



New report calls for relationships education to curb youth violence

Young Australians should be taught respect and how to deal with conflict while at school, according to a new report by the House of Representatives Family and Youth Committee.

At a time of growing concern over increasing violence among 12 to 24 year olds, the Federal Parliamentary Committee is calling for social development education to be a core component of Australia's new national curriculum.

"We need to teach our young people from a very early age how to develop and maintain respectful relationships, how to deal in a non-aggressive way with conflict and how to build resilience," Committee Chair, Annette Ellis said today.

"A consistent theme raised throughout the inquiry is that early intervention to prevent violence from happening in the first place is preferable."

Ms Ellis said engaging with young people had been a priority for the Committee and more than 1300 young Australians had responded to an online survey expressing their concerns. The majority of respondents said that they had witnessed violence in the last 12 months and over two thirds believe that the incidence and intensity of violence is increasing.

"Far from being the alcohol-fuelled, drug-crazed, knife wielding perpetrators of violence, the reality is that our young people are in fact, most likely to find themselves on the receiving end of violence," she said.

The Committee also recommends:

- options to ensure increased access to counselling for young people in need;
- classification of all media such that it aligns with key stages of childhood development and education on the meaning of all classifications for parents and young people; and
- a new national youth violence and rehabilitation strategy to coordinate the confusing array of interventions and programs which are currently on offer.

The report can be accessed from the inquiry website after 11:00 am on 16 July 2010 at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/fchy/youthviolence/report.htm>

A media launch will be held in Committee Room 2R1 at 11:00 am on 16 July 2010. This will be webcast live at: <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

For media comment, please contact the Committee Chair, Ms Annette Ellis on (02) 6293 1344 (electorate office).

For all other inquiries please contact the Inquiry Secretary by phone on (02) 6277 4566 or by email fchy.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the Committee's website: www.aph.gov.au/fchy