

Editorial: Increased mental health awareness

The recognition by the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) in February 2006 that mental health is 'an issue of national significance' is in itself significant because it indicates an increased awareness at both State and Federal government levels that 'mental health is a major problem for the Australian community' (COAG 2006). This development follows on from the announcement by the Federal Government late last year of 'funding of \$69 million ... to help young people with mental health problems' (DHA 2005), which included \$54 million for the establishment of a National Youth Mental Health Foundation. It is therefore very timely that the first issue of *Youth Studies Australia* for 2006 should be devoted to cutting-edge research from several leaders in the field of youth mental health and wellbeing.

In the first paper, we preview the Australia 21 report on young people's wellbeing, a collaborative project that identifies flashpoints and signposts for future research and policy. The second paper outlines features of an effective partnership that provides services for young people with dual diagnosis. Third, is a paper that considers the mental health impacts for young people of the widespread association of 'happiness' with hedonistic behaviour and excessive consumption. The fourth paper reports on research into a tool that young people are increasingly utilising for mental health problems – self-help support groups. The fifth paper provides

insight into what young people think contributes to their sense of wellbeing. The last paper is a progress report on the development of an innovative Internet-based program that targets anxiety in young people.

The stunning new design of YSA is the work of ACYS graphic designer Nick Gross. It foreshadows a revamp of all ACYS products in 2006 and is a fitting setting for the publication of these important papers.

Finally we would like to thank the Australian Research Alliance For Children And Youth for their sponsorship of this edition of *Youth Studies Australia*.

Sue Headley

COAG 2006, *Communiqué*, viewed 14 Feb. 2006, <<http://www.coag.gov.au/meetings/100206/index.htm#mentalhealth>>.

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