

# NSW Youth Health Policy: *a remix by young people*

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# NSW CAAH Key Focus Areas

- Developing information & resources
- Capacity building & training
- Supporting applied research
- Advocacy & policy development



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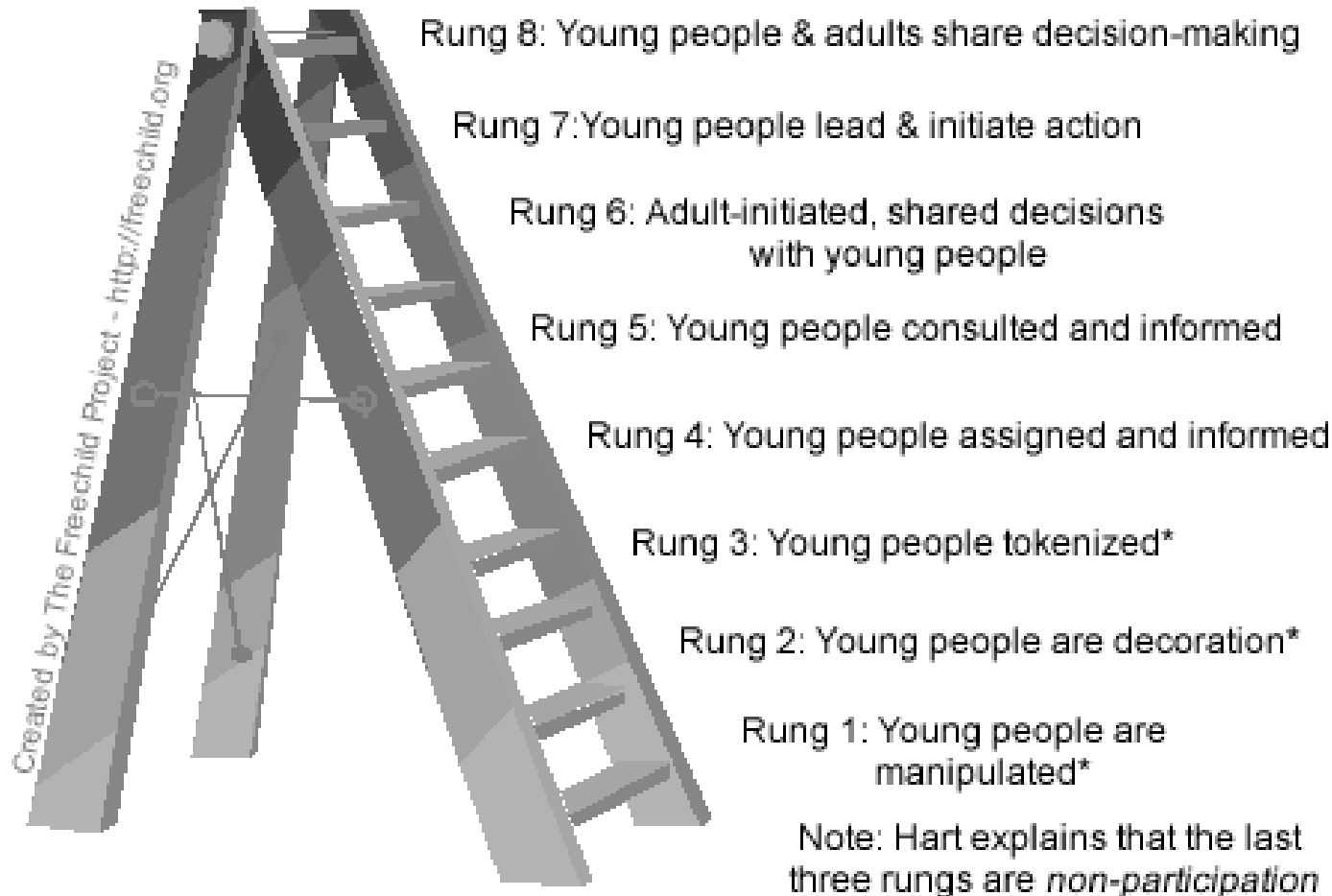
YOUNG PEOPLE'S HEALTH  
**OUR FUTURE**

NSW  HEALTH

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# Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



Adapted from Hart, R. (1992). *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*.  
Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

# Why is it important?

Participation is important because:

- It connects them with their community
- It allows them to express their voice and opinions
- It means that programs and services for young people better meet their needs

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# The Policy making process



- Reference group
- Consultation forum
- Online youth consultation
- Literature review
- Special consultations
- Ongoing Inter-sectoral consultation

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# Reference group

- 2 young people's representatives
- NSW CAAH
- NSW Health
- NSW Association for Adolescent Health
- NSW Youth Health Council
- Chair of Adolescent Medicine

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# Online consultation with young people

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**ACT NOW**  
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the childr<sup>en</sup>'s hospital at Westmead  
NSW Centre for the Advancement  
of Adolescent Health

# ActNow

ActNow is an online program that connects young people with opportunities to learn more about their world and take action on the social issues they care about.



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# How young people's ideas were used

- Overall direction
- Specific ideas to inform the policy
- Direct quotes: to bring young people's voices into the policy
- A name for the policy



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# The young people

- 20 young people
- Aged 13-24
- Rural and regional
- Culturally diverse
- Variety of health service usage



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# Week 1 – Being healthy and keeping yourself healthy

“It’s about all aspects of life. Including physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, psychological and also a work/life balance. Being healthy isn’t always easy; it is something that needs to be worked at and maintained.”

“Happy and healthy go hand in hand.”



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# Week 2 – Help to stay healthy

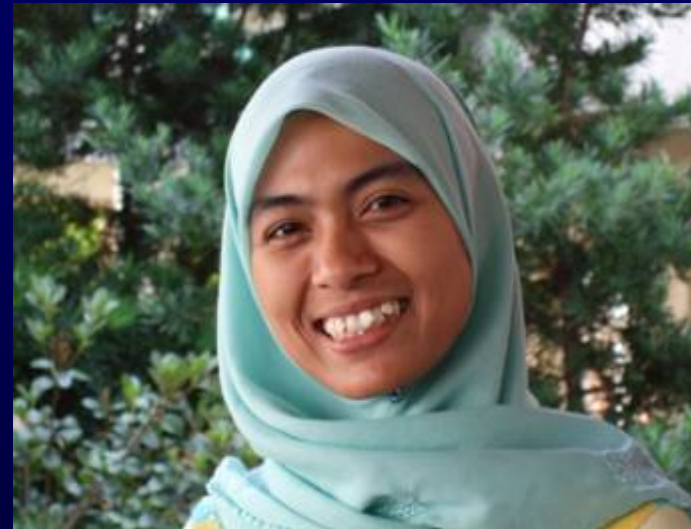
The internet, Reach out website  
"Doctor, sometimes if you go"  
Kids helpline  
Uni/school/private counsellor,  
Psychologist, Psychiatrist  
Magazines, books  
Work colleagues  
Headspace: "I've heard ads on the TV  
and radio"  
My pet  
God  
Tea, yoga,  
naturopath, acupuncturist



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## Week 2 – Help to stay healthy

“Feeling connected is important for a million reasons, not feeling alone or outside, feeling connected is like a baseline of normality, a perspective thing. If you are not connected then you might feel alien, you may feel unhealthy and you might be in strife without connectedness.”



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# Week 3 – What works best in health care?

“Don’t assume that you know something... ask questions if you need to.

Don’t judge us... be open and accepting of what we tell you.

Don’t talk in a language that we won’t understand... use words we can take with us.

Don’t break our confidentiality... explain to us about this so we are aware of it.

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Don't focus on the negative aspects of our lives...  
help us to see the positives as well.

Don't try to force your values and perspectives  
onto us... help us to discover our possibilities and  
choices.

Don't try and lead us where you want us to go...  
walk beside us and offer a helping hand along  
the way."



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# Week 3 – What works best in health care?

“Just be yourselves and be creative. We don't like services which are boring or that we don't understand.”



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## Week 4 – Finding out about help

“I would firstly seek website info, then if I thought I couldn't solve the problem myself, I would seek professional help.”



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# Names for the policy

## NSW Youth Health Policy:

- **Healthy bodies, healthy minds, vibrant futures**
- My future... your future... our future
- Shaping a healthy future
- Where our future lies
- Happy, healthy and here
- We are all responsible
- Let's get real

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# Evaluation of the process

- Have you enjoyed helping to shape NSW youth health policy?
- What did you like about participating?
- Was there anything you didn't like?



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# Evaluation of the process

- “Feeling I’m making a difference and helping to shape something which is very important for young people.”
- “It was also great that I had the experience to do this, even though I am from the country. We don’t often have a say on things like this.”

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# Consultation forum

- Appreciative enquiry framework
- Minister for Health opened the proceedings
- 120 people - cross-sectoral agencies, non-government organisations and other stakeholders
- Young people



# Youth health policy consultation forum



# Samir's reflections

- How have you experienced the process?
- What difference does it make to include young people's voices in the policy development?

# Policy recommendations / implications

- Young people make great policy writers!
- Young people use fresh and clear language
- Young people make the policy real
- Young people bring us back to what is important
- Young people make our job easier!

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**caah** NSW Centre for the Advancement  
of Adolescent Health

the children's hospital at Westmead

The NSW Centre for the Advancement of Adolescent Health (NSW CAAH) was established in 1998 under the NSW Youth Health Policy, to create better health and well-being for all young people aged 12 - 24 in New South Wales. Situated in The Children's Hospital at Westmead the Centre is funded by NSW Health.



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