

# Who cares?

Despite the shorter days and falling temperatures, the feeling in this edition of *Youth Studies Australia*, and in the Australian youth field in general, seems to be one of excitement and encouragement.

In some form or another, each of these six papers seems to address the question: **who cares?** These papers cover a range of topics: civic participation, the environment, peer influence, youth work, juvenile justice and mental health.

**Deal or no deal?** Neoliberal social policies implemented during the Howard era limited young people's ability to participate in decision-making processes ... will the new government's social inclusion agenda necessarily increase young people's capacity for participation?

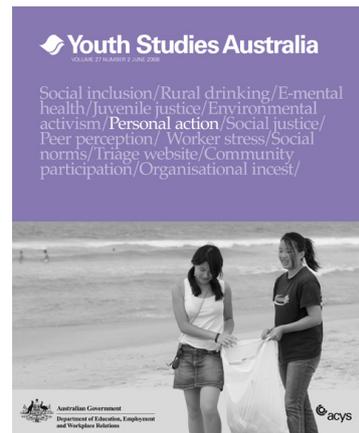
**An inconvenient truth** Studies indicate that concern for the environment is actually lower among young people than among older people. Are Australia's youth apathetic about a "green" future?

**Questioning 'normal'** A project being conducted with rural high school students in Tasmania is using the power of peer perceptions to reduce alcohol-related harm.

**Disillusionment, burnout and organisational incest** A look at the factors that contribute to stress in the youth work profession, and how these can be minimised and overcome.

**Doing justice to juvenile justice** While the concepts of "moral panic", "risk", "responsibility" and "rehabilitation" all shape discussions about young people and crime, a social justice framework may present a more inclusive way to deal with this enduring issue.

**Yshareit** The yshareit project, which aims to increase young people's awareness of and access to reputable e-mental health resources, relies on the ability and willingness of young people to care for each other.



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**Social inclusion and youth participation:  
A New Deal for Australia's young people?**

Kathy Edwards

In light of the recent election of the Rudd Labor government, and the highlighting of social inclusion as a ministerial portfolio and policy direction, Kathy Edwards examines both past and present Australian Government policies, and the UK experience under New Labour, in this investigation of the relationship between youth participation and social inclusion. Email: k.edwards@usyd.edu.au

**From ambivalence to activism:  
Young people's environmental views and actions**

Emma Partridge

Do young people really take particular interest in environmental issues, or are they apathetic? This paper considers what young people really think about the environment by drawing together and reviewing attitudinal polling and other research into young people's views. It seeks to challenge simplistic assumptions, and instead acknowledges the inherently complex nature of young people's attitudes to environmental problems. Email: Emma.Partridge@uts.edu.au

**Harnessing the power of perception:  
Reducing alcohol-related harm among rural teenagers**

Clarissa Hughes, Roberta Julian, Matthew Richman,  
Ron Mason & Gillian Long

This paper outlines early findings from the Tasmanian-based Social Norms Analysis Project (SNAP). The Social Norms model is presented as a theoretically informed, evidence-based model for reducing alcohol-related harm in youthful populations by utilising the complex and often positive contributions peer groups make to adolescent health and wellbeing. Email: Clarissa.Hughes@utas.edu.au

**Youth workers and stress**

Vaughan Bowie

In this paper, Vaughan Bowie focuses on the neglected area of youth workers themselves and how they are affected by stress resulting from their choice of occupation. It provides some insights into how youth workers and their organisations can identify and minimise much of this stress. Email: V.Bowie@uws.edu.au

**Concepts shaping juvenile justice**

Rob White

Rob White's paper explores ways in which community building can be integrated into the practices of juvenile justice work. He provides a model of what can be called 'restorative social justice', one that builds upon the juvenile conferencing model by attempting to fuse social justice concerns with progressive juvenile justice practices. Email: R.D.White@utas.edu.au

**yshareit:**

**A project promoting the use of e-mental  
health resources among young people**

Caroline Spiranovic, Kate Briggs, Kenneth Kirkby,  
Caroline Mobsby & Brett Daniels

The yshareit project aims to increase awareness of and access to reputable e-mental health resources among young people by developing peer support networks, supported by e-mental health resources including the triage website <www.yshareit.com>. Young people involved in the evaluation of the project completed a range of activities aimed at enhancing communication skills and developing ideas for promoting e-mental health resources. Email: Ken.Kirkby@dhhs.tas.gov.au

The neoliberal policy environment of the Howard era produced social exclusion, and decreased the capacity of young people to participate.

... surveys of young people carried out in the last two decades ... reveal a strong desire for a 'green' future, but a shaky (and declining) faith that this will eventuate.

In an environment of perceptual distortion, there is an underlying pressure to conform to the expectations of 'imaginary peers'.

We therefore need to recognise the often long-term 'marathon' nature of helping young people, in contrast to the short-term 'sprint' attitude often taken to such work.

In the end, what is to be done about juvenile crime cannot be divorced from the kinds of values and society we wish to have and promote.

Strategies are required that familiarise young people with the best available help appropriate to their own or their peers' particular mental health concerns.