

Peak Body

A youth affairs peak body is an organisation that has been formed to represent the collective interests of young people and youth service providers to the government and the wider community. A youth affairs peak body engages in a number of activities, such as social policy development and analysis, sector development, representation, advocacy, program development, research, consultations, information and resource development, lobbying and information dissemination. By doing so they provide a voice for young people, service providers, and the youth sector as a whole that may not otherwise be heard.

A youth affairs peak strives to improve government outcomes, improve the quality of service delivery, increase democratic participation and improve the quality of life for young people.

Youth workers often need to represent the interests of the young people they work with. It's important workers have an understanding of advocacy and how they can engage with their peak body to seek better outcomes for young people.

In this section you will find:

- Information on various types of advocacy;
- Information on the youth affairs peak body for the ACT; and
- Resources including more peak bodies.

The following sections also contain peak body resources: Counselling and Family.

Ways of Working

Advocacy

Advocacy is a way to bring about change in a situation by safeguarding and advancing the rights, interests and wellbeing of young people. As young people are a group where policy decisions are often made without consultation, they may need to rely on others to represent their interests for them. Advocates provide a voice for young people who may otherwise not be heard, and can help young people to have more control over the situations that affect their lives and can work with and support young people's voices to be heard.

Below is some basic information on the desired outcomes of advocacy, and a few types of advocacy that you are likely to encounter when working with young people.

Some Desired Outcomes of Advocacy:

- Young people are included and accepted in all aspects of community life.
- Young people have access to services/supports that meet their needs.
- Young people benefit from positive change to structure and policies.
- Young people are supported to participate in decision-making processes that affect their lives.
- Young people are treated justly and fairly.

- □ Negative community attitudes and misconceptions are changed.

Some types of advocacy include:

Self Advocacy:

Facilitates young people to develop their skills, knowledge and confidence in order to advocate on their own behalf. It involves young people understanding their rights, and being empowered to bring about change in their own lives.

Individual Advocacy:

Involves an advocate working to bring about change in a situation of an individual young person. This type of advocacy is focused on the specific needs and situation surrounding the individual. The advocate's primary loyalty is to the person for whom they are advocating, and they try to involve the young person as actively as possible in the process.

Group Advocacy:

An advocate acts on behalf of a specific group of people or assists the group to self advocate, in an attempt to bring about changes that will benefit the entire group.

Systemic Advocacy:

Focuses on influencing or producing changes in society in order to positively affect the quality of life for young people as a whole. Systemic advocacy works towards changing the structures in society that create inequalities and disadvantage.

Examples of systemic advocacy include law reform activities, media releases, policy development, lobbying, publications and submissions to government.

An example of advocacy in practice:

While a youth worker may primarily operate within the Self Advocacy and Individual Advocacy categories, they can also contribute to advocating for young people at all levels. Following is an example of how a worker might advocate on behalf of young people at each level of advocacy.

Example: A young person is having trouble accessing Centrelink payments.

Self Advocacy: The worker encourages the young person to visit or call their local Centrelink office to discuss accessing payments, or directs them to the Centrelink website so they can find more information about eligibility for payments.

Individual Advocacy: The worker visits a Centrelink office with the young person to assist them, or; calls Centrelink on their behalf to find out more information.

Group/Systemic Advocacy: The worker becomes a member of their local peak body for youth affairs in order to utilise opportunities to participate and contribute to policy submissions and other youth representation.

Service

Youth Coalition of the ACT

Peak body for youth affairs. Represents the interests of people aged between 12 – 25 years and those who work with them.

Phone	(02) 6247 3540
Mailing Address	PO Box 5232, Lyneham ACT 2602
Email	info@youthcoalition.net
Website	www.youthcoalition.net
Location	46 Clianthus St, O'Connor

Who Can Access:	Females and males from 12 - 25 years, and those who work with them.
How to Access	By phone, email, web and drop-in, 9am – 5pm, Monday - Friday. No referral necessary.
Programs	
<i>Sector Development</i>	Comorbidity Bus Tours of the alcohol and other drug, mental health and community sectors; tis document; Code of Ethics for Youth Work; information development; resources and library; weekly eBulletin, monthly youth sector forum; information and resource development; training and professional development (including a bimonthly calendar); and sector support.
<i>Policy</i>	Social policy development; advocacy and representation; research and consultations; and budget submissions and analysis.
Other	Also co-ordinates the annual Youth Week in the ACT. Individual, organisational and associate membership is available. Fees vary.
Families	Does not provide personal support to young people. Family and support people can access the service.

More Peak Bodies

ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations

Peak body for ACT Parents & Citizens Associations in government primary schools, high schools and secondary colleges.

Phone: (02) 6241 5759

Email: parents@canberra.net.au

Web: www.schoolparents.canberra.net.au

Location: Room 51, Majura Primary School, Knox St, Watson

ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS)

Peak representative body for not-for-profit community organisations, and disadvantaged and low-income citizens of the ACT.

Phone: (02) 6202 7200

Email: actcoss@actcoss.org.au
Web: www.actcoss.org.au
Location: Level 1, 67 Townshend St, Phillip

ACT Shelter

Represents and advocates housing issues on behalf of low to moderate income people in the ACT, and to report their views to government.

Phone: (02) 6247 3727
Email: contact@actshelter.net.au
Web: www.actshelter.net.au
Location: Unit 3, Havelock House, 85 Northbourne Ave, Turner

Alcohol and Other Drugs Council of Australia (ADCA)

National non-government peak organisation representing the interests of the Australian alcohol and other drugs sector, providing a national voice for people working to reduce the harm caused by alcohol and other drugs.

Phone: (02) 6281 0686
Email: adca@adca.org.au
Web: www.adca.org.au
Location: 17 Napier Cl, Deakin

Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL)

National peak organisation representing the State and Territory-based Drug User Organisations and issues of national significance for illicit drug users.

Phone: (02) 6279 1600
Email: info@aivl.org.au
Web: www.aivl.org.au
Location: Level 2, 112-116 Alinga St, Canberra City

Australian Youth Affairs Coalition

National non-government youth affairs peak body. Membership includes all state and territory youth peak bodies.

Phone: (02) 6247 3540
Email: ayac@ayac.org.au
Web: www.ayac.org.au

Carers Australia

National peak body working to provide a voice for carers.

Phone: (02) 6122 9900
Email: caa@carersaustralia.com.au
Web: www.carersaustralia.com.au
Location: Unit 1, 16 Napier Close, Deakin

Families ACT (FACT)

Peak body supporting families, individuals and organisations working in family support in the ACT.

Phone: (02) 6162 5814
Email: programs@marymead.org.au
Location: 255 Goyder St, Narrabundah

Homelessness Australia

National peak body working to prevent and respond to homelessness in Australia.

Phone: (02) 6247 7744
Email: info@homelessnessaustralia.org.au

Web: www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au

Mental Health Community Coalition of the ACT

Peak body for mental health in the ACT, composed of and advocates on behalf of community organisations, consumers and carers involved in the area of mental health.

Phone: (02) 6249 7756

Email: admin@mhccACT.net.au

Web: www.mhccact.org.au/cms/index.php

Location: Level 1, Griffin Centre, Genge St, Civic

Mental Health Council of Australia

National non-government organisation representing and promoting the interests of the Australian mental health sector.

Phone: (02) 6285 3100

Email: admin@mhca.org.au

Web: www.mhca.org.au

Location: Alia House, Level 1, 9-11 Napier Cl, Deakin

National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO)

National peak Aboriginal health body representing Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services throughout Australia.

Phone: (02) 6248 0644

Email: elaine@naccho.org.au

Web: www.naccho.org.au

Location: 1st Floor, 15 Torrens St, Braddon

National Disability Services ACT

National industry association for disability services.

Phone: (02) 6283 3213

Email: ndsact@nds.org.au

Web: www.nds.org.au

Volunteering ACT

Peak body for volunteering in the ACT region that represents the interests of all community volunteers, and of all those who work with volunteers.

Phone: (02) 6251 4060

Email: projects@volunteeract.org.au

Web: www.volunteeract.com.au

Location: Canberra Labor Club, Community Chambers, Cnr Chandler St & Cameron Ave, Belconnen

More Information

Youth Coalition Policy Platform

A key document that informs and guides the organisation in its work. The Policy Platform documents a range of issues facing both young people and those who work with them in the ACT and is a resource that provides an overview of particular issues and topics to those who have an interest in youth affairs.

Web: www.youthcoalition.net/public/Policy/positions.html