

Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian

Children and Young People Policy Scan

Issue 3: March 2010

Consultation opportunities

Children and young people under 18 – have your say! Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian

The Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian listens to and speaks up for children and young people. The Commission is currently seeking children's and young people's views on **cyberspace**, including their thoughts on social networking sites like Facebook and any problems they have experienced using the site.

The views of children and young people will help the Commission to find out what young people in Queensland think about certain issues, and how it can help make Queensland a safer and better place for children and young people to live.

The closing date for responses is **30 April 2010**.

<http://www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au/>

Public consultation paper – Review of the *Domestic Violence and Family Violence Protection Act 1989*, Department of Communities

The Queensland Department of Communities has released its 'Review of the *Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act 1989*' consultation paper.

The paper is part of a five-year strategy to help reduce domestic and family violence in Queensland. The review is timely due to the current national focus on domestic and family violence and the significant national reform work being undertaken regarding homelessness and child protection. The *Domestic Violence and Family Violence Protection Act 1989* has not undergone a comprehensive review since it was introduced 20 years ago.

The closing date for responses is **31 May 2010**.

www.getinvolved.qld.gov.au or <http://www.communityservices.qld.gov.au/violenceprevention/documents/2107-10-dfv-consultation-paper-web.pdf>

Inquiry into Youth Suicide Prevention, Parliament of Australia, House of Representatives, March 2010

After reviewing the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing's 2008-2009 Annual Report, the Standing Committee on Health and Ageing, will inquire and report on the need for and success of early intervention programs aimed at preventing youth suicide.

Submissions are due **Friday 9 April 2010**.

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/haa/youthsuicide/index.htm>

Inquiry into Suicide in Australia, Parliament of Australia, Senate, March 2010

On 10 September 2009 the Senate referred the matter of the 'impact of suicide on the Australian community including high risk groups such as Indigenous youth and rural communities' to the Community Affairs References Committee for inquiry, with particular reference to:

- a. the personal, social and financial costs of suicide in Australia
- b. the accuracy of suicide reporting in Australia, factors that may impede accurate identification and recording of possible suicides, (and the consequences of any under-reporting on understanding risk factors and providing services to those at risk)
- c. the appropriate role and effectiveness of agencies, such as police, emergency departments, law enforcement and general health services in assisting people at risk of suicide
- d. the effectiveness, to date, of public awareness programs and their relative success in providing information, encouraging help-seeking and enhancing public discussion of suicide
- e. the efficacy of suicide prevention training and support for front-line health and community workers providing services to people at risk
- f. the role of targeted programs and services that address the particular circumstances of high-risk groups
- g. the adequacy of the current program of research into suicide and suicide prevention, and the manner in which findings are disseminated to practitioners and incorporated into government policy, and
- h. the effectiveness of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy in achieving its aims and objectives, and any barriers to its progress.

Due to the considerable interest generated by this inquiry, the Committee is continuing to receive submissions throughout the inquiry. The reporting date has been extended to **24 June 2010**.

http://www.aph.gov.au/Senate/committee/clac_ctte/suicide/index.htm

Draft Clinical Practice Guidelines on Depression in Adolescents and Young Adults, *Beyondblue*

Depression and anxiety, together with substance use disorders, are the most common mental illnesses amongst young people. *Beyondblue* estimates that up to 75% of children and adolescents suffering from depression and other mood disorders are not detected, while those who are detected, often receive no treatment.

These draft Clinical Practice Guidelines bring together available evidence in the diagnosis, treatment and management of depression and anxiety in young people. The guidelines will benefit general practitioners, psychiatrists, psychologists, mental health professionals, nurses and primary health care workers, as well as school counsellors, teachers, school psychologists and, importantly, young people, their families, carers and friends.

The closing date for submissions in relation to the draft guidelines is **12 May, 2010**.

http://www.beyondblue.org.au/index.aspx?link_id=6.1247

Draft Australian Curriculum, Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority

The draft Australian Curriculum for students from Kindergarten to Year 10 in the subjects of English, maths, science and history was released on 1 March 2010.

Developed by the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority in consultation with education authorities and curriculum experts, the draft curriculum has been shaped by teachers, principals and others with expertise in particular subject areas.

Submissions in relation to the Draft Curriculum are due **23 May 2010**.

www.australiancurriculum.edu.au.

Inquiry into school libraries and teacher librarians in Australian schools, House of Representatives Standing Committee on Education and Training, 10 March 2010

The Minister for Education, Hon Julia Gillard MP, has asked the Standing Committee on Education and Training to inquire into and report on the role, adequacy and resourcing of school libraries and teacher librarians in Australia's public and private schools. The inquiry will examine:

- impacts of recent policies and investments regarding school libraries and their activities
- the potential of school libraries and librarians to contribute to improved educational and community outcomes, especially literacy
- factors influencing the recruitment and development of school librarians
- roles of different levels of government and local communities and other institutions in partnering with and supporting school librarians, and
- impacts and the potential for digital technologies to enhance and support the roles of school libraries and librarians.

Submissions are due **Friday 16 April 2010**.

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/edt/schoollibraries/index.htm>

A Flying Start for Queensland Children Discussion Paper, Queensland Government Public Consultation

The Queensland Government has launched a discussion paper about the future of education as part of its plan to provide all Queensland children with a flying start in life. The discussion paper seeks the views of Queenslanders about how we can best give children, whether they attend a state, Catholic or independent school, a flying start to prepare them for the transition to primary school and then into secondary school.

Submissions are due **30 June 2010**.

<http://deta.qld.gov.au/aflyingstart/community.html>

Ninth Annual National Survey of Young Australians, Mission Australia

Mission Australia has launched its ninth annual National Survey of Young Australians. The survey asks young people aged 11 to 24 what is important to them, what their issues of concern are, where they go for advice and support, what activities they are involved in and how optimistic they feel about their future.

The survey provides an opportunity for young people to have a say about the issues that affect them. Results from previous years have been an effective advocacy tool for improving services and programs for young people and a key resource for policy makers.

www.missionaustralia.com.au/youthsurvey until **Friday 2 July 2010**.

Child Protection

Child Guardian Report: Child Protection System 2008-09, Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian, 25 March 2010

This report presents findings from the Child Guardian's various monitoring activities for the period from July 2008 to June 2009, drawing its evidence from:

- 55,000 visits to children and young people
- 3,600 complaints about child-related matters
- surveying 2,896 children and young people
- 5 investigations about service delivery to children and young people
- 7 major evidence-based reports about the safety and wellbeing of children
- 74 child death case reviews, and
- performance data from Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) and other government service providers.

The Child Guardian has a legislative responsibility to independently oversee the effectiveness of the Queensland child protection system. Data are collated and reported against an agreed system performance assessment framework comprising ten key outcome indicators (effective assessment; appropriate interventions; safe out-of-home care; stable out-of-home care; best health possible; best education possible; special needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are met; individual needs met; successful reunifications, and successful transitions to independence).

A large amount of valuable data is presented in the report and helps to build a picture of how effectively the system is meeting its objectives. Overall, the findings are mixed, indicating areas of relative strength in the system (e.g. safe out-of-home care) and areas of weakness (e.g. case-planning, CSO support to children and young people in out-of-home care, successful transitions from care).

Room for improvement is identified across most wellbeing indicators; however there is evidence of incremental improvement in a various areas.

The report highlights the value of data from Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) in relation to the agreed upon system performance assessment framework. Each section of the report identifies 'future data priorities' needed to complete the Child Guardian's evidence base for assessing the system's effectiveness, building a sense of anticipation that this data will be available for future reports.

<http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/resources/publications/childGuardian2008-09.html>

Kinship Care in NSW - Finding a way forward: Report on a research project: an examination of issues around the support and supervision of Kinship Carers with a particular focus on NSW, Yardley, A., Mason, J. & Watson, E. University of Western Sydney, November 2009

This paper identifies the issues affecting the wellbeing of kinship carers and children with a particular focus on NSW. The study includes data gathered from 165 primary carers (kinship and foster) and their families who are caring for over 350 children.

Key findings from the report include:

- kinship care differs from foster care at a functional and emotional level
- it is not possible to distinguish between formal and informal kinship carers in terms of characteristics and experiences
- kinship carers need supports and services
- kinship carers want a partnership approach with professionals based on respect
- the current system connecting support and supervision is not working to further the wellbeing of carers or children, and
- kinship carers value the support, information, social interaction and other initiatives provided by local community organisations and groups.

Some of the report's recommendations are:

- Kinship Care should be regarded as separate from Foster Care and resourced and supported by a distinct framework of equal status to foster care
- partnership approaches should be established that centralise families and include the voices of children
- supervision and assessment should be redefined as working *with* family members and children towards safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of children
- support services should be separated from risk-based regulatory supervision, and
- funded support for community based kinship care support agencies and groups, grandparent support groups and agencies should be provided; with ongoing support for interaction, information sharing and engagement between these agencies and groups.

http://www.uws.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/114924/Kinship_Report_080110.pdf

Child Protective Services' Involvement in Families with Social Fathers, Fragile Families Research Brief (USA), February 2010

This brief examines associations between children's exposure to a social father (non-biological father) and Child Protective Services (CPS) involvement. The results are consistent with previous research showing that families with two biological parents have the lowest rates of CPS contact, followed by families where the mother lives alone and families with a social father.

The authors suggest that something about the absence of a biological father contributes to increased child maltreatment risk. Whether this comes from a social father's behaviour toward a child, the absence of a genetic father's protective bond with his child, complications resulting from the presence of step- or half-siblings in social father families, or simply greater CPS monitoring of social father families cannot be determined.

The authors conclude that CPS agencies have some justification in viewing the presence of a social father as elevating children's risk of abuse and neglect. The report recommends that agencies expand programs that strengthen relationships between social fathers and children with whom they live, rather than focusing exclusively on mothers. CPS programs can help mothers improve how social fathers interact with their children to reduce risk.

<http://www.fragilefamilies.princeton.edu/briefs/ResearchBrief46.pdf>

Neglect matters: A multi-agency guide for professionals working together on behalf of teenagers, Hicks, L. & Stein, M. National Youth Agency, Department for Children, Schools and Families (UK), 10 March 2010.

This guide aims to provide information and signposts to good practice for those working in the area of adolescent neglect. Its central concern is to contribute towards a better understanding of what adolescent neglect is and to offer suggestions for ways of improving multi-agency practice in this area. It provides information on:

1. the causes and consequences of neglect
2. ways for agencies to work together
3. primary, secondary and tertiary intervention strategies, and
4. what practitioners need to know and do.

<http://www.nya.org.uk/news/guidance-issued-on-supporting-young-people-at-risk-of-neglect>

Moving through the system – information, advice and guidance, Ofsted 25 March 2010 (UK)

This report focuses on the importance of providing high quality information, advice and guidance to enable young people, as well as their parents and carers, to make thoughtful and well-informed choices about their next steps in education, training or employment, particularly at age 16 and beyond. It includes a section with a specific focus on children in care.

Data for the report were obtained from inspections of services, including schools and children's homes, across 10 local authorities in the UK.

Findings related to children in care showed that:

- local authorities that had a virtual head-teacher or an officer with specific responsibility for children in care generally provided more effective support than those which did not
- half of the local authorities visited knew little about the progress and destinations of care leavers after the age of 16
- in seven of the 13 children's homes visited, staff had no knowledge of the options available to 16-year-olds and did not know who might be able to offer the necessary advice and support, and
- nearly half of the personal education plans and pathway plans for children in care were incomplete, and, in one of the authorities visited not all the carers had seen the personal education plans of the children for whom they were responsible.

The report makes the following recommendations for children in care:

- improve the quality of information, advice and guidance for children in care to enable them to move successfully through the education and training system
- ensure that personal education plans and pathway plans for children in care are completed fully and that they are made available at points of transition
- effectively monitor the destinations of care leavers after the age of 16 and support them to take up sustainable and appropriate education, employment or training, and
- ensure that foster carers and staff in care homes receive sufficient training to raise the educational achievement and aspirations of children in care, and to work effectively with other services providing looked after young people with information, advice and guidance.

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Moving-through-the-system-information-advice-and-guidance>

Youth Justice

Criminal Courts, Australia, 2008–09, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 12 March 2010

This annual publication presents nationally comparable statistics relating to the criminal jurisdiction of the Higher (Supreme and intermediate), Magistrates' and Children's Courts across Australia for the period 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009. The statistics describe the characteristics of defendants, including information about the offences and sentences associated with those defendants.

A stand-alone chapter presents information about defendants finalised in Children's Courts in 2008–09. Key findings from this chapter include:

- there were a total of 42,198 defendants finalised in the Children's Courts throughout Australia, an increase of 7% from 2007–08
- males accounted for 79.6% of total defendants finalised
- 81% of cases finalised in Children's Courts were adjudicated, with 95% of those proven guilty (the remaining 5% were acquitted)
- 9.4% of defendants proven guilty were given custodial orders, with the majority (90.2%) given non-custodial orders
- the most common principal offences adjudicated in the Children's Courts were theft (20%), acts intended to cause injury (18%), traffic offences (13%), unlawful entry with intent (13%) and public order offences (10%)
- in Queensland, there were 7338 defendants finalised (5667 males and 1665 females)
- 98.9% of defendants adjudicated in Queensland were proven guilty, and
- the majority of convicted defendants in Queensland were sentenced to non-custodial orders (94.5%), with 5.5% given custodial orders.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4513.0Main+Features12008-09?OpenDocument>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People

Police diversion of young offenders and Indigenous over-representation, Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice no. 390, Allard, T., Stewart, A., Chrzanowski, A., Ogilvie, J., Birks, D. & Little, S. Australian Institute of Criminology, 23 March 2010

This report presents the findings of a project examining offenders born in 1990 and their contacts with formal police cautioning, police-referred conferencing and finalised juvenile court appearances in the Queensland juvenile justice system. The project looked at the extent of Indigenous over-representation, evidence of disparity in how young people were processed and the impact of diversion on re-contact with the system

There were 8,236 young people born in 1990 who had had contact with the Queensland juvenile justice system between 2000 and 2007 when aged 10 to 16 years. This represents 14% of all Queensland 17 year olds having at least one contact with the juvenile justice system. When gender and Indigenous status were examined it was found that two in three of all Indigenous males and one in four Indigenous females had had an offending contact by the age of 17 years, compared to one in 10 non-Indigenous males and one in 20 females.

While Indigenous young people in the general population were found to be 4.5 times more likely to have contact with the criminal justice system than non-Indigenous young people, they were three times less likely to be cautioned than they were to appear in court, two times less likely to have a police conference than appear in court, and 1.5 times less likely to be cautioned than attend a conference for their first contact with the system.

However, while young people who were diverted for their first offence were less likely than those who appeared in court to have further contact, this reduction only held for female non-Indigenous young people.

The authors conclude that preventing initial contact for Indigenous young people is more important for 'closing the gap' than addressing the issue of disparity in the use of diversionary processes and that to reduce youth offending, programs need to be designed and implemented that address the complex needs of persistent young offenders.

The high rates of Indigenous contact highlight the need for early intervention programs to prevent Indigenous people having initial contact with the system. However, while there are no published studies evaluating the effectiveness of early intervention programs at reducing offending by Indigenous young people, when targeted in the general population, such programs have proven to be a cost-effective method of preventing offending. The authors suggest that there is a need to develop, implement and evaluate early intervention programs to reduce Indigenous over-representation in the criminal justice system.

<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/tandi/381-400/tandi390.aspx>

Framework for Measuring Wellbeing: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples 2010, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 5 March 2010

This publication describes a framework developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), in conjunction with stakeholders, to measure the wellbeing of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The framework attempts to provide a holistic approach to the mapping of statistics about the wellbeing of Indigenous Australians. It will be

used to guide the development of ABS Indigenous statistics by providing an organisational structure to aid the identification of data gaps and areas for statistical improvements. It will also provide a useful structure for ABS reporting and analysis of Indigenous wellbeing.

To provide structure to make understanding and utilisation of the framework easier, the various elements that may be included and/or measured in the framework have been grouped into nine domains for Indigenous wellbeing. These are:

1. culture, heritage and leisure
2. family, kinship and community
3. health
4. education, learning and skills
5. customary, voluntary and paid work
6. income and economic resources
7. housing, infrastructure and services
8. law and justice, and
9. citizenship and governance.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4703.0>

Alternative and Improved Responses to Family and Domestic Violence in Queensland Indigenous Communities, Cunneen, C. University of New South Wales Faculty of Law

This report addresses the issue of whether the legal system is responding adequately to domestic and family violence against Indigenous people. Specifically, it assesses the effectiveness of domestic violence protection orders for Indigenous clients and proposes recommendations for change.

The research was commissioned by the Queensland Department of Communities Violence Prevention Unit.

Some key findings from the report show that in Queensland:

- Indigenous women comprised 17.6% of all recorded female victims of offences against the person and comprised 68.8% of all recorded Indigenous victims of offences against the person in 2006-07
- Indigenous people are 5.7 times more likely than non-Indigenous people to be the aggrieved in a domestic and family violence order
- Indigenous domestic violence orders are more likely to involve family members than non-Indigenous orders, and are slightly less likely to involve spousal or intimate personal relationships
- while Indigenous people have higher rates of domestic violence order use than non-Indigenous people, they are much less likely to be the person applying for the order. This raises questions about engagement with and confidence in the legal process, as well as the availability of services to assist with private applications, and
- Indigenous offenders who breach a domestic violence order are more likely to be processed by police by way of arrest than non-Indigenous offenders.

The report contains fifteen recommendations, including that:

- an audit be conducted of significant Indigenous communities (including rural townships) to determine the availability of basic emergency and support services for women leaving a domestic and family violence relationship. Resources need to be allocated to those communities on a priority basis where there are no or limited services available
- the Department of Communities play a lead role in developing whole-of-government strategies for community education for Indigenous communities on domestic and family violence, and that these strategies include key Indigenous non-government agencies
- current training on domestic and family violence for general duties police and child safety officers should be reviewed to ensure that it adequately covers issues relating to the nature of domestic and family violence in Indigenous communities, and current law and policy
- mandatory reporting by health workers should not be introduced without further investigation of its specific impacts on Indigenous women in other jurisdictions,
- the Queensland Police Service thoroughly review the impact that their mandatory reporting policy to Child Safety is having on reporting domestic and family violence. The Department of Communities' (Child Safety Services) should also establish a community education function focusing on their policies, practices and responsibilities, and that Indigenous communities be a priority for community education.

<http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/view/legislativeAssembly/tableOffice/documents/TabledPapers/2010/5310T1801.pdf>

On Target to Halve the Gap in Indigenous Child Mortality, Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 10 March 2010

This report identifies the key drivers for Indigenous child mortality rates where there has been little or no improvement that need particular policy attention and intervention.

The National Indigenous Health Equality Council's (NIHEC) notes the progress being made in Indigenous child mortality rates and is encouraged by positive trends in key areas, such as antenatal care. However, NIHEC is concerned about several key drivers where little or no improvement has been made, such as the low birth weight babies born to Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander mothers. NIHEC recommends policy attention and intervention to focus on identified key drivers to bridge the gap in Indigenous child health.

The key drivers include infant mortality, child mortality, low birth weight, and socio-economic determinates including education, employment, income and housing.

[http://www.nihec.gov.au/internet/nihec/publishing.nsf/Content/708998BA2BBDDACBCA2576D40022B38C/\\$File/child_mortality_target.pdf](http://www.nihec.gov.au/internet/nihec/publishing.nsf/Content/708998BA2BBDDACBCA2576D40022B38C/$File/child_mortality_target.pdf)

The Early Years

An exploration of the timing and nature of parental time with 4-5 year olds using Australian children's time use data, Baxter, J. Research Paper No. 45, Australian Institute of Family Studies, March 2010

This paper examines the nature of parent-child time, differences in what children are doing with their fathers compared to with their mothers, and incorporates child and family characteristics in order to explain differences in mother-child and father-child time. Data were obtained from the first wave of the *Growing Up in Australia: Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)* study conducted in 2004.

Some of the results include:

- children were at all times more likely to be with their mother than their father, and children were more likely to be with their parents on the weekend than on weekdays
- on a weekday, children in couple families spent, on average, 406 minutes with their mother (56% of awake time) and 182 minutes with their father (25% of awake time)
- on weekends, the average time with mother was greater (500 minutes, 70% of time awake), as was the average time with father (402 minutes, 57% of time awake). The time children spent with their father very often overlapped with the time they spent with their mother
- a significant factor in explaining the total amount of parent-child time on weekdays is that time spent with children is constrained by hours of parental employment., and
- parents with a higher education were generally associated with less shared time watching television and more shared time doing achievement-oriented activities.

<http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/rp45/rp45a.html>

Children in need in childcare – A survey of good practice, Ofsted (UK) 8 March 2010

This survey aims to identify the factors contributing to high-quality provision and good outcomes for children in need in childcare settings. The survey was conducted between October 2008 and April 2009 and covered 25 child care settings in the UK.

Key findings from the survey show that:

- agencies who identify children's needs at an early stage and understand the changing needs of older children are able to provide children with prompt and appropriate support
- the sharing of information between parents and agencies ensured that responses to children's needs were coherent and coordinated, and that there was a continuity of service for children transitioning from child care to school. Responses were enhanced when childcare providers took on a coordinating role
- agencies who regularly reviewed and assessed children's needs, engaged in flexible planning and the appropriate management of resources and staff were better equipped to meet an individual child's needs
- agencies who conducted rigorous and regular self-evaluation were able to provide more effective supports for children in need, and
- a systematic focus on continuing professional development, the dissemination of effective practice and the careful deployment of staff with relevant knowledge and skills, ensured that the supports children received were closely matched to their specific needs.

The report recommends that to improve support provision for children in need, all childcare providers should:

- regularly conduct self-evaluations to review how well they are supporting children in need
- consider how to make better use of information and communication technology to enhance children's learning and development and to communicate with parents and carers
- involve children, young people and their families in planning and evaluating the services and programs required to best meet the child's needs
- regularly review resources to ensure children's needs are being met, and
- liaise with other providers, professionals and representatives of organisations working to improve outcomes for children to share good practice.

In addition, to improve support provided to children in need, child focused government agencies should:

- establish and promote opportunities for childcare practitioners and providers to share good practice measures and learn from:
 - experts in other settings and organisations supporting particular needs, through network meetings, electronic

- notice boards and exchange visits, and
- practitioners and health professionals within children's services, through co-located services, regular meetings, joint working and training

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Documents-by-type/Thematic-reports/Children-in-need-in-childcare>

Education

Schools Australia, 2009, Australian Bureau of Statistics, 16 March 2010

This report contains state, territory and national statistics on school, students and teaching staff involved in the provision or administration of primary and secondary education, in government and non-government schools for all Australian states and territories. Key data contained in the report show that:

- since 1999, the number of students in non-government schools rose by 208 500 students, which is an eightfold increase compared to the number of students in government schools, which rose by only 26,200 students. Despite this, the majority of students in Australia still attend government schools with around two thirds of full-time students attending government schools in 2009
- in 2009, Indigenous students represented 6.4% of all full-time students in Queensland, compared to 4.5% of all Australian full-time students
- the apparent retention rate for Indigenous students from year 7 through to year 12 has increased from 35% in 1999 to 45% in 2009. By comparison, the same apparent retention rate for non-Indigenous students increased from 73% to 77% in this time period
- in 2009, of all full-time equivalent (FTE) teaching staff, 69% were female and 31% were male. A higher proportion of FTE teaching staff in primary schools were female (80%) compared with teaching staff in secondary schools (58% female).
- in 2009, there were on average 15.8 students for every teaching staff in primary schools and 12.0 students for every teaching staff in secondary schools. The students to teaching staff ratio was similar in government and non-government schools, and
- the number of schools in Australia has decreased over the past 10 years from 9,587 schools in 1999, to 9,529 schools in 2009. This represented a decrease of 165 government schools, and an increase of 4 Catholic schools, and 103 independent schools.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4221.0?OpenDocument>

Law and Justice

Recent innovations in Australian protection order law – A comparative discussion, Wilcox, K, Australian Domestic and Family Violence Clearinghouse, 2010

This paper provides an overview of the current state of domestic violence legislation in Australia, focusing particularly on the law relating to protection orders.

Comprehensive law reforms across most states and territories have created new legal regimes for protection orders, primarily focussed on increased victim safety and the needs of children living with violence. Recent reforms have included:

- expanded definitions of violence
- availability of orders to a wider range of relationships (including care relationships)
- enhanced emergency protections, particularly in relation to policing responses
- greater focus on children's trauma responses and their need for safety, and
- specific provisions for conditions, such as exclusion and tenancy orders in some jurisdictions.

While provisions which provide a framework for 'good practice' can be cherry-picked from the recent law reform agenda, the author argues that lasting and substantial improvements to the legal framework for protection in Australia will also require that:

1. post-separation abuse, and trauma to children, arising from child contact arrangements are addressed through family law reform
2. practice, implementation and systemic issues are monitored and remedied, where necessary, and
3. funding for legal and victim advocacy is enhanced to facilitate access to justice.

http://www.adfvc.unsw.edu.au/PDF%20files/Topic_Paper_19.pdf

Australian crime: Facts and figures 2009, Australian Institute of Criminology, 18 March 2010

This report summarises trends in crime and criminal justice in Australia. It includes information on different categories of crime, location, victim and offender details and the response of the criminal justice system. It also includes for the first time national data on offender characteristics.

Key data relevant to young people show that:

- the majority of offenders were male and the offending rate for persons aged 15 to 19 years was almost four times the rate of all other offenders in 2007–08
- in 2008 the rate for male juveniles in detention reached 66 per 100,000, a 43% rise since 2004
- the incarceration rate of males was 10 times that of females
- the incarceration rate of Indigenous juveniles was 26 times that of non-Indigenous juveniles
- from 1981 to 2008, the overall detention rate for male juveniles fell by 37%, from 105 to 66 per 100,000
- the rate for female juveniles also fell, from 23 to six per 100,000. The proportion of females in the total juvenile detention centre population was 9% on 30 June 2008, down from 17% in 1981
- the number of Indigenous persons in all juvenile detention centres on 30 June 2008 was 459. This represents 56% of the total number of persons detained in juvenile detention centres, a decline from 58% in the previous year, and
- there has been a 64% increase in the rate per 100,000 of Indigenous juvenile detention since a low of 272 recorded in December 2000.

<http://www.aic.gov.au/en/media/2010/march/20100318.aspx>

Girls' Delinquency, Slowikowski, J. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (USA), February 2010

This fact sheet examines rising trends in girls' delinquency in the USA in the 1990s, with females representing 30% of juvenile arrests for violent offences in 2004, up from only 11% in 1980. The Fact Sheet assesses trends of girls' delinquency and whether girls were becoming more violent or if other factors contributed to their higher arrest rates.

To provide comprehensive information on female delinquency, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) created its Girls Study Group in 2004. Several other OJJDP-sponsored programs have also undertaken efforts to enhance the juvenile justice system's response to girls' delinquency.

Findings from the study indicate that girls are not more violent than before and confirms that girls engage in far less crime and delinquency than boys for nearly every offence. It was also found that mandatory arrest policies and other changes in the juvenile justice system impacted on higher arrest rates for girls.

Delinquency risk factors for both girls and boys include family dynamics, schools involvement, neighbourhood involvement and the availability of community based programs. However, factors that directly increase girl's risk of delinquency include onset of puberty, sexual abuse or maltreatment and depression and anxiety. Protective factors that prevent girls becoming juvenile offenders, even with the risk factors, include involvement of a caring adult, school connectedness, school success and religiosity.

<http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/228414.pdf>

Children's rights

Human Rights Council to develop UN communications procedure for violations of children's rights, Child Rights Information Network, 24 March 2010

The United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva has agreed to start drafting a new international human rights instrument enabling the Committee on the Rights of the Child to receive and examine communications from children and their representatives alleging violation of their rights.

A complaints or "communications" procedure allows individuals, groups or their representatives, claiming that their rights have been violated by a State that is a party to a Convention, to bring a communication before the relevant United Nations Committee, provided that the State has accepted the procedure.

The communications procedure will be established by a new Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The first session of the Working Group is expected to take place in December 2010 and the new instrument could be adopted by the end of 2011.

<http://www.crin.org/resources/infodetail.asp?id=22274#>

Understanding Consent in Research Involving Children: The ethical Issues, A Handbook for Human Research Ethics Committees and Researchers, Merle Spriggs Children's Bioethics Centre, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, 2010

This handbook has been developed as an educational resource for Human Research Ethics Committees (HRECs) and researchers. The handbook highlights some of the key issues to be considered by HRECs and researchers when assessing the ethics of consent in research involving children. The authors detail the provisions of the National Health and Medical Research Council's National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and discuss what is generally considered ethically appropriate in relation to children and what issues are contentious.

The handbook discusses issues surrounding parental consent and right to information, the concepts of 'assent' and 'dissent', the use of incentives, sharing of information with child participants and the use of opt-out consent. It also looks

specifically at the ethics surrounding children's involvement in genetic, clinical, and internet-based research.

<http://www.mcrci.edu.au/projects/ConsentInResearch/educational/handbook.asp>

Children on rights and responsibilities, Ofsted, Children's Rights Director for England (UK), 4 March 2010

This report presents the views of almost 2,000 children and young people living away from home, including those in care services, residential schools, colleges and boarding schools.

Through surveys and consultations, the children and young people expressed the view that having rights comes with responsibilities. The children consulted were in favour of having one list bringing together both rights and responsibilities in one place as opposed to separate lists in the *Human Rights Act* and the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. They had a clear view of what responsibilities children should have. These included taking responsibility for one's own actions, safety, health and hygiene, looking after oneself, making use of education, using the right to have a say by actually giving their opinions, taking responsibility for looking after other people and taking responsibility for the wider environment.

The report contains a table which lists rights in order of priority based on young people's votes. The top ten on the list are:

1. to be protected from abuse (2,283 votes)
2. to have an education (2,229 votes)
3. to be helped to keep alive and well (2,192 votes)
4. not to be discriminated against because of my race, colour, sex, disability, language or beliefs (2,164 votes)
5. not to be treated or punished in a way that is cruel or meant to make me feel bad about myself (2,102 votes)
6. special help for any child with a disability (2,059 votes)
7. to have privacy (2,050 votes)
8. not to be bullied (1,995 votes)
9. to keep in touch with my parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters if I want to and they want to, wherever we all live (1,981 votes)
10. to have my private letters, phone calls, emails and messages kept confidential (1,940 votes)

The full list contains 36 rights, and the report goes into detail about why young people said they had voted for each option. Children and young people were also asked what well-being meant to them. Responses ranged from 'being healthy' (44% of responses) to 'being supported' (11%).

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/Ofsted-home/Publications-and-research/Browse-all-by/Care/Children-s-rights/Children-on-rights-and-responsibilities>

Health and Wellbeing

Inquiry into Alcohol-Related Violence – Final Report, Law, Justice and Safety Committee, Queensland Parliament, Report No. 74, March 2010

This report identifies that alcohol-related violence is a broad and complex issue, but focuses on the violence that occurs around licensed premises. At a state level, the report suggests more can be done to provide adequate transport and better enforcement of liquor laws, as well as more support provided to the community and the industry. Local governments could address the need for more public amenities, including public toilets and street lighting, along with a stronger commitment to identify and manage entertainment precincts. There is also a role for the liquor industry to take more responsibility for the management of entertainment precincts and for individual patrons to take more personal responsibility for their behaviour.

The report makes 68 wide ranging recommendations on ways to reduce alcohol-related violence in Queensland, relating to reduced trading hours, improved public transport, better enforcement of current liquor laws and improvements in the responsible service of alcohol. A number of the recommendations relate specifically to young people, including:

- the Department of Communities (Child Safety Services) have a liaison officer available to assist, especially between 11pm – 4am on Saturdays and Fridays, in precinct areas and also organise a 24 hour services to provide care to any child or young person who comes to the attention of the police
- education campaigns for young people in schools and alcohol related social media campaigns, and
- parents or guardians of a minor up to age 16 fined for an alcohol-related offence should also be liable for the fine and that a young person aged 16 or over who has not paid any alcohol-related fine remain liable for it after turning 18, with consequences, such as an inability to obtain a drivers licence while it remains unpaid.

<http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/view/committees/documents/lcsrc/reports/Report%2074.pdf>

What works with adolescents? Family connections and involvement in interventions for adolescent problem behaviours - Australian Family Relationships Clearinghouse Briefing No. 16, Robinson, E. Power, L. & Allan, D. 30 March 2010

This paper examines the literature regarding adolescent-parent relationships, and explores the evidence for family involvement in interventions, such as family therapy, to address adolescent problems

The authors suggest that family-based interventions are effective and may be offered for a range of adolescent risk behaviours. The authors recommend that the availability of such programs be increased.

The authors outline well-established programs that successfully work with parents and adolescents, particularly as early intervention programs in homelessness. The authors conclude that further rigorous evaluations of these and similar programs, including the implementation and evaluation of international evidence-based models, will help to build strong evidence base for family-based interventions in adolescent problem behaviours within the Australian context.

www.aifs.gov.au/afrc/pubs/briefing/briefing16.html

What works for older youth during the transition to adulthood: Lessons from Experimental Evaluations of Programs and Interventions, Child Trends, Hadley, A.M., Mbwana, K., & Hair, E.C., March 2010 (USA)

This fact sheet examines the role that programs designed to serve older youth can play in promoting positive development and subsequent self-sufficiency in adulthood. The authors review the findings from 31 studies to examine the impacts of various intervention strategies on well-being outcomes during the transition to adulthood. While all programs evaluated outcomes for these emerging adults, programs varied in the ages of targeted youth: 10 programs targeted youth from as early as 12 years and into their early twenties; eight programs served youth from 16 years and into their early twenties; and 11 programs began at 18 years of age.

The review indicates that education and career programs can be effective, especially for low income youth and for youth targeted from younger ages, for example, those under age 18. Furthermore, specific intervention strategies, such as mentoring, case management, and providing child care for young parents, are associated with program success across outcomes. However, existing substance use and reproductive health programs have not consistently been found to be effective across outcomes for this age group.

http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2010_03_09_FS_WWOlderYouth.pdf

Health and wellbeing of young Australians: Indicator framework and key national indicators. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 30 March 2010

This bulletin provides a preview of the reporting framework and the key national indicators that are the basis of the forthcoming report, *Young Australians: their health and wellbeing 2011*, which is scheduled for release in May 2011. The 71 key national indicators presented in this report have been developed in consultation with the National Youth Information Advisory Group, and based on the National Youth Information Framework. This framework consists of three tiers: health status, determinants of health and health system performance.

The 71 key national indicators of young people's health and wellbeing include:

Health status

- Wellbeing
- Human function
- Deaths
- Health conditions
 - Injury and poisoning
 - Chronic conditions
 - Communicable diseases
 - Oral health

Determinants of health

- Health behaviours
 - Overweight and obesity
 - Physical activity
 - Nutrition
 - Sun protection
 - Substance use
 - Other substance use
 - Sexual and reproductive health
- Community and socioeconomic factors
 - Family cohesion/ family functioning
 - Parent health and disability
 - Social capital
 - Community and civic participation
 - School relationships and bullying
 - Child protection
 - Victims of violence
 - Homelessness
 - Young people and crime
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Income
 - Socioeconomic status of parents

Health system performance

- Potentially voidable hospitalisations
- Teenage purchase of cigarettes and alcohol
- Survival for melanoma of the skin
- Cervical cancer
- Appropriate use of antibiotics
- Delivery by caesarean section
- General practice consultations
- Waiting times in emergency
- Adverse events treated in hospital

- Environmental factors
 - Environmental tobacco smoke
 - Housing environment

Several additional indicators have been suggested which may eventually feature in the report to be released in 2011.

<http://www.aihw.gov.au/publications/index.cfm/title/11294>

Are Young People Learning or Earning? Australian Social Trends, Australian Bureau of Statistics, March 2010

This report outlines the key findings in the ABS 2009 Survey of Education and Work on the levels of participation in education and work among 15-24 year old young people in Australia. The report shows that:

- in 2009, 81% of young people aged 15-24 years were fully engaged in either education or work
- in 2009, all but 3% of 15 year olds and 6% of 16 year olds were fully engaged in either education or work
- Indigenous young people were more than twice as likely as other young people to not be fully engaged
- similarly, young people living in areas of socioeconomic disadvantage were around 50% more likely to be not fully engaged
- young people who left school without completing year 12 and who had not done any further study had a non-fully engaged rate around three times higher than that of young people overall, and
- Queensland had the highest rate of non-fully engaged young people in 2009 of just under 22%.

<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features40Mar+2010>

Beyond Risk Factors: Towards a Holistic Prevention Paradigm for Children and Young People, France, A., Freiberg, K. & Homel, R. British Journal of Social Work (2010) 1–19, February 2010

The paper explores the growing body of evidence for risk factor analysis (RFA), outlining both its strengths and weaknesses and shows how a more holistic approach can be adopted.

The authors argue that the prevention paradigm in children and youth services has been underpinned by the emergence of the science of RFA, which has had mixed success in prevention work but has gained significant political support as a method of identifying and intervening in the lives of those most at risk of poor future outcomes.

Within the RFA model, causal pathways are seen as complex, and prediction at the individual level problematic, yet at a group level, the evidence seems strong that those children and young people with multiple risk factors are more likely to have future social problems.

While RFA starts from a set of assumptions about the notion of childhood as a developmental stage that leads to later outcomes through the unfolding of a predetermined program, social theory and sociology approaches to understanding childhood have emerged that suggest that childhood cannot be separated from its social context and that the life course is influenced by cultural, economic and political factors as well as psychological factors.

The report outlines the Australian Pathways Programme, which concentrates on building strengths in individuals and families while also actively engaging parents and children into the process. Resilience is also important in that it is seen as a central feature of how to address risk.

The authors conclude that the fundamental focus for analysis and intervention needs to recognise the social and cultural context of developmental pathways, and emphasises needs to be on relations between levels of organisation in a child's or young person's developmental process.

http://www.griffith.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/197978/beyonrisk.pdf

Society and Culture

The Effects of Macroeconomic Conditions on the Education and Employment Outcomes of Youth, Melbourne Institute Working Paper Series Working Paper No. 2/10, Héault, N., Kostenko, W., Marks, G., & Zakirova, R. March 2010.

This paper examines the impact of macroeconomic conditions on the education and employment outcomes of young people in school-to-work transition. The main finding is that the effects of macroeconomic conditions on education and employment outcomes differ by gender and by levels of education.

Other results from the study indicate that:

- higher numeracy and literacy scores increase the probability to be studying
- higher literacy scores significantly improve the labour market outcomes of young women
- young people who attended non-government secondary schools are more likely to be studying and less likely to be working full-time or unemployed
- young males and females with one or both parents with post-secondary education are more likely than other young people to pursue further education
- having both parents employed decreases the probability of being unemployed
- young people from non-English speaking countries are substantially more likely to be studying and less likely to be

- working full-time than their Australian born counterparts
- young males who have three or more siblings are more likely to be working full-time and less likely to be studying (and not working) than young males with no siblings
- young people with an education level of Year 12 are the most likely to pursue further study, and
- young people with the lowest education level are less likely to be studying and face the highest unemployment risks.

<http://www.melbourneinstitute.com/wp/wp2010n02.pdf>

Turning 18: pathways and plans, Taylor, J. & Gee, N. Brotherhood of St Laurence, March 2010

This report documents the latest stage of the Life Chances study, which has followed the lives of 138 young people since infancy, and outlines their experiences as they enter a key transitioning period from school to further education, training, employment and in some cases unemployment. In 2008 participants in the study turned 18.

The study found that the young people's pathways differed according to family income, for example, 26% of the young people from low-income families had left school early while none from high-income families left early. In addition, higher tertiary entrance scores were positively associated with the following factors at age 16 - family factors (high family income, parents with tertiary qualifications, positive family relationships), school factors (self-rated academic achievement, getting on well with teachers, school engagement), and wellbeing.

The authors conclude that the findings highlight the challenges for policy makers and educators wanting to increase Year 12 completion and social inclusion in education. These include the need to 'invest' in education and training resources to:

- ensure affordable schooling and further training that does not exclude those on low incomes
- provide appropriate learning opportunities for young people with low academic achievement and learning difficulties, and
- provide adequate income support for young people from low-income families to allow full participation in education and training.

http://www.bsl.org.au/pdfs/TaylorGee_Turning_18_pathways_and_plans_2010.pdf

A Scan of Disadvantage in Queensland 2010, Caniglia, F., Bourke, P. & Whiley, A.P. Uniting Care's Centre for Social Justice, March 2010

This report updates the Uniting Care's 2006 Scan of Disadvantage Report and aims to create momentum for a proactive, coordinated and targeted approach to reducing entrenched disadvantage in Queensland. It shows the continuing locational nature of disadvantage and recommends place-based partnerships across community, government and business as critical response.

Some of the key findings of the report are:

- the most disadvantaged areas in Queensland are dominated by communities comprising of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote or very remote locations
- the Wide Bay/Burnett area has high levels of overall disadvantage, and
- while the overall disadvantage residents in the Brisbane area is lower there remains pockets where significant numbers of residents are living in poverty for example Beenleigh, Eagleby and Inala.

Some of the recommendations made require:

- the government to implement specific, targeted responses to Indigenous disadvantage in all urban, regional and remote areas that show high levels of disadvantage
- the government to work with community organisations to adopt integrated strategies to reduce social exclusion including issues of poverty, education, family support, social cohesion and housing affordability
- the development of an evaluation framework to assist with monitoring performance and enhancing implementation of any new or expanded programs, and
- the implementation of flexible funding and service delivery arrangements including multi-purpose service hubs and place-based budgets for particular locations characterised by high levels of spatial disadvantage.

http://www.ucareqld.com.au/SocialJustice/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=133&Itemid=20

Participation and Engagement

Participation: How to support children and young people's campaigning, Participation Works (UK)

Participation Works (UK) has published *How to support children and young people's campaigning* which helps practitioners support children and young people to design, deliver and evaluate campaigns that bring about change.

The guide suggests a four stage process for successful campaigning and provides case studies of successful campaigns by children and young people and outlines some of the benefits of campaigning. This is one of a series of free 'How to...' guides available to anyone with an interest in youth participation.

www.participationworks.org.uk.

Media and Communications

The digital world of young children: emergent literacy, Blanchard, J. & Moore, T. Pearson Foundation (USA), March 2010

This research article explores the effects of digital media on young children's learning. It aims to improve understanding of the ways in which young people's learning and expression are shaped by mobile and digital technologies.

The research explores the ways in which young children make use of increasingly personalized and mobile media - including mobile phones, television, video games, smart devices and computers. The report focuses on the impact of these new ways of learning and highlights the degree to which these emergent literacies are rooted in young people's use of common-place mobile devices - especially in developing and least-developed nations.

The findings suggest that developmental milestones are changing as a new generation of young children approach learning and literacy in ways not thought possible in the past. According to the authors, digital media is already transforming the language and cultural practices that enable early literacy development, making possible a new kind of personal and global interconnectedness.

The research reveals that:

- opportunities to engage with digital media increasingly prevail through the use of mobile devices – and in developing countries access to mobile devices is more commonplace than access to other technologies
- developmental milestones are changing as young people's access to mobile and digital technology grows, and
- digital media positively impacts children's opinion of learning, providing engagement opportunities not always seen with print materials.

This study also confirms the need to continue delivering educational programs to teachers and children who otherwise would not have access to these kinds of educational opportunities

<http://www.pearsonfoundation.org/emergentliteracy/>

For Safety's Sake, Pure Profile Research on behalf of Microsoft Australia, 17 March 2010

This report presents the findings of a survey of 1,000 Australian parents with children aged 18 and under living at home about their children's internet use and what precautions they took to protect their children while online.

Key findings from the survey show that:

- online safety is a key concern for parents but most fail to do anything about it
- 65% of parents did not take any precautions when their children were online
- 60% admitted allowing their children access to the internet without any restriction or supervision
- one in five parents had caught their children looking at inappropriate and unpleasant material
- almost a third of parents had found their children chatting to strangers
- only 60% of parents knew that parental controls were located on their computers but only 30% of parents used parental locks to control their children's online activities
- 20% of parents had not discussed internet safety with their children, and
- 12% of parents had caught their children giving out personal information on the internet.

http://www.cnet.com.au/story_media/339301950/Microsoftforsafetyssake.PDF

UK children's media literacy, Ofcom, 26 March 2010

This report provides an overview of media literacy among UK children and young people aged 5-15 and their parents/carers. Key findings from the report show that:

- 22% of 8-11 year olds and 70% of 12-15 year olds with the internet at home have set up a social networking site profile on social networking sites such as Facebook.
- Children aged 12-15 with a social networking profile are more likely to restrict access to their profiles so that they can be seen only by their friends.
- Although the minimum age for registering with social networking sites is thirteen, 19% of children aged 8-12 who use the internet at home say they have a profile on Facebook.
- At an overall level, 25% of home internet users aged 8-12 have a profile on at least one social networking site, of which 11% have set their profile to be visible by anyone.
- 16% of children state that "*it's easier to keep things private or secret on the internet than it is in real life*", with 14% aged 8-15 years saying they "*feel more confident online than they do in real life*". A further 14% state that "*it's easier to talk about personal things on the internet.*"

http://www.ofcom.org.uk/advice/media_literacy/medlitpub/medlitpubrssl/ukchildrensml/ukchildrensml.pdf

Resources

Covert and cyber bullying, Australian Institute of Criminology, February 2010

This factsheet highlights findings from the Australian Covert Bullying Prevalence Study and outlines key recommendations. The factsheet reports that:

- 65% of Year 4 students experienced covert bullying, with this number decreasing to 35% of Year 9 students, and
- up to 10% of students in Year 4 to Year 9 reported having been cyber bullied in the previous term, with older students in this age category reporting a higher rate of victimisation than younger students.

Recommendations include:

- developing a whole-school approach to understanding, preventing and dealing with bullying, including covert and cyber bullying
- ensuring the roles of parents, staff and students in preventing and dealing with covert and cyber bullying are understood and followed
- addressing the root causes of bullying and associated behavioural issues. Educate and empower students with knowledge of the causes and implications of bullying and the role of the peer group in encouraging or preventing bullying behaviours
- taking actions such as banning student use of personal technologies while at school have been found to reduce the chances students will report cyber bullying for fear of having their mobile phones or laptops confiscated, and
- ensuring spaces where technology can be accessed are highly visible to staff.

<http://www.aic.gov.au/publications/current%20series/rip/1-10/09.aspx>

Submissions prepared by the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian

Inquiry into Suicide in Australia, Senate Community Affairs Reference Committee

In November 2009 the Commission for Children and Young People and Child Guardian provided a detailed submission to the *Inquiry into Suicide in Australia* about the nature and extent of youth suicide in Queensland, as well as issues associated with historical under-reporting and risk factors identified through the Commission's child death review work.

A supplementary submission was provided to the inquiry in March 2010 following the Commission's appearance to give oral evidence on matters including the extent of historical under-reporting of youth suicide, the prevalence of contagion suicide and other risk factors, as well as comparisons between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth suicide and the non-Indigenous youth population.

<http://www.ccypcg.qld.gov.au/resources/submissions.html>

Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians joint response to the Draft Indigenous Education Action Plan 2010-2014, Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs (MCEECDYA), February 2010

The Australian Children's Commissioners and Guardians (ACCG) provided a joint submission to the MCEECDYA on the Draft Indigenous Education Action Plan 2010-2014. The education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and the continuing gap between outcomes for Indigenous and non-Indigenous students as a key area of concern.

The Action Plan identifies national, jurisdictional and local action in six priority domains:

- readiness for school
- engagement and Connections
- attendance
- literacy and Numeracy
- leadership, Quality Teaching and Workforce Development, and
- pathways to real post school options.

The joint submission identified the following seven recommendations:

1. the Action Plan is integrated with the wider COAG Closing the Gap initiative
2. there is long term investment into culturally appropriate maternal health and early childhood services
3. connections are strengthened between schools- as the hub of the community- and children's services
4. the importance of outreach services to chronically disengaged children and their families is fully reflected in the Action Plan
5. the Action Plan is a best practice, evidence based, well resourced strategy with clear monitoring and evaluation mechanisms
6. MCEECDYA consider further its role in monitoring the outcomes of the Action Plan, and
7. meaningful consultation and participation with Indigenous children and young people become a standard approach in future education plans.

Events and Conferences

"Live it Now" National Youth Week 2010, 10-18 April 2010

Youth Week is a special celebration for all young people aged 12-25 which offers opportunities for young people to:

- showcase their talents, contributions and achievements
- exchange their ideas and views
- attend live events
- raise issues of concern to them
- act on issues that affect their lives, and
- participate in new activities and learn new skills.

Youth Week also gives the wider community an opportunity to:

- hear what young people have to say
- promote and celebrate the positive contributions young people make to their communities, and
- address issues that concern young people.

Free events include creative art and media workshops and interactive youth forums on topics such as identity, place and purpose. Young Queenslanders can win prizes with the *Live it Now* online competition by making a video, recording a song, writing a story or taking a photo that expresses their ideas, opinions or creativity.

<http://www.communityservices.qld.gov.au/youth/youthweek/about.html>

The Koping Program Discussion: Communities empowering families affected by parental mental illness and substance misuse, Community Child Health Service Building, 184 St Pauls Terrace, Spring Hill, Wednesday 26 May 2010, 9am-1pm

Discussion will aim to promote increased interest for a collaborative response to families affected by parental mental illness in the Brisbane North Area and will involve government and non-government organisations, young people and their families.

RSVP's are required by 4 May 2010 either by phoning 3266 3100, or emailing koping@health.qld.gov.au or Sharon_kellett@health.qld.gov.au

Building a Child Friendly Australia: Responding to vulnerable families - The Association of Children's Welfare Agencies 2010 Conference Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, 2-4 August 2010

The Program Committee for the Association of Children's Welfare Agencies 2010 Conference is currently inviting the submission of abstracts for consideration for the program.

For information about submitting an abstract go to: <http://www.acwa2010.com/>

Media Releases and Speeches

Funding for community youth events, The Hon Jenny Macklin MP, Minister for Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 19 March 2010

As part of the Government's National Strategy for Young Australians, \$400,000 will be available to fund local community-based events like music festivals, sporting events, family BBQs, fashion parades, or car shows during 2010.

This funding is being made available through the Federal Government's 'Think Family, Think Community' which aims to build strong relationships between young people from disadvantaged areas and their families through community events.

These events will be designed to involve young people at risk of social isolation including young carers, young people in out of home care, and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Further information on Government initiatives aimed at young people go to www.youth.gov.au

http://www.jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/jennymacklin.nsf/content/funding_community_youth_events_19_mar10.htm

Supporting playgroups for children and families, The Hon Jenny Macklin MP, Minister for Families Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and The Hon Bill Shorten MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Disabilities and Children's Services, 24 March 2010

The Rudd Government is providing \$1.2 million to Playgroups Australia to deliver 96 supported playgroups over two years for families with children across the country. In addition, the Government is providing \$14.6 million to 2011 for 52 Indigenous-specific supported playgroups in remote, regional and urban communities and an additional 7 supported

playgroups for vulnerable families.

The Government is also delivering 150 PlayConnect playgroups by 2012 for children with autism spectrum disorders.

http://www.jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/jennymacklin.nsf/content/jm_shorten_m_playgroups_24march2010.htm

Queensland Youth Justice Laws overhauled, Minister for Community Services and Housing and Minister for Women
The Honourable Karen Struthers, 28 March 2010

Reforms to address youth crime came in to effect in Queensland on 29 March 2010.

The new laws balance the need for jail time for serious offenders with the need for programs to help young offenders break the cycle of crime.

The amendments support victims of crime as well and aim to meet community expectations that offenders will be held responsible for their actions as well as being given a chance to rehabilitate where appropriate.

Changes to the *Youth Justice Act 1992* include:

- giving courts the powers to impose curfews on young offenders to ensure they are properly supervised and are not given opportunities to reoffend
- widening court powers to name dangerous young offenders convicted of serious offences, and
- giving police stronger powers to arrest young offenders who do not comply with conferencing requirements.

<http://www.cabinet.qld.gov.au/MMS/StatementDisplaySingle.aspx?id=69116>

New autism services for young children in Brisbane, Joint Media Release with The Hon Jenny Macklin MP, Minister for Families Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, The Hon Kate Ellis MP, Minister for Early Childhood Education Childcare and Youth and Graham Perrett MP, Member for Morton, 29 March 2010

Young children with autism spectrum disorders can access specialist early childhood services at a new, autism-specific early learning and care centre in Brisbane. The Rudd Government is providing more than \$4 million over three years to AEIOU for Children with Autism to establish the centre at Griffith University's Nathan Campus, including \$2.3 million in capital funding to build the new centre.

The centre is one of six autism specific centres, which are part of the Rudd Government's \$190 million Helping Children with Autism Package.

http://www.jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/internet/jennymacklin.nsf/content/autism_services_brisbane_29mar10.htm