



Positive Pathways for Victoria's Vulnerable Young People

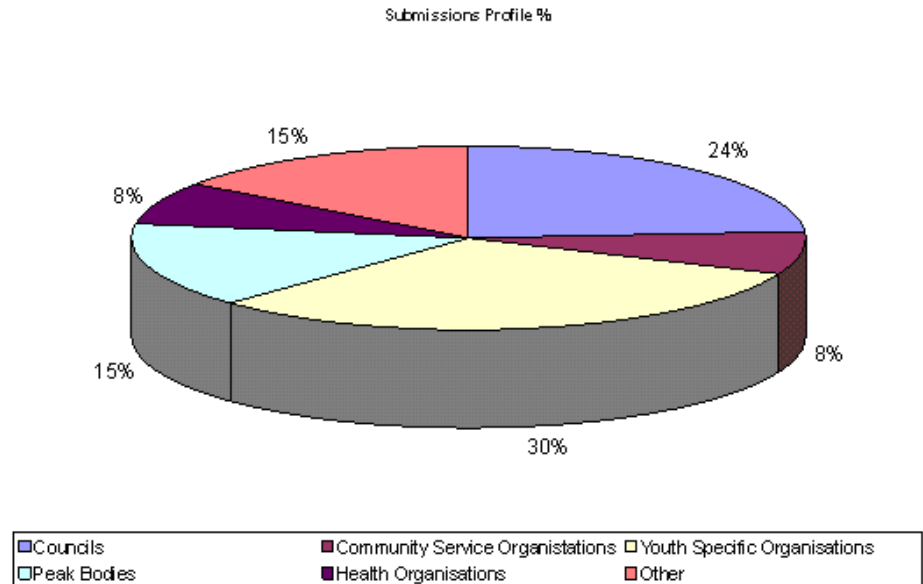
A policy framework to support vulnerable youth

VCOSS/ YACVic sector briefing

7 October 2010

Conception of the framework

- **Genesis**
- The sector and government recognising the need for a coordinated approach to policy, delivering supports and measuring outcomes for vulnerable young people aged 10-25 years
- **Consultation process**
- Over 800 hard copies of the discussion paper were distributed to key stakeholders and interested parties
- Over 300 people attended consultation workshops
- Over 80 written submissions received from Councils, peaks, Community service and health organisations and youth specific organisations



Themes emerging from the consultation

- Systemic reform

- Need for a whole of government, cross portfolio approach
- Need for additional resources to achieve reform
- Lack of coordination in supports leading to young people 'falling through the gaps'
- Importance of local planning and effective consultation
- Need for tailored responses to particular groups of vulnerable young people
- Build service capacity and effectiveness by connecting organisations with evidenced based quality practice resources

- Key role for education

- Schools as a key platform for early identification
- Need for better assistance for transitions from primary into secondary school and into post-compulsory education/training and employment
- The need to provide more and/or better alternative education pathways, as well as improved access to higher education and training/employment.

Introduction

- The target group

Young people aged between 10-25 who, through a combination of their stage of life, individual, family and community circumstances and barriers to participation, are at risk of not realising their potential to achieve positive life outcomes

- The objective

That they have a strong sense of belonging, are motivated to create and share in opportunities and are valued for their contributions and influence in their communities

<p>1. All young people (aged 10 to 25 years) Vulnerability managed through family, recreation, social and cultural support</p>	
<p>The majority of Victoria's young people cope well with vulnerabilities that arise during adolescence.</p> <p>Risk factors:</p> <p>Traumatic life events (death of family / friend)</p> <p>Difficulty with peers</p>	<p>2. Experiencing additional problems Vulnerability requires early interventions</p> <p>Some young people experience additional problems that require an early service intervention. Community-based interventions at this level reduce the escalation of problems.</p> <p>Risk factors:</p> <p>Low-level truancy</p> <p>First contact with police</p> <p>Emerging mental health issues</p> <p>Experimental alcohol or other drug use</p> <p>Family conflict</p> <p>Unstable peer group</p> <p>Isolated from community</p> <p>Pregnant/teenage parent</p>
	<p>3. Highly vulnerable Requires comprehensive, coordinated interventions</p> <p>Highly vulnerable young people require comprehensive and coordinated interventions from a range of support services.</p> <p>Risk factors:</p> <p>Left home/homelessness</p> <p>Disengaged from family</p> <p>Significant alcohol or other drug use</p> <p>Not working or enrolled in education</p> <p>Mental health</p> <p>Frequent truancy</p> <p>Family violence</p> <p>Sexual abuse</p>
	<p>4. High risk Young people who are at high risk require intensive interventions</p> <p>Although relatively small in number, young people experiencing vulnerability at this level require intensive support services.</p> <p>Risk factors:</p> <p>Co-occurring chronic problems (such as alcohol or other drug and mental health)</p> <p>Criminal orders from Children's or adult Court</p> <p>Out-of-home care</p>

Areas of focus



Key actions flowing from the framework

- 1.Improve educational opportunities for young people at risk of disengaging from education
- 2.Improve service system identification of vulnerability
- 3.Extend opportunities for vulnerable young people to have a say in policies that affect them
- 4.Support local efforts by sharing information and research
- 5.Focusing workforce resources around evidence based practice

Implementation

- Involvement of four Ministers
- Coordination by the Children's Services Coordination Board
- Implementation of whole of Government actions



How will the framework be used?

- To guide future program design, development and implementation
- A reference for policy makers to facilitate effective planning and service delivery
- To coordinate a holistic, cross portfolio and localised approach to youth services
- To advocate for the needs of vulnerable young people and the workers in their lives
- To encourage schools and vocational education providers to provide enhanced supports to vulnerable young people
- To facilitate next steps in service system reform through the investment in *Brighter Futures*

The beginning of reform

From:

- Vulnerable young people who drop out of school have limited alternatives
- Some vulnerable young people missing out on services and falling through the gaps
- Limited involvement of young people in program and service design
- Complex service system which is difficult to navigate, with multiple referrals
- Fragmented services which do not interact with each other, each addressing a specific component of the issue faced by a young person

To:

- ➔ • Flexible education options which are tailored for vulnerable young people to ensure engagement with education and training
- ➔ • Timely identification of vulnerable young people, preventing escalation of issues and entry into tertiary and statutory service systems
- ➔ • Better representation from particularly vulnerable groups to enable tailored responses
- ➔ • Streamlined assessment and access to local services
- ➔ • Services linked to provide a holistic and coordinated service responses