



Submission No. 25

(Youth Violence)

A.O.C. Date: 23/10/2009

**Youth Advisory Council
New South Wales**

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Family, Community, Housing and Youth
fchy.reps@aph.gov.au

23 October 2009

Dear Committee

I am writing regarding the Inquiry into the impact of violence on young Australians.

The Youth Advisory Council is set up by an Act of NSW Parliament, the *Youth Advisory Council Act 1989*. The Council is made up of 12 members from across NSW. The Council's role is to advise the Government of NSW, through the Minister for Youth, on matters of concern to young people and Government policies and programs concerning young people.

The Council would like to make a submission to the Inquiry, focusing on three of the terms of reference:

- perceptions of violence and community safety among young Australians;
- links between illicit drug use, alcohol abuse and violence among young Australians;
- strategies to reduce violence and its impact among young Australians.

Perceptions of violence and community safety among young Australians

Council members believe that personal safety is not guaranteed, especially in South West Sydney, the City, on trains and at night.

The Council is of the opinion that violence in regional areas is more targeted, while violence in large metropolitan areas occurs more randomly.

The Council agreed that violence, especially in sport, is seen as socially acceptable. Violence can be seen on TV, in movies and sport. It is normalised within schools as a source of entertainment.

The Council also noted that young people are using violence as a way of stopping themselves from becoming victims. It was thought that this is particularly the case with cultural and gang related violence.

Links between illicit drug use, alcohol abuse and violence among young Australians

The Council agreed that young people were well informed and educated on the consequences of alcohol and substance abuse and related violence. However, they also acknowledge that when young people are intoxicated or under the influence of illicit drugs they ignore what they have learnt.

The Council also believes that binge drinking and getting “hammered” are still seen as socially and culturally acceptable among young people. The Council noted that binge drinking culture is at a dangerous level.

The Council noted that if young people can’t get drunk at licensed venues, they will go elsewhere, including private homes and public spaces.

The Council also commented that crime rates associated with youth violence are on the rise and that it is commonly fuelled by alcohol and substance abuse.

Strategies to reduce violence and its impact among young Australians

The Council was largely of the opinion that to reduce the impact of violence among young Australians, the Government needs to identify and address the contributing factors that lead to violence.

The Council identified the following strategies to reduce violence:

- Increased education in schools about violence, particularly school yard bullying that leads to violence
- The provision of more support for children experiencing physical abuse
- Public education campaigns that focus on peers rejecting inappropriate behaviour.

Yours sincerely



Amanda Scott
Chair
Youth Advisory Council