



The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP

Minister for School Education, Early Childhood and Youth

MC10-016927

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
House of Representatives
Standing Committee on Petitions
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Murphy

Thank you for your letter of 26 November 2010 in regards to a petition supporting Step to the Future Foundation's (STTF) Youth Forums. I apologise for the delay in responding.

I appreciate the concerns raised by the petitioners in regards to STTF Youth Forums. The Australian Government is committed to helping young people successfully manage their transition from school to further education or work and is working with the states and territories to provide young people with equitable access to programs that help them reach their full potential.

In July 2009, the Australian, state and territory governments signed up to the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions (the National Partnership). The National Partnership focuses on:

- lifting the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate to 90 per cent by 2015;
- at least halving the gap for Indigenous students in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates by 2020; and
- supporting the Compact with Young Australians.

Under the National Partnership, the Government is providing funding of \$623 million over four years for programs that support youth at risk, encourage community based partnerships and provide funding to the states and territories for agreed reform areas. These agreed areas can include mentoring, giving jurisdictions greater flexibility to allocate resources to areas that will produce the best outcomes for young people.

Further information on the National Partnership is available from the Department's website at www.youth.gov.au/transitions.

In Victoria, the state government is using part of this funding to support mentoring activities through the funding of community agencies, many of which deliver programs that support young people in school. On a local level, the Victorian Government has proposed four complementary initiatives within the Improving Career Development Services suite to be funded under the National Partnership.

The four initiatives are:

- development of a careers curriculum;
- professional development for career practitioners;
- careers mentoring network initiative; and
- regional career development coaches.

In September 2008, following an external evaluation of the STTF Youth Forums, DEEWR, FaHCSIA and Defence funding was withdrawn from STTF and DEEWR's contribution was redirected to the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions.

In my response to the Mr Darren Chester MP, Member for Gippsland, I noted that the petitioners may be interested in the Prime Minister's Australian Youth Forum Challenge (PM's AYF Challenge). The AYF Challenge was initiated to provide young people with the opportunity to implement innovative ideas on engaging with other young people in their community, empowering them to be active change makers in their communities. Funding has been provided to assist in making some of these ideas become a reality while encouraging other young people to become active in community life.

Information on future funding rounds will be promoted on the Australian Youth Forum website www.youth.gov.au/ayf.

In the broader mentoring field, the Government has allocated funds of \$660 000 from the National Career Development component of the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions to the Australian Youth Mentoring Network (AYMN).

The AYMN is a not-for-profit peak body organisation that fosters best practice in youth mentoring activities through development and promotion of national benchmarks, mentoring resources, research, training, conferences and other community forums. The AYMN also supports Partnership Brokers and Youth Connections providers who, under the National Partnership, incorporate mentoring as part of their services.

AYMN's website, www.youthmentoring.org.au, lists registered mentoring programs by state location. Under the auspices of the Baw Baw- La Trobe Local Learning and Employment Network, the Gippsland Mentoring Alliance provides support to the community-based mentoring projects in the Traralgon area.

Under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions, the Government is demonstrating its firm commitment to providing leadership and support for youth, careers and transition programs. The substantial investment in the National Partnership's coordinated approach means that it is no longer in a position to fund individual projects such as the Step To The Future Youth Forums.

Thank you for bringing this petition and the petitioners' concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Peter Garrett