

OFFICE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH - FUNDING FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIAN
FEDERATION OF RURAL YOUTH

1139. Hon MURRAY CRIDDLE to the parliamentary secretary representing the Minister for Youth:

I refer to the refusal of the Office for Children and Youth to provide funding under its community service grant program to the Western Australian Federation of Rural Youth, which aims to improve the quality of life for people aged between 16 and 30, particularly those based in agricultural communities.

- (1) How does the minister explain the complete cut in funding when the provision of annual funding from the Office for Children and Youth amounted to \$33 638.84 in 2005-06?
- (2) Is the minister aware of other groups in regional Western Australia with a similar focus to that of the Western Australian Federation of Rural Youth?
- (3) If yes to (2), what are those groups and is the government funding them?

Hon KATE DOUST replied:

I thank the member for some notice of this question. The Minister for Youth has provided the following response -

- (1) The process of review of services funded under the community service grant program follows three steps. The first is the completion of a service provider application form by all funded services. The form includes a series of questions about the service provider's alignment to the Office for Children and Youth's strategic plan for 2006-08 as well as organisational management. The second is the formation of an independent assessment panel. The third is service provider presentations before the assessment panel.

The Office for Children and Youth's strategic plan for 2006-08 identifies the following four strategic priorities: the promotion of positive mental and emotional wellbeing; the provision of leadership and development opportunities for children and young people based on best practice principles; increased awareness of the harm of inappropriate alcohol consumption and reduction of the onset of high-risk patterns of alcohol consumption during adolescence and beyond; and recognition and celebration of the achievements of children and young people and the contribution they make to the community.

In the service provider application form completed by the Western Australian Federation of Rural Youth, it described its service as "a not-for-profit group run by young people for young people. It is a volunteer-based organisation which aims to build lasting social networks and provides valuable skill development for young country people or those with a strong interest in rural life." The panel advised the Minister for Youth that the Western Australian Federation of Rural Youth did not demonstrate what strategies it had in place to actively encourage diversity of participation across a broad target audience. It also considered that the activities of the service had a predominantly social focus, which did not align with the strategic priorities of the Office for Children and Youth.

In summary, in order to be funded through the community service grant program, the Western Australian Federation of Rural Youth had to demonstrate that it consistently met or exceeded the specific requirements of the program by targeting a diverse audience; that it has the capacity to meet reporting and accountability requirements; that it has strategies in place to ensure the safety of participants; and that it had a strong alignment with the strategic aims and directions of the youth portfolio. The panel felt that the Western Australian Federation of Rural Youth did not demonstrate in either its written submission or oral presentation that it was able to satisfactorily meet all the requirements of the program. The Western Australian Federation of Rural Youth is encouraged to apply for funding through the Youth Grants WA program, which comprises three categories. The first is small grants of up to \$5 000. The second is sponsorships of up to \$10 000. The third is special project grants of up to \$35 000 for specific priorities. This will be advertised biannually from 2007-08.

- (2)-(3) There are a number of groups, both formal and informal, operating in Western Australia that provide social and networking opportunities as well as skills development for young people and regional young people.