
From: Andrew Johnson
Sent: Wednesday, 5 February 2025 5:38 PM
To: Committee Social Issues
Cc: Jess Fielding; Veronica Gordon
Subject: CM: Inquiry into the prevalence, causes and impacts of loneliness in New South Wales - post hearing response

Dear Committee Members,

Please find our post-hearing response below. We look forward to continuing to work with the Committee in the future. We are currently finalizing youth hubs in a box including funding models and we will send you the work as soon as it is completed - our hope is in the next month.

Kind regards

Dr AMANDA COHN

My first question was just—you mentioned that you were working on pulling together some of this specific advice on the hubs. Would it be possible for you to share that with the Committee on notice?

Response

Background

In 2024 Youth Action, Thrive International and the NSW Government released the 'Key Tenants of Programs that Successfully Engage Young People Report'. The report built upon the work of The University of Sydney, Youth Action, Youth Work NSW and Department of Communities and Justice on evidence-based practice: Youth Evidence reviews on Socioemotional Wellbeing and Youth Work: Agency and Empowerment hereafter "evidence review".

The key findings from the report were the need for youth hubs to be expanded as a key solution to youth disengagement, social cohesion, youth connecting into services and mental health. In consultations with young people and the youth sector and in further consultations with 1200 young people undertaken across the areas of social cohesion, loneliness and justice (throughcare), 85% of respondents wanted more investment in youth hubs.

Further research in relation to hubs was conducted by Youth Action with a roundtable of 40 representatives from Government and non-government organisations. The following was discussed.

- Key elements of a hub
- What supports do young people want to be connected to as soft-entry points?
- Community engagement and capacity-building
- Training, service navigation and connection

Further work has taken place including, the establishment of a working group, additional consultations, including the Youth Action conference where best practice of operational procedures of hubs was discussed, interviews with news and media, and meetings with various Government agencies.

Why are hubs important?

Youth hubs are a foundational space in the community which, connect young people to individualised support and centralised services (e.g., Centrelink, Housing, NDIS LAC) and streamline access to them (e.g. Monthly outreach); are an environment that fosters love, rapport, and belonging and allows young people to feel a sense of trust, are culturally safe and inclusive and foster community and ownership. They are adaptable, flexible and responsive to community need.

A hub is not a building, it's a concept. Revitalise assets to ensure they are purposeful. A hub can meet a young person where they are at and extends beyond a physical centre (outreach model).

Next Steps

- Establish Minimum standards of a youth hub
- Determine funding model
- Run another roundtable
- Fund economic modelling for outcome for hubs

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: You said in your opening remarks about a need for more hubs. Do you have a list of areas where there is the unmet need at the moment?

The working group is currently continuing to work on a place-based need response in relation to the hubs model in NSW. Further conversations will be shared with the Committee in the future.