# Consultation questions – youth policy

**Date: Monday, 12 October 2015**

**About you - Mr Kelvin Glare AO, APM, O StJ, Retired Chief Commissioner of Police.**

 **Mr Ivan Ray Retired Police Inspector, Founder of Blue light**

**Input -**

**Draft vision**

Q. What do you think of the draft vision?

**The target group 12 to 24 is not realistic and does not reflect the community understanding of “Youth”.**

 **The age of 18 years allows young Victorians to obtain a drivers licence, the right to vote, drink and buy alcohol, purchase tobacco products and view restricted media and entertainment, establish an independent identity, own property, incur debt, gain independent access to Social Welfare, obtain a passport, shooters license, become a company director, and if falling foul of the law will be dealt with in the adult Criminal Justice system – they are adults..**

**This is not to suggest that some over 18’s are not entitled to and need support. Moving this group in to the adult sphere may require the realignment of resources but the outcomes would create a more focused organization capable of better service delivery to Youth. The effectiveness of this strategy would be reflected in a reduction in the over 18’s requiring support.**

 **It is likely that there is a higher proportion per capita in resources dedicated to the over 18’s.**

**A shift in focus to early intervention is essential if we want to make a difference.**

**The looming inevitability of adulthood may help motivate some youths to make adjustments sooner rather than later particularly if the consequences of not adjusting look dire.**

**At the other end of the age spectrum, by the age of 12 early intervention in many cases is too late and they are close to having shattered lives rather than cracked which may be repaired.**

**Recommendation:**

**Amend youth definition age to 6 – 18 to better allow for more focused outcomes.**

**Draft objectives**

Q. What do you think of the draft objectives?

**Laudable but they must be underpinned by actual programs. We would expect that these draft objectives are in place now and there is nothing new.**

**The draft Policy draws us to the view that there is little appetite for change in this Youth space.**

**The lack of prominence for early intervention is very disappointing when it should be to the fore. Equally a major omission is the ability to Triage young people to the correct service agency. Good outcomes can’t be expected unless when cracks appear the youths are connected to the correct agency/service. The onus on connecting correctly appears to be with the Youth or their family, if they have one, and that is deplorable and an abdication of responsibility and a major failing in the system.**

**Recommendation:**

**Encourage the Chief Commissioner to reintroduce the Police in schools program so appropriately trained Police can perform this triage function.**

**What’s important to young people?**

Young people have identified the following issues as important to youth.[[1]](#endnote-1) Please respond only to those questions of interest to you.

Q. What do you think should be done to improve educational opportunities for young people?

**Better schools, better teachers. Education pathways that better suit particular students and considerable focus to explain the relevance of education to students. Pathways as an alternate to the purely academic have to be marketed so the feeling of less self-worth by not achieving high academic results is minimised. Realistic education outcomes and goals for individual students communicated to families is essential. Relieving unrealistic pressure from students will lead to far better outcomes for young people. Even with effective pathways a tutoring system to help struggling students to meet their full worth is essential.**

**Recommendation:**

**Undertake a feasibility study of better education pathways and apply strategies to minimise feeling of less self-worth by not achieving traditional academic stardom. Explore the feasibility of a Tutoring system for students with problems.**

Q. What do you think should be done to improve training opportunities for young people?

**There is a need for young people to receive assistance to aim at a career within their individual intellectual and physical capabilities. That could be linked to the tutoring system.**

Q. What do you think should be done to increase employment opportunities for young people?

**More support for those who employ young people, with, for example, tax breaks. Employing young people who have no skills is not easy for the largest employer in Australia (Small Business). This area needs to be addressed independently of this exercise as it is a large issue of itself, but relevant training, Incentives for employers and employees need to be reviewed and acted upon in the best interest of youth.**

**Recommendation:**

**Undertake an employment review targeted to better achieve a better take up by young people.**

Q. What do you think should be done to improve the mental health of young people?

**Where teachers or others believe a young person may be suffering some kind of mental issue facilitate early intervention. Training and access to resources. Identifying a potential problem is one thing, guiding the student to appropriate/effective care is another.**

**Recommendation:**

**Support the Chief Commissioner in the re-establishment of the Police In Schools Program where Police Officers are trained to look for early indications of Mental Health issues so they can provide young people with the referral resources.**

Q. What do you think should be done to tackle alcohol and drug issues for young people?

**Education, particularly through the re-introduction of a Police in Schools Program. The promotion of sport and role models will help, but early intervention is essential.**

**Recommendation:**

**Properly resourced Police in Schools Program Officers in consultation with School staff would be ideally placed to address these issues.**

Q. What do you think should be done to improve housing for young people?

**Housing infrastructure development targeted at accommodation for young people. If we can house refugees we can house our own youth. We need to take another look at this issue with all options on the table. No Youth should be left without access to housing but this must be handled with care as every child over 14 thinks about leaving home and to make housing available with ease might open the floodgates and create more family dysfunction and welfare dependence than the status quo.**

Q. What do you think should be done to tackle discrimination of young people?

**Education – Police in Schools Program. Teachers desperately need support, they are there to teach and we are placing additional responsibilities extraneous to their core function. These additional burdens means something/somebody has to suffer.**

**Recommendation:**

 **A Police In Schools program would be ideally placed to address this issue as well as Bullying - both physical and cyber.**

Q. What do you think should be done to improve public transport for young people?

**Greater reductions in fares for young people and students.**

Q. What else do you think should be done to improve the lives of young people in Victoria?

**Have Government provide actual programs rather than rhetoric**.

Q. Any other comments?

**Care of International students…………..**

**Selling the resource of education internationally has created a valuable export commodity and a commerce sector in it’s own right. We are told to expect significant growth and that this education business forms an important part of our balance of trade and contributes to the wealth of the Nation. It is also a commercial operation with the profits going to Universities and private providers but the cost of providing youth welfare services to these students is carried by the State.**

**I know of no other commercial operation where the State resources are used to contribute to the profitability of a very lucrative enterprise.**

**It appears the user pay principle is not applied.**

**After the kerfuffle with Indian students not that long ago, we believe the community would be outraged to know that we are providing this service to a commercial operation perhaps at the expense of our own.**

**Having to service 160,000 students has to have a substantial impact on the Youth budget and therefore allocation of resources.**

**A levy of $500 per student p/a would generate $80Mil p/a in the first year and climb to in excess of $400Mil over four years, factoring in the projected growth of the industry.**

**Sufficient to fund an improved (rolled gold) service to these students and would generate sufficient income to develop and resource an extensive (rolled gold) early intervention program the likes of which have never been seen. It would also fund a tailored Tutoring program to raise education levels in support of other initiatives.**

**A solid business case can be constructed for this initiative.**

**The obverse is the growth of this industry will place an ever increasing burden on existing services further progressively detracting them from our own youth.**

**The additional employment opportunities in the Youth, Education and Police sector and the ability to properly service the triage function for a revamped Police in Schools Program would certainly have attractions and contribute to the Victorian economy.**

**The International Student industry can make a commercial decision to either pass the levy on to the students or absorb the cost as an expense like every other business enterprise. No wonder this enterprise is so profitable if they can duck and hive off expensive services elsewhere, hidden in other Government Department budgets.**

**We would be confident that the Government would be attracted to this proposition as finding additional substantial revenue streams is very difficult. The State will need to act promptly as once it is out there, it will be picked up very quickly at a National level.**

**Recommendation:**

***Introduce an Annual Levy of $500 on all International fee paying students in Victoria.***

**Coordination and evaluation of resources……..**

**There is an appalling lack of coordination of Government, and NFP (Not For Profit) Youth resources. Although there appears to be plenty of meetings, the outcomes of these meetings are questionable. There is an urgent need for leadership and accountability in this area.**

**Reducing duplication and better targeting of resources will mean better outcomes for Youth.**

**There appears to be plenty of rhetoric but a lack of on ground application.**

**The support administrative function outstrips the on ground application of programs by a seriously large factor. Further there seems little evaluation of suitability of purpose – effectively anybody can hang a shingle, start a youth enterprise and expect to get NFP status with all the advantages and without any accountability as to outcomes for youth.**

**A review of the Youth Commission where it can provide a para legal service in support of practitioners in the field and evaluate service providers would be a very positive step. The power of the Commission would be limited to the ability to refer matters to the Children’s Court for legal orders.**

**Recommendation:**

***The Role and function of the Youth Commission be reviewed and expanded to perform these vital tasks. Introducing a broad church of expertise to the ranks of the Commission with a substantial bias to pragmatism to ensure our children receive the best possible care and support when and where they need it, to the exclusion of administrative and political niceties.***

**There is a need for action – NOW.**

1. Mission Australia, 2014. *Location, Vocation, Aspiration – Youth Survey 2014.* [↑](#endnote-ref-1)