



## **YOGIE Award Winners 2009**

Presented by

**Joy Burch MLA**

Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services

The Yogies are a Youth Coalition of the ACT initiative, proudly supported by the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

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We acknowledge the Ngunnawal people as the traditional owners and continuing custodians of the lands of the ACT and we pay our respects to the Elders, their families and ancestors.

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

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples hold distinctive rights as the original people of modern day Australia, including the right to a distinct status and culture, self-determination and land.

We celebrate Indigenous cultures and the invaluable contribution to they make to our community.

### **About the Youth Coalition of the ACT**

The Youth Coalition is the peak youth affairs body in the Australian Capital Territory and responsible for representing the interests of people aged between 12 and 25 years of age, and those who work with them.

The Youth Coalition is represented on many ACT Government Advisory structures and provides advice to the ACT Government on youth issues as well as providing information to youth services about policy and program matters.

We actively promote the well being and aspirations of young people in the ACT with particular respect to their social, political, cultural, spiritual, economic and educational development.

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# The YOGIE Awards 2009

The YOGIE Awards (the YOGIES) 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 exists in the youth sector.

The YOGIES are presented annually by the ACT Minister responsible for Children and Young People at the Youth Coalition's end-of-year function. The awards are presented in 9 categories that recognise the work of groups and individuals. Nominations are promoted towards the end of each year. Services, workers, young people and members of the community are encouraged to nominate any programs, services and individuals. A judging panel determines the winners.

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**

- 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 AWARDS**

- Outstanding Youth Worker Award
- Outstanding New Talent Award
- Outstanding Contribution to Young People Award
- Lifetime Achievement Award

For further information about the YOGIES visit [www.youthcoalition.net](http://www.youthcoalition.net) or contact (02) 6247 3540 or [info@youthcoalition.net](mailto:info@youthcoalition.net).

# **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: Young Carers Leadership Committee  
CYCLOPS ACT, Anglicare Canberra and Goulburn**

The Young Carers Leadership Committee (the Committee) was established in March 2009, and seeks to provide members with opportunities to participate in advocacy, networking, awareness-raising, and developing of social activities for the young carer community in the ACT.

Supported by the staff teams at CYCLOPS ACT and the Litmus Program, the Committee currently has five passionate and enthusiastic young members. Each member of the Committee has a unique story regarding their caring role and experiences with different services. These experiences have provided the young people with a valuable insight into service delivery, community awareness, and the lives of other young carers.

In 2009, the Committee has been involved in a number of activities, including participating in Youth Week in the ACT, and attending a two-day Young Carers Conference in Queensland. The Conference explored topics such as young carers and education; children caring for parents with a mental illness; and young carers from newly arrived communities. Following the conference, the Committee members were invited to meet with the ACT Government's Youth Advisory Council, to report on the findings and make recommendations.

The Committee was also invited to participate in a National Centrelink teleconference, among other groups of young people from around Australia. One Committee member in particular had a significant impact during the teleconference and was consequently invited to participate in a radio interview after the event.

During 2009, the Committee members also participated in a consultation with the ACT Government on the development of the *ACT Young People's Plan 2009 – 2014*. The consultation gave the members an opportunity to share ideas on how the ACT Government and services can support young carers in Canberra. The ACT Government reported that the Committee's input was highly valuable and their contributions were to be considered for the final draft of the Plan.

## **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: STEPS Program  
CatholicCare Canberra and Goulburn**

The CatholicCare STEPS Program (STEPS) is a sub-acute step-up step-down accommodation facility for young people aged 13 – 18 years experiencing mental distress. Funded by ACT Health,

STEPS commenced operations in April 2008. STEPS operates through a partnership between CatholicCare and CAMHS.

STEPS has an early intervention and prevention focus to recovery by providing young people who may be experiencing an escalation in their mental illness (step up), or those who have been hospitalised but are now stable (step down), an alternative to hospitalisation. The voluntary program seeks to assist young people to better understand and manage their mental wellbeing through a combination of individual and clinical support in a safe environment.

STEPS is the first step-up step-down mental health facility for young people within the ACT and Australia. The service delivery model is based on the belief that partnerships and collaborations between services, young people and their parents/caregivers are essential factors in providing a service which is not only effective and holistic, but is also respectful and consumer-driven. Every aspect of the STEPS program is reliant on working in a collaborative and inclusive manner and focused on providing young people with an opportunity and safe environment to recover and re-engage with life.

STEPS utilises a number of innovative approaches to aid the recovery of young people in residence. These include both individual sessions and group activities. Residents are encouraged to explore their personal challenges through a variety of creative mediums. For example, some of the most recent projects have included 'mindfulness' sessions regarding music, exercise and self care; 'drumbeat' sessions which utilises hand drumming to engage participants in a cooperative group process to explore relationship issues and a photography projects which provides residents with the opportunity to visualise their recovery through a future framework process.

### **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.

### **Winners (Jointly Awarded): headspace ACT, and MYS Driver Project, Multicultural Youth Services**

#### **headspace ACT:**

headspace ACT opened on 9 September 2008, and aims to provide an integrated, multidisciplinary and evidence-based early intervention service for young people in the ACT aged 12 – 25 years, with emerging mild to moderate mental health and/or substance use problems. headspace ACT is an innovative service with 18 multidisciplinary professionals providing integrated care from a centralised location at the University of Canberra. The headspace ACT staff team consists of salaried youth mental health workers and a mental health clinician, psychologists working in private practice, and students on clinical placements. In addition, a number of services are co-located at headspace ACT, including:

- Alcohol and Drug Foundation of the ACT (ADFACT) alcohol and other drug workers;
- DIRECTIONS ACT alcohol and other drug workers;
- Mental Health ACT clinicians; and,
- Ted Noffs Foundation alcohol and other drug workers.

headspace ACT uses a consortium model that brings together the commitment and expertise of key agencies to partner in the development of this service. Consortium members responsible for overseeing headspace ACT include the ACT Division of General Practice, ADFACT, Mental Health

ACT, Ted Noffs Foundation ACT, University of Canberra, and the Youth Coalition of the ACT.

headspace ACT also delivers specialist mental health training and conducts a range of mental health promotion activities with schools and the broader community. During 2009, headspace ACT partnered with Navigate, YWCA, to deliver training to youth workers on engaging with families.

**MYS Driver Project:**

The Driver Project (the Project) was initiated by Multicultural Youth Services (MYS) in 2009, in response to the most popular request for support from MYS clients – driving lessons. MYS, with support from SCOPE Youth Services, YWCA, received two grants from the ACT Government, through the Office for Multicultural Affairs, and the Office for Women, to deliver this project.

The Project provided support to 18 young people through 3 all-day driver educational programs with the Australian Federal Police driving school, followed by 9 weekly individual driving lessons with each young person through the Arrow Driving School. The YWCA provided a mini-bus to transport the young people to the AFP driving school; and the AFP provided a number of classroom lectures on driving safety, road rules and car maintenance, along with lunch for the young people.

While providing 18 young people with practical skills and knowledge, this Project also supported relationship-building between young refugees and the Australian Federal Police, both improving cultural and refugee awareness for AFP members, and helping refugee young people to build a new, positive image of police.

**Commendation:**     **ACT Housing Gateway Services**  
                          **Lowana Youth Services**  
                          **Oasis Youth Residential Service**  
                          **Tumladden Youth Accommodation**

In 2009, representatives from Tumladden, Lowana Youth Services, and Oasis Youth Residential Service met with ACT Housing Gateway Services. It was agreed that Youth Housing Outreach Workers would visit Southside youth accommodation services on a monthly basis, to take applications for ACT Housing, conduct intake interviews, and be available for existing applicants to follow up their status.

This collaboration made ACT Housing far more accessible to young people in youth accommodation services, and ensured applications were processed more easily, requiring only one appointment (where previously young people had to visit the Belconnen office multiple times to lodge their application and have assessment interviews). It also ensured that applications were handled by the specialist youth housing managers, who were the ACT Housing staff best able to work with young people at-risk.

**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:**     ***Who Cares?* Research Project**  
                  **Institute of Child Protection Studies, ACU**

In September 2009, the Institute of Child Protection Studies (ICPS) released a report, developed by Debbie Noble-Carr, Tim Moore and Morag McArthur, titled *Who Cares? Experiences of young*

*people living with a family member who has an alcohol or other drug issue. The report is the culmination of a research project that aimed to explore the question: *What are the specific needs of children who have a parent with an alcohol or other drug issue, and how are these similar to other children with care responsibilities?**

The project was funded by the the ACT Government through its Carers Recognition Grants Project, and conducted by the ICPS with support from Anglicare Canberra and Goulburn; and in exploring the question outlined above, aimed to grasp the implications for the range of services that might come into contact with these families (including young carers, AOD, family support and care and protection programs) and the way that supports might be provided.

Children and young people were directly involved in the research process. Adopting an ethical and child-centred approach, the research team provided young people with an opportunity to talk about their experiences in one-on-one interviews that were developed in consultation with a young people's reference group. The group also helped the research team understand emerging themes and draw out policy and practice implications.

The project also drew on the existing young carer and alcohol and other drug literature which highlighted the vulnerability of these children and young people, and the ways that their family and caring situation affected their health, wellbeing, education, social inclusion and future life opportunities.

## **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: CREATE Your Future Program CREATE Foundation ACT**

The CREATE Foundation provides support and advocates on behalf of children and young people in out-of-home care. The CREATE Foundation in the ACT provides a number of programs to children and young people, including the CREATE Your Future Program, which is funded by DHCS and provides outreach support to young people aged 16 – 25 years, who are transitioning to independence, with a focus on accessing and maintaining education and employment. This 12 month pilot program began in February 2009 and was accessed by up to 20 young people.

Young people were supported to participate in the workshops and modules, and a website was developed to support young people transitioning from care: [www.createyourfuture.org.au](http://www.createyourfuture.org.au). Young people were also offered individual support and advocacy during the duration of the program.

The program was established through best practice initiatives from NSW as a workplace-based training module, run with the support of Atari. In 2009, it was extensively adjusted to encompass education as well as training, and a series of life skills modules. The program was written to cater to a number of different learning styles to ensure young people of all abilities would be able to participate. CREATE Young Consultants co-facilitated the program, and the program was supported by the CREATE Your Future Reference Group.

Of the nine young people that commenced the program, eight completed it. All eight young people have continued to engage with the CREATE Foundation and take further advantage of the support and advocacy offered by CREATE. The CREATE Foundation sought feedback from participants and Young Consultants to ensure that suggestions and ideas for future contributions were recorded.

# ***Individuals 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: Steve Byrne**

Steve Byrne has been involved in the youth sector for a number of years, in both direct service delivery and at a sector level. Most recently, Steve worked as a youth worker at the newly-established headspace ACT, with young people aged 12 – 25 experiencing emerging, mild to moderate mental health and / or alcohol and other drug issues.

Prior to working at headspace ACT, Steve worked as a Sector Development Officer at the Youth Coalition of the ACT, providing support to youth services and advocating for young people at a systems level.

Steve has also worked as a youth worker with Anglicare Canberra and Goulburn; and taken on volunteer positions, such as with Mental Illness Education ACT (MIEACT). Although currently in the process of moving to Melbourne, Steve is seeking to continue working in the mental health field with young people.

## **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: Maryse Pietersz**

Maryse works as a youth worker in the Transition Program at Barnardos, which provides support and accommodation to chronically homeless young people in the ACT. Maryse provides outreach support to young people who are not in Barnardos accommodation. Her role includes providing practical support to young people, such as organising a birth certificate, Centrelink benefits, and preparing applications for Housing ACT. She also links young people in with employment, training, or resuming schooling.

Maryse has been described as a 'breath of fresh air', for both staff and clients at Barnardos Transition Program. Through all of the challenges presented through her work, she can always maintain her genuinely sunny disposition. Being a newcomer to Canberra has not stopped her networking and building relationships with many local youth services, including Multicultural Youth Services.

Maryse recently helped organise a fundraising event for homeless young people in the ACT, called 'Gimme Shelter'. Over 100 people slept 'rough' in the Albert Hall on cardboard and over \$25,000 was raised for Barnardos programs to work with homeless young people in the ACT. Maryse was instrumental in the event from its inception to its conclusion; organising businesses to donate to the event, entertainment and soup for the sleepers, and also the cardboard for everyone to sleep on. With the money raised, Barnardos is able to buy more fridges, washing machines, food vouchers, toasters, kettles, linen, crockery and cutlery – all the basic items a young person needs to set up a flat. This would not have happened without Maryse's inspirational work.

## **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: Carrie Fowlie**

Having worked in the youth sector for a number of years, Carrie Fowlie previously worked at Northside Community Services, and at Anglicare Canberra and Goulburn. For the last five years, she has been working at the Youth Coalition of the ACT, for much of that time as the Deputy Director.

Through her work in the youth sector, Carrie has been extremely proactive and engaged in progressing youth affairs in the ACT; and has become sought after as a representative for young people and youth services, both in the ACT and nationally. Carrie is well-known for her commitment and dedication to young people, both as a youth worker, and at a sector level.

In 2007, the Youth Coalition received funding to provide sector support activities to the alcohol and other drug sector in the ACT, through the ACT Alcohol and Other Drug Sector Project. This has been a highly successful project, and in building on it's success this year Carrie has shifted focus to directing the ACT AOD Sector Project full time and working towards establishing a peak body for the ACT alcohol and other drug sector. Carrie be sorely missed by the youth sector in the ACT, but will no doubt continue to be a strong advocate for young people and youth affairs.

## **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: Andy Miles**

Andy is currently the manager of Barnardos Transition Program in Canberra, and has been working with young people for more than 12 years. Within the sector, he is renowned and respected for his work ethic, conviction to support young people, and humour.

Andy's work, to this day, encapsulates the vast array of tasks and roles of a 'youth worker'. Andy continues to work with young people despite his management role. He supports past clients who always know they can rely on Andy, who has a strong reputation for being fair. Aside from their allocated worker, nearly every client of Barnardos Transition Program knows they can call Andy for support. Andy recognises the importance of providing tangible physical support to young people: 'getting his hands dirty', by helping young people clean apartments, move furniture, and drive them around to attend to their needs.

At a sector level, Andy attends a huge number of meetings, forums, steering committees, and can always be relied on to contribute. Andy voiced his concerns regarding young people at a systemic level and has been a strong advocate. Andy has mentored numerous youth workers, who continue to be motivated and inspired by him.