



Community Relations Commission

For a multicultural NSW

“WHO AM I?”

REPORT OF THE

COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION

YOUTH LEADERS DAY

21 SEPTEMBER 2011

Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
Multicultural Youth Network.....	3
CRC Youth Commissioners	4
Attendance.....	4
Participation.....	4
OUTLINE OF THE DAY.....	6
Opening speeches	6
Workshop Sessions	6
Keynote Address	7
Concluding Plenary Session	7
EMERGING THEMES OF THE DAY	9
Workshop Strand A: Social Media.....	9
Workshop Strand B: Pathways to Leadership.....	11
Workshop Strand C: Advocacy.....	12
Workshop Strand D: Identity and Creative Cultural Expression..	13
Workshop Strand E: Community Engagement and Capacity Building.....	15
OUTCOMES OF 2011 CRC YOUTH LEADERS DAY	16

INTRODUCTION

The Community Relations Commission of New South Wales (CRC) undertakes wide-ranging consultation with the culturally, religiously, and linguistically diverse community of New South Wales with respect to its statutory objectives to promote the principles of multiculturalism.* As a key component of the Commission's consultation strategy, the Community Relations Commission Annual Symposium has become a special feature on the New South Wales multicultural event calendar.

The most significant development in the CRC Annual Symposium in recent years has been its expansion into a two-day event, with the first day dedicated entirely to young people. CRC Youth Leaders Day is a separate forum giving young people a voice on issues facing our multicultural society now and into the future.

The 2011 CRC Youth Leaders Day was the sixth consecutive year of this dynamic and well-attended event. The theme of this year's Youth Leaders Day was "Who am I?" The event took place on 21 September 2011 at the ParkRoyal, Parramatta.

Multicultural Youth Network

The Multicultural Youth Network (MYN) is a diverse group of young people who are committed to working together to promote the value of cultural diversity and to foster the acceptance and respect of this diversity. MYN was established by the CRC in 2005 and has played a key role in the CRC Youth Leaders Day since its inception in 2006.

MYN members were instrumental in the planning and implementation of the 2011 CRC Youth Leaders Day. The MYN served as the planning committee for the event, and MYN members also participated on the day as workshop facilitators. A special training session on workshop facilitation was organised by the CRC prior to the event for MYN members to build skills and confidence in this capacity. Rabbi Zalman Kastel, the National Director of Together for Humanity Foundation, ran the training session, which included the preparation of facilitator notes and guidelines and other materials to assist MYN members in the running of interactive group discussions, icebreakers and other activities to ensure that workshops were engaging and effective.

*The Principles of Multiculturalism

The *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism Act (2000)* defines "multiculturalism" by the following principles (the "principles of multiculturalism"):

- (a) the people of New South Wales are of different linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds who, either individually or in community with other members of their respective groups, are free to profess, practise and maintain their own linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic heritage,
- (b) all individuals in New South Wales, irrespective of their linguistic, religious, racial and ethnic backgrounds, should demonstrate a unified commitment to Australia, its interests and future and should recognise the importance of shared values governed by the rule of law within a democratic framework,

- (c) all individuals in New South Wales should have the greatest possible opportunity to contribute to, and participate in, all aspects of public life in which they may legally participate,
- (d) all individuals and institutions should respect and make provision for the culture, language and religion of others within an Australian legal and institutional framework where English is the common language,
- (e) all individuals should have the greatest possible opportunity to make use of and participate in relevant activities and programmes provided or administered by the Government of New South Wales,
- (f) all institutions of New South Wales should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the population of New South Wales as a valuable resource and promote this resource to maximise the development of the State.

CRC Youth Commissioners

Under NSW legislation, Community Relations Commissioners are elected from the community and appointed by the Governor of New South Wales. 15 Commissioners are currently appointed, and two of these are young people under the under the age of 25.

Youth Commissioners Sam Almaliki and George Pappas fulfilled the roles of MCs for the 2011 Youth Leaders Day.

Attendance

Building on the success of previous years, the much anticipated 2011 Youth Leaders Day and was very well supported and attended by approximately 200 youth delegates, presenters, speakers, workshop facilitators, MYN members and CRC representatives.

The CRC sent letters of invitation to the 2011 Youth Leaders Day to over 300 high schools from the private, public, and religious secondary school sectors, in addition to a number of youth and student representative bodies. The invitation list included a broad cross-section of high schools from the Sydney metropolitan area and beyond.

Recognising that the CRC Youth Leaders Day represents an excellent opportunity for students to learn and share ideas with students from diverse cultural and schooling backgrounds, the response from schools was very positive. Many registrations were lodged ahead of the deadline to ensure a place, and several schools asked to send more than the designated two student representatives.

Youth delegates represented approximately 95 high schools including government and non-government schools, Catholic, Muslim, Jewish and independent schools and youth organisations.

Participation

As a strongly youth-focused event, the 2011 CRC Youth Leaders Day featured 15 presentations on issues relevant to young people which were also presented

predominantly by young people. With MYN members also on board as workshop facilitators, and in some workshops presenters, and with CRC Youth Commissioners as MCs, this high-level of involvement by young people in all aspects of the day resulted in a refreshing amount of energy, optimism and creativity.

These qualities were particularly evident at the concluding plenary session which, despite being held at the end of the day, culminated in an engaged discussion about what growing up in a multicultural society means for young people and what they can do to lead the way for their communities in the areas of harmony, anti-discrimination, community engagement, and cross-cultural dialogue.

OUTLINE OF THE DAY

Opening speeches

Youth Commissioners Sam Almaliki and George Pappas, and the Chairperson of the Commission, Dr Stepan Kerkyasharian AO, welcomed delegates to the Youth Leaders Day in the Governor's Ballroom of the ParkRoyal Parramatta.

Delegates received a warm Welcome to Country by Darug Elder Uncle Greg Simms.

The Minister for Citizenship and Communities and also the Minister responsible for Youth Affairs in New South Wales, the Hon. Victor Dominello MP, officially opened proceedings. The Minister encouraged youth delegates to step up and be proud of their cultural identity and infuse it into the Australian way of life, whilst being proud Australians.

The Minister pointed out that multiculturalism is around us in every way and consideration and growth of multiculturalism needs to be the centre of Government decision making. The Minister believes this will be further strengthened by the support of young leaders. The Minister urged youth delegates to make the most of the discussion and workshops and hoped that delegates would be inspired to join the MYN so that it becomes a 'mighty force for multiculturalism in NSW'.

Workshop Sessions

Five concurrent workshop sessions facilitated by MYN members ran from 10:00am till 1:30pm with a morning tea break in between.

Workshop topics were formulated in consultation with the MYN project planning team to ensure they were relevant to young people. In addition, extensive research was undertaken to find the most successful and innovative projects currently being developed in the community with regards to young people in NSW.

The workshop topics for the 2011 Youth Leaders Day were:

- Social Media
- Pathways to Leadership
- Advocacy
- Identity and Creative Cultural Expression
- Community Engagement and Capacity Building

Keynote Address

The keynote address was delivered following the Minister's speech by Peta Jane (PJ) Madam. PJ is a journalist and news presenter, SBS.

PJ discussed the ways in which sharing information through social media is a powerful force and can break down barriers both personally and professionally and build trust between people even if they have not met before.

PJ highlighted the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya as a first class example of how people came together for a political cause regardless of background, age or religion. In these instances, social media enabled well organised rallies that received plenty of media coverage and this occurred several times. Social media in this case was able to give people a voice when mainstream media could not or would not.

The negative side of social media including not being able to verify footage; unable to provide answers all of the time; and great dilemma separating fact from fiction was also discussed.

PJ discussed the future and role of social media in modern multicultural Australia by sharing thoughts, opinions, views, exchanging facts and inspiring others. This platform helps to both educate and ensure people feel involved and included as a part of something bigger. PJ believes that in the right hands and the right spirit, social media can do wonders in bringing people together and spreading positive messages about living in harmony.

Concluding Plenary Session

The concluding plenary session discussion was facilitated by Youth Commissioners Sam Almaliki and George Pappas.

A representative from each workshop strand presented a summary of presentations to all delegates, providing an overview of workshop discussions and also presenting a photo tableaux of their workshop's key themes. The photo tableaux were produced during workshop sessions and were the outcome of small group discussions and brainstorming on the emerging themes of the workshop. Each small group was then asked to perform an impromptu tableau depicting one of the emerging themes and to hold this pose for a digital photo.

Presenting slide shows of the "photo tableaux" was a very effective way of guiding the plenary session, helping to bring the different topics discussed from the five workshop stands together in a meaningful and interesting manner. This creative engagement with the emerging themes at the conclusion of the day was readily embraced by the youth delegates whose level of enthusiasm, insight and capacity for lateral thinking was exemplary and inspiring.

The Chairperson of the CRC, Stepan Kerkyasharian AO, closed the 2011 CRC Youth Leaders Day with a lucky door prize and a closing address to youth delegates. The

Chairperson thanked the delegates for their participation and contribution displayed throughout the day.

The Chairperson spoke of the common interest of protecting what is Australia and all that it represents and the way young people and the future leaders need to carry forward the strong message of multiculturalism by accepting each other and our differences.

The Chairperson suggested that new ways of disseminating messages need to be discussed especially since social media is the way of the future and a way to keep connected. The Chairperson concluded by commenting that delegates can play a leadership role for young people by spreading the message of multiculturalism and that cultural differences play no part in our ability to live, work and be together.

EMERGING THEMES OF THE DAY

The following section is a summary of the workshop presentations and emerging themes from each of the five concurrent workshop sessions held on the day and listed below:

- Social Media
- Pathways to Leadership
- Advocacy
- Identity and Creative Cultural Expression
- Community Engagement and Capacity Building

Workshop Strand A: Social Media

MYN Youth Facilitators: Kousai Elali and George Pappas

The three presentations in the Social Media workshop stimulated an engaging discussion among youth delegates about the power of social media and its capacity to facilitate change, break down barriers and build trust between people. The workshop also focussed on online safety and personal branding.

Presentation 1: Project Eyewatch

Presenter: Constable Matthew Grech, NSW Police Force

Project Eyewatch is about bringing the Neighbourhood Watch program into the 21st Century. Project Eyewatch is an online Neighbourhood Watch meeting that is on anytime and anywhere and enables the community to participate in their own time in a safe environment.

Project Eyewatch provides an opportunity for two way communication; Police can provide accurate, up to date information to the community and the community can raise awareness of concerns and ask questions.

Social media has enabled the NSW Police Force to provide information to the community instantaneously, rather than waiting for the media to feed the information through. Each Police Local Area Command is in the process of establishing dedicated Facebook pages. These pages will be used to share information including details about wanted criminals and stolen vehicles and refer community members to appropriate agencies.

The NSW Police Force is the first in the world to use social media to allow the community to communicate with the Police. The idea is now being emulated around the world including the United Kingdom, where it is believed such a program would have assisted in minimising the extent of the riots in August 2011.

Presentation 2: Creating Change**Presenter: Donna Yap, LOUD**

This presentation showcased the ways in which social media can create change.

LOUD are the “change makers”, a communications agency which helps businesses to find a way to engage with the audience. LOUD treat social media as a conversation.

The presentation highlighted the two criteria of social media 1) multiple conversations must be supported simultaneously 2) anyone can join in on the conversation. Prior to the internet, all media was part of a group broadcasting only one message and no conversation or conversation but not a strong broadcast. Now the media is about conversations that can be broadcast and the tools that now exist create the content.

The presentation showcased several case studies of how social media is creating change including the Egyptian political revolution; The Khan Academy and 10, 000 hours. The ability of simultaneous conversation moves society forward and everyone is a content creator that can utilise social media to propel change. Young people are ‘digital natives’ as opposed to ‘digital immigrants’ and this is what can allow for real change.

Presentation 3: YOU Online**Presenter: George Pappas, MYN**

This presentation focussed on building an online presence and the inherent dangers of doing so. An overview was provided on social media and its impact and uses for young leaders who have opinions “*We don’t have a choice on where we do social media, the question is how well we do it*”.

The main points highlighted in this presentation covered:

- The internet is more about conversation and connection than content absorption and social media is now a fundamental part of everyday life.
- Twitter was recognised as a tool that enables communication across the globe and assists in breaking down barriers.
- Proper use of filters to ensure appropriate postings.

Workshop Strand B: Pathways to Leadership

MYN Facilitators: Sam Almaliki and Joe Elali

This workshop focussed on leadership pathways and the many routes available to reach career goals.

The session highlighted the ways in which personal, community and educational pathways often cross and influence each other and can influence individuals taking on leadership roles and creating the next generation of leaders.

Presentation 1: Urban Youth Council

Presenters: Mal Fruean, Afi Dauniika, Nia Ahum, Sade Fruean, Iata Fasomola, Jordan Oda, Yulia Pene, Kitone Moale and Hyrum Timu, NSW Council for Pacific Communities

The Urban Youth Council (UYC) formed in 2011 as a way to maintain social and cultural networks as a result of the relocation of families from social housing in South West Sydney.

The UYC consists of young people from New Zealand and Pacific Islander backgrounds and has enabled its members many opportunities to develop leadership skills. Some of the activities the UYC has participated in include: Reach: the Musical; The Emerging Youth Leadership Program; MYN Strategic Planning Day; NAIDOC Day; International Youth Day Forum and The Aboriginal Advisory Council celebration of International Day of Indigenous People.

The work and achievements of the UYC has been recognised by the community with nominations in 12 categories in the Pacific Awards Night.

Presentation 2: Ashcroft High School Leadership Model

Presenters: Janet Fairweather, Dennis Nguyen, Bridgette Logan and Callum Croft, Ashcroft High School

Ashcroft High School aims to have 50% of students involved in leadership programs. Induction begins from year 9 and continues into the senior schooling years. This workshop demonstrated a different model for developing school leaders and a school representative body. Selection into the Student Leadership Council (SLC) consists of an application process. The SLC body is divided into portfolios and includes global connections, healthy schools and quality teaching.

Ashcroft High School was featured ABC TV's *New Inventors* program in a culmination of their leadership program.

Presentation 3: Leading the Way**Presenters: Sam Almaliki and Joe Elali, MYN**

The presenters provided delegates with tips on being an effective leader and opportunities to expand skills based on personal experience. Delegates took away the following points:

- Get active – opportunities are endless
- Be confident in ideas and goals and your ability to achieve them
- Share ideas and intentions and bring people in to garner further support
- The more people participating on a project, more ideas are likely to be generated and the more successful the project is likely to be
- Share the load – delegate tasks so all participants are involved and share in the successes/achievements
- Find a mentor for support
- Set realistic goals and priorities and find out what is required to achieve them.

Workshop Strand C: Advocacy**MYN Facilitators: Basim Shamaon and Jordan Valageorgiou**

This workshop covered a range of strategies for approaching situations, understanding rights and responsibilities and providing an individual and collective voice for young people.

Presentation 1: Human Right's Education and Advocacy**Presenter: Loki Ball, Sydney Youth Engagement**

This presentation focussed on human rights based solutions to complex social and legal problems that young people face including bullying, domestic violence and homelessness.

An overview on human rights was provided that can be applied and used as tools for social change. Various case studies were highlighted to showcase how human rights based frameworks can in some circumstances be more effective in solving complex social and legal problems, as well as understanding about Australia's commitment to human rights.

Presentation 2: Advocacy Training**Presenter: Anne-Marie Taylor, Multicultural Youth Affairs Network (MYAN)**

This presentation discussed practical skills and tools to undertake advocacy about the issues that are important by identifying points of interest and ways to act on this.

Local and national levels of advocacy were highlighted and the notion of representing various views to decision makers. The importance of networking and building relationships with other people and organisations was discussed as well as developing an advocacy strategy once issues and goals have been identified.

Youth delegates discussed reasons why issues take so long to resolve and the formal procedures that slow down the process. Further discussion around forming a NGO and creating solutions independently instead of going through government channels was raised.

Presentation 3: Community and Cultural Transition**Presenter: Hamad Mustapha Turay, STARRTS**

This presentation discussed the Communities in Cultural Transition project which uses a holistic approach to implement advocacy at individual, family and community level.

The Communities in Cultural Transition project has three goals: to increase community capital; strengthen capacity of common groups; and break the cycle of independence.

Workshop Strand D: Identity and Creative Cultural Expression**MYN Facilitator: Elizabeth Mora**

This workshop highlighted the ways in which identifying with a particular culture or group helps young people feel a sense of belonging and contributes to overall well-being. The workshop also focussed on new technologies and the way it provides innovative ways to participate in creative activities as well as enable individuals to express their identity and culture.

Presentation 1: Respecting Cultural Connections – Youth Belonging and Social Cohesion,**Presenters: Elizabeth Mora, Emma Nicholls and Loubna Kawtharani, St George Youth Services**

St George Youth Services volunteers discussed with youth delegates the challenge of developing a strong multicultural society that fully engaged all members from diverse backgrounds. Issues of media and the development of identification were central to this discussion.

As part of the presentation, youth delegates were asked to actively participate in identifying the problems that challenge multiculturalism in Australia. Discussion included issues of media inaccuracies in the form of stereotyping and the failure to embrace multiculturalism that can cause conflict and isolation.

Presentation 2: Alex and Eve Series

Presenters: Alex Lykos, George Xanthis, Helena Stamoulis and Eithnee Feeney, The Bulldog Theatre Company

The Bulldog Theatre Company is made up of individuals and actors who are from multicultural backgrounds. The Bulldog Theatre was founded on the challenges faced by actors of cultural backgrounds in finding substantial roles in the Australian theatre. The Bulldog Theatre has allowed members to develop and produce original Australian plays that examine issues facing a nation made up of people from different religions, different cultures and socio-economic classes.

Bulldog Theatre productions are typically humorous and consider the challenges of multiculturalism including cross cultural relationships, socio-economic class division, the impact of crime and the dangers of drugs.

Presentation 3: Mothers Day

Presenter: Lidia Luna, Information and Cultural Exchange

Film maker Lidia Luna presented her short film, *'Mothers Day'* and talked about her inspiration in developing the storyline. The film focussed the challenge for children of first generation migrants in straddling values of their family taken from their birth homeland and those of their adopted country.

The main character of the film, Ana is rebellious and disrespectful towards her mother when she is asked to curb her socialising in order to pay more attention to her family. Ana seeks solace from her best friend but is surprised to find her friend is unsympathetic. Ana then discovers her friend is commemorating the death of her own mother and this realisation helps Ana to gain perspective on her mother's modest demands.

Workshop Strand D: Community Engagement and Capacity Building

MYN Facilitators: Sue Aji and David Guerrero

This workshop discussed opportunities which connect young people with their communities through creating ideas and projects that enhance their skills and knowledge and experience and by demonstrating how young people can act as facilitators of change within their communities and the wider community.

Presentation 1: Interact

Presenters: Lana Nguyen, Judy Tran, Kevin Tran, Courtney Lor and Predeepti Sen, Hurlstone Agricultural High School

Interact was established as a way of raising community awareness of social justice within the school and the surrounding local area. The name stands for *International Action*. The club forms part of an international network promoting global awareness. Currently there are 290 members, making it the largest student run charitable organisation in the Southern Hemisphere. The club has strong links with the local community through the Rotary Club, the local radio station C91.3FM and Facebook.

This workshop discussed the diversity and participation that is emphasised through the teamwork and involvement of students from Hurlstone Agricultural High School.

Presentation 2: 'Peace Warrior' and 'Stand Up Speak Out' Programs

Presenters: Louisa McKimm and Tamara Clayton, The Michael Marslew Foundation operating as part of the Enough is Enough Anti-Violence Movement

The *Peace Warrior* and *Stand Up Speak Out* programs are designed to enhance the ability of young people to engage with the broader community in a peaceful, positive way.

The presentation discussed the development of both programs and the ways in which they are based around the view of violence of young people arises from misunderstanding between each other, and an absence of a positive outlet for that energy.

Presentation 3: Belonging, Identity, Spirit and Participation

Presenters: Nadine Chami, Mohammed Taha, Meg Jeffrey and Rabbi Zalman Kastel, Together for Humanity Foundation

Presenters discussed the issues of engagement and belonging in the community, providing delegates with an insight into how they might connect with and contribute to the processes of engagement and identity formation.

OUTCOMES OF 2011 CRC YOUTH LEADERS DAY

In summary, the 2011 CRC Youth Leaders Day succeeded in achieving the following outcomes:

- Approximately 200 young people participated on the day as delegates, presenters and workshop facilitators.
- Youth delegates represented 95 high schools including government schools and non-government, Catholic, Muslim, Jewish and independent schools and youth organisations.
- Five concurrent workshops allowed for an enthusiastic level of participation in discussion and the sharing of ideas and practical advice on issues that were recognised as being of importance for young people in a culturally diverse society.
- Members of the MYN were successful in fulfilling their roles of workshop facilitators.
- Feedback via Survey Monkey online evaluation reported that many of the youth delegates found the event enjoyable and thought it to be a great learning experience. Highlights of the day included the opportunity to meet new people from different cultural backgrounds in a positive learning atmosphere.

These outcomes will be used to inform the planning and implementation of future community events and forums organised by the Community Relations Commission including the 2012 CRC Youth Leaders Day.