



# 23/24

## Annual Report



# Acknowledgment of Country

Youth Action acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We understand that sovereignty was never ceded and recognise their continuing connection to lands, languages, waters, and cultures.

Our office is located upon the land of the Gadigal people. We recognise their traditional and ongoing Custodianship, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

## Cover Art

### Artist Statement

**'To speak up against authorities' by Jennie Zhu**  
As a contribution to this year's Annual Report, I created a canvas that encapsulates the vibrant spirit of young individuals and the unwavering determination to push their voices and opinions out there, representing the resilient voices of the youth and the obstacles and surprises that will have to be overcome. The artwork takes inspiration from the dynamic selection of Youth Action's signature colours: purple and sub-ranges of pink and blue. The hues of purple embody the strength and courage of individuals who are standing up to shape their futures, while pink and blue underscores the warmth and care that the community extends to nurture their dreams.

The focal point of the artwork is the collection of vibrant speech bubbles from the microphones that float strikingly across the canvas. These speech bubbles stand as visual metaphors for the powerful voices of youth, voices that deserve to be heard, acknowledged, and celebrated. In a deliberate choice, these speech bubbles feature an inverted colour scheme—neon aqua hues against a mostly purple background. This inversion serves as a representation of the transformative process that occurs when young voices are uplifted and empowered. The traditional norms are upturned, and the youth emerge as agents of change, driving conversations and shaping narratives. This is such a world where young individuals are often marginalised, their voices sidelined. I represented the obstacles facing and opposing them through the person in the suit, seemingly larger than the buildings. I also represented the young voices through the girl standing front and centre, facing the towering, suited giant, with many buildings and motifs to speak up, portraying the many organisations, just like Youth Action, supporting the youth and the importance of including them in dialogues that directly affect their lives and communities. The energetic and vibrant colours reflect the vitality and enthusiasm that young people bring to every endeavour. By ensuring their voices

are integral to conversations about policies, services, and societal changes, we embrace a future that is truly inclusive and reflective of their needs, aspirations, and dreams. I hope that this cover serves as a visual call to action, a reminder that every hue of colour represents a story, a dream, a potential change-maker. In the coming years, may the youth's voices resonate louder, their presence felt more profoundly, and their impact ripple through communities far and wide. Through unity and empowerment, we create a world where every voice matters, and every young individual finds the support they need to flourish.

### About the Artist - Jennie Zhu

I am a Chinese-Australian student and artist located in Sydney, Australia. Growing up, I was always curious about colours when I travelled around Asia with my parents. As I grew older, my once stubby fingers grew enough to play with the playdough and crayons my grandmother bought me. I drew and sculpted many different things based on my surroundings; the shows I watched, the people around me or the things I saw. I continued to grow, physically and mentally, becoming more conscious of the world, past the brightly coloured bubble of my childhood. Gradually I left the bubble, straight into the view of global issues, mainly involving those that involved me - the youth. I found myself taking art more seriously - I still incorporated aspects of my surroundings; the people, the shows, the issues. However, this time around, my surroundings were much different from the ones I used to know. I believe art should convey some sort of idea or feeling relative to the artist themselves, and the topics revolving around their life. I work with mostly acrylic, oil and digital art to convey my ideas into reality.

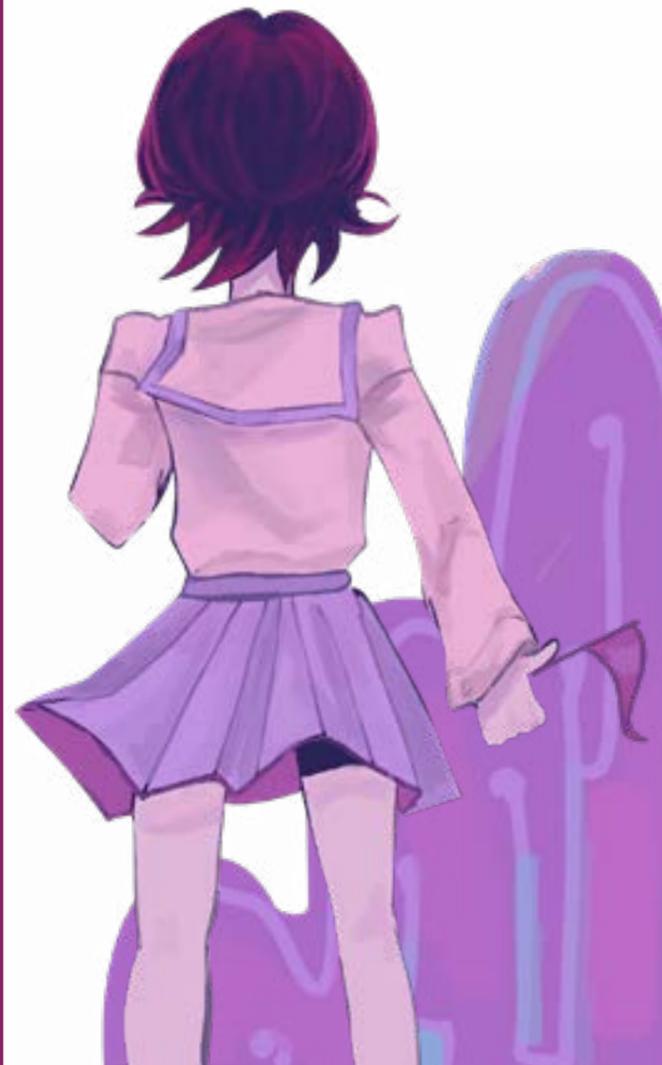
# About Youth Action

Youth Action is the peak organisation representing young people and the services that support them in NSW. We work towards a society where all NSW young people are supported, engaged, valued, and have their rights realised. We represent over 150 Member organisations and regularly engage with young people and youth workers from all over the state, as we have for over 30 years.

We give a particular focus to young people who are regional, First Nations, LGBTIQA+, with disability, from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including migrants and refugees, and doing it tough. We use a rights-based lens to focus on programs, policy and advocacy that achieve meaningful outcomes, embed strengths-based approaches, and are informed by data and evidence. We are an ally to the self-determination of First Nations communities, are led by the expertise of young people and the Sector, and work to be a trustworthy partner and collaborator.

## Youth Action

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# Chairperson's Message

I am so pleased to have the opportunity to commend this year's Annual Report to you all. Youth Action, the peak who has always punched well above its weight, continues to go from strength to strength under the guidance of a passionate and committed team.

Change is an inevitability few of us like. It is human nature to seek stability and comfort in what we know. But the world keeps evolving and we are forced to keep growing with it. Youth Action has seen considerable growth and change this past year and I could not be prouder of the team who made it all possible.

Kate Munro and her team have worked hard to provide members solid representation and fearless advocacy this year which you can see in the following pages of this report. The Minister for Youth of our new state government has been well engaged with us on a number of projects, and they continue to support the work we are doing.

The youth sector, of which I have been such a proud member of for so long, is also growing and changing with the times. Youth Action has been a strong voice for connectedness and skills development in the sector, and putting our money where our mouth is with opportunities for training and consultations for all members. Youth Action has shown us new ways to reach out, to connect and to share our wisdom, our challenges, and our triumphs.

I hope to see you all at the Youth Conference to be held in Sydney again this year. We are privileged to have the

Hon Rose Jackson MLC, Minister for Youth speaking at our Conference this year. It is as good a barometer of the impact Youth Action is having as any when we have the enthusiastic support of our legislators. Along with the generous support of The Hon Jihad Dib MP, Minister for Youth Justice who took such interest in our Throughcare project, I think our members can be sure that Youth Action is taking every opportunity to speak truth to power.

Youth Action is working to create a NSW where young people feel empowered to speak their truth and where the youth services who support them have all the resources they need to amplify those voices. I am privileged to be part of their cheer squad and I am so glad you could join us too. Please enjoy this report card and enjoy your contribution to creating a stronger, wiser, more creative future!



*Penny Lamaro*

# CEO's Message

Dear friends,

The past year has been another one where we have seen change both within Youth Action and out in the community. Once again, we saw the youth sector's critical role with supporting young people across all areas of their lives, including helping them tackle rising challenges in cost of living, mental health, and engagement in learning.

Youth Action started the year by implementing our new organisational structure. However, we did not have a full team until the beginning of 2023. I want to especially thank the staff we had last year, as despite our reduced capacity we were still able to deliver all the initiatives we had planned.

Sometimes things can get so busy it is hard to step back to get a full view of everything. I am especially proud that across all areas of our work, we were able to engage with 3064 young people through 76 opportunities and 2269 youth sector representatives through 69 opportunities this year.

I had many highlights this year, but here are some of the some of my favourites. Firstly, we hosted 300 people at the NSW Youth Work Conference and Awards in person for the first time since 2019 at the beautiful Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP). Our advocacy work for the NSW Election was another incredible piece of work. Through this, we formed the NSW Youth Alliance and held an Election Forum with a panel of MPs and young people. And finally, the development of the script "Saplings," which incorporates the youth voice

component of our Youth Justice Throughcare Initiative. The playwright was professionally read in front of government representatives and opened by the Youth Justice Minister.

I want to express my deepest thanks to our key funding partners Department of Communities and Justice and Ministry of Health as well as others who commissioned us to undertake work for them this year including Vincent Fairfax Foundation, Women NSW and Jesuit Social Services.

Thank you to our amazing youth sector and young people members and stakeholders who have engaged with us throughout the year. It is always such a privilege to work alongside you and we are truly grateful for the contributions you make to our collective work.

Thank you to our wonderful Board, led by Penny Lamaro. The guidance you all give to Youth Action and myself is invaluable. And finally thank you to our fantastic staff team for your daily passion and commitment to improving the lives of young people in NSW.



*Kate Munro*

# Members

The strength of our collective advocacy is underpinned by the engagement of our members. Our work has been driven through our engagement with our members. We strive to ensure diversity in the ways that members can shape our campaigning and advocacy work by having input in our reports and submissions, building their capacity through participating in training and learning opportunities, and celebrating the diversity of their work through the NSW Youth Work Awards.

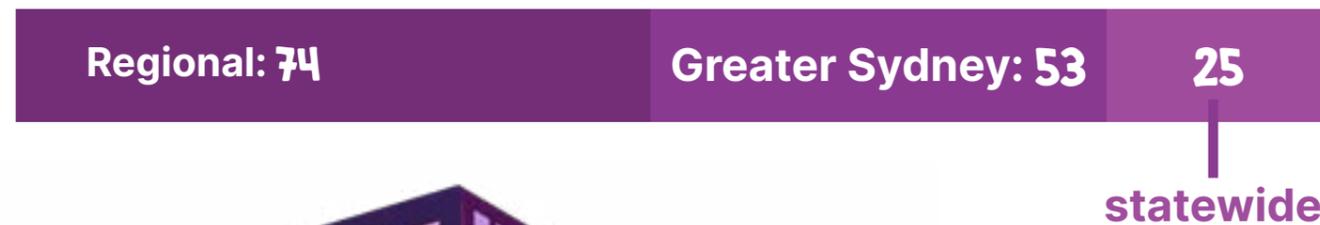
## OUR MEMBERS

**Active Young Members: 131**

**Active Individual Members: 131**

**Organisational Members: 152**

**Regional/Greater Sydney/Statewide members:**



# Member Engagement

This year we have continued to ensure that we provide a variety of opportunities for our members to contribute to Youth Action's work as well as provide direct member benefits. Along with the opportunities available to the broader sector and young people, we have offered member-only invitations to advocacy forums and roundtables, media opportunities to highlight young people connected to member organisations, discounted member rates for training, and involvement on our Board of Governance and the Annual General Meeting.

Some of our member exclusive opportunities included: Young Artist in Residence program, being a judge on our NSW Youth Work Awards Panel, participation on the Youth Action Election Forum Young Person Panel, free attendance at the Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP) showing of 'Cusp', a production by First Nations playwright about three young adults in the Northern Territory, attendance at Professional Networking events at Youth Action's coworking space, as well as discounted tickets to Youth Action's Annual Conference and Awards.

**"Youth Action was involved in our first Youth Week festival in our region. It was so nice to have their presence and have the other services in our region exposed to Youth Action."** Organisational member

**"Youth Action continues to open opportunities for our young people to have a voice, a voice that is not often heard and the voices of many who, without Youth Action, would not have the opportunity to be a part of progress."** Organisational member

**"Youth Action were instrumental in upskilling our local young people in valuable strengths-based advocacy training for Have Your Say Day 2022."** Organisational member

**"Youth Action has done an amazing job in reflecting the needs of the sector and working more closely to support young people in more diverse and essential ways. The formation of the NSW Youth Worker Association was a great accomplishment."** Individual member

**"The Youth Justice Throughcare project has been a valuable opportunity to inform government on the challenges/barriers & work collaboratively on solution development."** Organisational member

We are grateful to our young people, individual and organisational members for supporting Youth Action's work this year. It has been an incredible opportunity to work with many of you and we are excited to highlight that work in this report.



Some of the NSW Youth Work Awards 2022 winners

# Campaigns and Advocacy

Youth Action's advocacy work is grounded in the voices and lived experiences of young people and the youth sector. It has also been driven by our 2021 – 2024 Strategic Plan. Over the past year, Youth Action has held consultations with young people and the youth sector across NSW about their priorities for the upcoming election, re-engagement in school, employment, sexual violence, youth justice throughcare, mental health and the cost-of-living crisis. The Youth Justice Throughcare Initiative continues to be the major initiative in our Strategic Plan.

**Number of Reports: 3**

Election Platform, NSW Youth Alliance 10 Key Asks and Key Recommendations from NSW Young People

**Number of Submissions: 3**

Senate Select Cost of Living Submission, Youth Justice and Child Wellbeing Reform across Australia joint submission with Fams, 2023 NSW Pre-budget Submission



## PRINT

Australian Associated Press national news article



## PRE-RECORDS

Triple J Breakfast News and Radio Release State-wide Network



## PACKAGED NEWS

Packaged news piece including radio and TV: ABC Online & 7pm News



## LIVE INTERVIEWS

Election Platform, NSW Youth Alliance 10 Key Asks and Key Recommendations from NSW Young People, FBI Backchat Program and ABC Sydney Breakfast Show



## ADVOCACY WORK

Media: Our Campaign and Advocacy work was reported in the media across many platforms.

# Key Campaigns and Advocacy Work

- **NSW Election Forum:**

What Matters to Young People: In preparation for the NSW State Election in May 2023, Youth Action held an Election Forum where we heard from politicians from all major parties, including the Hon. Felicity Wilson MP, the Hon. Julia Finn MP and the Hon. Amanda Cohn MLC. We also had a panel of young people that spoke about their election priorities and participated in a Q&A session.

- **Youth Justice Throughcare:**

Youth Action's Throughcare Initiative was a focus of the year, with activities including a panel at our annual conference about community based programs and their role in better throughcare for young people, four meetings with our Throughcare Steering Committee including one with The Hon Jihad Dib MP, Minister for Youth Justice in attendance and our young people's voice collaboration with the Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP) to produce the script for "Saplings", reflecting the lived experiences of young people in contact with law and justice systems.

- **The Voices of Young People in NSW on Sexual Violence:**

In 2022 Youth Action was contracted by the Department of Communities and Justice to hold consultations with young people 16 – 24 years of age on sexual violence prevention and response. Over two roundtables, Youth Action worked with young people to identify priority issues, needs, gaps and opportunities for enhancing sexual violence prevention and response in NSW. This report and its findings will inform the implementation of actions in the NSW Sexual Violence Plan 2022-2027 as they relate to young people.

- **NSW Raise the Age Campaign:**

Youth Action sits on the lead group of the NSW campaign to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14, without exception. We continue to support the work and activities of the campaign.

- **NSW Government Coercive Control Taskforce:**

Children and Youth Reference Group: As a result of our submission and appearance at the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Coercive Control, Youth Action was invited to sit on the Children and Youth reference group to provide advice and recommendations about young people.

- **Youth Justice Advisory Committee:**

As part of our ongoing work in youth justice throughcare, Youth Action was invited to sit on the NSW Youth Justice Advisory Committee as a non-government representative.

## Case Study: NSW Election Advocacy

In the lead up to the NSW Election we undertook a number of advocacy activities to ensure young people and the youth sector's views were represented to all parties and that young people had access to the information and resources they needed to make an informed decision on voting day. The activities we undertook included:

- Pre-Election polling of 1200 young people about the key issues influencing their vote and what information and resources they wanted to help them on voting day.
- A working group of 24 young people who assisted us to develop voter education social media tiles and resources, eight of whom spoke on a panel at the Election Forum.
- Met with the NSW Greens Party (Abigail Boyd MLC), NSW Labour Party (Julia Finn, Shadow Minister for Youth), and NSW Liberal Party (Natasha Maclaren-Jones Minister for the Department of Communities and Justice and Ben Franklin, Minister for Regional Youth) in the lead up to the election to present our draft recommendations for our Election Platform.
- Met with our fellow state peaks: NSW Council for Social Services (NCOSS), Fams, Yfoundations, Local Community Services Association (LCSA), Tenants Union, and AbSec to discuss our key recommendations to ensure our asks aligned with theirs.
- Based on consultations undertaken with young people and the youth sector we produced our "What Matters to Young People" Election Platform with key recommendations for the incoming government.
- We formed the NSW Youth Alliance with four key NSW advocacy and peak organisations: Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP), Multicultural Youth Affairs Network (MYAN NSW), Yfoundations, and Youth Action. Produced NSW Youth Alliance 10 Key Asks.
- Hosted the NSW Election Forum at ATYP in the Rebel Theatre with speakers from the NSW Labour Party, NSW Liberal Party, and the NSW Greens Party alongside a panel of eight young people from our Election Working Group. We had 200 youth sector and young people attend in person and online.

This advocacy work allowed us to present what we had heard during consultations and in the pre-election poll to the major parties and to provide opportunities for the sector and young people to hear directly from politicians. By doing so, we were able to showcase the value of young people's voices and lived experience in policy development.

## Case Study: Youth Justice Throughcare

In line with our ongoing Strategic Plan priorities, we have continued our focus on highlighting the services and supports needed to reduce young people's contact with law and justice systems both prior to and post juvenile custody. This Initiative has allowed us to focus our advocacy on a cohort of young people who tackle complex challenges.

Over the year, we held four Steering Committee meetings co-chaired with Miyay Birray an Aboriginal community-controlled youth service in Moree. The meetings created an opportunity to advocate on themes affecting young people that were commonly reported by committee members. It also allowed us to highlight the diverse nature of the crucial work undertaken by the youth sector.

As part of this initiative, Youth Action partnered with the Australian Theatre for Young People (ATYP) to undertake consultations and run workshops with young people in contact with law and justice systems to develop a script highlighting their collective stories. With funding from Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation (VFFF), we commissioned a young First Nations playwright, Hannah Belanzsky to write a partial script that would be performed in front of key decision makers to highlight young people's lived experience of these systems and prompt discussion about what could be done to improve outcomes for them.

Over 80 young people connected to our member organisations were involved in consultations and script development workshops in metro and regional areas across NSW: Miyay Birray (Moree), Youth Off the Streets (South West Sydney and Reiby), and Midjuburi Youth Resource Centre (Marrickville).

The completed partial script "Saplings" was performed at ATYP on 14 June as a professional read by talented First Nations actors and their director in front of an exclusive audience of representatives from across government and NGOs who have been involved with our previous Throughcare Roundtables. The event was opened by The Hon Jihad Dib MP, Minister for Youth Justice.

Youth Action will continue to work with ATYP to complete the script to a full-length commission.

Youth Action would like to thank the organisations, youth sector and young people that we have worked and collaborated with this year to ensure that the voices of young people and the youth sector are heard through our campaigns and advocacy work.



The Hon Jihad Dib MP, Minister for Youth Justice at the Throughcare Steering Committee meeting before the 'Saplings' professional script read



'Saplings' professional script read cast



The Hon Jihad Dib MP, Minister for Youth Justice at the 'Saplings' professional script read



# Young People

Young people's voices need to inform the policies and decisions that impact them. Over the year, Youth Action has facilitated consultations online, in person and through surveys to represent the voices of young people to decision-makers as well as helped young people and the youth sector build their capacity to include their lived experiences in their advocacy work.

Young people: **3064**

Youth participation opportunities: **76**

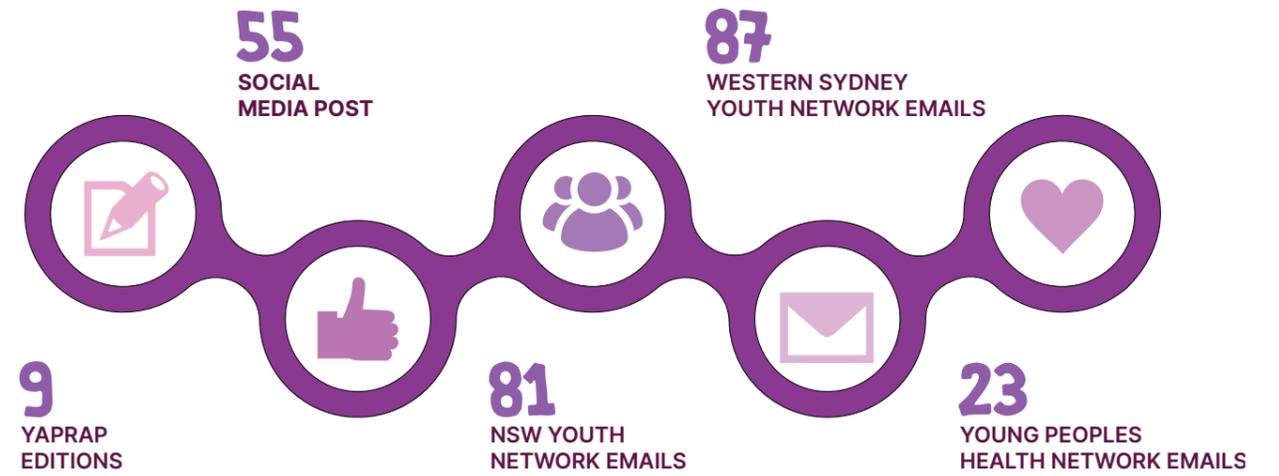
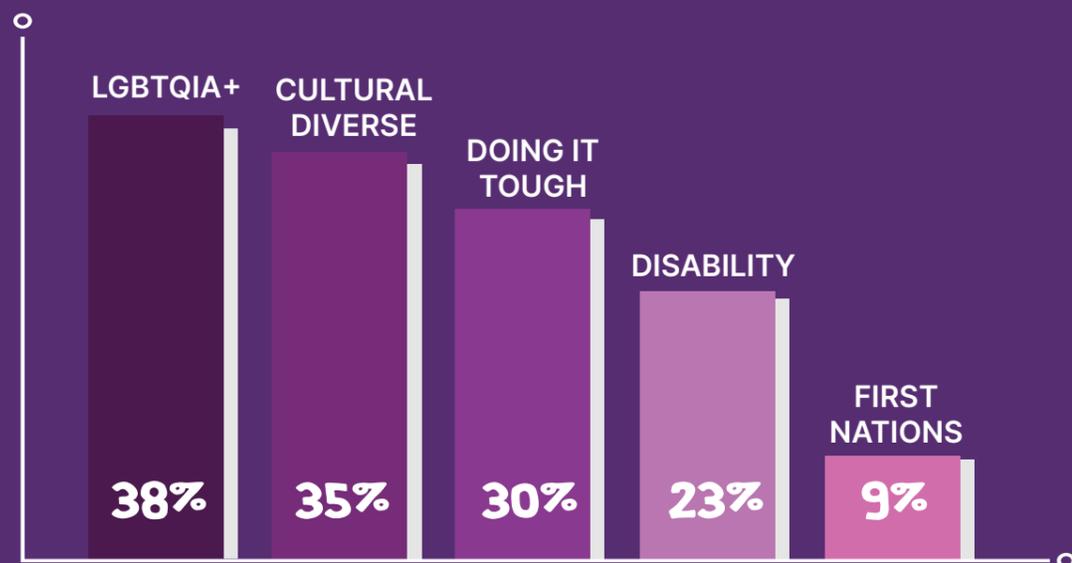
Young people who took part in pre-election survey: **1200**

## Sample of Diversity

Western Sydney: **42%**

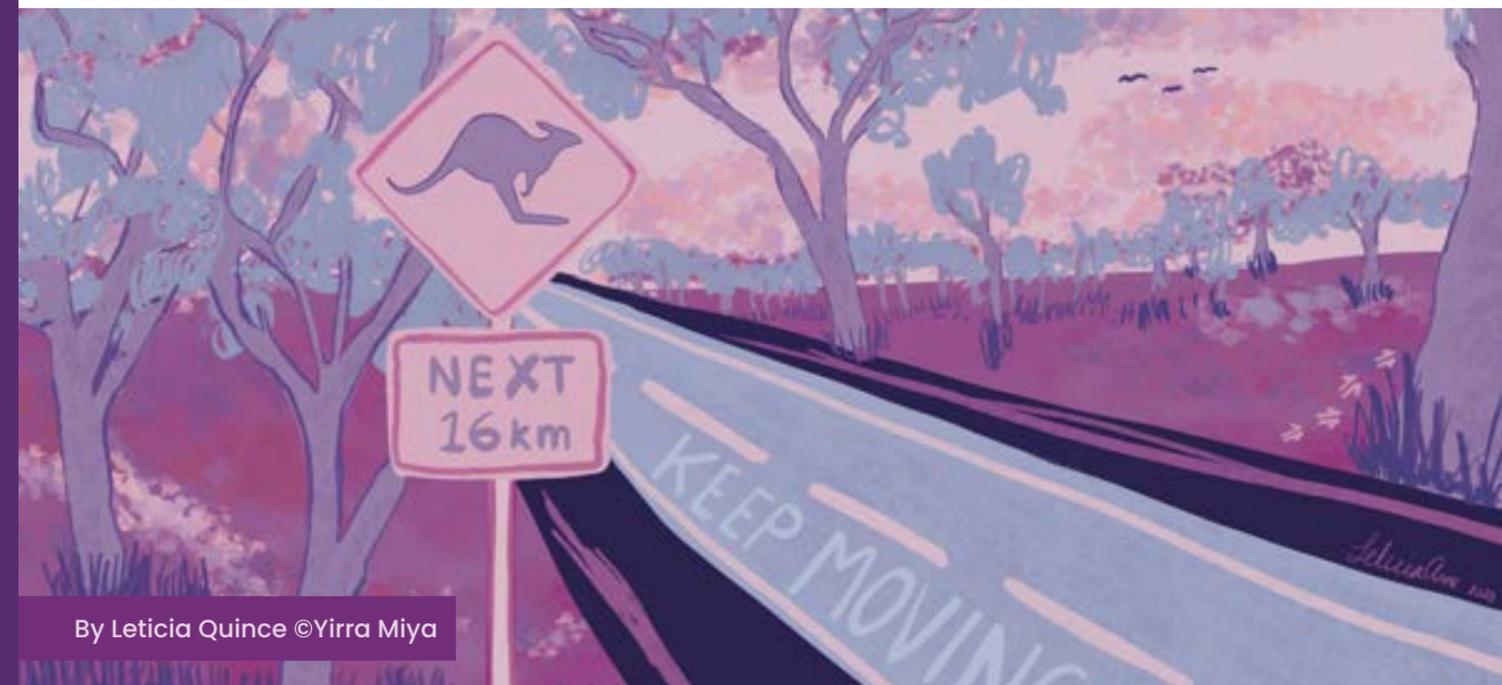
Greater Sydney: **34%**

Regional: **23%**



## Capacity Building

- Strengths-Based Advocacy Training:**  
 40 young people from the Northern Beaches Advisory Group participated in Strengths-Based Advocacy Training.
- Youth Engagement Toolkit Training:**  
 50 young people were trained to use the toolkit.
- Advocacy 101 Training:**  
 267 young people from the following organisations, schools and councils participated in advocacy training: Ambarvale High School, Blacktown Youth Forum, St Johns Park High School, Mount Annan High School, Camden High School, Oran Park High School.
- Media Training:**  
 We trained eight young people to serve as panellists for the NSW Election Forum: What Matters to Young People in NSW. In the lead up to the Election Forum, this group of young people were prepared with the questions for the panel and supported with any questions they had about how they were going to respond. On the day, four young people spoke to journalists from the ABC and Australian Associated Press for articles that were later published online.



By Leticia Quince ©Yirra Miya

## Voice and Representation

- **Election Consultations:**  
76 young people were consulted in preparation for Youth Action's 2023 Election Platform. Consultations were held at an online forum, Reiby Youth Justice Centre, TAFE Campbelltown, Verona School, SydWest Multicultural Services, Julia Reserve Community Centre Camden, Whitelion Mt Druitt TAFE, Street Uni Penrith and Ambarvale High School.
- **Young People Election Working Group:**  
10 young people formed our Election Working group and met six times for media training, consultation, young voter education co-design and to participate as panellists at our Election Forum.
- **Throughcare Consultations:**  
Young people provided suggestions of ways to improve outcomes for young people, who have been involved with police, courts, or the justice system to reduce their contact with these systems. We heard from 46 young people who attended consultations at Youth of the Streets Dunlea, Midjuburi Youth Resource Centre, Youth of the Streets Chester Hill, Miyay Birray Moree and Reiby Youth Justice Centre.
- **Sexual Violence Action Plan Roundtables:**  
25 young people attended two regional and metro roundtables to contribute to our Voices of Young People in NSW on Sexual Violence report.
- **Improving Employment Outcomes in Western Sydney:**  
80 young people attended consultations for the commissioned work we did with Jesuit Social Services to explore young people's ideas about improving employment outcomes. Consultations were held at TAFE Campbelltown, Verona School, SydWest Multicultural Services, Julia Reserve Community Centre Camden, Whitelion Mt Druitt TAFE, Street Uni Penrith, Ambarvale Highschool and Lebanese Muslim Association.
- **Re-engagement in Learning and Mental Health Consultations:**  
267 young people participated in consultations from Horningsea Park, Blacktown, Parramatta, Fairfield, Greystanes. Young people spoke about their transition back to school and community post lockdown and shared how to maintain their mental health and what services and supports assist with this.
- **Youth Week:**  
We heard from 303 young people at five Youth Week Events – Youth Homelessness Matters Day, the Y NSW Youth Week Event, Bring it On Festival Fairfield, Deadly Connections and the Youth Services Expo Narrabeen.
- **Community Events:**  
Youth Action spoke to 136 young people at community events such as Yabun, held on 26 January and Fair Day, held as part of the Sydney Mardi Gras festival.



### Western Sydney Project

Youth Action has delivered the Western Sydney Project since its inception in 1988. The project is connected to the needs of and issues for young people and youth services in Western Sydney and is grounded in ensuring young people's voices are heard and their rights are realised.

This year, 457 young people across Western Sydney told us what it's like to be a young person in Western Sydney across 29 meetings. See the engagement section above for the breakdown of these numbers.

### Ask for Health Project

The Ask for Health project is designed to increase and build upon young people's health literacy. It aims to help young people better understand and navigate the health care system in NSW by equipping young people with the knowledge, skills, motivation, and confidence to make decisions in everyday life concerning their health.

- **Ask for Health Young People Steering Committee:**  
Our Steering Committee of ten young people supports Youth Action to undertake our Health Literacy Program. Early in the year, these young people evaluated the Ask for Health website, content matter and training materials and identified areas for improvement for Youth Action to implement.
- **Ask for Health Peer Facilitators:**  
This group of 12 young people have been trained as peer facilitators and co-facilitated seven trainings with us in the first half of 2023.
- **Ask for Health Training:**  
We conducted health literacy training with 52 young people across five occasions.

**"I recently ended up supporting a friend by going with them to the Emergency department (of the hospital). Because of the training I received from being part of this program, I thought to go to the Ask for Health website and remind myself of the rights my friend had and start preparing helpful questions that could come up with for the doctor. Not only was the website a great place for gaining information at the time that helped my friend feel prepared speaking to doctors and supported them in getting the best possible outcome for that visit, but also having the website to focus on while we were waiting to see someone, gave us the ability to focus on something helpful instead of just sitting there trying to make small talk and becoming more nervous. I am grateful that I did the training because in that moment it really supported my friend and me and I feel like we got the best possible outcome for them because of it."** - Young person who has been part of the Health Literacy program since 2020.

Youth Action is grateful to the incredible young people we have worked with this year. Their insights and lived expertise inform our advocacy work that is highlighted throughout this report.

# 2022 YOUTH IN ACTION

## YOUTH ACTION



Youth and Community Morning Tea at Armidale



Young people panel at the Election Platform



Consultation boards, Fair Day, 19 March Victoria Park, Broadway, Gadigal Land



Youth Action team, Deadly Connections Deadly Night event, National Centre of Indigenous Excellence, Redfern, Gadigal Land



Youth Action team, Bring it On! Festival at Fairfield Showground, Cabrogal Land



Youth Action Team at Yabun Festival, 26th Jan. Victoria Park, Broadway, Gadigal Land



Youth Action Team, Youth Week at the Y Space Parramatta, Dharug Land



# Youth Sector

Youth Action's work with the youth sector this year has centred on building capacity and connecting with the sector through online and in person opportunities. Over the year, Youth Action facilitated 69 opportunities to engage with 2269 youth sector workers. This has included consultations, roundtables, and forums as well as delivering training to support the sector in its work with young people. We also continue to share resources and opportunities through our sector networks.

**Number of Sessions: 69**

**Number of Workers: 2269**

## DIVERSITY OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE THEY WORK WITH:

**Greater  
Sydney  
43%**

**Western  
Sydney  
39%**

**Regional  
52%**



## Capacity Building

### Monthly Sector Sessions:

- Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) (July 2022)
- Youth Justice Throughcare Education Workshop (August 2022)
- 2023 State Election Priorities for Young People (October 2022)
- Youth Communication Skills and Speech Pathology (March 2023)
- Advocacy and the Incoming Government (April 2023)
- Facilitating Respectful Conversations between First Nations and Non-First Nations Young People (May 2023)
- In conversation with Catherine Gordon from KCA: Nurturing Hope and Resilience During Collective Trauma (May 2023)
- From Graphic Recording to Graphic Participation: Harnessing Creativity for Deeper Collaboration (June 2023)

### Evidence Based Practice Training:

- DCJ provided funding to Youth Action and Youth Work NSW (YWNSW), the youth work professional association, to conduct Evidence Based Practice training. Three trainings were held as face-to-face sessions in Orange and Belmore, and the NSW Youth Work Conference and one online. A total of 96 workers attended the trainings.

## Case Study: Evidence Based Practice Training

Youth Action and Youth Work NSW partnered with the Department of Communities and Justice to provide training to the sector on how to use the DCJ Evidence Portal. The Portal aims to increase the use of evidence in service design and delivery, to improve outcomes for children, young people, families and communities. It provides extensive content about evidence reviews, core components of evidence-based practice with young people, and how to use evidence to improve outcomes working with young people.

Our training works through this content to assist workers to use the portal and improve their skills in relation to identifying evidence about what works both in their practice as well as in the literature. We are proud of this effective collaboration between DCJ, Youth Action and YWNSW and the opportunity it has provided to have discussions with the youth sector about the importance of evidence-based practice and how the youth sector can work together with DCJ to build the existing evidence base.

### Western Sydney Project

The Western Sydney Project provides opportunities to the youth sector in Western Sydney to build their capacity to deliver effective, evidence based, outcomes-oriented services. We coordinate the Western Sydney Youth Services Network (WSYSN) and regularly engage with the Western Sydney youth sector for consultation and feedback on our local and state-wide collective work and advocacy. Our engagement with the youth sector through the Western Sydney Project is highlighted throughout this section.

### Ask for Health Project Work with The Youth Sector

Youth Action have run sector Ask for Health training nine times this year to a total of 50 youth workers through our Health Literacy Project, funded through the Ministry of Health. This training provides information on Health Literacy to increase capacity of workers to start important conversations on health with the young people they work with. Through the training we talk about health buddies, young people's rights at the doctor, as well as where to go for reliable health information endorsed by the Ministry of Health.

## Case Study: Youth Action NSW Youth Work Conference

On October 17 - 18 2022 we hosted our first face to face conference since 2019 at the Australian Theatre for Young People's venue at Hickson Wharf in Sydney. We had 217 people attend the sell-out two day event and heard from over 30 presenters speaking across four plenary sessions, six workshops, and five masterclasses. Panels and masterclasses included the following: role of youth voice in rights-based programming; working better with First Nations young people and organisations, role of community based programs in throughcare; managing growth in your organisation, evidence based practice; incorporating advocacy and policy into programming; innovation showcase; making unemployment solutions work for young people; better practice in youth participation; NSW Peaks election priorities and young people; how to better manage contracts; embedding right's based programming in organisational structure; Asset Based Community Development; and youth interagency and local collaborations.

The conference allowed us to bring together people working with young people from a diverse range of roles, level of expertise, types of organisations, and geographic areas. The youth sector is at its strongest when it is connected and working collaboratively and events such as a conference provide a wonderful opportunity to do this. We were also grateful to host a number of government representatives who came to engage with the youth sector including: DCJ, Youth Justice, Office of Regional Youth, Department of Education, NSW Health, and local council representatives.

## Voice and Representation

### Election Consultations

Sector consultations to inform Election platform and advocacy: 227 attendees (August and October).

### Throughcare Consultations

Sector consultation to inform youth justice throughcare advocacy: seven attendees (March).

## Case Study: Youth Work Awards

On October 17 2022, we held our first face to face Awards Ceremony since 2019 at the Australian Theatre for Young People's venue at Hickson Wharf in Sydney. The award categories were judged by a panel of youth sector professionals, young people, and Youth Action Board members.

As we wanted to ensure the focus of the event was on celebrating everyone who was nominated rather than just the winners, the Award Ceremony provided a valuable opportunity for people to connect with colleagues and celebrate all that the sector does, which is particularly important after the difficult few years we have just had.

You can see a list of categories, their sponsors and the winners on our website.

- 11 winners, 10 highly commended, and two Hall of Fame Inductees
- 150 people attended Awards
- Six young people MC'd the event
- A huge thank you to our Event Partners for making the event possible: NSW Department of Communities and Justice, Office of Regional Youth, the NSW Advocate for Children and Young People.
- And another huge thank you to our Award Partners: Fams, New South Wales Council of Social Services, Association of Children's Welfare Agencies.

## Professional Networks and Sector Communication

### Online Communications

- Western Sydney Youth Service Network (WSYSN) emails: 231
- Forum of Youth Development Officer NSW Youth Sector emails: 318
- YAPRAP Youth Action monthly newsletter: 9 editions
- Social media posts: 68

### Western Sydney Youth Service Network (WSYSN) Meetings

- WSYSN meetings brought together workers supporting young people from across Greater Western Sydney to discuss local advocacy topics, share learnings and consult with the sector to inform Youth Action's organisational work.
- Sector Election Consultation: We consulted with WSYSN to get their feedback on our Election Platform about the priorities of the young people they work with in Western Sydney.

### Youth Interagencies

Attended local youth interagency networks from Armidale LGA, Tamworth LGA, Blue Mountains LGA, Liverpool LGA, The Hills Shire LGA, Camden LGA, Hawkesbury LGA, Macarthur, Cumberland LGA, Campbelltown LGA, Canterbury Bankstown LGA, Fairfield LGA and the NSW Settlement Partnership Youth Collective. Engagement focused on discussions and input from networks into Youth Action's advocacy work and maintaining relationships with the youth sector in Western Sydney. Our Health Literacy Project Officer also spoke at interagencies held by the City of Sydney, Liverpool Council and Inner West Council about the Ask for Health Project this year.

Youth Action acknowledges and supports the incredible work that the NSW youth sector does. We would like to thank the workers that have supported and share our advocacy work this year to ensure that the voices of young people and the sector are heard.



Photos from the NSW Youth Work Conference 2022

# Who We Are

## List Board members

- Chair** – Penny Lamaro
- Deputy Chair** – Leticia Quince
- Secretary** – Lakin Agnew
- Treasurer** – Todd Pinkerton
- Ordinary Members** – Jack Whitney, Peter Hope, Rose Lewis, Josephine Ng and Hayley Rose

## List of staff that worked in the year

- CEO** – Kate Munro
- General Manager** – Tyrone Jandey
- Western Sydney Project Coordinator** – Veronica Gordon
- Health Project Coordinator** – Courtney Venaglia
- Health Literacy Project Coordinator** – Jazzie Quinn
- Capacity Building and Participation Officer** – Hareem Abbasi
- Research and Policy Officer** – Barbara Honeysett
- Communications Officer** – Angelica Liem
- Peer Participation Officer** – Mabel Truong
- Peer Communications Officer** – Ella Kennedy

# Cultural Art

## Artist Statement

**Regional Artwork: 'Yanhanha Dayangun (Moving Forward)' by Leticia Quince**

This artwork reflects the journey of young people and the road they take to follow their aspirations. It's understanding that no matter how long and hard the road looks from a distance, you can achieve what you set your heart and mind on if you keep moving forward. The cultural significance of using the kangaroo silhouette within the sign and their tracks represents resilience. Kangaroos are one of two native Australian animals that can't move backwards. The reflection of the gum trees represents growth and overcoming adversity.

**Acknowledgement of Country Cultural Illustration: Gaagumarra Birrang (Embracing your Journey)' by Leticia Quince**

This cultural element shares young people embracing their journey and coming together at Youth Action as a platform for them to amplify their voice, make change and lead their lives. The community circle represents young people coming together to share knowledge and embrace who they are collectively. Coming together is conveyed through the people (U-shaped symbol) surrounding the community circle, amplifying youth voices (knowledge sticks) and sharing knowledge on Country (cross-hatching). The path connecting to the community circle represents journey, resilience and moving forward (kangaroo tracks).



## About the Artist - Leticia Quince

Leticia is a proud Wiradjuri Torres Strait Islander yinaa 'woman' and Wiradjuri Artist. Leticia established her creative business, Leticia Anne Designs in March 2020 at the age of 23. Embracing the growth of her business and team, she launched Yirra Miya in February 2023 as her second business under her company Buralgang Enterprise Pty Ltd. Leticia uses her resilience and leadership qualities, reflecting from her lived experience growing up in the child protection system, to role model to other young entrepreneurs and youth. She represents the power of creating your own path, self-empowerment and following your aspirations. Leticia was a youth worker for six years and was awarded the Indigenous Achievement Award for 7 News Young Achievers in 2022 and a finalist for their Creative Award and Small Business Award for Leticia Anne Designs in 2023. Leticia is also the Deputy Chairperson of Youth Actions' Board of Directors.

# Connect With Us

## Youth Action

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## Follow us on social media

instagram.com/youthactionnsw  
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## Email Us

info@youthaction.org.au

