

# What's it to you? Youth Week 2003

Youth Week activities in the Territory this year focused on the theme "What's it to you?".

In line with the theme, 14-year-old Joanne Van Den Berg wrote a poem exploring issues of being young in today's world.

The central message to her poem was that young people are not all bad, despite media and public perceptions that young people are 'trouble makers' and 'juvenile criminals'.

Joanne's poem was performed by a group of five young women in malls in Darwin and Palmerston on Thursday 10 April.

The women were supported by dancers and singers from the local dance group Kakadu Dreaming.

Along with the performance were visual displays, including masks made by students at Palmerston High and Don Dale Detention Centre and a large banner with an anti-war message.

The performance was supported by Anglicare, the Officer of Youth Affairs and the NT Legal Aid Commission.

NLAC CLE Officer Ms Samantha Willcox told *Balance* that "the performance was an opportunity for the young women to challenge the negative stereotyping about young people that is unfortunately so prominent."

"Along the way the women learnt about their rights as people in our community. It was an exciting and rewarding experience for everyone involved."<sup>①</sup>



Above: Jessica, Joanne, Joan, Justeene and Briohny perform the poem "What's it to you?" in the Darwin Smith Street Mall for Youth Week 2003

## Defending the rule of law: Law Council

The Law Council of Australia has expressed its concern about Australia's response to terrorism.

Law Council president Ron Heinrich told the recent Commonwealth Law Conference that Australia was at risk of undermining the rule of law.

"Terrorism is a threat to Australians' safety and governments have to deal with it," he said.

"Unfortunately there is a tendency to overreact with draconian measures which don't support our enduring values".

He said the ongoing detention without charge of David Hicks and Mandouh Habib, and the present bill to give new powers to ASIO to question people in secret without a lawyer, are issues of great concern to the Law Council.<sup>①</sup>

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