

2013 NATIONAL YOUTH HEALTH CONFERENCE

FINAL REPORT

Introduction

The 2013 National Youth Health Conference, hosted by the Australian Association for Adolescent Health (AAAH), was held at the Esplanade Hotel in Fremantle, Western Australia (WA) from November 13-15th 2013. The conference was the latest in a series of National Youth Health Conferences that have taken place in Australia over the last 30 years. This was the first conference to be hosted by AAAH since its re-launch in November 2011.

Full details of the conference, including speakers and youth participants, can be viewed on the conference website at <http://youthhealthconference.promaco.com.au>

The outline of the conference program is available at http://youthhealthconference.promaco.com.au/AAAH_Program.pdf

Delegates

The conference brought together 270 delegates from Australia, New Zealand, the Asia Pacific region, Europe and North America to highlight the latest research in Youth Health, showcase examples of best practice and provide an opportunity for health professionals working with young people to develop new contacts and enrich existing networks.

Delegates were drawn from a wide range of disciplines including medicine, nursing, allied health, education, mental health, non-government agencies, Aboriginal Health and youth justice.

Keynote speakers included:

- Professor George Patton, Professor of Adolescent Health Research, University of Melbourne
- Dr Deborah Christie, Clinical Psychologist, University College Hospitals, London, UK
- Professor Jonathan Carapetis, Director of the Telethon Kids Institute, WA
- Dr Simon Denny, University of Auckland, NZ
- His Excellency Malcolm McCusker, Governor of WA
- Ms Michelle Scott, WA Commissioner for Children and Young People
- The Hon. Tony Simpson MLA, Minister for Youth; Local Government and Communities

Speakers at the conference symposia included:

- Mr Peter Orchard, CEO, CanTeen
- Mr Chris Tanti, CEO, headspace
- The Hon Chief Justice Wayne Martin
- Judge Denis Reynolds

Youth participation program

The conference included a vibrant youth participation program, coordinated by the

Australian Association for Adolescent Health

Starlight Foundation, and generously sponsored by the WA Department of Local Government and Communities. Funding was used to support registrations and travel for young people coming from regional and remote areas of WA and for elements of the arts / entertainment program.

Details of many of the young people who took part in the conference are available on the website:

<http://youthhealthconference.promaco.com.au/youth-participants.php>

Young people were involved in the planning and running of the conference in the following ways:

- participation in the program planning committee
- speaking / performing at the opening and closing ceremonies (see attached photographs)
 - Ingrid Cumming: Welcome to Country
 - Emma Crane: UNICEF Australia Young Ambassador
 - Helen Pepper: closing address
 - Wesley Boys: performance at closing ceremony
- co-chairing of scientific sessions
- speaking at symposia and scientific sessions
- entertainment throughout the conference, including welcome drinks and conference dinner
- official conference photographer (Rachael Barrett)

The success and importance of the youth participation program was reflected in the positive feedback, both formal and informal, received from many of the delegates. Embedding the participation of young people in the planning and running of the conference gave the meeting an energy and a quality that was commented on by a large number of those attending.

Examples of feedback from conference delegates are shown below:

'Having youth performers and youth do all the supportive things like photography, sound, etc was very inspiring and should be continued to support the theme of the conference'

'I loved the variety of the talks and presentations, the venue, the youth participation, the entertainment'

'The UNICEF speaker was excellent as was the Welcome To Country'

'It was also great to have the young people involved as much more than just a token gesture'

I think the involvement of youth was excellent and future conferences should build even further on this where possible'

'The conference was terrific - not just the academic and clinical presentations but the thoughtful ways you punctuated the beginning and end of each day and integrated the young people's views all the way through'

Sponsorship, bursaries, exhibitors and supporters

The conference received generous sponsorship from a wide range of sources. These included:

- The University of Western Australia

Australian Association for Adolescent Health

- WA Child and Adolescent Health Service
- WA Department of Local Government and Communities
- WA Mental Health Commission
- WA Department of Education
- Telethon Kids Institute
- CanTeen
- Headspace
- The University of Notre Dame
- bioCSL

Funding for bursaries to support attendance of delegates at the conference was received from:

- Lotterywest
- The PMH Foundation

Exhibitors included

- Independent Living Centre WA
- Australian Red Cross
- bioCSL
- Health and Disability Services Complaints Office

Other supporters included:

- Tourism WA
- Perth Convention Bureau

Conclusion

The 2013 National Youth Health Conference was the latest in a series of Youth Health Conferences that have been held in Australia over the last few decades. The conference provided an opportunity to raise awareness of the specific health needs of young people, to highlight the work of youth health professionals and researchers across Australia and beyond, to celebrate the talents and participation of young people, and to announce the re-launch of the AAAH to a wide audience.

The organising committee is extremely grateful to all those who contributed to making this event such a success. We are now working hard to plan the next conference, which will be held in Melbourne, in November 2015.

We look forward to seeing you there.



A/Prof Donald Payne
President
Australian Association for Adolescent Health

Photos from the 2013 National Youth Health Conference

Australian Association for Adolescent Health



Ingrid Cumming, CEO of Kart Koort Wiern, His Excellency Malcolm McCusker and Emma Crane, UNICEF Australia Young Ambassador



Ingrid Cumming performing a smoking ceremony as part of the Welcome to Country on Day 1

Australian Association for Adolescent Health



The Hood (Maliriko, Torekana & Pidavara Bule-Turner) performing at the close of Day 1



The Youth Participation Team

Australian Association for Adolescent Health



The Hon. Tony Simpson MLA speaking at the opening session on Day 2



Helen Pepper and the Youth Participation Team speaking at the Closing Ceremony

The Wesley Boys Moorditj Mob performing at the Closing Ceremony

