CONTACT INFORMATION

Office  Suite 13, Level 4, Macarthur Square Shopping Centre, Gilchrist Drive, Campbelltown NSW 2560

Post  PO Box 112, Macarthur Square NSW 2560

Phone  02 4628 2319

Email  info@youthsolutions.com.au

Website  youthsolutions.com.au

Facebook  facebook.com/youthsolutionsnsw

Twitter  twitter.com/youthsolutions

Instagram  instagram.com/youth_solutions

YouTube  youtube.com/YouthSolutionsNSW

Please direct any questions you may have about this Project Report to Youth Solutions.

PROJECT LEAD

Karen Yuen
Youth Development Coordinator
Youth Solutions
karen@youthsolutions.com.au

YOUTH SOLUTIONS STAFF

PEEP was supported by the following Youth Solutions staff members:

- Geraldine Dean, Chief Executive Officer
- Shannon McEwan, Finance and Administration Officer
- Amanda Dillon, Communications Coordinator
- Miriam Deshayes, Health Promotion Officer
  (April 2016 – current)
- Rachel Kershaw, Program Support Officer
  (February 2016 – current)
- Lauren Ognenovski, Health Promotion Coordinator
  (July – December 2015)
- Sue Willoughby, Executive Administration Officer
  (July 2015 – March 2016)
CONTENTS

Contact Information ........................................................................................................ 2
Project Lead’s Message ................................................................................................. 4
Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................ 4
Project Rationale ........................................................................................................... 5
Guiding Principles ......................................................................................................... 5
Project Overview ............................................................................................................ 6
Project Highlights ......................................................................................................... 7
Media .............................................................................................................................. 8
Findings ............................................................................................................................ 9
Recommendations .......................................................................................................... 10
YAG Testimonials .......................................................................................................... 10
References ...................................................................................................................... 11
2015 – 2016 has been a year of many exciting changes for PEEP. At the beginning of 2016, Youth Solutions created the Peer Education program as a new opportunity to engage with new youth volunteers in Macarthur, as well as to continue engagement with previous YAG members and students.

In addition, Youth Solutions has aligned the peer education workshops facilitated by its YAG members and peer educators with the service’s SAFE Series of presentations. As a result, the peer education workshops are more closely linked with alcohol and other drug issues with measurable health outcomes.

Thank you to the YAG members, peer educators students and project collaborators for your involvement and contribution to PEEP!

Thanks for your support!
— Karen

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

NSW HEALTH AND SWSLHD
Youth Solutions received core funding from NSW Health and South Western Sydney Local Health District towards the Peer Enrichment and Empowerment Project (PEEP).

PANAROTTI’s RESTAURANT
Youth Solutions would like to thank Panarotti’s Macarthur for generously providing catering for monthly YAG meetings throughout 2015 – 2016.

PROJECT COLLABORATORS
Youth Solutions enjoyed collaborating with the following organisations to deliver PEEP in 2015 – 2016:

- Ambarvale High School
- Camden Community Connections
- Camden High School
- Camden Rams Junior Rugby League Club
- Elderslie High School
- Elizabeth Macarthur High School
- Macarthur Disability Services (MDS)
- Mount Annan Christian College
- Save The Children Australia – Youth Advisory Council
- TAFE SWSI Campbeltown Campus
- Traxside Youth Health Service Macarthur – CQ Group
- Wingecarribee Shire Council

YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP
Youth Solutions deeply values the support of the Youth Advisory Group (YAG), and would like to thank the following members for assisting with PEEP:

- Amber Noonan
- Chisato Nakashima
- Clarissa Tosti
- Danielle Kahn
- Kirsty Fitzgerald
- Joel Boyd
- Natalie Giunta
- Rachel Kershaw
- Teriece McCully

PEER EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS
Youth Solutions would like to thank the following Peer Educators for assisting with PEEP:

- Adrian Agostino
- Gopi Subramaniam
- Jennifer Huynh
Youth Solutions acknowledges the importance of peer education when it comes to communicating messages to young people. A Mission Australia (2014) survey of young Australians aged 15 – 19 years found that young people rely increasingly more on their friends and social media networks and the internet as a source of information. This suggests the importance of developing programs lead by peers, which allow young people to more effectively support each other and access appropriate professional services when needed.

**TOBACCO USE**

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2011a, 2011b) and South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD, 2014):

- 19.2% of people living in south western Sydney are current smokers
- 27% of young males in south western Sydney smoke
- 27.4% of young females in south western Sydney smoke
- 50% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders are current smokers
- Campbelltown LGA has the highest rate of smokers across Sydney – 25.3%
- Campbelltown LGA has the highest rates of females smoking during pregnancy across Sydney – 19.5%
- Smoking is the leading cause of preventable disease and death in Australia.

**MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE**

In 2015, almost one in seven (13.9%) 14 - 17 year-olds were assessed as having mental disorders in the previous 12 months (Lawrence et. Al., 2015). Smoking was higher for young people with major depressive disorder, with one quarter (24.4%) having smoked in the last 30 days. Alcohol consumption was higher among young people with major depressive disorder based on self-report, with 27.6% having drunk more than four drinks in a row in the last 30 days.
PROJECT OVERVIEW

GOAL

Through PEEP, Youth Solutions aimed to decrease alcohol and other drug use and increase resilience and positive mental health outcomes for young people aged 15 – 25 years by:

- increasing knowledge of drugs, alcohol and related harms
- increasing skills in resilience, stress management, safe decision making and positive coping strategies
- increasing connections with peer educators

STRATEGY 1: YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP

The Youth Advisory Group (YAG) is a group of volunteers who live, work or study in the Macarthur region. The YAG assists Youth Solutions with:

- identifying issues of concern to young people
- developing strategies to address issues
- delivering peer education workshops
- implementing a health promotion campaign

In 2015 – 2016, the YAG consisted of 9 young people aged 17 – 25 years.

STRATEGY 2: PEER EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Peer Education Program consists of a group of volunteers who live, work, study or recreate in the Macarthur region. The peer educators assist Youth Solutions with:

- delivering peer education workshops
- implementing a health promotion campaign

In 2015 – 2016, Youth Solutions recruited 11 peer educators aged 17 – 25 years.

STRATEGY 3: PEER EDUCATION TRAINING PROGRAM

Members of the YAG participate in the peer education training program each year to develop their knowledge and skills to deliver peer education workshops.

In 2015 – 2016, the training sessions were:

1. Introduction to peer education
2. Community engagement
3. Mental health and resilience
4. Alcohol and other drugs
5. Workshop facilitation skills
6. Social media and newsletters
7. Finance and budgeting
8. Cultural awareness

YAG members also had the opportunity to participate in training provided by external providers:

- Tackling Tobacco training (Cancer Council NSW)
- Youth Mental Health First Aid (Wesley Mission Life Force)

STRATEGY 4: PEER EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

Peer education workshops from the Youth Solutions SAFE series of presentations are delivered to young people aged 12 – 25 years, by Youth Solutions’ staff members and YAG members.

The workshops involve the YAG members leading an interactive activity to other young people. In 2015 – 2016, the presentations included:

- Party SAFE (safer celebrations)
- Party SAFE (harm minimisation with cannabis)
- Cyber SAFE (AOD and cyber safety)
- Value Your Mind (mental health and wellbeing)
PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- YAG Orientation and Induction
- Youth Solutions’ stall at Ambarvale High School
- Party SAFE with Camden Rams Junior Rugby League Club
- Party SAFE (cannabis) presentation with Traxside Youth Health Service Macarthur
- Party SAFE and Cyber SAFE presentations in collaboration with Camden Community Connections at Elizabeth Macarthur High School, Elderslie High School, Camden High School and Mount Annan High School
- RU OK? Day stall and activities at Macarthur Square Shopping Centre
- Value Your Mind presentation with the Save the Children Australia Youth Advisory Committee
- Value Your Mind presentation with students at TAFE SWSi Campbelltown Campus
- Assisting with the planning and implementing the Wingecarribee Youth Forum
- Party SAFE at Ambarvale High School
- Party SAFE at Mount Annan Christian College
20/05/2016 – Camden-Narellan Advertiser

Macarthur youth help search for a solution

They’re the group of volunteers dedicated to helping the region’s young people.

And they want your help.

The Youth Solutions’ Youth Advisory Group – made up of locals aged between 17 and 29 – are on the front line when it comes to health promotion in the area.

09/05/2016 – South West Voice

Want to make a difference: sign up for Youth Solutions

Are you a young person who is passionate about youth health?

Are you looking to make a difference in the Macarthur community?

Yes? Then Youth Solutions would love to hear from you.

The youth drug and alcohol prevention and health promotion charity is recruiting for its Youth Advisory Group (YAG).

Young people aged between 17 - 25 years, who live, work, study or spend their recreation time in Macarthur, have until Tuesday, May 24 to apply for the 2016 - 2017 YAG intake.

Youth Solutions chief executive officer Geraldine Dean encouraged young people with a passion for youth health and health promotion to apply.

“The Youth Solutions YAG is a vital part of our service,” Mrs Dean said.

“Our YAG members help us to ensure that our work is positively and appropriately geared towards the young people in our community.”

06/06/2016 – Macarthur Chronical (Campbelltown and Camden – Wollondilly edition)

Being a part of the solution

To tackle drug and alcohol abuse, join health charity’s Youth Advisory Group and make a difference.
FINDINGS

**PEEP**

**9 YAG MEMBERS | 11 PEER EDUCATORS**

- 317 VOLUNTEER HOURS
- 279 WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS
- 15 PEER EDUCATION WORKSHOPS
- 3 COMMUNITY EVENTS
- 11 COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

5% ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS
30% CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE

100% Reported increased knowledge and skills by YAG members about peer education

100% Reported increased knowledge and skills by YAG members about community engagement

100% Reported increased knowledge and skills by YAG members about health promotion

**PARTYsafe**

**195 YOUNG PEOPLE | 20 STAKEHOLDERS**

- 12 GROUPS
- 9 COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

9% ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS
23% CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE

76% Reported increased knowledge about the types and effects of alcohol and other drugs

71% Reported increased knowledge about being safe around alcohol

72% Reported increased knowledge and skills about what to do in an emergency

74% Reported increased knowledge and skills to access support services
RECOMMENDATIONS

YOUTH VOLUNTEERS

- Decreasing the membership period to 6 months from 12 months
- Integrating more social activities and events into the calendar

HEALTH OUTCOMES

Continue to incorporate once-off presentations which currently sit under non-core projects into PEEP. Such presentations include:

- Party SAFE (safer celebrations strategies)
- Quit SAFE (harm minimisation for tobacco use)
- Sport SAFE (AOD and sport)
- Cyber SAFE (AOD and digital reputation)

PROJECT COLLABORATIONS

Explore project collaboration opportunities with:

- Bunnings Warehouse
- headspace Campbelltown YRG
- other local youth advisory groups
- local junior rugby league clubs
- Sport and Recreation NSW
- Subway

YAG TESTIMONIALS

I gained knowledge and experience about working in Youth Work context and drugs and alcohol. Everyone is welcoming and reliable.

- Chisato (YAG member)

It’s a fantastic opportunity to give back, learn and teach youth about positive health.

- Clarissa (YAG member)

Everyone at Youth Solutions makes you feel like you are more than just a volunteer. They respect you and your views and are passionate about improving the lives of all young people.

- Danielle (YAG member)

I liked the opportunities I was presented with whilst I was part of YAG. If it was not for these opportunities, I may not have realised I wanted to work in the Health Promotion field.

- Rachel (YAG member)
REFERENCES

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2011, ‘Substance use among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’, *Australian Institute of Health and Welfare*, Canberra, Cart. No. AIHW 40


