



# YOGIE AWARD WINNERS

PRESENTED BY  
**RACHEL STEPHEN-SMITH MLA**

The Yogie Awards recognise, celebrate,  
and promote outstanding practice in  
working with young people in the ACT  
and surrounding area

December 8th 2017



**ACT**  
Government

Community Services

The Youth Coalition of the ACT acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional owners and continuing custodians of the lands of the ACT and we pay our respects to the Elders, families and ancestors.

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

We acknowledge that the Indigenous people hold distinctive rights as the original people of modern day Australia including the right to a distinct status and culture, self-determination and land. The Youth Coalition of the ACT celebrates Indigenous cultures and the invaluable contribution they make to our community.

A special thank you to Aunty Violet who is welcoming us to Country at this year's Yogie Awards ceremony.

# About the Annual Yogie Awards 2017

The Annual Yogie Awards (the Yogies) recognise, celebrate, promote and reward outstanding practice in working with young people in the ACT and surrounding area. They also highlight the exceptional commitment, talent and innovation that exist in the youth sector. In 2017, we are celebrating fourteen years of the Yogies.

The 2017 Yogies will be presented by Rachel Stephen-Smith, MLA, Minister for Disability, Children and Youth. Awards are presented in 9 categories that recognise the work of groups and individuals, with young people, workers, individuals, programs and services invited to provide nominations.

A judging panel, comprised of a representative from the Youth Coalition; a representative from the Community Services Directorate; and a representative from the youth and community sector, determines the Award winners, with the exclusion of the Staff Acknowledgement Award (which is identified by the Youth Coalition staff team).

A commendation may be awarded when a nomination has been received that the judging panel believe deserves recognition.

We invite you to get involved in promoting the great work of the ACT Youth Sector by sharing your comments and congratulations using #YOGIES2017

## Award categories:

- **Outstanding Achievement in Youth Participation Award**
- **Innovation in Service Delivery Award**
- **Excellence in Research and Evaluation Award**
- **Outstanding Youth Worker Award**
- **Youth Work Champion**
- **Outstanding New Talent Award**
- **Lifetime Achievement Award**
- **Outstanding Contribution to Young People Award**
- **Youth Coalition Staff Acknowledgment Award**

# WINNER PROFILES

## 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: LGBTQIA\* & Allies Prom 2017, YWCA Canberra**

The YWCA's LGBTQIA\* and Allies Prom commenced in 2016 in response to a call from young people for more social events for gender and sexually diverse young people in Canberra. This annual event provides a fantastic occasion for young LGBTQIA+ people and/or allies, aged between 12 and 25 years, to celebrate and express their identities, in a non-judgemental environment.

This year, YWCA Canberra staff supported young people from gender and sexuality diverse groups across the ACT to develop a subcommittee to ensure that the Prom 2017 was a meaningful and successful event for all young people involved. Through this committee, the young people had control over the theme, catering, information and other aspects of Prom 2017. This resulted in the introduction of pronoun badges for young people to wear if they chose, a chill-out space, the Halloween theme, a photo booth and non-gendered toilets.

Organisation partners who helped make this event a success include:

#### Formal Partnerships

- Aids Action Council
- Mental Health Community Coalition of ACT – Mental Health Week Grant
- Canberra Gay and Lesbian Tennis Club
- ACT Government
- A Gender Agenda

#### Allies

- Woden Community Service
- Belconnen Community Service
- Headspace Canberra and Queanbeyan
- PFLAG Capital Region (Parents, Family and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)
- ACT Policing
- Volunteers

# Excellence in Research and Evaluation

*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: Research To Practice Series, *Institute of Child Protection Studies***

The Research to Practice Series has been published since 2013, with 18 issues published and freely available to anyone who wishes to access them. The Institute of Child Protection Studies conducts research and evaluation on a broad range of topics. The Research to Practice Series translates this research into information that is easily understandable by practitioners from a range of backgrounds working in a broad cross sector of the community. The series draws on the findings of research to promote best practice in working with children, young people and families and educate community workers on the perspectives, ideas and needs of client groups.

Through the Research to Practice Series, the ICPS takes their best practice, child & young person focused research and turns it into something practical and relatable. This means the research has a real opportunity to significantly influence governments, organisations, and youth programs which use an evidence base to inform their policies and practice.

# Innovation in Service Delivery 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: Intensive Diversion Program (IDP), Canberra PCYC**

The Intensive Diversion Program (IDP) works with young people aged 12-16 years who are at high risk of offending behaviour, and are engaged with either Child & Youth Protection Services, ACT Policing, or ACT Children’s Court. The program combines a mix of skills-based recreational activities, educational programming and/or vocational pathways, intensive case coordination between Canberra PCYC, ACT Policing & CYPS, and links into team sports and interest groups. It has evolved significantly over the past year through the introduction of daily tutors, who are delivering a new approach to educating young people who have disengaged with mainstream education. IDP takes a hands on approach, with visual stimulation and impact. It includes a suite of programs to compliment the educational component which showcase positive behaviours and outcomes that can be achieved. The team is constantly working on ways to better engage young people, by looking at concerns the young people raise and bringing in weekly social workers with a broad range of expertise.

The program has brought in guest speakers from Defence, Australian Federal Police, and businesses across the ACT to talk about job opportunities, and participants are taught a range of practical skills. As a result of the program’s support, a number of young people have re-entered education systems and have displayed increasingly positive attitudes towards community and work. Also crucial to the IDP’s success has been the post-program initiative of case management support, which ensures the young people have the vital support that they require in order to be able to become independent. Furthermore, including the families of the young people into the program has enabled greater familial support to the young people when they have completed the program.

Partners who have contributed to the success of this program include ACT Policing and Child & Youth Protection Services.

## Highly Commended: 360 Initiative - Non-Binary Clothing Line, YWCA Canberra

In 2017, the 360 initiative launched its non-binary clothing line. The idea arose as young people in the YWCA Canberra A-Z Group identified that a common barrier for young people who are gender queer, gender fluid, transqueer or transgender was the limited availability of gender neutral clothing. The young people participating in the project committed to an 8-week program that culminated in a public launch of the clothing line held at the Hyperdome Shopping centre. There were 100 t-shirts given out to LGBTQIA\* Youth and Allies.

By wearing the t-shirts and having conversations with others about their meanings, these young people have become leaders within the community in advocating and promoting awareness of issues for LGBTQIA\* youth. The young people who participated in the project committed to an 8-week program that taught them about the clothing industry, small business, collaborative practices, financial management, interpersonal skills, design, financial management, and marketing. The project created an opportunity for young people to feel empowered through peer support activities and take on leadership roles in creating a stronger supportive community through awareness and education.

The young people who were involved in the 360 Initiative 2017 are planning on developing their own clothing line using the skills and knowledge they gained from the project.

Thanks to the Aids Action Council for a grant which contributed to the success of this program.

# Outstanding Youth Worker Award

*This award recognises an individual youth worker who has demonstrated their exceptional commitment to supporting young people through their ethical, participatory and strengths-based practice*

## **Winner: Richie Unga, St John's YouthCare Canberra**

Richie Unga is a Youth Outreach Worker at St John's YouthCare Canberra. He has worked in the community sector for 8 years, having previously worked with PCYC and doing residential youth work. In his current role, Richie is recognised as being able to work with young people in a flexible and responsive way, centred around their needs. Richie works hard to address current practical needs, as well as those related to their future planning and aspirations.

Richie is visibly passionate about the work he undertakes with young people. He uses the understandings and insight gained from the challenges which he overcame at a young age in his work with young people, balance with maintaining respectful boundaries with the young people he engages with. He is consistently motivated to engage with young people who are 'falling through the gaps', working alongside them to set goals and get their lives back on track. He is able to build rapport quickly and engage with young people in a supportive way. It is obvious that Richie is someone who genuinely cares about young people, and his interactions are authentic and are based on supporting young people to identify their strengths. He is also committed to working in a way that reinforces pro-social behavior, collaborative problem-solving and goal setting.

Richie is committed to working collaboratively with other workers within the sector. He has been instrumental in connecting young people to other services where this can be of benefit – and is committed to facilitating warm referrals. Richie works to extend his learning and develop his youth work practice, regularly attending youth sector meetings and workshops. His colleagues and young people note that he is flexible, resourceful, and creative in his work with young people and seeks to be curious about their lives in order to better understand their needs. His tireless efforts have resulted in many young people in his care speaking more positively about themselves, celebrating their own strengths, and demonstrating a 'can-do' attitude.

## **Highly Commended: Jeremy Leala, *Woden Community Service***

Jeremy is considered by his peers to be truly spectacular youth worker and all around nice guy, who does all within his power to help anyone and everyone. As a youth engagement officer in the Woden Youth Engagement Team, he is proactive in creating programs and avenues for all young people to support their interests and involvement in the wider community. Jeremy delivers DJ workshop for young people, with some developing great skills which have lead into paid employment. Jeremy will always find a way around any barrier a young person faces, and they respond well to him. He is looked up to and respected by all young people who access the program, as well as his colleagues within the youth sector.

Previous service users have often returned just to say hello to Jeremy and update him as to where have what they are up to, quite often thanking him for the support he offered in gaining a house, employment or further education. No matter how busy he is, Jeremy is always willing to make time for a discussion or to assist other people. He is actively involved in the youth sector, attending forums and often putting his hand up to take the lead to support youth sector events, no matter how busy he is.

## **Highly Commended: Rhonda Foley, *Girl Guides Australia***

Rhonda, or Kanga as she is known to Girl Guides across the ACT/NSW, is a fantastic role model to the girls and young women she has so enthusiastically led. Currently, she is a Leader to young girls as well as holding the role of Learning and Development on the Region Team. Rhonda is dedicated, welcoming, and youth oriented; it is because of her hard work and commitment that so many young girls in the ACT continue with Guiding, an organisation devoted to empowering young women and girls.

Rhonda is the best example of a proactive and caring Guide Leader, as shown through her strong 37 years of leadership. Rhonda has demonstrated her commitment to young people as a Guide Leader with energy and passion. 'Kanga' works in partnership with the girls rather than making decisions on their behalf; she encourages the girls to make mature and sensible choices, and explains to them why the choices have to be made and how to follow through with them. Rhonda's dedication to young people inspires and motivates many girls who she has worked with to further their hobbies and interests and to make a real difference in the world. She has taught skills through her countless years of working with children and young people that can never be forgotten, and instilled strong values in girls that they later live their lives by.

# Youth Work Champion

*This award recognises an individual youth worker who, while demonstrating excellence in supporting young people, has also displayed an outstanding commitment to developing and improving their individual practice and the work of the youth sector.*

## **Winner: Daniel Gaffney, Belconnen Community Service**

As the Leader of Youth Engagement Team at Belconnen Community Service, Daniel has showed a relentless dedication to the young people that engage in the program. In addition to his 18 months with BCS, Daniel has a long history in the youth sector having previously worked at PCYC, Narrabundah College and in church youth programs. He cites these past positions as providing him with valuable insights from which he continues to draw on in his current role. Within BCS, Daniel is part of, and manages a team of 4 youth workers, leading with a gentle and encouraging manner. He is described as being fastidious in safeguarding his team, ensure best practice and professionalism are at the forefront of their work, while always being hospitable and engaging with the young people who come through the program.

Daniel exemplifies excellence in his work by genuinely listening to the feedback of both staff and young people, and regularly engaging in practice reflection which strengthens his engagement style and improves his practice. He leads by example, reinforcing the principles of the CYFSP Practice Framework. He uses a personalised, strength based approach to gain confidence, seek clarity and support the positive choices young people make. Daniel is continually upskilling his practice by regularly undertaking professional development in his own time. It is evident that he sees Youth Work as a profession, and puts effort into maintaining and promoting professional standards. He is always happy to share his insights with staff, and hear feedback on the conclusions he has come to.

Daniel has a unique ability to form relationships through his friendly and encouraging demeanour, allowing for immediate engagement and problem solving. With a therapeutic approach to assisting young people, he is able to replace barriers with resilience, and help set realistic goals for their personal success. Daniel has made an amazing impact to the overall cohesion of the youth sector in Belconnen.

# 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 well-being of young people.*

## **Winner: Olivia Hatfield, Anglicare**

Liv started with Anglicare in March 2017 working as a Youth Worker in two programs, The Junction Youth Health Service and Y-Engage. As a Youth Worker, Liv has hit the ground running facilitating Health Support Groups in schools, and supporting young people emotionally and practically with information to help them in their decision making processes. Liv has professionally, respectfully and passionately engaged young people experiencing poor mental health and drug and alcohol dependency.

Liv's enthusiasm is fierce and unstoppable. She has recently developed a group called "Word Jam" which is designed to assist young people explore their identity through story. Through workshops, young people have the opportunity to reflect on their life story and express that through rap and poetry.

Liv approaches her work with passion and confidence. She always has the needs of the young people at the forefront of her thinking, and supports them with respect, integrity and humour.

# Outstanding Contribution to Young People Award

*This award recognises an outstanding individual who rarely receives recognition for their integral work which supports young people and/or the youth sector.*

## **Winner: Umair Qureshi, Anglicare**

The Anglicare Youth Engagement Program (YEP) provides an alternative education support model for young people aged 14-19 years of age who have become disengaged from mainstream education. Umair is one of the senior case managers facilitating the program, who assists in the provision of a range of services to young people, aimed at helping them re-engage with mainstream education, pursue other forms of skill development or enter employment. Many YEP students have significant barriers preventing them attending mainstream education. Umair's role is to work one on one with students to identify barriers to education and address them through a range of internal and external supports.

Umair's passion, energy and commitment to assisting young people has transformed YEP as a result of his efforts to build trust and rapport with students, and using his skills to keep students engaged and coming back. From an average of two students, Umair now has an average of 12 students attending regularly. He has assisted two students to move on to CIT, and is working with another two to follow that path. Umair has also assisted many other students in identifying more positive paths, with some re-engaging with mainstream education. Umair is a shining light in the sector with the energy and drive to assist students to realise that they can break the cycle and overcome problems, with many now identifying goals and working on achieving them. This program would not have been successful without Umair's commitment and hard work

## **Highly Commended: Fox Fromholtz, *headspace Canberra***

Fox has been a volunteer for the headspace Canberra Youth Reference Group for the last 3 years. During this time Fox has been an advocate for Mental Health and has represented headspace at numerous events, schools and agencies. Fox is a very passionate advocate for LGBTQIA\* young people. Fox has been setting up the Youth Ambassadors Program, a peer led program delivering educational workshops in schools to teach students about mental health and encourage them to seek help if they need it.

Fox volunteers between 2-6 hours a week, which has had a positive impact on Youth Mental Health and reducing the stigma of mental health in Canberra. Among their peers, Fox is considered a passionate advocate for Youth Mental Health, especially for LGBTQIA\* young people and has made a significant contribution to the effective operations of headspace Canberra.

# Lifetime Achievement Award

*This award recognises an individual who has consistently demonstrated a commitment to supporting and improving the well-being of young people in the ACT.*

## **Winner: Fiona MacGregor, Belconnen Community Service**

Fiona MacGregor has been a powerhouse of the community sector for many years, having a crucial role in the development of the current service system for young people, including the CYFSP, and youth workers in schools program. Fiona is currently working as a consultant for the ACT Community Sector, one stop in a long career of influence. Throughout her career, her steadfast and strong-willed determination to improve outcomes for young people through well-structured systems and a skilled workforce has left a valuable legacy.

Fiona played an important role in moving education within the juvenile detention facilities towards a system that better caters for the specific needs of young offenders. She was integral to the development of the current youth worker in schools program, as well as many other key contributions during her time at the ACT Education Directorate, including the setup of learning centres for marginalised young people across the ACT.

With the rollout of the Child Youth and Family Services Program, Fiona's leadership was crucial to the creation of the Practice Framework, providing a consistent guide for strengths-based, collaborative practice in working with young people. She has been a strong voice for developing the workforce within the ACT, and has advocated for many training initiatives that have been integral to the ongoing professional development of youth workers.

Her frankness and forthright manner are well-known; and the respect she commands due to her commitment to person-centred practice and continuous improvement has allowed her to generate positive movement towards a more effective and responsive service system. Fiona has raised the bar of the professional standards of the Youth Work Sector in the ACT, and it would not be at the level it is today without Fiona's contribution.

# Youth Coalition Staff Acknowledgment Award

*This award is selected by the Youth Coalition staff team, and acknowledges an individual or group who have significantly contributed to young people in the ACT, the youth sector, and the work of the Youth Coalition of the ACT.*

## **Winner: Families ACT**

Families ACT are the peak body which aims to represent the interests of children, young people and families and the continuum of services which support them, in the ACT and surrounding region. Families ACT takes a broad view of what constitutes a family, and strives to improve the wellbeing of all families in the ACT and surrounding region. The Youth Coalition staff team unanimously nominated Families ACT for the 2017 Staff Acknowledgement Award in recognition of the expertise they bring to the ACT youth and community sector, and their strong focus on excellence in everything they do.

Families ACT excel in the work they engage in, and have also made a tremendous contribution to broader sector work, through: CYFSP Workforce Development and Practice Leaders, joint advocacy with the sector through budget submissions, delivery of practice framework and case review training. Will Mollison has also co-led Youth Worker Practice Network training sessions focused on self care and reflective practice, contributing to the development of this professional network of frontline youth workers.

In 2017, Families ACT also coordinated a highly insightful and immersive series of talks as part of its Middle Years Forums. With a range of industry and academic leaders invited to speak, the sector has learned more about the needs of children in the 'middle years', and the importance of supporting children and families at this stage of their lives.

The Youth Coalition staff team highly values our ongoing partnership with Families ACT, and would like to thank Will and Karen, as well as the Families ACT Board & Advisory Council, for the contribution they make to the youth sector, and the young people and families in the ACT.



**[www.youthcoalition.net](http://www.youthcoalition.net)**



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The Annual YOGIE Awards are a Youth Coalition of the ACT initiative, proudly supported by the ACT Government Community Services Directorate.