

National Conversation – Host your own forum

National Strategy for Young Australians

Youth Off The Streets

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Young people attending: 10

Topics discussed:

- 1. Equipping young Australians with the skills and personal networks they need for employment**
- 2. Strengthening early intervention with young Australians to help prevent any problems getting worse and to help young people get their lives back on track**
- 3. Establishing clear cut legal consequences for behaviours that endanger the safety of others**

OUTCOMES – Young people's feedback

- 1. Equipping young Australians with the skills and personal networks they need for employment**
 - Work experience is very important.
 - Prior to leaving school it would be very helpful to do courses on interviewing skills/preparation.
 - Help in building resumes
 - Schools need to make connections with employers willing to take on work experience students
 - Employers need to be more willing to take on young people who have not previous experience

- Not much that schools can actually do if employers are not willing to give you a go. If you have had no previous experience employers are reluctant to give you a job.
- Maybe a program for funding for all schools including independent schools to employ staff to run a program to develop relationships with employers that will take on young people for work experiences and help young people prepare resumes, interview skills, what is expected from the employee. To outline the steps in looking for work and being prepared for interviews and employment.
- Speaking to people who are already enrolled in TAFE, Uni or people who are in the industries that we want to work in in the future to be able to hear firsthand what we need to do.
- Better advertising of websites that give information about how to apply/enter particular jobs/Uni/TAFE. Clearly outlining costs involved for Uni/TAFE etc.
- Kids need to be given a fair chance when seeking work experience or employment.

2. Strengthening early intervention with young Australians to help prevent any problems getting worse and to help young people get their lives back on track

- More schools similar to ours when students are given the chance to get their education in a setting that supports and cares about them.
- More senior schools (Years 11 & 12) with the same support offered at our school
- Smaller classes so the student can get more support from the teachers especially those who are struggling and usually slip through the cracks. More one on one support.
- Teachers with more experience in working with young people and know how to deal with difficult situations
- Someone in the schools who young people can relate to and go to with problems. As mainstreams are so large the counsellors are usually too busy.
- More youth centres for young people, Homebase is a great centre it is modern, has youth workers who help out without pressuring, they listen.
- Legal advice/court support.
- Rather than focusing on the punishment there should be more focus on what the young people are going through that lead them to trouble and how they can be helped to change their lives not punished.
- Mentoring programs for young people to go to offering advice/support.

What are the main things that would likely send you off track?

- Drugs/Alcohol
- Peers

- Family/home life
- Behaviour
- Bullying
- Bad experiences
- Fighting, Pride, cannot walk away from a fight
- Self esteem
- Boredom

How can we help overcome these:

- Affordable/free rehabilitation clinics.
- Be able to self refer/drop in clinics to help, give advice
- Given the tools to education kids on how to walk away from a fight
- Education on consequences of certain behaviours (preferably from people who have been through similar situations)
- More alternative schools
- More training for mainstream schools to help kids/give support to prevent these kids from dropping out of the system
- More assistance in primary schools, early intervention targeting year 6 kids to help prevent behaviours
- More support for year 6 kids in transitioning into high school
- Teachers in mainstreams need more support
- Mainstreams need to have funding to be able to offer young people support when struggling.
- Positive reinforcement rather than punishment

3. Establishing clear cut legal consequences for behaviours that endanger the safety of others

- Instead of the young person going to court have mediation/conference between the offender and the victim as a first step
- For the more violent crimes have a more severe punishment
- Crime should equal the punishment
- If driving unlicensed and under age you should not be able to get your licence and would need to attend counselling.
- Bullying:
Expulsion from school
Currently not enough punishment for offenders
Paying attention to the real problem look at the reasons why this is going on.
Schools need more support.
Should be treated as abuse

- Authorities are more worried about the punishment rather than solving the real problems
- Speakers at schools/school talks from young people who have been affected in the past
- Anger management programs in schools or outside schools that young people can access
- Solution solving
- Juvenile Justice centres need more funding to employ workers experienced in dealing with troubled young people and help them turn their lives around so they don't reoffend.
- Programs for families on parenting/guidance
- Currently agree with the laws in place but more needs to be done to help kids change their lives in the way of funding for counselling, rehabilitation programs for youth
- Taking young people to see what can happen if they put themselves in a dangerous situation before it happens. Having people come to speak to young people who have been involved in incidences.
- Skilling authorities in dealing with young people, showing more understanding to young people. Authorities need to be taught control and not be too rough.