

Member Profile, December 2009: Youth Mentoring Network



The Australian Youth Mentoring Network is a national hub for youth mentoring research, tools and resources. The Network aims to foster the growth and development of high-quality mentoring programs for young people in Australia by providing a national base of collaboration, support, guidance and expertise.

Launched in 2006, the Network was developed in response to the growing demand for a collaborative body to aid sharing of youth mentoring resources nationally. The government-funded organisation now lists more than 1500 individual members and 240 member organisations. Executive Officer Kathleen Vella said prior to the Network's establishment, many Australian mentoring programs were working in isolation and young people were missing out.

Research has shown that young people who are mentored are less likely to become involved in criminal activity, abuse drugs and alcohol, or leave school early.

"The reality is that young people do not have the same access to mentors as the generations before them. Mentoring programs aim to fill the gap that a retired next-door neighbour or a school teacher with a bit of extra time may have occupied. Mentors help young people understand their own potential, feel good about themselves, and most importantly make informed decisions to prevent them from hitting crisis points."

Like ARACY, the Network gives its members an opportunity to connect with like-minded people and share their experiences on what works in the mentoring sector. Kathleen also said the National Youth Mentoring Benchmarks for effective and responsible mentoring programs have helped create a more professional sphere, which allows more mentors to meet the needs of more young people.

"Our member numbers are growing steadily, though we are aware there are so many more people out there running programs. Our biggest challenge is to get people signed up onto our website. Mentoring programs that are not on our system may be missing the opportunity to help more young people, or be the recipient of funding to further their programs - and they may even miss the chance to affect policy."

More information on the Australian Youth Mentoring Network can be found at www.youthmentoring.org.au.

To learn more about the benefits of ARACY membership, or becoming an ARACY Member, visit our [website](#) or contact our [Membership Officer](#).