homelessness, with moderate to low needs. The FLS will be provided in up to 30 properties of 1 and 3 bedrooms, and will be able to accommodate couples, siblings and friends to foster harmonious living environments. It will also

		work with private market landlords to expand the availability of affordable housing options for young people.
Youth Identified Accommodation and Support Program	Barnardos Australia	To support a minimum of 20 (at any one time) young people aged 16 – 20 within family-style accommodation arrangements. It will engage young people and their support families in the process of developing a suitable accommodation arrangement in the interest of both parties.
Mentoring, Life Skills and Social Enterprise Service	The Ted Noffs Foundation	To support a minimum of 80 (per annum) young people by providing a flexible approach to the development of life and work skills, with the option of a mentor. Training courses will be developed as well as an annual social enterprise seed funding program.
Parent Accommodation Support Program	St Vincent De Paul	To support 4 families and 20 (any at one time) young parents aged 16 – 25 by providing housing and/or assisting them to find long-term, supported and sustainable accommodation.

Transition Process

Youth Coalition meeting with Social Housing and Homelessness Services:

The Youth Coalition met with Social Housing and Homelessness Services, Community Services Directorate, on 16 February 2012 to discuss questions raised at the Youth Coalition's first Youth Housing and Homelessness Forum meeting in February. These related to staffing transitions, client transitions, allocation of properties, communications planning and brokerage.

The Youth Coalition of the ACT is committed to working together with Social Housing and Homelessness Services to ensure a smooth transition process for all service providers and young people.

The Community Services Directorate has prioritised transitions for young people in accommodation services closing first. Negotiations are underway with services to ensure these clients are not exiting into homelessness.

Other initiatives and processes aimed at supporting the transition to delivering the new service models include:

- The Community Services Directorate has committed to providing regular updates, and encourages services to contact them to discuss any concerns. A second communiqué was sent out on 27 February 2012, which assisted in developing this document.
- A transitions planning forum was held on 17 February 2012, with another one planned for mid-March.
- Information will be disseminated through the Youth Coalition of the ACT, the Homelessness Forum and Joint Pathways.

Key Contacts in Housing ACT

Regarding Tender Evaluation:

Mr Richard Baumgart, Director, Housing ACT
(02) 6207 5026
richard.baumgart@act.gov.au

Regarding Service Funding Agreements:

Ms Sarah Watson, Assistant
Manager, Social Housing and
Homelessness Services
(02) 6250 7974
sarah.watson@act.gov.au

Ms Alice Tibbitts, Senior
Manager, Social Housing and
Homelessness Services
(02) 6207 5668
alice.tibbitts@act.gov.au

All housing enquiries should go to First Point on 1800 176 468.

For further information about support services available to young people in the ACT call the Youth Support Line on (02) 6162 4718.

All enquiries about support available for families should be directed to Parentline on (02) 6287 3833.

Youth Housing and Homelessness Forum

The Youth Coalition hosts the monthly Youth Housing and Homelessness Forum (YHHF) on the first Tuesday of each month. The YHHF aims to provide a forum for housing and homelessness providers to improve their practice in supporting young people who are experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, homelessness in the ACT.

The details for the next YHHF meeting are:

Date: Tuesday 6 March 2012
Time: 9.30am: Youth Homelessness Service Preferred Providers only
10.30am: All other services and government agencies welcome
See comments below
Venue: 46 Clianthus St, O'Connor (Youth Coalition Office)

In light of the reforms occurring to the youth housing and homelessness sector, and following consultation with members, meetings for 2012 will take on a different format.

The first hour (9.30 – 10.30am) will be for Youth Homelessness Service Preferred Providers ONLY. The second hour (10.30 – 11.30am) will be open to all other services and government agencies.

The purpose of these changes is to enable preferred providers to have a forum to voice their opinions, access support, and to ensure a successful transition to the new service framework.

Meeting dates for the Youth Housing Homelessness Forum in 2012 include:

- 6 March
- 3 April
- 1 May
- 5 June
- 3 July
- 7 August
- 4 September
- 2 October
- 6 November

For more information about the Youth Housing and Homelessness Forum, contact Adelaide Jones on (02) 6247 3540 or adelaide@youthcoalition.net.