

**What contributed to the Kennett Government not renewing core funding  
to the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria in 1999? A critical historical  
examination of youth affairs policy in the State of Victoria during the  
period of the Kennett Government 1992–1999**

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**Thesis submitted for the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master  
of Research**

**Victoria University**

**Institute for Sustainable Industries and Liveable Cities**

**February 2024**

## **Abstract**

The 1992 Victorian state election of the Jeff Kennett–led Liberal–National Party (LNP) coalition government saw the introduction of neoliberal economic policies that changed the provision of government services and significantly impacted youth affairs policy, service provision and outcomes for young people at that time. Between 1992 and 1999, the neoliberal policy changes created structural reform and introduced free-market philosophies of individualisation, privatisation and competition into the public sector. Costar and Economou (1999) described the Kennett Government as the most ideologically driven neoliberal government Victoria has seen. At the time, there were attempts to silence those voices that were publicly critical of the government. The removal by the Kennett Government of core funding to the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria and the tendering out of its services are one example of the Kennett administration's neoliberal activism. The Youth Affairs Council of Victoria is a publicly funded institution set up to provide advice to the government of the day on the concerns of young people, and the removal of government funding and subsequent tendering out of its services in 1999 are emblematic of the nature of change during this period and have come to symbolise a low point in the application of neoliberal economics and its impact on the Victorian state's youth affairs policy of the time.

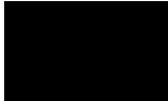
This research has used critical historical research methods, alongside qualitative interviews of key “eyewitnesses” (Given, 2008; Lune & Berg, 2017; Marwick, 2001), to document and critically examine the official and unofficial records from the period. The research draws on Foucault's governmentality (Foucault, 1991) as a theoretical frame within which to understand and critically evaluate the events and policy decisions that led to the Kennett Government not renewing its funding to the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria in 1999.

## Declaration of Authenticity

I, Rachel Dyer, declare that the Master of Research thesis entitled '*What contributed to the Kennett Government not renewing core funding to the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria in 1999? A critical historical examination of youth affairs policy in the State of Victoria during the period of the Kennett Government 1992–1999*' is no more than 50,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.

I have conducted my research in alignment with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research and Victoria University's Higher Degree by Research Policy and Procedures.

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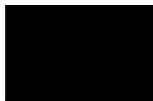


Date: 05/02/2024

## Ethics Declaration

All research procedures reported in the thesis were approved by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval Number: HRE21-172).

Signature:



Date: 05/02/2024

## Acknowledgements

This research is dedicated to the cohort of young people in the time under investigation and those who fought with and for them.

I want to thank and acknowledge my supervisors, Professor Tim Corney and Emeritus Professor Robyn Broadbent, for their invaluable knowledge and expertise that have enriched my learning.

I would like to recognise the inspiration and encouragement from my mother, whose journey to tertiary education was unconventional and challenging. Thank you for understanding my experience, always encouraging me to keep going and reminding me it is never too late to study.

I'd also like to extend my gratitude to my sisters and friends Jessica, Katey, Paige, Regan and Bronwen for their unwavering support and patience as I worked on my thesis.

To Harry, words cannot describe how grateful I am for your kindness, sacrifice and patience and for setting me straight every time I felt that my dreams were out of reach.

And finally, Pippin, may you always be by my side.

I acknowledge that this thesis has been proofread by Mary-Jo O'Rourke AE according to the national university-endorsed *Guidelines for editing research theses* (Institute of Professional Editors, 2019) consistent with Standards D and E of the Australian Standards for Editing Practice (ASEP).

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Appendix A: Sample interview questions

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## **List of Abbreviations**

ALP	Australian Labor Party
AOD	Alcohol and other drugs
CALD	Culturally and linguistically diverse
CCT	Compulsory competitive tendering
CMY	Centre for Multicultural Youth
CWAV	Children’s Welfare Association of Victoria
DEET	Department of Education, Employment and Training
DHS	Department of Human Services
EYIN	Ethnic Youth Issues Network
LNP	Liberal–National Party
LGBTIQA+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer, questioning, asexual and other diverse people
NGO	Non-government organisation
PROV	Public Record Office Victoria
RYC	Regional Youth Committees
SEC	State Electricity Commission
SLV	State Library Victoria
YACVic	Youth Affairs Council of Victoria
YSAS	Youth Support + Advocacy Service

## **Inclusive and Updated Language**

As this research has a historical focus, it is important to note that the language and terms used in the youth sector during the time under examination have changed and developed over the last 31 years (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 160). Historical archival data and some participant interviewees in the study used previous iterations of language that are not current, with an understanding that some uses of language can promote stigma, oppression and inequalities, and may potentially cause harm (Smith, 2007). The following section details the use of updated language and terms; this language is used when discussing the data, although direct quotes are used verbatim.

### **Culturally and linguistically diverse young people**

The phrase “culturally and linguistically diverse” (CALD) is a term used to describe diverse communities of languages, ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, traditions, societal structures and religions. This term is used currently in preference to “ethnic community”, although some official government departments did use the term “ethnic” throughout the archival data (Pham et al., 2021). For background, in the Victorian 1991 census, people who spoke a language other than English at home were most likely to speak Italian, Greek or Chinese language dialects. Those who were born overseas were primarily born in Vietnam, the UK, China and Malaysia (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1993).

### **First Nations and Koori young people**

Throughout the raw data, there was terminology used when discussing First Nations people that can now be viewed as harmful. As Korff (2021) wrote, the use of the word “government” can be harmful to First Nations people due to the previous government policies that caused harm and traumatised First Nations people. As this research is conducted on Wurundjeri land and talks about the Koori people of Victoria, both “First Nations” and “Koori” are used throughout the writing of this thesis. It is desired that using

both terms encompasses both the Koori people and those First Nations people from other lands that may have been living on Koori Country at the time under examination (Korff, 2021). The Victorian government highlighted Korff as a source for terminology now used throughout Victoria, emphasising that First Nations people prefer the identification of language groups and their geographical identity (Victorian Public Sector Commission, 2022).

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer, questioning, asexual and other diverse people

Within this study, LGBTIQA+ is used to refer to young people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex, queer, questioning and/or asexual, with the plus sign representing those who identify using other terms, being gender diverse or multi-gendered or having other non-specified identities that fit within the spectrum of non-heterosexual and/or non-cis-gendered people. This is based on the Victorian Government's *LGBTIQA+ inclusive language guide*, which used the self-identifying terminology used currently in Victoria (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, 2023a). The language and terms used during the period under investigation were not as progressive as today; throughout the data LGBTIQA+ was simply LGBT. When discussing the complexities of gender and sexual diversity in the archival data, it is clear that the intention was to encompass all who identify across the LGBTIQA+ spectrum unless expressly stated otherwise.

Young people experiencing homelessness

As young people experiencing homelessness were a significant policy focus during the period and identified issues faced by young people in the time under examination, this is discussed within the data and analysis. However, first-person language is used by the author to describe the cohort of young people experiencing homelessness at this time

instead of using the term “youth homelessness” due to the inference that this language perpetuates inequality and oppression (Palmer, 2018).

#### Young people living with disability/disabled young people

It is understood that the previous language used when addressing the disabled community is outdated. Current terminology is nuanced and can be based on personal preference (Ferrigon & Tucker, 2019). This thesis uses person-first and identity-first language interchangeably when discussing disabled young people, aiming to discuss the disability community inclusively and adequately. The current Victorian government, on its website, affirms the use of person-first language as the preferred terminology when discussing the disability community, also recognising that others may choose identity-first language (State Government of Victoria, 2022), further justifying the choice of using both person-first and identity-first language throughout the thesis.

#### Young people who use alcohol and/or other drugs

Young people using alcohol and other drugs (AOD) were identified as a focus within the policies featured in this thesis. Since those policies were enacted, language has evolved to follow a harm-reduction approach to discussing AOD by the Victorian government and institutions working with people who use drugs and alcohol. Person-first language is used throughout this thesis to put the young person's experiences first, as such “Young people using AOD” replaces terms such as “drug and alcohol abuse”. It is important to note that when discussing AOD use in contemporary times, it is not assumed that substance use equates to a disorder (Alcohol and Drug Foundation et al., 2020).

The author intends to not cause any harm to those who identify within the communities mentioned above. The author acknowledges the stigma, bias and discrimination that may be attached to previous language iterations. This thesis is written with an

understanding that the selected terminology may progress beyond what is currently in use.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis is a critical historical examination using qualitative eyewitness interviews and document analysis (Given, 2008; Lune & Berg, 2017; Marwick, 2001), drawing on Foucault's theory of governmentality (Foucault, 1991) as a theoretical lens through which to examine the research question: "What contributed to the Kennett Government not renewing core funding to the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria in 1999?". The thesis critically examines the events and policy decisions of the key historical actors (i.e., the stakeholder organisations) in youth affairs during the period of the Victorian Liberal–National Party (LNP) coalition government 1992–1999 led by Jeff Kennett (i.e., the Kennett Government), in particular the Kennett Government's decisions concerning youth policy and service provision in its second term of government 1996–1999. Specifically, the thesis is focused on documenting and understanding why the key government-funded youth policy advisory body, the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic), had its core government funding not renewed and its services put out to tender.

The rationale for the thesis is based on a gap in the historical record, with little documented analysis of youth policy decision-making during the Kennett Government period in the literature (Bessant & Webber, 2001; Corney, 2021; Costar & Economou, 1999). While Irving et al. (1995) provided a comprehensive historical overview of youth policy in Australia, with information concerning youth affairs within the state of Victoria, they concluded their analysis with the Cain–Kirner Australian Labor Party (ALP) governments, which ceased with the election of the Kennett Government in 1992. That work provides a solid historical foundation for this research but leaves the youth policy decisions of the Kennett Government with limited examination. Costar and Economou (1999), in their extensive record *The Kennett revolution*, made little mention of youth policy decisions and made no mention of the events or decisions that led to the loss of

core funding of YACVic, providing space for further examination of this matter. Bessant and Webber (2001) provided some historical details of the loss of funding experienced by YACVic during this period and Corney (2021) also noted this event in his history of the Youth Workers Association. Corney (2021, p. 11) made the general observation that the “1990s was a rocky period for the Victorian youth sector” and he suggested that the Kennett Government’s policies saw the introduction of “compulsory competitive tendering” (CCT) that led directly to “youth services and programs vying and competing against each other for decreasing amounts of public funding”. He added that during this period, “the Youth Affairs Council [YACVic] was critical of the decisions of the sitting government”. While these observations from Corney (2021) and Bessant and Webber (2001) are important and lay a foundation for the questions central to this research, these historical notes and observations are brief and discursive, with limited or no in-depth examination of the policy or decision-making surrounding this period or the particular events under investigation. As such, this research critically examines the policy and decision-making surrounding this period and, in particular, YACVic’s loss of core government funding and tendering out of its services as a key event, to bridge the gaps in the literature and contribute to the knowledge on Victoria’s political history concerning youth affairs and youth policy in order to inform future decisions and actions of governments and the youth advisory peak body, YACVic.

YACVic as the peak youth sector advisory body and key facilitator of young people’s voices to government has and continues to play a unique and important role in the Victorian youth affairs policy context. To provide historical context to the research project, the purpose of YACVic as an organisation, in the period under examination was outlined in the 1992 *Annual report* as follows:

To influence the structures which affect young people towards a more equitable distribution of power and resources to young people, recognising that there are

wide discrepancies between groups of young people in terms of their access to such power and resources (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1993, p. 2).

Since 1992, the objectives of YACVic provided above have remained constant.

This research uses critical historical research methods and qualitative eyewitness interviews (Given, 2008; Lune & Berg, 2017; Marwick, 2001) to document and critically examine the official and unofficial records from the past and uses Foucault's governmentality (Foucault, 1991) as a theoretical frame through which to understand and critically evaluate the events and policy decisions that led to the Kennett Government not renewing its funding to YACVic in 1999.

The thesis begins by describing the researching and analysis of relevant historical documents from the period. This enabled the identification of key "eyewitnesses" to the events and these eyewitnesses were contacted and invited to participate in semi-structured interviews concerning the historical events under investigation, enabling the research question to be investigated and critically examined (Given, 2008) and a historical record of the events from relevant eyewitnesses representing the key stakeholder organisations (i.e., actors) in the time under investigation to be established and examined. The three key stakeholder organisations (actors) under investigation are:

1. the Victorian government (i.e., the LNP parliamentary coalition that won government in 1992 and 1996 led by Premier Jeff Kennett, i.e. the Kennett Government)
2. the Office of Youth Affairs (the state government department charged with implementing government policy and administering the funding of services)
3. YACVic (the non-government organisation [NGO] funded by government to provide advice to government and represent the interests of the youth sector i.e., young people, youth workers and youth sector organisations).

The thesis establishes a timeline of events with a particular focus on the events and youth policy positions of the Kennett Government's second term in office (1996–1999) and the relationships between the three actors. As such, the thesis maps and critically analyses the ideological and political differences between the actors at the time, providing background to the political context that influenced youth policy decisions, represented diagrammatically in timelines that correspond to the youth policy actions and decisions of the three actors.

The thesis also provides a theoretical context to the policy decisions of the Kennett Government through contextual analysis of the vital role played by neoliberal economic theory (Harvey, 2007; Peck & Tickell, 1994; Tonts & Haslam-McKenzie, 2005) and, in particular, the impacts of economic rationalism, privatisation and CCT on the delivery of human services, particularly youth services, in Victorian at the time and establishes how the impacts of the application of neoliberal economic theory continue to relate to and affect young people and youth policy today.

As such, the overall aim of this project is to bridge a gap in the literature, revealing and critically examining the historical events surrounding the Kennett Government's removal of funding to the peak youth advisory body and the tendering out of its services, and their significance, in particular, why these events have become emblematic of neoliberal policy impact in the Victorian youth sector and, using a Foucauldian (Foucault, 1991) governmentality framework, to critically reflect on the use of power by government in these historical events from youth work and youth sector perspectives concerning continuing contemporaneous influences.

### 1.1 Autobiographical statement: Positionality of the researcher – a youth worker perspective

As a degree-qualified and practising youth worker, I came to this research topic from the perspective of someone working in the youth sector, with my professional practice and world view having been shaped by particular ethical considerations and values that underpin the theory and practice of professional youth work (Corney, 2014; Corney et al., 2022). This youth worker perspective is illustrated in Figure 1.1 below.

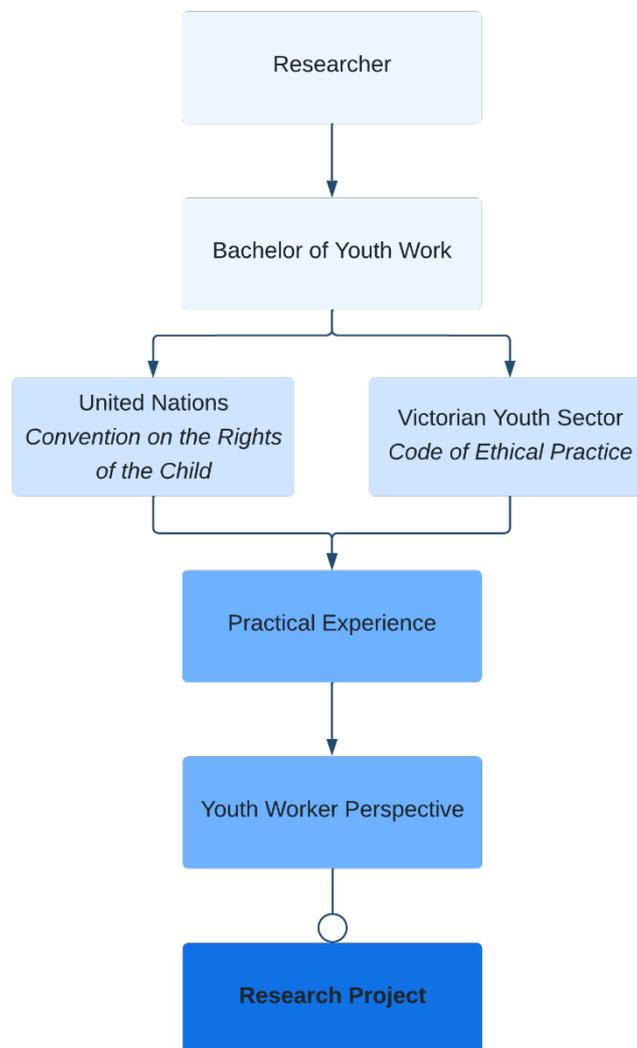


Figure 1.1: Youth worker perspective

My youth worker perspective is shaped by my formal youth work training, which included the study of human rights (UNICEF, 1989) as a framework for practice, and my professional practice in the field as a youth worker, which is guided by the Victorian youth sector's *Code of Ethical Practice* (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2007). As depicted in Figure 1.1, this perspective represents experience in the field and the supporting theoretical underpinnings upon which youth work is based, in particular the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNICEF, 1989) and the Victorian Youth Sector *Code of Ethical Practice* (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2007), which is informed by human rights and guides professional youth work practice in Victoria.

As such, this research is looking at this historical period from the youth worker perspective, upholding the human rights of young people in this context, and is critical of youth policy that does not put the “best interests” (UNICEF, 1989) of young people at the centre of policy and practice.

## 1.2 Theoretical frame

This study draws on the theoretical frame of Foucault's theory of governmentality (Foucault, 1991; Foucault & Faubion, 2000), in particular his analysis of the way governments use power and control, to critique and analyse the historical events under examination. The concept of governmentality was first realised in French philosopher Michel Foucault's lectures in 1978–1979 at Collège de France as chair on the history of systems of thought (Hamann, 2009; Lemke, 2001). Governmentality as an analytical concept is the “conduct of conduct”, which refers to the actors performing the action of government and the systematic ways in which conduct is governed (Lemke, 2015). The concept of governmentality emphasises how state power is enacted and how subliminal methods of control are engaged through the use of procedures, institutions, techniques and practices, using these networks to achieve the regulation of social conduct. This concept allows the perception of state power to be magnified and expanded,

encompassing the state as a whole, not just policies but government-run services (Joseph, 2010). Within this frame, the methods of control were exercised by neoliberal governments seeking to take “action at a distance” through the promotion of neoliberal ideals such as the free-market, competition and individualisation (Herbert-Cheshire, 2000).

This study uses the theoretical frame of Foucault’s theory of governmentality, specifically his analysis of the way governments use power and control, to critique and analyse the historical events under investigation. Within Foucault’s concept of governmentality, the research is approached through the lens of how power was used to control the actors and events under examination. Using this theory concerning neoliberal governmentality creates an understanding of the movements, or “technologies of control”, and how they influenced policies and institutions, going further to impact the daily lives of individuals such as those in the youth sector.

In relation to governmentality, Foucault emphasises the deficiencies in power relations between the state and the populace. This adopts a philosophy that determines the unique positioning of geopolitical, social and historical conditions within society (Joseph, 2010). In this instance, neoliberalism acknowledges the necessity of government intervention, which can be both indirect action and direct state control (Herbert-Cheshire, 2000). This theory permits the analysis of neoliberal governments that use specialised state technologies as direct interventions and indirect methods to lead and control individuals, causing individuals to be seen as responsible for their own welfare (Lemke, 2015).

Further, “the assemblage of technologies” allows for analysis of the nuanced and complex interrelationships of power, knowledge, government and economics, and the actors that are moved and motivated by these technology structures. These are technologies of production, technologies of sign systems, technologies of power and

technologies of self (Rooney, 1997). This analytical framework portrays the connection and co-dependency that the actors must adhere to in order to encourage the movement of society, using technologies to ensure the determinative shaping of society and society-shaping (Rooney, 1997). Thus, governmentality shaping society through technologies enacts the use of power as a method of social control and individualising the outcomes of the populace (see Figure 1.2).

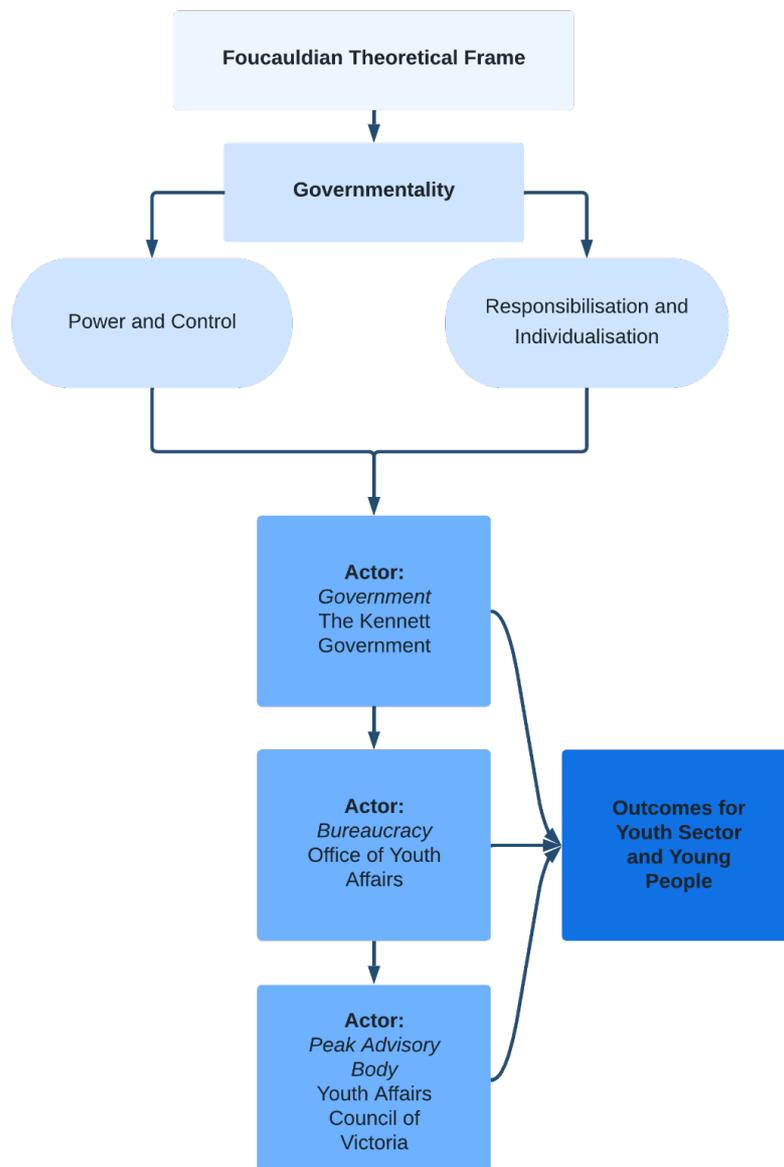


Figure 1.2: Theoretical framework

This research highlights the use of Foucault's technologies of power to enact social control via the distribution of power by governing bodies. Foucault's theory of governmentality is justified as the framework that underpins the research so as to understand the influence of the neoliberal policies that were prevalent at the time of the Kennett Government 1992–1999. There is a well-documented understanding that the Kennett Government had a neoliberal policy agenda and created policies that upheld and enacted neoliberal ideologies (see Costar & Economou, 1999; John & McDonald, 2020; McIntosh, 2010; and Mendes, 2010). Based on this literature and the policies enacted, this research refers to the Kennett Government as upholding and enacting neoliberal policy and it is therefore described as a neoliberal government.

### 1.3 Neoliberalism

The history of neoliberalism is connected to the post-Fordist mode of social regulation. From the 1980s the Western developed nations were revolutionised by the social and economic practices that are now termed neoliberalism (Harvey, 2007; Peck & Tickell, 1994), epitomised by the governments of two of neoliberalism's most influential leaders of their time, Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Ronald Reagan in the USA (Harvey, 2007).

In the context of the state of Victoria in the 1990s, neoliberalism was a set of government economic policies that enforced a self-reliant economy through business practices in public and private markets. There are multiple variations on what is defined as neoliberalism. However, this thesis is based on how neoliberalism was described during and after the time under investigation by Harvey (2007) and Peck and Tickell (1994). Tonts and Haslam-McKenzie (2005, p. 184) confirmed that these definitions of neoliberalism accurately represent Australian neoliberalism in the 1990s, particularly in the state of Victoria.

The main ethos of neoliberal policy is to:

- withdraw government influence and funds from service provision
- sell government services and contract out to the private sector (privatisation)
- promote successful outcomes through efficiency
- encourage competition over cooperation
- shrink the welfare state (Harvey, 2007; Peck & Tickell, 1994).

Neoliberal policy can be viewed as creating greater market efficiencies through competition, reducing public expenditure, increasing individual responsibility, reducing reliance on government-funded welfare and, thus, improving the economy. Neoliberalism represents the ideology that the wellbeing of humans can be improved by encouraging entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within these practices, creating less reliance on the state through encouraging industry-based markets. These practices create markets in areas where there were not previously any, for example introducing market-based ideologies such as competition into youth and other human services such as education, health care and instrumentalities, such as land, water and electricity (Harvey, 2007).

The outcomes of neoliberalism on the wider community can see it as diminishing of the quality of life, creation of cultural and social disconnection by promoting individualism, deregulation and cutting of social services, welfare privatisation, encouraging of competition between citizens through the rule of the market and elimination of the concept of community, which is replaced with individual responsibility (Martinez & Garcia, 1997; Western et al., 2007). Moreover, this so-called reformative policy can promote inequality in society, taking the responsibility to care for the disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalised from the government and placing it onto the individuals themselves (Beeson & Firth, 1998; Costar & Economou, 1999; John & McDonald, 2020; Western et al., 2007).

The justification behind using Foucault's governmentality as a theoretical lens for this research is that it enables a critique of the Western experience of neoliberal governments. The Victorian context under investigation references the implications of neoliberal governmentality as a means of discreet control measures through the rule of the market and defunding of social services, as this was happening in Victoria at the time (Joseph, 2010; Western et al., 2007). Furthermore, this framework examines the implications of reducing government intervention in services, particularly those such as YACVic that worked towards advocating for and enabling the collective voice of young people who, by reason of age and resources, lacked a political voice to government.

#### 1.4 Justification

The implications of neoliberal policy have been widely addressed throughout literature worldwide (Brady, 2014; Harvey, 2007; Martinez & Garcia, 1997; Peck & Tickell, 1994), with evidence that links neoliberalism and the decline in the welfare of citizens throughout the societies that have lived through the application of these political agendas (Hamann, 2009; Harvey, 2007; John & McDonald, 2020; Martinez & Garcia, 1997; Western et al., 2007). Although these changes have been studied in Victorian communities, little research has focused on the neoliberal youth affairs policy positions of government and the resultant experience for young people at this time.

As the Victorian Kennett Government was revolutionary within the context of neoliberal reformation in Australia (Costar & Economou, 1999), this research documents a critical time in Australian political and youth affairs policy history which has had limited examination to date. Although there have been studies on the separate implications of neoliberalism, research has not been conducted specifically on the Kennett Government's youth policy agenda, its relationship with the loss of government funding of the peak advisory youth council in Victoria or the potential consequences for young people.

The research provides clarity on youth affairs policymaking in Victoria in the period 1992–1999. The research is documentary and critical, enabling further examination by others of the history of the Victorian youth sector and youth policy, and adding to a knowledge base for the youth sector. In addition, this research will inform contemporary debates about youth policy and practice in the best interests of young people and work towards improving the trajectory of all young people.

As such, the theoretical lens of governmentality has enabled the researcher to critically examine the exercising of power and control in youth affairs in the state of Victoria by the neoliberal Kennett Government and its effects on youth affairs policy and service provision generally and also specifically concerning government decisions regarding the funding of YACVic at that time.

#### 1.5 Research aims and question

This research aims to document and critically examine historical events in the state of Victoria associated with the period of the Kennett Government's two terms in office between 1992 and 1999, and their significance, particularly why these events have become emblematic of neoliberal policy impacts in the Victorian youth sector culminating in the loss of core government funding to the peak youth affairs advisory body. These historical events provide the basis for the investigation.

Using critical historical research methods and qualitative interviewing of eyewitnesses, through the lens of Foucault's governmentality, the research has collected and analysed key documents and interviewed key stakeholders involved in the events in order to meet the following aims:

- establish a record of the historical events of the Kennett Government, its Ministers for Youth and its Office of Youth Affairs that led to the loss of core funding to YACVic and tendering out of its services

- create and examine three policy timelines based on the activities of the three policy actors involved: the Kennett Government, the Office of Youth Affairs and YACVic
- map and critically analyse the ideological and political actions of the actors, showcasing the context that influenced the policy decisions
- decipher the impacts of neoliberalism – economic rationalism, privatisation and CCT – in the Victorian state government at the time and how it may continue to relate to and affect young people and youth policy today.

These aims endeavour to answer the overarching research question:

*What contributed to the Kennett Government not renewing core funding to the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria in 1999?*

#### 1.6 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is separated into five chapters: 1. Introduction; 2. Literature Review; 3. Research Design and Methodology; 4. Results and Discussion; and 5. Conclusions, Findings and Recommendations.

The first chapter has provided the foundation for the thesis and theoretical context of the research, conveying the researcher's perspective and defining core theories such as the Foucauldian theory of governmentality and neoliberalism. The chapter continued by justifying this study and documenting the issues under examination and the gaps in the literature. The introduction concluded with the research aims and overarching research question.

The second chapter summarises the existing body of knowledge through brief histories of neoliberalism in Australia, the previous ALP government, the election won by the Kennett Government in 1992 and overviews of the Kennett Government and YACVic, enhancing the reader's overall understanding. A literature review follows that relates to: youth policy; youth participation; the importance of youth councils; the Kennett era; CCT;

public critique of the Kennett Government; and the legacy left by the Kennett Government 31 years later.

The research design and methodology chapter introduces the current literature gaps that have been bridged through investigation. The research question and aims, research design, methods, data collection and analysis are discussed. The benefits of this research are then explored, followed by the ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

The results and discussion chapter discusses the emergent themes and subthemes in the analysis process. The results display the historical timelines built from the initial data collection phase and participant interviews, followed by discussion of the archival data and participant interview data, with analysis and comparison of the timelines throughout this section.

The final chapter, the conclusions, findings and recommendations, emphasises the importance of the findings and presents recommendations for policymakers, youth advisory bodies and youth work practice, and recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

Between 1992 and 1999, the Victorian state LNP government under Premier Kennett introduced a variety of legislation that enacted much change throughout Victoria (Costar & Economou, 1999). The purpose of this chapter is to provide a background on the three key actors and outline the political context in Victoria prior to the election of the Kennett Government in 1992. It embeds a foundation of knowledge on neoliberalism in Australia, the Cain–Kirner ALP Government, the key events in the lead-up to the 1992 Victorian state election and the Kennett Government. The chapter then introduces YACVic and contextualises youth policy, youth services and youth participation, and the role of youth advisory councils to the Victorian government, young people and the public sector. In addition, this chapter discusses CCT and how neoliberal policies impacted Victoria, focusing on the public service and the media. Finally, the Kennett Government and its interactions, policies and legacy are discussed further in this chapter to provide insight into the Victorian political climate in this period.

### 2.2 Neoliberalism in Australia

Australia's first connection to neoliberalism was through the implementation of distinct economic reforms by the federal ALP government of the 1980s led by Bob Hawke and Paul Keating. This began with the Hawke Government deregulating the economy by floating the Australian dollar, reducing trade tariffs and privatising government utilities such as telecommunications carrier Telecom, national airline Qantas and the Commonwealth Bank. Utilising these neoliberal policies could be viewed as the federal ALP attempting to keep up with the international political prowess of the Thatcher Government in the UK and the Reagan Government in the USA in the 1980s (Beeson & Firth, 1998; Harkness, 2013). Although the ALP at this time was not as aggressive as

other governments like those of Thatcher and Reagan, it is important to note the origins of neoliberalism in Australia and highlight that this neoliberal underpinning of the federal government created tension with the Victorian state ALP government at the time who were critical of many of these changes (Harkness, 2013; Tonts & Haslam-McKenzie, 2005). Ultimately, neoliberal economic philosophy resulted in providing structural changes to Australian economic policy. At this time, the federal government was also making legislative changes based on leveraging private investment to support development and introducing public fiscal restraint (Tonts & Haslam-McKenzie, 2005). This pattern of economic rationalism, set by the Hawke–Keating Government, was mirrored and extended to Victoria by the election of the Kennett LNP coalition state government 1992–1999 (Costar & Economou, 1999; McIntosh, 2010; O'Neill, 2000; O'Neill & Alford, 1994; Smith, 1999).

### 2.3 The Cain–Kirner ALP Governments

Prior to the 1992 Victorian state election, the ALP, led by John Cain and Joan Kirner, had been in power. The ALP had held power in Victoria for a decade, starting from April 1982 until October 1992, ending the previous 27-year-long rule of the Liberal Party. John Cain was elected as the premier of the ALP government in 1982 but resigned in 1990. He was succeeded by Joan Kirner, who was his deputy and became the first female premier of Victoria and the second female premier in the history of Australia (Parliament of Victoria, 2023c).

The Cain–Kirner Victorian ALP Governments practised Keynesian economics and as such were inherently different from the federal ALP Hawke–Keating Governments, which had been following neoliberal policy agendas (Tonts & Haslam-McKenzie, 2005). The Keynesian approach to economics challenges the laissez-faire free-market capitalist approach by using government intervention to regulate the economy through various economic levers such as tax rates and government expenditure (Jahan et al., 2014).

Further, the Cain–Kirner Governments were described as taking a traditional social democratic stance on both social and economic issues (Harkness, 2013). Although from the same party, the distinctions between the state and federal ALP governments' policies developed tensions between the two. The sentiment in the literature is that the opposing political and economic agendas from the federal Hawke–Keating Governments were one of the contributing factors to how the Cain–Kirner Governments came to their end, as developed by Considine and Costar (1992) and Harkness (2013).

The Cain Government's Keynesian style of governing used an interventionist approach aimed at regulating the economy. Harkness (2013, p. 37) stated that under the Cain Government, Victoria had “unemployment the lowest in the nation, and the strongest growth figures and economic growth indicators”, although the state government was levying higher fines, fees and taxes than the averages for the rest of the Australian states and territories. The Cain Government concentrated its policy reforms on industrial relations in areas such as occupational health and safety, and social services such as disability services, promoting equal opportunity, government accountability, freedom of information, women's health, environmental conservation and recognition of Traditional Ownership of land by First Nations peoples. The Cain Government also introduced utility and public transport concessions for low-income earners (Harkness, 2013).

The Cain Government proceeded to win two more elections in March 1985 and October 1988, although at this time the government turned defensive after scrutiny from the opposition Liberal Party in areas such as debt, taxes and the workers compensation scheme – WorkCare. Other areas of scrutiny came from public scandals due to wrongdoing by the governor and tourism commissioner, forcing both to resign (Harkness, 2013).

By the 1988 election, WorkCare and the Victorian Economic Development Corporation became two areas that the Liberal Party was consistently and openly critical of. Despite this, the Victorian ALP won the election for what was described as an “unprecedented third time, albeit with a reduced majority in the lower house and with four fewer members in the upper house” (Harkness, 2013, p. 38). As a result, there was an increasing demand on Cain and his leadership came under scrutiny again, both within the ALP and in the public eye (Harkness, 2013).

The collapse of the State Bank of Victoria in 1990 and its sale were met with much public contention and cries of government mismanagement by the opposition. The State Bank was revered as Victoria’s most-respected and largest government-owned entity, with its forced sale to the Commonwealth Bank described as disastrous to Victoria, costing the government not only financially but in public confidence in the Victorian ALP, prompting the Tri-continental Royal Commission (Coghill, 1997). Regardless of these issues, Harkness (2013) stated that the Cain–Kirner Governments were looked upon favourably as a model for other states and viewed as the “most successful state government on a range of indicators” (Harkness, 2013, p. 42).

John Cain stated at the June 1990 state conference that the media had portrayed the ALP as facing almost certain defeat and marred by in-fighting. He announced that he would resign if there was no harmony within the party. Staying true to his word, on 7 August 1990 Joan Kirner took over as premier (Harkness, 2013). By 1991, Australia had experienced another economic downturn, pushing unemployment in Victoria to rise above the national average (Pascoe & Pascoe, 1998). On 4 October 1992, the Kirner Government lost the Victorian state election to the Kennett–led LNP, which formed a coalition government (Shamsullah, 1999).

## 2.4 Lead-up to the 1992 election

The Kennett Government's criticism of the Cain–Kirner Governments has been detailed by Harkness (2013) and Shamsullah (1999). The criticism of the Cain–Kirner Government was seen as a right-wing tactic of discrediting the ALP and its “big government” ideology. This ideology was to stimulate the economy and was demonstrated to be successful after the previous 1982 economic downturn. In contrast to the social democratic policies of the Cain–Kirner Governments, having an egalitarian focus and encouraging a strong Keynesian economy for the years it was in power, the Kennett Government's policies were neoliberal and focused on fiscal restraint and reducing government spending, particularly welfare services and privatisation of state utilities (Harkness, 2013; Hayward, 1993).

There were many factors that academics believed caused the ALP to lose the 1992 Victorian state election, with the main areas being: the slowing down of the Cain–Kirner Governments' reformist policies after being in power for three terms; the need to rely on cabinet and government bureaucracy to make changes; having different policy ideologies to those of the federal neoliberal Keating Government; and the 1990 financial crisis (Harkness, 2013), which increased the unemployment level in Victoria (Hayward, 2023). Interestingly, upon reflection on this time, Considine and Costar (1992, p. 1) stated, “the financial crises that beset the Cain Government would have led to the defeat of a government of any political hue.”

Whilst the Kennett Government was campaigning to win the 1992 election, the campaign's focal point was that the LNP was in outrage over the ALP government's spending. This is viewed as one of the more overt reasons why the Kennett Government was voted in by Victorians. This was through the use of the media and constant fear-mongering, labelling the Cain–Kirner Governments and the ALP as “the guilty party”, and sensationalising the spending that the then-government was doing as reckless and the

cause of high unemployment rates, not the financial crisis (Costar & Economou, 1999; Pascoe & Pascoe, 1998). The neoliberal policies the LNP put forward as election promises were justified by the need to reverse Victoria's "economic crisis" (Hayward, 1993; Shamsullah, 1999).

## 2.5 The Kennett Government

The LNP coalition was the government that the citizens elected in the state of Victoria, Australia, on 6 October 1992. The leader of this political coalition at the time was Jeff Kennett, who became the 43rd premier of Victoria and remained so until 20 October 1999, winning a second election in 1996 and spending 2571 days as the premier (Parliament of Victoria, 2017). Kennett was described at the time of his ascension to the premiership as a "political larrikin" (Economou, 2006, p. 363) and was a polarising Liberal Party leader previously described as having a "dominant personality" (Costar & Economou, 1999). By those who admired him he was seen as youthful and bold, striving to replenish the Liberal Party with new energy. His critics regarded him somewhat similarly, but also saw him as reckless and shallow. These views were not only held by the ALP opposition but also within the Liberal Party itself, as Kennett had been previously deposed in 1989, only to regain the leadership in 1991 prior to the election (Costar & Economou, 1999; Economou, 2006).

## 2.6 Youth Affairs Council of Victoria

The contemporary Australian youth sector is comprised of stakeholders whose primary focus is program and/or service delivery. Many youth organisations are small and may not have the resources to contend with constant policy changes, meaning that these organisations rely on peak sector bodies that act as umbrella organisations representing the whole sector and advocating to government for them and for young people; this is known as a peak advisory body (Bessant & Webber, 2001). A peak advisory body serves

two primary functions to the government: providing expert and specialised advice; and facilitating communication between the people it represents and the government (Smith, 1977).

In Victoria, the peak body that has fulfilled this role concerning youth policy is YACVic. YACVic aims to uphold the rights of young people in Victoria and promotes young people as visible, active and valued in the community (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2007). Therefore, the historical role of YACVic as a voice for young people and youth organisations to government is important to the focus of this research.

YACVic's origins are as the youth advisory body to the Victorian arm of the National Fitness Council and first operated in the 1940s. Although it was previously named the associated Youth Committee of the National Fitness Council, it was shortly renamed the Youth Council of Victoria to provide separation from the National Fitness Council (Youth Affairs Council Victoria, 2021). Between 1978 and 1980, there was another restructuring of the organisation after establishing the Youth Council of Victoria as the fundamental NGO for youth affairs in Victoria. The organisation then became the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (Youth Affairs Council Victoria, 2021).

To provide historical context to the research project, in the period under examination the purpose of YACVic as an organisation was outlined in the 1992 *Annual report* as follows:

To influence the structures which affect young people towards a more equitable distribution of power and resources to young people, recognising that there are wide discrepancies between groups of young people in terms of their access to such power and resources (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1993, p. 2).

Since 1992, the objectives of YACVic have remained relatively similar, while the particular issues raised by young people and the youth sector may have changed. As this research is centred around past events, the 1992 purpose of YACVic is important to

this study in order to understand the events that resulted in YACVic losing its government funding in 1999 (Lune & Berg, 2017, pp. 158–159).

A significant organisation operating under the umbrella of YACVic was the auspiced unit the Ethnic Youth Issues Network (EYIN). EYIN was attached to YACVic until the time of the loss of funding; when YACVic was put out to tender, EYIN was put out for a separate tender (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1999). EYIN was described as a:

State-wide, community-based organisation that supports and resources workers who work with or for young people of ethnic minority. It seeks to affect policy change and assist in the development of policy in the government and non-government sector which reflects the multicultural nature of our society (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1994, p. 3).

The EYIN then became the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues, and is now known as the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY) (Centre for Multicultural Youth, 2019), which has been managed since its inception and breakaway from YACVic by long-time youth worker Carmel Guerra.

Financially, YACVic relied on core funding received directly from the Victorian state government, with a small amount of funding coming from paid memberships by youth workers and youth sector organisations (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1991, 1993). This required YACVic to rely on the government to facilitate its role as a peak advisory body, which meant that the livelihood of YACVic was dependent to a vast extent on government funding.

## 2.7 Youth policy

Government policy is what governments say and do through enacting laws, regulations, procedures and actions and providing services in the interests of citizens (Peters, 2018). Youth policy is government policy specifically related to the needs and interests of young

people; it was described as a “government's commitment and practice towards ensuring good living conditions and opportunities for the young population of a country” (Denstad, 2009, p. 13). The purpose of youth policy is to guide the government to facilitate learning conditions, experiences and opportunities that enable young people to have the knowledge, skills and competencies to transition into adulthood. Youth policy is unique to each country and region based on the government's view of young people, reflecting this view within its policies (Council of Europe, 2021).

Maunder (1996) suggested that youth policy in Australia has been used as a control measure to keep young people off the streets and out of trouble, keeping them in school or work. He stated that youth policy is based on understanding youth from the policymaker's perspective, with policy responses being based on different representations of “youth”. This is confirmed by Woodman and Wyn (2013), who suggested that current government policies are based on previous views of youth transition experiences and do not allow the current social and economic risk factors that impact young people to inform current policies. Maunder's argument about youth policy being used as a control measure can be correlated with Foucault's theory of power through governmentality, as it situates the experience of young people within governmental controls (Foucault et al., 2008; Hamann, 2009; Lemke, 2015).

Woodman and Wyn (2013) suggested that youth policy should be made in a young person-centred context, identifying the needs for “successful” child to adulthood transitions, asking what the experience is for young people and relating this to policy. This sentiment advises of the need for youth participation in policymaking. This approach when discussing youth policy is consistent with a human rights perspective that sees young people as central to youth policy decision-making processes. Woodman and Wyn (2013) highlighted successful child-to-adulthood transitions relating to the relationship between young people and policy. However, enabling young people's participation in the

policy process does not feature in the neoliberal agenda, nor do the complexities young people face due to neoliberal governmentality or the shaping of society through the movement of power structures based on market forces, individualisation and competition.

## 2.8 Youth participation

Youth participation is “a process where young people, as active citizens, take part in, express views on, and have decision-making power about issues that affect them” (Farthing, 2012, p. 73). Based on age, young people can be labelled as marginalised due to the exclusion and discrimination they face from the media, politics and society (Corney, 2014). The power imbalance between young people and governments magnifies this marginalisation. For example, young people are excluded from politics due to age restrictions on voting (18 in Australia) and, as such, are often overlooked by governments, meaning young people and their issues are often disregarded in the political sphere (McAllister, 2014). Historically, young people have been treated as individuals with issues rather than as a vulnerable group oppressed by governments and restricted by their age (Maunder, 1996).

Under the restraint of being the definitive power in society, adults create the constructions by which young people are to abide and prescribe how young people are viewed through the lens of media or politics, known as adultism (Corney et al., 2022). This rhetoric enforces the scope of young people to engage with politics in a way that adults deem acceptable (Vromen, 2003). In areas of government, youth participation is limited due to the restrictive nature of politics and political spaces, and a lack of adequate access to political spaces for young people (Edwards, 2009; McAllister, 2014; Woodman & Wyn, 2013).

A common theme regarding young people and politics is the view that young people are uninterested in or apathetic towards politics (Vromen, 2003). This view potentially disempowers young people, excluding them before they are legally able to participate in the formal political process. The counterargument to young people being apathetic towards politics is that young people do not have adequate access to political spaces. This sentiment is reflected by Edwards (2006), McAllister (2014), Vromen (2003), and Woodman and Wyn (2013), confirming that young people are left out of politics. Vromen (2003) recommended that formal political participation should include young people instead of excluding them. This lack of access to political processes for young people is one of the reasons that peak bodies such as YACVic exist. YACVic has championed the view that youth participation in the political process can be achieved through enabling active citizenship such as protesting, campaigning and participating in community and social change activities. However, this has often caused tensions with government.

There is a sentiment of powerlessness among many young people regarding participation and access to formal political participation (Vromen, 2003). As the focus of youth policy is to produce “good citizens”, it follows that young people must have access to education systems that enable or instruct them in how to be good citizens in the eyes of governments (Edwards, 2009; Vromen, 2003). A compounding issue related to inadequate access to political spaces is the socioeconomic issues that face young people, such as access to education or social support services (Vromen, 1995).

In the Kennett era, government funding to education and social services was being cut and/or privatised and there was a changing of the focus of what governments would fund and the mechanism of government provision of services, particularly the introduction of CCT of welfare service provision. As a result, the education system was “reformed”, resulting in over 300 public schools being closed and school property being sold (Costar & Economou, 1999; Pascoe & Pascoe, 1998). These so-called cost-saving measures

meant that many young people whose families could not afford fee-paying private schools in their local area potentially had to travel further beyond their community to access state-provided education. This restricted access to education for low-income families, especially for people in regional or rural areas (Sheil, 2018; Western et al., 2007). This is an example of Foucault's governmentality as the exercising of power through the actions of government made families and young people of low socioeconomic status "responsible" for their access to education or lack thereof, individualising the problem and entrenching poverty, isolation and social exclusion for these young people. Whilst Costar and Economou (1999) referenced the social impacts of the Kennett Government's funding cuts and closures of schools, there is little literature linking Kennett's closing of state schools and welfare cuts to young people's inability to access political spaces and active citizenship, which are intertwined with youth participation and the purposes of youth-focused organisations such as YACVic.

## 2.9 The importance of youth councils

Maunder (1996, p. 176) defined a youth advisory council as "a body established at the state or federal level to represent youth organisations or groups". As young people face inequalities when speaking to governments, youth advisory councils work to provide input to the government policies which directly impact young people's overall wellbeing (Bessant & Webber, 2001). Youth councils such as YACVic not only provide advice to governments but often provide advocacy for young people and are also needed to hold governments accountable for their decisions and the impacts of the youth policies that are put in place (Edwards, 2009; Maunder, 1996).

Since the Second World War, through necessity youth advisory councils have evolved with the changing social and economic environment. Originally, state-based youth councils were used as advisory bodies to national fitness campaigns and governments used these fitness campaigns to prepare young men for military service (Maunder,

1990). However, by the 1960s, during the Vietnam war period young people were beginning to challenge these social norms and yet were demonised by some sections of the media for questioning the policies of their governments (Maunder, 1996).

With the release of the *Barry report* in 1956, young people in Australia were starting to be viewed as a vulnerable group rather than a potentially deviant group. This report was a catalyst for change. It was the first of its kind to address the socioeconomic factors that young people face, highlighting societal risk factors, not individual ones. In response to this report, the Victorian government increased financial support to youth organisations and used a youth advisory committee to disperse the funds. The *Barry report* changed youth policy, resulting in the government removing the defence focus from fitness programs and starting to develop an understanding of young people's complexities through engagement with the youth council advisory peak bodies (Irving et al., 1995).

The anti-Vietnam War youth and student movement of the 1960s brought young people together. They protested against the social issues impacting them, coinciding with other youth protest movements around the rest of the world at this time. As a result, young people became more political, with a focus on wanting independence and becoming more vocal and aware of civil and human rights, leading to successful campaigns to lower the voting age from 21 to 18 in Australian federal elections and in elections in the state of Victorian (McAllister, 2014). This change of perspective and the introduction of rights-based approaches through the Australian federal government's 1990 ratification of the United Nations *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNICEF, 1989) prompted the conception of a rights-based view of young people and youth work in contemporary times (Corney, 2014; Irving et al., 1995; Maunder, 1996; Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2007).

During the time that the Kennett Government was in power, government policies in many different areas that impacted young people's lives were enacted with significant funding

cuts to service delivery and machinery of government changes (Bessant & Webber, 2001; Costar & Economou, 1999). With YACVic not having its core funding renewed in 1999, the opportunity for young people to participate in government decision-making was reduced.

## 2.10 The Kennett era

From 1992–1999 the Kennett Government brought in a variety of new legislation, including the *Public Sector Management Act 1992* and the *Employee Relation Act 1992* (Costar & Economou, 1999). The changes revolutionised the public sector, including invoking privatisation, defunding welfare and social organisations, and the CCT of human services including youth services (Russell, 1999; Smith, 1999; Steane & Walker, 2000). These new policies paved the way for the Kennett Government to begin restructuring the Victorian public service sector, which ultimately enabled the tendering out of youth services.

Once the Kennett Government came to power, there was a quick turnaround of legislation. In many cases, it was said that this was due to the debt that was inherited from the previous ALP government, with Pascoe and Pascoe (1998, p. 10) remarking that “The initial mood of financial crisis may have assisted reform implementation”. Hayward (1993), in analysis of the Kennett Government's budget cuts, agreed with this sentiment, highlighting that the perception of crisis propelled the reformation of the state government funding of services. The significant achievements of this government were the restoration of Victoria's credit rating and the budget surplus designed to alleviate the debt from the ALP government, which was viewed as a recovery from the economic crisis. At this time, the Kennett Government convincingly encouraged the notion that Victoria had changed for the better in contrast to the previous government and was perceived to be achieving great political success, especially by those in the business sector (Costar & Economou, 1999).

The Kennett Government's budget cuts, used to create the budget surplus, adversely impacted the broader community. Victoria was labelled "the contract state" (O'Neill & Alford, 1994, p. 2) due to the ways in which government services were tendered out and governed by contracts within the public sector and beyond. By using this contractual mode of government, public services were reduced, health facilities declined, the education system suffered with the closing of schools and teaching staff reductions, and public infrastructure was sold, including the State Electricity Commission (SEC) and public transport (Costar & Economou, 1999; O'Neill & Alford, 1994; Pascoe & Pascoe, 1998). The loss of the SEC was viewed as a devastating loss to the Victorian public as it was an institution founded in the 1920s and was replaced by three bodies with separate responsibilities such as electrical generation, high-voltage transmission, and distribution and supply, and was sold to the private sector to create a privatised energy market instead of state ownership and supply (O'Neill & Alford, 1994).

The Public Sector Management Act engineered structural changes within the various government departments by amalgamating departments, reducing the twenty-two ministerial departments to just thirteen, which was achieved just over a month after the Kennett Government came into power (Costar & Economou, 1999; Pascoe & Pascoe, 1998). The Public Sector Management Act provided the government with an opportunity to critique, discuss and question the functionality and funding of organisations that relied on their relationships with their associated ministerial counterparts. For example, youth organisations such as YACVic would generally interact with the Minister for Youth Affairs and Office of Youth Affairs and work through the bureaucratic environment, where it relied on the government for funding. After the 1996 election, the Kennett Government cut the number of ministerial government departments to eight (Costar & Economou, 1999). This saw the administration of the ministerial portfolio of Youth Affairs taken over by the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Office of Youth Affairs was

disbanded. The Office of Youth Affairs was reinstated in 1999 with the election of the Bracks Government.

These changes, initiated by the Public Sector Management Act, affected Victoria and the youth sector in particular by introducing funding cuts to service delivery to youth organisations and introducing a CCT process. In addition, the process focused on changing the infrastructure to become managerial, economic and efficiency-based, removing the focus from young people's social issues and needs, thus commodifying and weakening the youth sector (Broadbent, 1997; Russell, 1999; Steane & Walker, 2000). These changes meant that in the youth sector, some organisations may not have been able to fulfil their intended outcomes or stay true to their core values, reducing the ability of these organisations to meet the social needs of young people (Steane & Walker, 2000). This resulted in the individualised responsabilisation of social needs in accordance with Foucault's governmentality outcomes. Critical literature on this topic suggests that these changes were not for the betterment of the Victorian public sector or young people. Smith (1999) agreeing with Russell (1999) suggests that the public service was no longer a collaborative environment.

Edwards (2009) explained that governments view young people as "disengaged" with low electoral participation and not "active" citizens in Australian politics. Nevertheless, by shrinking economic equality and the welfare state, neoliberal social policies have exacerbated citizenship and electoral participation barriers, forcing young people out of the political sphere. The closing of 300 state-funded schools (Costar & Economou, 1999; Pascoe & Pascoe, 1998) ensured that the neoliberal objectives would continue to individualise and responsabilise young people. These actions within the state government correlate with neoliberal governmentality by using a method of control, such as closing state-funded schools, to regulate social conduct, creating inequality through the

inaccessibility to schooling and putting responsibility for education onto individual young people and their families (Beeson & Firth, 1998; Joseph, 2010; Martinez & Garcia, 1997).

## 2.11 Compulsory competitive tendering

CCT is defined by the Industry Commission (1996, p. xix) as the requirement of:

Selecting a preferred supplier from a range of potential contractors by seeking offers (tenders) and evaluating these based on one or more selection criteria.

CCT resulted from the public sector restructuring, meaning that instead of using in-house service delivery, it was outsourced, which meant the in-house team had to either disband or downsize, with the outsourced service absorbing the in-house team as part of the contract terms. It also forced in-house or external service providers to compete with one another to offer services at the lowest price to the government, creating a market-based economy for the provision of human services. CCT was enacted to improve quality, costs and productivity in the sector, improving efficiency and effectiveness (Steane & Walker, 2000). This was imperative to local government services, as by 1997 a minimum of 50% of each local government council's services was procured through CCT (Industry Commission, 1996, p. 435). This reform is an example of neoliberal governmentality, as Ernst (1996) described CCT as turning the public sector into "government as business" (Beeson & Firth, 1998; Foucault et al., 2008; Hamann, 2009; Joseph, 2010; Lemke, 2015). Although this reform was enacted to create so-called positive change in the public sector, there have been many critiques of CCT. Costar and Economou (1999) demonstrated that CCT resulted in the loss of 50,000 jobs from the public sector, with the private sector absorbing the government tenders. Sheil explained that on a community level:

Citizens became customers without the protection of the State, or guidance of a morality other than that of individual contracts that denied the basic expectations of political and social citizenship (Sheil, 2018, p. 264).

This indicates an understanding of what was happening in the community due to reform, providing insight into how the general public was experiencing this level of neoliberal governmentality.

From the youth work perspective, Broadbent (1997) stated that CCT and privatisation urged youth workers to consider different areas in the youth work field. CCT led to sectoral change, politicising workplace management and bringing the need to understand new employment regulation legislation which challenged service delivery, creating a competitive work environment rather than a collaborative environment. A non-collaborative environment is an explicit breach of contemporary youth work frameworks and promotes division, is reductive to the core youth work values and reduces the benefit to young people (UNICEF, 1989; Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2007). This literature identifies the perspective of youth workers in the sector and comments on the impacts of privatisation and CCT. A focus of this research is the implications of creating a competitive environment and cutting funds to areas that rely on service delivery to boost social capital, such as the youth and community sectors (Broadbent, 1997; Costar & Economou, 1999; Steane & Walker, 2000).

## 2.12 Public critique and the silencing of the Victorian public sector

Whilst the Kennett Government was severely cutting access to education, the neoliberal agenda was being strengthened by strategically investing public resources in elite sports instead of welfare, creating capital from the infrastructure that would stimulate the private sector (John & McDonald, 2020). John and McDonald (2020) affirmed that this focus on Melbourne as the “sport city” allowed the government to redefine public interest. The

government, through the media, was relating Australian cultural norms and sport to appeal to the public. With the supportive media campaign, the government could portray economic benefits that it contended would far outweigh the social disadvantages. However, despite the media coverage there was public opposition, including a protest against the redevelopment of Albert Park with 10,000 attendees in 1994, which prompted the Victorian anti-protest laws. These reactionary responses by the Kennett Government to criticism are consistent throughout the literature, not only on a public scale but also within the government and its workforce (John & McDonald, 2020). Furthermore, whilst focusing on Melbourne and its attractions, regional and rural Victoria were ignored, with people in these communities feeling silenced and disempowered (Sheil, 2018).

The literature shows the links between the Kennett Government and the silencing of critics, particularly those in the public service. This was achieved at a bureaucratic level and via the media. For example, public servants were warned not to engage in political debate and teachers were gagged by ministerial order, with a reduction in the number of ministerial departments (Costar & Economou, 1999). Smith (1999, p. 53) further expanded on the impacts on government employees, declaring that staff members in government were told "not to make political statements if they do not want to be defunded". This statement raises concern over the limitation of free speech throughout this time and the implications for YACVic, an advisory peak body that most likely would not be secretive about its loss of funding but critical of the government's decisions concerning the welfare of young people. Corney (2021, p. 5) strengthened this sentiment by affirming, "the Youth Affairs Council was critical of the decisions of the sitting government".

Russell (1999) mentioned the decline of equal opportunity that the Kennett Government enacted, stating that gambling taxes raised significant revenue. Costar and Economou (1999) and Smith (1999) echoed this view of revenue-raising through gambling taxes.

Corney (2021) proposed that YACVic's critique of the Kennett Government's neoliberal policies was a primary reason YACVic lost its core government funding and its services being put out for tender. Concerning this literature, the research aims to critically examine this claim.

### 2.13 The legacy of the Kennett Government – 31 years later

After the defeat of the LNP government in 1999, Victoria was led by the ALP until 2010, when the LNP coalition led by Ted Baillieu won the 2010 state election. After his resignation, Denis Napthine became premier until 2014 (Parliament of Victoria, 2023c). The current premier of Victoria as of 27 September 2023 is Jacinta Allan of the ALP (Parliament of Victoria, 2023b). Following the resignation of longstanding premier Daniel Andrews, who became premier in December 2014 (Parliament of Victoria, 2023a). The previous Andrews Government was described by Hayward (2023) as having neo-Keynesian economic policy strategies and progressive social policies promoting mental health reform and transgender rights, investing in social housing, family violence legislation and Treaty with First Nations people.

The Andrews Government in 2020, 2021 and 2022, similarly to the Cain Government in response to impending recession (Harkness, 2013), used Keynesian pump-prime economic tactics to alleviate the recession caused by COVID-19 and, in doing so, overturned many of the neoliberal economic principles first introduced by the Kennett Government. These Keynesian economic processes related to the previous Cain Government and had not been used by the Victorian ALP government since that time, highlighting the social democratic nature of the ALP Andrews Government post-COVID (Hayward, 2023).

Hayward has discussed the Andrews Government as being a "rentier capitalist", where it inherited a privatised and contracted state that the Kennett Government first

commissioned. This draws a link between the two governments as the past Kennett Government influenced modern Victoria through privatisation that has ultimately made the current government beholden to the contracts of the past. As recently as the 2022 election campaign, the Andrews Government announced that if elected, it would reinstate the SEC and write it into the state constitution so it could not be removed again (State Government of Victoria, 2023a).

Apart from the Hayward paper, there is little research on the current Victorian ALP government and its policies; however, this research is relevant to contemporary Victoria in that there are still areas where the Kennett Government's policies have been inherited and are influential. These changes include the case-management style of youth work that is still seen today. Corney (2004) shared that youth workers, to secure employment, must practise within the case-management framework even if that was not seen previously as valuable to youth work practice. This sentiment is shared by Irving et al. (1995), who discouraged using case-management as a form of youth work practice. The beginning of this case-management style of youth work and changes to the sector are analysed within the research to understand its implications for youth workers and young people.

Hayward (2023, p. 8) stated that the Kennett reforms were intended to promote economic growth and innovation, but resulted in private monopolies controlling markets with little competition. In conjunction with understanding the beginnings of the case-management role in youth work we see in the current day, the research will discuss why having a private market involved within the case-management system may have adverse outcomes for young people.

Hayward (2023) posited that due to Andrews' comments on privatisation failing families, pensioners and Victorians, commitment to creating more government-owned

infrastructure could be the beginning of the end for neoliberalism and rentier capitalism in Victoria. As this thesis is written within the time of the Allan Government continuing these promises from the previous Andrews Government, with the movement towards public-owned assets, it is interesting to note that a social democratic government would be essentially undoing the neoliberal policies of the previous Kennett Government.

## 2.14 Conclusion

This research investigates the impacts of the Victorian Kennett Government's neoliberal policies on young people in Victoria through a Foucauldian (1991) theoretical lens of governmentality from a youth work perspective. The research critically examines the links between youth access to active citizenship, the Kennett Government's youth policies and the relationship with social control.

Throughout the literature, there is a consistent link between the Kennett Government and the privatisation of the public sector made by John and McDonald (2020), O'Neill and Alford (1994), Russell (1999) and Smith (1999), but young people and the youth sector are not overtly mentioned in these papers. However, they produce a full view of the significance of the reforms and restructuring of the public sector. This highlights the direct links to neoliberal governmentality using the unique features and understanding of neoliberal economic policy as a control method. This literature conveys that these policies and procedures were consistently aligned with the fundamental features of neoliberalism and governmentality by enforcing policies and processes such as encouraging competition, withdrawing government funds from services, promoting efficiency, privatisation, selling services and CCT – all of which can be described as elements of control through technical procedures, policies and practices that had a disproportionate impact on marginalised people (Foucault et al., 2008; Hamann, 2009; Joseph, 2010; Lemke, 2001).

Despite Bessant and Webber (2001) discussing YACVic losing core funding by the government, these writers have not further expanded upon why this was the case or how it came about. The Bessant and Webber (2001) paper does not detail the political influences, decisions or events that led to the loss of funding. Although it explains why youth peak bodies are necessary, the depth of information is insufficient to provide adequate answers to the research question, prompting this investigation. Corney (2021) proposed that YACVic's critique of the Kennett Government's neoliberal policies was a primary reason for YACVic losing its core government funding and its services being put out to tender. This research critically examines these claims and the events that led up to them, historically documenting and examining this period.

## Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

This chapter outlines the design of this research, including an overview of the stages of historical research, the methods and an explanation of the approaches utilised for the data collection and analysis. The chapter concludes by discussing the benefits, ethical considerations and limitations of this research.

### 3.1 Introduction

Concerning youth policy history in Victoria during the period of the Kennett Government (1992–1999), there are gaps in the literature. A particular gap is the events that led to the removal of YACVic's core funding, why it was removed and how this relates to the broader social and policy issues at that time. These events are examined using 'critical' historical research methods and qualitative interviews with eyewitnesses (Given, 2008; Lune & Berg, 2017; Marwick, 2001) to investigate the cause of the loss of core funding for YACVic. Critical historical research draws on the tradition of critical theory (Morrow et al., 1994), and in particular, this research uses Foucault's (1991) theory of governmentality as an analytical lens to inform and interpret historical events.

Timelines are constructed as a basis for the research, providing a chronological order of events. This is a common practice in historical research as historians use timelines to show when events happened and the development of these in chronological order (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 161; Marwick, 2001; Porra et al., 2014). The research project has used five participant interviews with eyewitnesses to enrich and examine the archival (documentary) data. The documentary data was procured from annual reports, publications, correspondence, government inquiries, policy documents and newspaper articles of the period.

The qualitative interviews had two purposes, to gather information on the events that led to YACVic losing its core funding and to explore the movement of technologies and use

of power as a form of social control (Foucault, 1991) by discussing the context surrounding the events with eyewitnesses and gaining insight into not only the participants' involvement in YACVic at this time but also the socioeconomic environment in Victoria and perceived impacts of the Kennett Government (Lune & Berg, 2017).

The overall aims of this project justify the use of historical research methods as provided by Marwick (2001) and Given (2008) of the five stages of historical research design to expand upon the research question, identifying the complexities of the past through the people, ideas, nuances and events (Lune & Berg, 2017), and exploring and interpreting the meaning (Given, 2008, p. 2). Furthermore, this method of investigation allows the theoretical frame to ground the data and contribute to the analysis. This justifies the choice of methodology as it is not only attempting to document but also to critically examine and understand the historical significance of neoliberal impacts on the Victorian youth sector and continuing impacts on current policies. As such, the research attempts to extend beyond the collection of dates, facts and figures, and details of the issues that have influenced the past to look at the implications for the present and what may continue to influence the future (Glass, 1989; Notter, 1972).

### 3.2 Research question and aims

The overarching question driving this research is:

*What contributed to the Kennett Government not renewing core funding to the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria in 1999?*

In order to answer this question, the study historically identifies and analyses political ideologies and rationales that underpinned and influenced the decisions that led to the non-renewal of YACVic's core funding, with the overall research being investigated through the lens of Foucault's governmentality and from a youth worker perspective.

Using critical historical research methods, the research aims to:

- establish a record of the historical events of the Kennett Government, its ministers for youth and its Office of Youth Affairs that surrounded the period leading up to the loss of core funding to YACVic and tendering out of its services
- create and examine three policy timelines based on the activities of the three policy actors involved: the Kennett Government, the Office of Youth Affairs and YACVic
- map and critically analyse the ideological and political actions of the actors, showcasing the context that influenced their policy decisions
- decipher the impacts of neoliberalism, economic rationalism, privatisation and CCT in the Victorian state government at the time and how these may continue to relate to and affect young people and youth policy today.

As such, the overall aim of this project is to document and critically examine through the lens of Foucault's governmentality (1991), historical events and their significance concerning youth policy in the state of Victoria and their relationships with the funding of the youth sector's peak advisory body at that time, in particular why these events have become emblematic of neoliberal policy impacts in the Victorian youth sector, and critically reflecting on these historical events from a youth sector perspective concerning continuing contemporaneous impacts.

### 3.3 Research design

Patton (2002) stated that qualitative data sources are commonly documents and interviews, and provide data that quantitative methods cannot easily analyse. This approach to research focuses on the events, lived experiences and interactions providing historical and social contexts to a specific dataset, providing a way to interpret the phenomena and the meanings that humans bring to the phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Patton, 2002). The study predominantly uses archival data and eyewitness interviews, with the interviews providing a context and an interpretation of the documents in practice. The interviews establish and document the events from the

perspective of key eyewitnesses (the interview participants), allowing the researcher to consider the participants' experiences and place their experiences alongside the literature, examining, validating and comparing their recollections with the literature (Creswell, 2018). Using this method expands upon existing knowledge and assists in garnering an understanding and interpretation of the events that transpired using the documents and interview data. As the participants were upper-management and/or board members at YACVic, having worked there at differing and overlapping times, the interview questions were tailored to address these differences. Research interview questions were prepared following the literature review.

### 3.3.1 Historical research methods

The research uses a qualitative approach, using critical historical data collection methods to analyse archival data. It critically examines through the lens of Foucault's governmentality (1991) the contemporary context the historical events and policy decisions of the Kennett Government from 1992 to 1999, in particular, the policy decisions that resulted in the non-renewal by the government of YACVic's core funding and the tendering out of its services.

The recruitment of interview participants was 'purposeful' (Creswell, 1998) as the participants needed to have both knowledge and lived experience of the historical events under investigation, and be willing and available to be interviewed, allowing for the research questions to be examined and aims to be sufficiently determined (Patton, 2002). The participant recruitment process was on the basis of 'convenience' endeavouring to maximise the opportunities to interview participants within the timelines of the research (Sim & Wright, 2000).

As this research was looking at specific events and time periods with limited associated research and literature, there was an investigative element to uncovering the events.

Although initially it was believed that this research would be historiographical, upon further examination it was apparent that the research would be writing the history to meet gaps within the literature. Historiography differs from historical research because it reflects on the writing of history, the philosophies and theories that inform and motivate specific historical accounts and what influences may have swayed the writing of historical accounts (Given, 2008, p. 2). In order to answer the research question, the research design process must find the best way to carry out rigorous research. Collecting data and interpreting the phenomena provided a foundation for the research design, following historical research methods. The data collected provided context to contemporary issues and fills the gaps of an under-researched topic (Given, 2008). Historical research techniques refer to the interpretive process of writing history, which is justifiable by introducing a line of investigation that correlates with previous forms of history writing (Porra et al., 2014). Furthermore, Topolski (1977) suggests that historians should follow the research question to answer queries about the past.

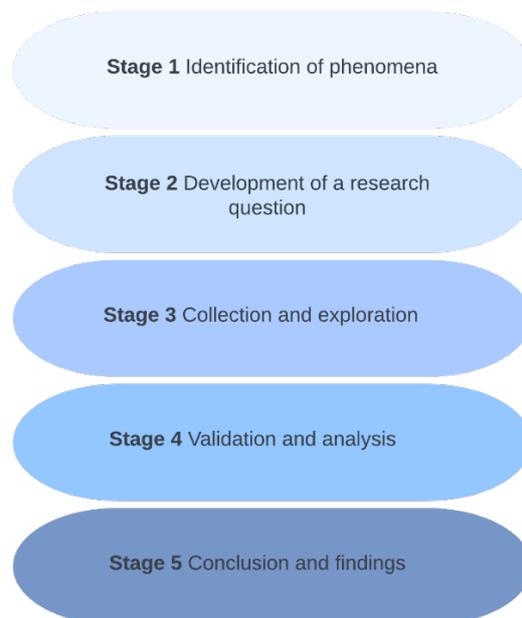
An integral part of the research is its intent to inform change and address current social issues. For example, questioning government funding cuts to social services on the assumption that it will improve the welfare and rights of a marginalised group, using a critical and transformative approach to answering the research question. This is achieved by documenting historical evidence and then critiquing the political influences and policies that resulted in YACVic losing core funding, linking the resulting political and social actions (Mertens, 2008).

Historical research, according to Lune and Berg (2017, p. 159), "attempts to systematically recapture the complex nuances, the people, meanings, events, and even ideas of the past that have influenced and shaped the present". This form of research aims to link the past and the present, as contemporary issues may be based on past cultural and social issues. The historical method goes beyond searching for facts, to

exploring them and interpreting their meaning based on the surviving data (Given, 2008, p. 2). Historical research is inherently unique in social sciences by the broad spectrum across which it analyses patterns of cultural, social, political and economic activity that contribute to phenomena. By exploring change, historical research emphasises the complexities of life (Porra et al., 2014).

### 3.3.2 Stages of historical research

According to Marwick (2001), historical research can follow a unique process that includes five stages in the research design. These stages, detailed by Given (2008, p. 2), provide the ability to establish a record of the past and provide an account of events that happened at the time. In addition, the analysis of these records explains the events, contemporary phenomena, and the patterns repeated in history. These stages are detailed in Figure 3.1 below, along with the researcher's actions to achieve this process.



*Figure 3.1: Stages of historical research in this study*

### Stage 1 – Identification of the phenomena through initial research

This includes reading the literature, reflecting on the researcher's points of interest and listening to present ideas on the phenomena (Given, 2008). This stage was achieved through talking with the study supervisors on topics of interest within youth policy, neoliberalism, history and young people's access to services. These readings and conversations allowed the researcher to select the time period and phenomena that are the focus of the study.

### Stage 2 – Developing a research question

The research question was developed using the information collected in stage 1. In this stage, a theoretical lens was identified that provided a framework for data analysis and interpretation. This framework allowed the researcher to focus on and interpret the events (Given, 2008). This research project identified Foucault's governmentality (Foucault, 1991) as a theoretical frame recognising government economic policy was used as a powerful form of social control and underpins the critical analysis and interpretation of these historical events.

### Stage 3 – Collection and exploration of data

Stage 3 involved the exploration, collection and examination of data. This stage is viewed as the most intensive as it depends on accessibility and availability of sources. To put this stage into practice, it began with initial historical conversations with people working in the youth sector at the time, discussing the different organisations, memorable events and where to find the archives, documents, first-hand accounts and eyewitness participants, needed to conduct the study.

As historical research relies on a wide variety of sources, both primary and secondary, including unpublished material, in this stage the data started to be collated from both primary and secondary archival sources. The primary sources referred to first-hand

accounts of the events. These primary sources collected from the time were original documents, letters, minutes, newsletters, newspaper articles, annual reports, government inquiries and policy documents. When conducting historical research, primary data sources are valuable to the validity and reliability of the analysis.

Secondary sources are items that are created after the events have occurred. They may have been created by a person or an organisation not directly related to the event but adjacent to it. They can be descriptive, including books, research, summaries, interpretations, biographies and even descriptions of the primary sources, but created after the events. These secondary sources are oral or written second-hand accounts of the events and can be found in journal articles, newspapers, biographies, textbooks, encyclopaedias and other media. Regarding this research, the secondary sources were biographies, literature and some eyewitness accounts from participants after the event, including people who worked at YACVic before and after the removal of its core funding (Given, 2008, p. 2; Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 161; Porra et al., 2014, p. 557).

#### Stage 4 – Analysis and validation of data

Stage 4 is data analysis and validation of the data's reliability. In this stage, patterns emerged through coding and thematic analysis, with themes identified based on strength and repetition in the data. The data was evaluated based on internal and external validity, as discussed below. This ensured the research question was answered and allowed for the interpretation of the data, with conclusions drawn (Given, 2008).

#### Stage 5 – Conclusion and findings

Finally, stage 5 was discussing the results of the analysis, dialoguing with relevant literature, coming to conclusions and presenting findings and implications. The evidence included in this section is detailed and supports the previous stage (Given, 2008, p. 2).

### 3.4 Data collection

Following the review of literature and interpretive historical analysis of the written record, qualitative methods allowed for interview questions to be constructed and designed based on the historical data (Given, 2008; Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 2; Marwick, 2001).

As with historical research methods, the research must assume that some datasets will be based on incomplete data. This is due to the fact that data sources may have been displaced, lost, destroyed or distorted over time. As such, this research extended beyond these gaps in the data to find the answers to the research question (Given, 2008, p. 2).

#### 3.4.1 Archival data collection

Through the preliminary stages of the research, primary and secondary data was collected and categorised to begin the research. The majority of the written data was primary data, with some secondary data. This included YACVic documents, newspaper reports and eyewitness interviews, parliamentary documents and autobiographies written over 1992–2000. Most of these sources were created at the time of the events being studied, enabling the researcher to get close to what was happening at the time (Given, 2008, p. 3; Marwick, 2001).

The primary and secondary sources contained descriptions of some of the events at the time (Lune & Berg, 2017). Primary and secondary sources provided access to the historical events at a macro level (Given, 2008, p. 3). The source materials were accessed from State Library Victoria (SLV), Public Record Office Victoria (PROV), University of Melbourne archives, *The Age* newspaper archives and YACVic's archives. As sampling can be diverse due to the availability of sources, it was imperative for the project to procure as much archival data as possible to find relevant documentary sources close to the phenomena (Given, 2008, pp. 3–4). However, due to the

preservation needs of the documents under investigation apart from the newspaper archives, all documents and evidence were hard copies that could not leave the institutions that housed them. Therefore, each artefact had to be individually copied in person at the discretion of the institution responsible.

In some cases, such as at the PROV and the University of Melbourne, researchers can only enter with minimal personal belongings and limited stationary items, which meant that the researcher had to take detailed notes in a research journal and take photographs of documents using a personal phone, if it complied with copyright laws. The copies and photographs were then processed through Adobe to utilise optical character recognition software, enabling the documents to be highlighted and made readable. The data was then transferred to the Victoria University research archive depository, R Drive, and the NVivo computer software was used to house and manage the data.

The archival data was the foundation of the research and had significant relevance to the study. The source material provided substantial data to establish the timelines and to outline areas that needed further questioning through the qualitative interview process. This data substantiated and highlighted areas that could have contributed to the loss of core funding of YACVic. An example is the Ministerial 'Portfolio' of Youth Affairs and its frequent movement throughout various state government Ministries and its location and administration within various large state government departments and how these movements may have impacted the youth sector and YACVic.

#### 3.4.2 Analysis and validity of primary and secondary sources

The analysis and validity of the primary and secondary data are vital parts of the research. Primary and secondary data was validated through procurement of the data using reputable sources such as government-owned public record offices and libraries. To ensure the validity of the data, it was dated and labelled, with the authorship identified

(Given, 2008, p. 5). With historical research, it is important to note that not every conceivable data source could be used (Given, 2008, p. 3). The data collection process showed that some data was missing from YACVic's records. To remedy this, the researcher turned to public record archives and libraries to try and find the missing data and supplemented missing historical data through the eyewitness interview process.

The research used Gottschalk's (1969) definition of a data source or document as authentic if it was written:

- in the time, or close to the time, under investigation
- to make a record, for example, legal documents
- for confidential communication
- for corresponding with a small group of people, such as through personal correspondence
- for a personal record, such as a personal diary
- for public records, for example, magazines, newsletters and newspapers; or
- by experts who possessed unique but broad knowledge of the events under investigation.

In order to produce rigorous historical research, the data must be subjected to external and internal criticism (Given, 2008, p. 5; Lune & Berg, 2017). As described by Lune and Berg (2017, p. 163), external criticism is "primarily concerned with the question of veracity or genuineness of the source material". Within the context of the research project, during the data collection phase the data sources were subjected to external criticism by questioning and validating the creator of the sources, identifying if the item was the original document or a reproduction and confirming the date on which the data source was made, which assisted in the classification of primary and secondary sources (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 163). The documents procured from YACVic, the PROV and SLV

had been validated by the institutions housing them with accurate dates and labels. The researcher further validated them by analysing the content. The data had logos and letterheads that fit into the design aesthetic of the 1990s, as well as dates that corresponded with the years under investigation. These documents had been signed by board members who have since verified their involvement in YACVic at this time through the eyewitness interviews. Some of the data sources were newsletters and publications made by YACVic for its members, while others were internal emails that had been printed at the time (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 164).

Internal criticism is based on the data's ability to reflect the accuracy of what is within the source material. It involves questioning the reliability of the data and assessing the meaning within the data. To be rigorous in this stage, the researcher must be critical of the meaning within the data and aware of bias and lack of relevancy (Given, 2008, p. 5). Throughout the datasets, items produced by YACVic can be seen as having bias as they were written from the viewpoint of the organisation. For example, publications such as *Farewell YACVic*, which detailed different articles written at the time under investigation, documented that YACVic had its funding withdrawn and was critical of the sitting government. A way to counteract this bias is to balance the experiences of the loss of funding by asking the participants about the movements that led to the loss of core funding and YACVic's subsequent closure and the events or other issues, such as the organisational structure of YACVic, that may have led to the funding withdrawal, emphasising where this bias stems from.

#### 3.4.3 Semi-structured interviews with eyewitnesses

There are limitations to written documents as they can dictate subjectivity through the ability to be filtered by the writers. As such, the research also collected and reviewed an oral history of human experience and memories from eyewitnesses, in particular, those voices that have not been heard or documented (Given, 2008; Lune & Berg, 2017).

The research addresses events over 1992–1999 using the experience of eyewitnesses, people working at YACVic at the time, to explore, interrogate and interpret key policy positions and their impacts from the period (Creswell, 2018).

The eyewitness interviews were ordered so the researcher could first interview people involved with YACVic during the time of the loss of core funding. This allowed for the timeline to be contributed to by those key people with first-hand knowledge of what had been happening in YACVic at an organisational level. The second stage of interviewing was incorporating people who had worked within the sector at the time but were also connected with YACVic either during its closure or immediately after. This permitted previous YACVic employees to discuss the impacts of the loss of YACVic's funding and the subsequent reinstatement of its funding on a broader level.

The semi-structured, one-on-one interviews lasted from 1 hour and 30 minutes to 2 hours and were audio recorded and later transcribed for thematic analysis purposes. The availability and recall of the participant determined the length of the interview. The interview questions were structured to create an environment for both the participant and researcher to establish the background of where the participant was placed in the time period regarding employment position, understanding of the political environment and how the events related to young people. The questions focused on investigating the experiences of the participants but also on informing the timeline in areas where archival data was lacking. Another use for the interviews that was unique to this research is that there was limited documentation on YACVic available over 1995–1998 so the participants provided vital information for the investigation.

The open-ended interview questions (see list of indicative interview questions in appendix a) were separated into two main stages, one to gather participants' critical perspectives about how government power was used to influence, for example, societal change and/or social control, and to enable an understanding of how neoliberal policies

of the government (governmentality) influenced the youth sector and young people. The second stage was YACVic-centric, to corroborate and substantiate the timeline, asking direct questions about the events that led to YACVic losing its core funding.

The final research questions asked participants if there were other people they believed should be interviewed for this research and if they had anything else to say about the time under investigation. Although this was an added question, which was inspired by the literature as Costar and Economou (1999) discussed, voices that were critical of the government had been silenced at the time and therefore asking this question allowed participants to openly discuss the period under investigation without any risk of retribution, which may not have been a possibility previously.

### 3.5 Sampling, participant recruitment and interviews

The method of identifying individuals for interviews was pragmatic and purposeful (National Health and Medical Research Council, 2007, p. 28) and based on relevancy to the events under investigation (Creswell, 1998). For example, participants were identified as previous YACVic employees at upper-management level and board members. There were five interview participants, with the recruitment of participants being purposive as they were seen to be critical people at the time who could provide rich data (Patton, 2002). Interviews were conducted online via Zoom and audio recorded for later transcription and analysis.

### 3.6 Data analysis

As this research is qualitative, using historical data collection methods including document search and interviews, the records were procured, collated and critically analysed (Foucault, 1991) using thematic analysis to investigate the phenomena (Lune & Berg, 2017). Thematic analysis systematically identifies, organises and provides insight into patterns of meaning in data. These patterns of meaning, or themes,

encapsulate the whole dataset. The themes highlight essential attributes in the data related to the research question, allowing the researcher to observe the collective experiences and meanings (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 81–82). Using these themes, the thematic analysis goes beyond summarising the data by critically examining, interpreting and understanding the data, then using this understanding to answer the research question (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). Furthermore, the thematic analysis identifies the commonalities, strengths and repetitions within the data to procure and validate an answer to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This method of analysis sits within the realms of interpretivist/constructivist paradigms, making this method justifiable and congruent with the research aims and methods being used (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 81).

Thematic analysis in this research project could be classified as theoretical as the analysis used structural coding methods in the first stage of the coding cycle. This is due to the specificity of the interview questions. Furthermore, this analysis is latent, which fits into the interpretivist approach, as not only is the research exploring a time period but it is also critically examining (Foucault, 1991) the underlying implications of neoliberal governmentality to the time under investigation (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

In order to answer the research question, the Kennett Government policies from the period under investigation and the eyewitness interview data transcripts were critically analysed, allowing the participant voices to examine and demonstrate the implications of these policies. In addition, analysing the Kennett Government's policies investigated the underlying issues in the historical data, comparing these with those of the interview data and creating opportunities for the research question to be answered (Yanow, 2000). While conducting the interviews, the researcher took extensive notes. This notetaking became the framework of coding and development of the themes.

Using Saldaña (2009) *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*, two cycles of coding were done. This style of coding was used to make the analysis process rigorous and thorough, allowing for the thematic analysis to sufficiently identify the themes within the data.

### 3.6.1 First cycle of coding

The first cycle of coding began with structural coding. Structural coding was selected to approach the data with the specific examination and analysis that led to answering the research question and was achieved by coding each participant's interview answers to the interview questions themselves. Not only did this provide the researcher with answers to each interview question, but it also allowed the researcher to familiarise themselves more with the data and answers (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89). This type of coding utilised entire verbatim paragraphs and also large pieces of historical data (Saldaña, 2009, p. 3). The second stage of the first cycle was a hybrid of reductive and inductive coding. It was reductive and inductive because both were necessary to fit within the historical research method. The reductive element was based on the fact that there was a critical research question to be answered and, some codes were already hypothesised to fit within this criterion (Saldaña, 2009, p. 65); for example, themes such as “power” and “control” were based *a priori* on the Foucauldian (1991) theory of governmentality, how power techniques inform control measures, whilst ‘tendering’ was based on the pre-existing knowledge that YACVic had lost its core government funding in 1999 and been put out for tender. However, even though this reductive form of coding was used, it was also essential to the interpretivist element of the research to have inductive coding, meaning that there was space within the data for emergent patterns and themes to be coded, highlighting the more explorative nature of this research (Saldaña, 2009, p. 65).

### 3.6.2 Second cycle of coding

The second cycle of coding was much more selective. This coding was less broad and focused more on generating categories, highlighting concepts, filtering the data and identifying the themes within the data (Saldaña, 2009, p. 8). With themes being the patterns within the data that are characterised by their significance to the research, in this stage the themes were narrowed down to determine key areas within the data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). In this stage, a latent approach was taken to some of the themes as there is a theoretical underpinning within this research, looking at an underlying ideology within the theme and then understanding it within the context of the research project (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). This critical (Foucault, 1991) theoretical-based coding identified *apriori* where power had been used as a control method by the Kennett Government in relation to YACVic and how the dynamics of power and control between these actors influenced the youth sector and young people. An example of this is how government funding was cut to youth organisations, showcasing the movement of technologies to influence an outcome, resulting in organisations that were opposed to these policies being more focused on keeping afloat as their organisations had lost funding and would have less opportunity to organise and oppose the government policies as they were struggling, highlighting the power deficiencies between the actors of the Kennett Government and the youth sector, including YACVic. The underlying ideology is neoliberal governmentality and the ways in which neoliberal policies impact welfare and service delivery organisations to the most marginalised people. This stage involved refining and reviewing the themes to create the final themes and subthemes to produce a theme table, which is the central figure of the results chapter (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89).

### 3.7 Ethical considerations

Before conducting participant interviews and analysis, it was necessary to obtain approval from the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (VUHREC), in accordance with Victoria University policies and the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research. The project was deemed low risk by VUHREC and approval was granted for the study on 24 February 2022 (Application ID: HRE21-172).

Within the context of the semi-structured interviews, undertaking this study could have posed some social risk due to the disclosure of issues within organisations and the government. This risk was mitigated by de-identifying the information and paying particular care when discussing people and places of work. A unique factor in this research is that it is an investigation of events from many years ago; many people had since moved on from these workplaces, but it was important to note that participants may have previously been colleagues and their identity should be respected.

### 3.8 Limitations of the study

Thorough ethical research recognises that there are instances where limitations should be illuminated. By identifying and discussing these limitations, space is provided for future research in this area. This study's overall limitations were the timing, the lack of officially recorded historical data and digitisation of records, and the difficulty of recruitment of participants due to social distance restrictions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### 3.8.1 Timing

As this research is focused on historical events, one main limitation is the time in which the events happened. When conducting this research, due to it being 24–31 years ago,

there were issues in procuring data, documents, minutes and reports from this time as some had not been digitised or kept. Over the years, collections have been displaced and moved around different organisations, leading to missing information.

Throughout the participant interviews, there were moments when the participants would say they “do not quite remember”; this was expected before the beginning of the research as, with time, people forget. A way to counteract this was having the archival data collection stage as the first data collection method to provide the information for the timeline and to have the participants' experiences and accounts confirm the archival records where needed.

### 3.8.2 Access to data and digitisation of records

Access to documentary data was a continuous process throughout the data collection stage. The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted the timeliness of the initial data collection process and the resulting lockdowns meant the institutions that housed the documents could not loan them out. Attempting to follow the data and where the records were being housed was relatively complex as YACVic's records had been moved to many different institutions. Unfortunately, some annual reports from YACVic were not found, leaving some gaps within the data. This meant the researcher had to rely on the eyewitness participants' experience to fill gaps in this time.

As the documents that were in SLV, PROV and University of Melbourne were hard copies that were not permitted to leave the premises, internal and external criticism was used by the researcher to determine the documents that needed to be digitised; this was a time-consuming process which required the researcher to organise the documents correctly and precisely, if a mistake had been made through identifying the document, it would have meant having to return to the institution.

Whilst every effort was made to seek as much archival data as possible, it was apparent that not all data could be recovered due to timing, access and organisational recordkeeping. This is a known fact about historical research. Research could be conducted to investigate this topic further, with this study being the basis for others.

### 3.8.3 Sampling

Challenges within the sampling process arose due to the historical elements of this research. This made it imperative to analyse both archival data and interviews, as some data was unavailable. Another challenge in conducting a historical research project that required interviews, particularly with purposive sampling, was access to participants. As the period under investigation was 24–31 years ago, unfortunately some key players from the time had passed away. In addition, other potential participants had retired and could not be located as they did not have an online presence or contact.

Further limitations related to purposive sampling were that, although the researcher had emailed organisations and individuals requesting contact, there was sometimes no response. This is not an issue of contention, but it is worth noting that it was a problem that arose often, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, as part of the research project design the researcher was hoping to interview previous politicians who had been active in the time under investigation and unfortunately there was no response. This leaves room for future research to be conducted where it would be beneficial to interview politicians from this time to gauge a broader view of what was happening at a government level and to investigate further the policies written at the time and how they impacted young people.

### 3.8.4 COVID-19 pandemic

Throughout the first year of writing this thesis, Melbourne, Victoria, was experiencing consistent lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This meant that access to the

institutions that held the documentary data was restricted, making procuring these documents difficult. None of the archival data was available online and it had to be investigated in person.

Once the lockdowns were lifted in November 2021 the researcher could move more freely but, due to age, was ineligible for COVID vaccination following the lockdowns. This meant that Stages 1 and 2 of the research process were severely impacted by the inability to access data, as access to SLV, PROV and University of Melbourne all required double vaccination, pushing back the timeliness of completion.

Many sacrifices were made during this time by many people. Of course, this research project being pushed back was insignificant compared to the struggles many others faced, especially young people, but it is important to note that this was a factor that limited the research.

## Chapter 4: Results and Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results from the analysis of the archival data and participant interviews. The results are presented in three timelines and a table of document analysis and interview data analysis (see Table 4.1), with overarching themes and subthemes identified from the thematic analysis. The historical timelines are presented below as a reference point for the following discussion section, which encompasses the identified overarching themes and subthemes, and discusses them accordingly with reference to the literature.

### 4.1 Profile of participants for semi-structured interviews

The criteria for the semi-structured interviews were:

- the participants had to have been involved with YACVic at an upper-management organisational level and/or board members between 1992 and 2000
- they had to be confirmed by the archival data to have been a member of YACVic at that time
- they had to have been a documented active participant in the organisation.

These criteria were confirmed through the YACVic archival data.

Potential participants were first contacted via email and after the determination of eligibility. Those who did not meet the criteria were excluded from the interviews.

Participants confirmed their eligibility via email prior to interviews. Eligibility was again confirmed at the start of the interview in the initial stage.

### 4.2 Historical timelines

The results from the data gathered have been separated into three timelines, establishing a record of the historical events. These three historical timelines are based on the three actors involved, including 1. the policy decisions and legislation of the

Kennett Government, 2. the movement of the Office of Youth Affairs portfolio and 3. YACVic's history throughout this time. See the following Figures 4.1,4.2, 4.3 and 4.4.

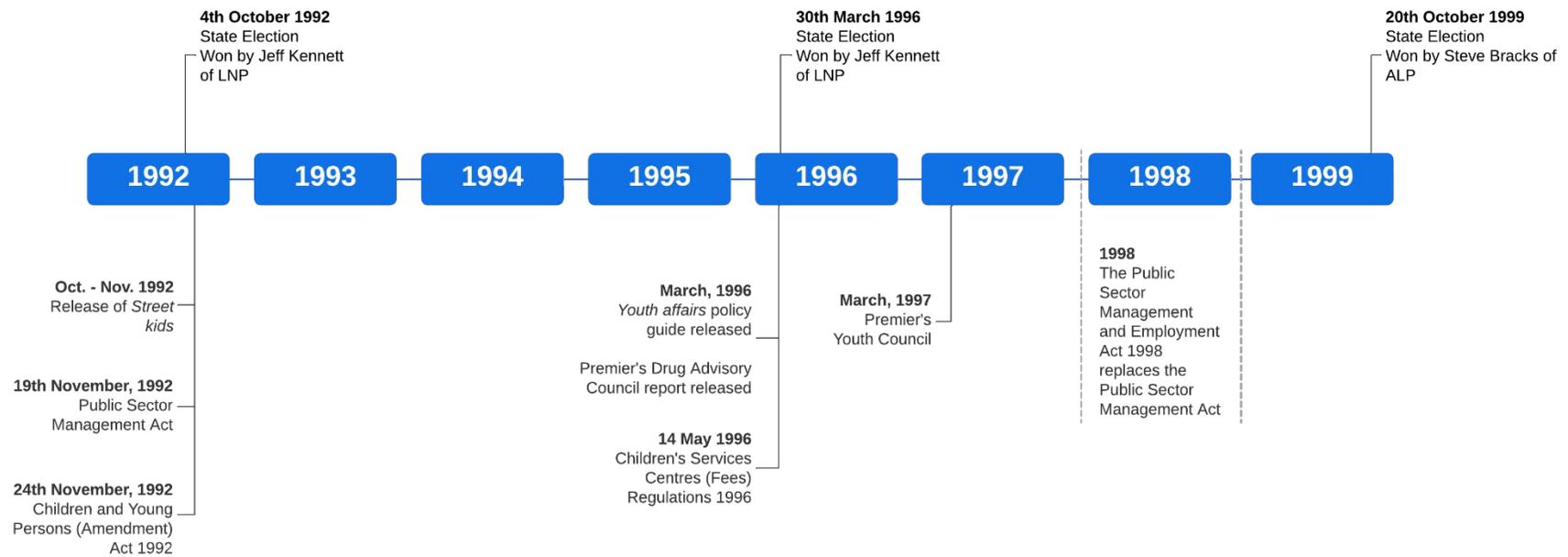


Figure 4.1: Actor 1 – Victorian government (Kennett Government) timeline

**Key**

Government: Liberal-National Party

Government: Australian Labor Party

**1991-1992**  
 Youth Affairs located within the Ministry for Ethnic, Municipal and Community Affairs.  
**After the election of the Kennett Government, Youth Affairs moves to Department of Business and Employment. Office of Youth Affairs is established.**

**1996**  
 Office of Youth Affairs was not retained.  
**Youth Affairs moves to DHS.**

**1999**  
 Post- election Office for Youth is re-instated.  
**Youth Affairs moves to DEET.**

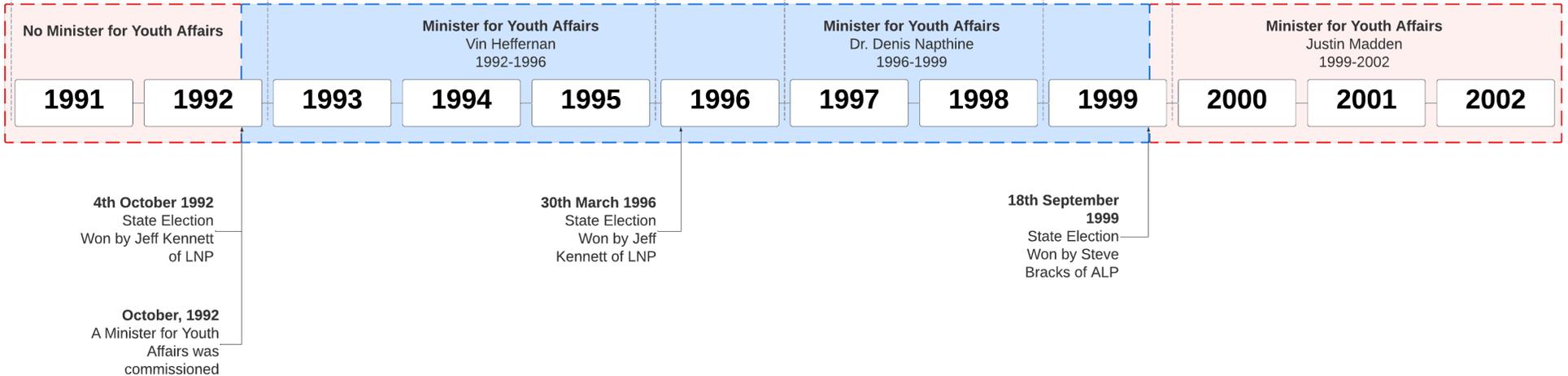


Figure 4.2: Actor 2 – Office of Youth Affairs timeline

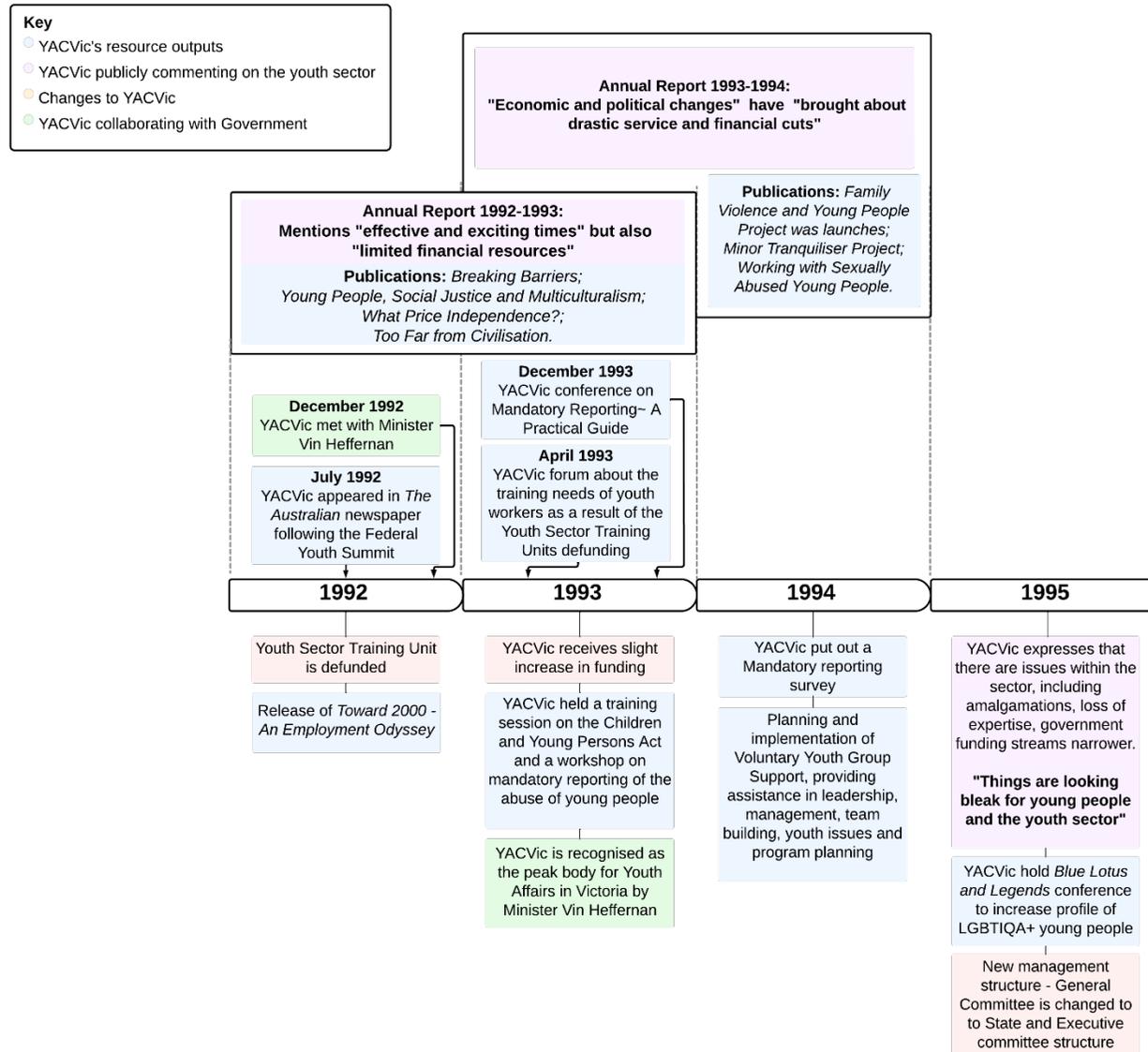


Figure 4.3: Actor 3 – Youth Affairs Council of Victoria timeline 1992-1995

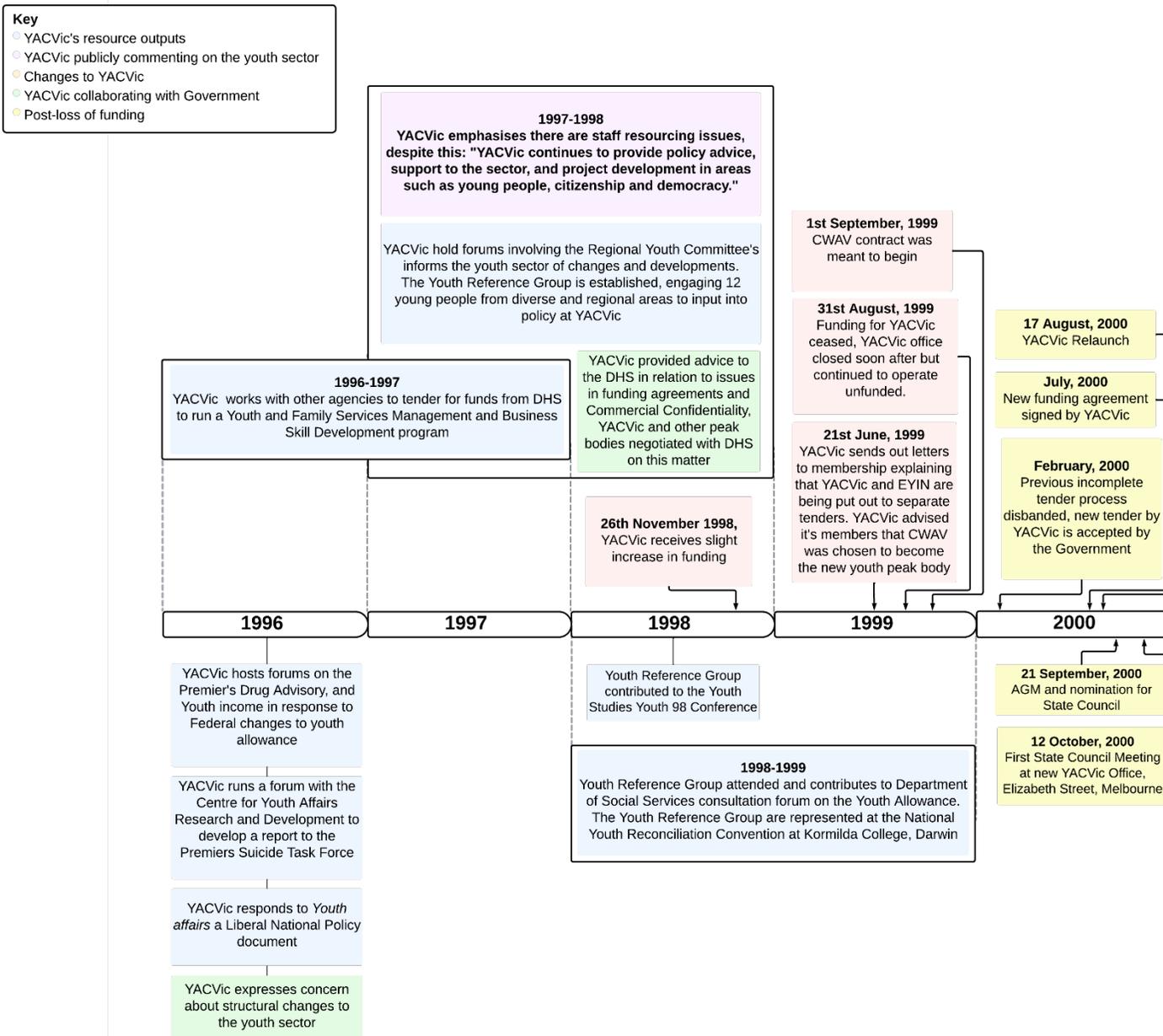


Figure 4.4: Actor 3 – Youth Affairs Council of Victoria timeline 1996-2000

### 4.3 Overarching themes and subthemes

Six overarching themes were identified from annual reports, letters, documents, publications and participant interviews. These themes are 1. “power”, 2. “control”, 3. “competition”, 4. “distraction”, 5. “betrayal” and 6. “reinstatement”. These six overarching themes drawn from the data analysis to form the results are featured in Table 4.1 below outlining the overarching themes and subthemes.

Within the theme of “power” (Foucault, 1991), power was exercised by the government through the policy levers of subthemes “funding” and “policies”, with evidence from Peck and Tickell (1994) and Harvey (2007) definitions of neoliberalism present throughout these subthemes. In the theme of “control”, the subthemes prevalent are “resistance”, “vulnerability” and “discipline”, which are interrelated with the consequences of power (Foucault, 1991).

“Competition” was identified as a theme that provided an outlook on the complexities the youth sector faced through the subtheme of “privatisation”. This correlates with the subtheme of “tendering” and how YACVic approached the tendering process. The theme of “distraction” emerged in which YACVic was distracted by external factors, with the identification of “support” and “representation” being impacted by the distraction as the corresponding subthemes. The theme of “betrayal” indicates the areas in which the actors were complicit in betrayal. The final theme, “reinstatement”, shows how YACVic fared after the organisation closed, its reopening and how YACVic modified itself through this process.

Table 4.1: Overarching themes and subthemes.

<b>Overarching theme</b>	<b>Subthemes</b>	<b>Summary of themes</b>
1. <i>Power</i>	1a: Funding 1b: Policies	The subthemes identified under the overarching theme of “power” represent the “conduct of conduct” (Foucault, 1991) in which the government (Kennett Government) was “taking action at a distance” using neoliberal policies to control the other actors (being the Office of Youth Affairs and YACVic).
2. <i>Control</i>	2a: Resistance 2b: Vulnerability 2c: Discipline	“Control” as a theme relates to the outcomes of control in which the actors either exerted their power (Kennett Government) or resisted that power (Office of Youth Affairs and YACVic) and the outcomes of resistance which led to vulnerabilities and discipline and punishment (Foucault, 1975, 1991) by the government.
3. <i>Competition</i>	3a: Privatisation 3b: Tendering	“Competition” highlights the environment in which YACVic was operating at this time and how YACVic and the youth sector were influenced by competition. This theme represents the tendering process and how complex the environment was for the youth sector at this time. i.e., the alienation and separation of the youth sector as individual youth organisations were pitted against each other in the tendering process, undermining collaboration and cooperation, leading to individualisation and responsabilisation (Foucault, 1991).
4. <i>Distraction</i>	4a: Support 4b: Representation	“Distraction” shows where YACVic was distracted from its key role and tasks i.e., representing the voice of young people – by resisting and protesting the neoliberal policies of the Kennett Government. As a result of the distraction, YACVic lost the support of its members, the broader youth sector and the government.

5. *Betrayal*

5a: Kennett Government 5b: Youth sector 5c: YACVic	The theme of “betrayal” is centred around the act of betrayal within the context of the events under investigation and how the actors and the youth sector, through their actions, betrayed their initial intended purposes and each other.
6. <i>Reinstatement</i>	The “reinstatement” theme shows how YACVic manoeuvred out of its loss of core funding and closure and into a more promising organisational standing with the newly elected Bracks ALP government in power, rebuilding its membership base and standing within the broader youth sector.

## 4.4 Discussion

### 4.4.1 Theme 1: Power

Within the neoliberal policies of the Kennett Government, there was an agenda to remove state debt through privatisation, cutting funding to services and shrinking government departments (Costar & Economou, 1999; Peck & Tickell, 1994; Rooney, 1997; Tonts & Haslam-McKenzie, 2005). These neoliberal philosophies are identified as using power to manipulate the economy and society (Rooney, 1997).

#### 4.4.1.1 Subtheme 1a: Funding

Power was exercised by the Kennett Government through the provision or withholding of government funding for services and through the introduction of CCT for service provision funding. This meant that one service could lose its funding to another service winning the tender. This pitted services against each other as funding was reduced, creating a competitive and individualised market for service providers competing against each other for limited and decreasing funding. In this environment of funding scarcity and precarity, the threat of having funding removed as a result of an organisation being critical of government policy was very real and, as interviewees recalled, it changed the way YACVic staff undertook their advocacy work to government as the perceived potential loss or reduction in funding could lead to much deeper organisational issues that impacted the outputs of services, programs, and staffing motivation and retention. This led to a sense that YACVic was no longer independent of government but beholden to it. This demonstrates the complexity of the power dynamic inherent in the relationship between the three actors and the wider youth sector membership of YACVic. This power dynamic underpinned by government funding, caused tensions not just between the youth affairs council and government, but also between the youth affairs council and the Office for Youth and between the youth affairs council and its wider youth sector

membership as it responded to government funding threats. This evidences the use of power by neoliberal government to force policy change through the threat of withholding funding in concert with Foucault's theory of governmentality.

#### 4.4.1.1.1 Funding instability

As the Kennett-led Victorian LNP government sought over 1992–1999 to reduce the state debt it had inherited from the previous Cain–Kirner Labor Governments (Costar & Economou, 1999; Pascoe & Pascoe, 1998), a method of rectifying this debt as an election promise (Hayward, 1993; Shamsullah, 1999) was to reduce government spending, particularly on education and welfare services, through imposing neoliberal governmentality throughout the whole state of Victoria in public services and government-run services. This subtheme directly correlates with the Peck and Tickell (1994) and Harvey (2007) definitions of neoliberal philosophy, as it was increasing government power through withdrawing government funds. In the archival data, it is documented that funding for YACVic was an ongoing issue from as early as 1992 and right up until its closure in 1999, with funding instability reported as early as the 1992–1993 *Annual report* using language such as “weathered” to outline that this had been a complex storm-like process of “securing funding” from the Kennett Government for the organisation:

1992 has proven a difficult year for YACVic, as has been the case for many agencies within the community sector. The agency has weathered various events that have had a significant effect on the finances. These include the change over of staff, the cessation of YSTC [Youth Sector Training Council], and difficulties related to securing future funding (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1993, p. 11).

This issue of funding instability continued throughout the time under investigation, as seen in the 1999 *Farewell YACVic* (1999, p. 3), which stated, "One of the challenges that

YACVic has had to face is the instability of funding from the government for peak bodies." The reference in both documents to a "challenge" that has been "weathered" throughout 1992–1999 is an example of neoliberal governmentality by the Kennett Government using its power to facilitate methods of control to construct an environment where funding was a "challenge" to obtain. By creating challenges related to obtaining funding, it was pushing YACVic to comply with the parameters set by the government, using this power to control the organisation through the instability of funding (Herbert-Cheshire, 2000; Joseph, 2010; Lemke, 2015).

Contributing to the evidence surrounding the action of restricting government funding as a power manoeuvre, interview participants provided examples of how restricting this funding impacted the broader organisation and what the government changed within the organisation that led to the individual members of the organisation assuming responsibility for the outcomes of the organisation (Lemke, 2015). Interview Participant 5 provided context to the funding of YACVic and how the previous Cain–Kirner ALP Governments, with their socially democratic policy positions, contrasted with the Kennett Government's ideological underpinning that did not see value in the youth sector:

There were too many [welfare and community] bodies and the Liberals thought that they needed to make them more "efficient" and maybe effective in the crudest form, which really did mean funding cuts and wanting to make them smaller, which then went with the closing of schools, the amalgamation of councils; it was all part of that debate ... We had started under a Labor government that funded us and then you went into a Liberal government that had a very predetermined notion of what it wanted to do in the not-for-profit sector and the government sector. – Participant 5

This "predetermined notion" of the Kennett Government pushing for efficiency aligns with the government starting to restrict and manipulate funding. Interview Participant 1

articulated how unstable funding could impact the broader view of an organisation whilst mentioning that advocacy and policy positions "kind of threatened" the access to funding:

The instability of the funding also led to some of the instability in the staffing team and the infrastructure of the organisation. That any of the advocacy positions or even the policy positions kind of threatened part of the funding. – Participant 1

The terminology used by Participant 1 reveals the nuanced layers of power imbalance between the actors, relaying that the neoliberal Kennett Government was using governmentality to exert control over YACVic through the instability of funding and, in this instance, using YACVic's advocacy and views on policy against it. Interview Participant 3 shared that the funding levels were inadequate or very short-term, stating that funding was:

Definitely a problem for youth workers, people being funded for one year or two years or three years; what we needed was ten-year funding. – Participant 3

Additionally, it was confirmed by Participant 1 that the funding process was unique as it was negotiated periodically, illustrating that the insecurity in renegotiating funding added to the organisation's instability and contributed to YACVic being reliant on the government, which used this instability to control the organisation indirectly:

One-year to three-year max funding really means that the organisation was quite beholden to government to not be too radical because funding was also hanging over their head, always hanging over the head ... And so we were on negotiation, and year by year, for the YACVic funding. So that was another pressure in the process. – Participant 1

In addition, the phrasing of YACVic being "beholden to government", implies who held power in this relationship and who was subjected to it, which emphasises that the participant was conscious of the power deficiencies between the actors, with YACVic

being subject to the government. This relationship between these two actors is considered standard, as the government is the one holding funding power. However, as an advisory peak body to the government, YACVic created challenges to its access to government funding that inhibited its ability to fulfil its role, impeding its ability to provide specialised, expert advice to the government and facilitate communication between the youth sector and government (Smith, 1977).

The archival data further evidences Participant 1's knowledge of the funding instability issues that led to organisational issues; for example, in the 1993–1994 *Annual report* the Executive Officer remarked:

It is no secret that the core staffing structure has suffered a great deal of instability over the past eighteen months. Despite the best efforts of the Committee and some good individual efforts from staff over this period, this situation has taken its toll on the overall effectiveness and general profile of the organisation (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1994, p. 8).

#### 4.4.1.1.2 Staff retention

Staffing retention was an ongoing issue within YACVic throughout the time under investigation; due to the short-term funding contracts, employees perceived their jobs to be insecure, resulting in a high turnover rate as staff sought more stable, longer term positions. For example, staffing issues and retention were discussed in the 1992–1993 and 1993–1994 annual reports and *Farewell YACVic*, which reported a “high turnover of staff” (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1999, p. 17). The staffing retention issues resulted in job advertisements similar to that in Figure 4.5 below in *The Age* newspaper in 1993, 1994, 1998 and 2000.

**Executive Officer:  
Youth Affairs Council of Victoria**

YACVic, Victoria's peak youth affairs body, provides youth organisations and young people with a means by which to voice their opinions and concerns.

YACVic is seeking a full time Executive Officer to lead;

A. Policy development and community liaison.  
B. Public advocacy and government relations.  
C. Financial and staff management.

Salary range: \$45,000 - \$50,000

Demonstrated skills in managing an organisation or agency, communication, leading and supporting staff, government relations and working to a governing council are mandatory.

Applications must address full selection criteria, contact (03) 9419 9122 for a copy, and be forwarded to Chairperson, YACVic, Suite 1/250 Gore Street, Fitzroy 3065. Applications close 5pm Monday June 1st.

YACVic is an Equal Opportunity employer.  
There are no internal applicants.

*Figure 4.5: Employment, The Age, 17 May 1998*

*Employment, The Age, 17 May 1998 (The Age, 1998).*

High staff turnover was a persistent issue across the organisation, from the lower level employees to the leadership team. Participant 5 highlighted that there was a lack of consistent leadership in YACVic throughout the time under investigation, sharing that they often had to step into the role of CEO on an interim basis:

CEOs came and went so often that I had to act up in between. – Participant 5

The notion of inconsistent leadership adds to the adversity the staff faced. In conjunction with this, Interview Participant 2's perception was that the staff were suffering not only from the infrastructure issues but also due to the unstable funding environment:

I think the staff team had become a bit worn down and pretty deflated. And internal communication in the team was not great, so there was not a lot of people. People were pretty worn down. – Participant 2

With the issue of funding instability, the problems that staff faced within the parameters of neoliberal governmentality provide an internal view of what was happening to YACVic as an organisation, individualising the problems (Lemke, 2015). With staff members being "worn down and pretty deflated", this conflates the problems of YACVic as being individual internal issues rather than the by-products of short-term and reduced government funding policy.

#### 4.4.1.1.3 Individualisation as a result of funding instability

By using and manipulating the power deficiencies between the actors, the Kennett Government adversely impacted YACVic internally, turning the organisation inward and individualising the problems within the organisation itself, reducing its outward focus and capacity to service its members and the wider youth sector (Foucault et al., 2008). YACVic's funding instability resulted from the actions of state control (Herbert-Cheshire, 2000; Rooney, 1997). Indirect state control was achieved by the method of making access to funding difficult, which resulted in staffing issues, organisational capacity problems and decreased production of services and outputs, as shown in Figure 4.6 below.

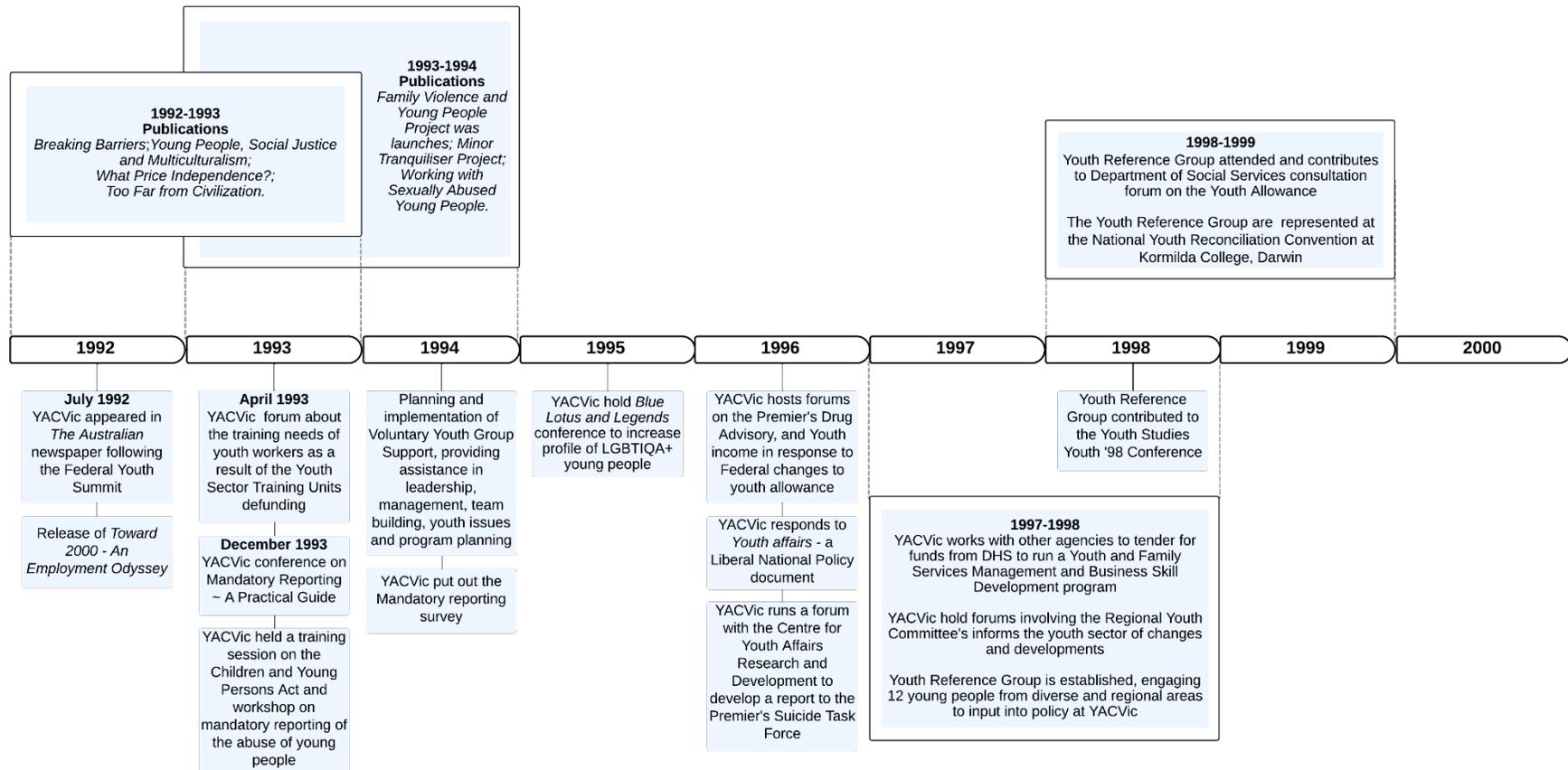


Figure 4.6: YACVic's resource output

As depicted in Figure 4.6, there was a decreasing output of resources, including publications, forums and reports. The figure shows that, in the earlier period 1992–1996, there was a variety of resources that YACVic was producing however, from 1996 onwards the output was reduced, with the focus of resources on policies and legislation. This confirms that YACVic struggled to retain the variety of previous resource outputs, consistent with Broadbent (1997), Russell (1999); Steane and Walker (2000) relating to how funding cuts can influence organisations. Restricting the funding of YACVic, depriving it of resources and making the process of negotiating funding a difficult task influenced YACVic's outputs and operations. By using neoliberal policy to disrupt the funding processes of YACVic, the Kennett Government used power to weaken, divide and control the organisation.

#### 4.4.1.2 Subtheme 1b: Policies

Through the use of power structures enforced by the Kennett Government, policies were able to be identified from the archival data and the interviews through the analysis process. Within this subtheme, government policy was another power technology (Foucault, 1991) that allowed for the determinative shaping of society (Peters, 2018; Rooney, 1997). “Policies” as a subtheme permitted the identification of the impacts of the Public Sector Management Act (1992) and how it moved from being enforced by actor 1 (the Kennett Government) to actor 2 (the Office of Youth Affairs) with the consequences felt by actor 3 (YACVic), and to underscore the interdependency between the latter two actors. The subtheme of “policies” revealed that the Kennett Government also encouraged neoliberal philosophy and governmentality in relation to youth policy (Foucault, 1991; Lemke, 2015). The evidence within the “policies” subtheme demonstrates that the Kennett Government's treatment of young people went in direct opposition to Article 3.1 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* as the “best interests” of young people were not the primary consideration:

In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration (UNICEF, 1989, p. 2).

#### 4.4.1.2.1 Amalgamations and movements of Youth Affairs

In November 1992, as discussed in the literature review, when the Kennett Government legislated the Public Sector Management Act (shown in Figure 4.7 below) condensed and amalgamated government departments went from 22 departments to 13 departments within four weeks of the LNP coming into power. After winning the 1996 state election, the number of departments was cut to just eight (Costar & Economou, 1999).

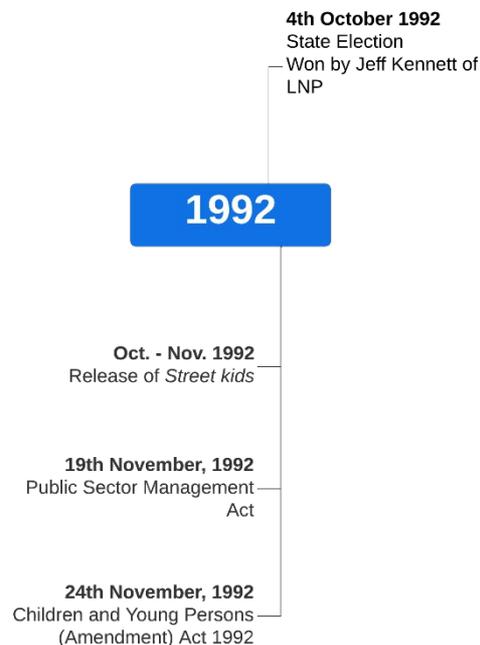


Figure 4.7: Excerpt from Figure 4.1

As the timeline depicts in Figure 4.2 the Youth Affairs ministerial portfolio and the administrative Office of Youth Affairs was moving throughout the time under investigation. As depicted in Figure 4.8 and Figure 4.9 below, when the Kennett Government came to power the portfolio was situated within the Ministry for Ethnic, Municipal and Community Affairs (Australian Research Data Commons, n.d.), moving shortly after to the Department of Business and Employment.

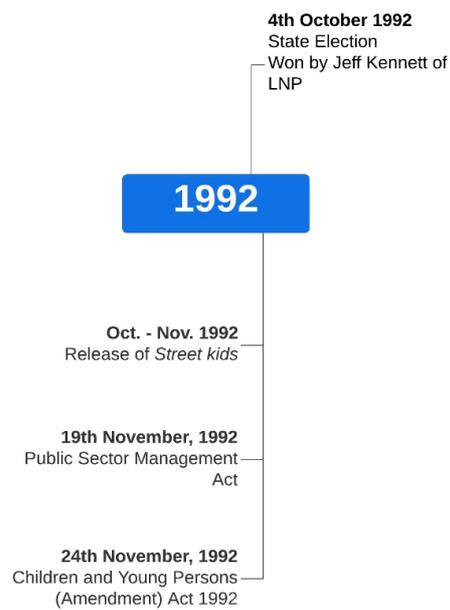


Figure 4.8: Excerpt from Figure 4.1



Figure 4.9: Excerpt from Figure 4.2

With the election of the 1992 Kennett Government, a Minister for Youth Affairs was appointed, and the location of the Youth Affairs ministerial portfolio was moved from the Ministry for Ethnic, Municipal and Community Affairs. The administrative Office of Youth Affairs was located in the Department of Business and Employment. This affected the youth sector and YACVic as the department's primary function would influence government policy e.g., changing from community affairs to business and employment policy.

The movements of Youth Affairs between departments may at first appear to be indirect actions by the government (Herbert-Cheshire, 2000; Lemke, 2015), but the movement of Youth Affairs to the Department of Business and Employment was underpinned by neoliberal governmentality (Foucault et al., 2008). The relocation of Youth Affairs to Business and Employment emphasised the government's wish to move youth affairs policy towards business and employment outcomes and, in effect, individualise and control young people, promoting their economic contribution to society (Maunder, 1996). This sentiment is confirmed through the *Street kids* (Liberal–National Coalition, 1992) policy outline and, while concentrating on providing young people with education

and training towards employment and economic outcomes, the government was neglecting more significant issues such as crisis accommodation and the issue of access to education and training as it was closing 300 schools, many in the inner city.

Interview Participant 4 articulated what it was like to be working with the ministerial portfolio of Youth Affairs under the Department of Business and Employment, providing an example of a meeting:

There was no youth work voice there. It was this idea that we would bring bureaucrats and because he's Vin Heffernan, Minister for Small Business! Businesspeople! That was what I really remember. I just could not get my head around what it was supposed to do. That they had in their mind that these businesses and bureaucrats would provide solutions, and solve the problems that young people were facing. And I think what they had in their mind was this, they would create economic opportunities for young people. – Participant 4

Participant 4's experience further shows the use of business policy as youth policy and the Youth Affairs location in the Business portfolio as a way of promoting neoliberal philosophies and further using power to control young people and the youth sector. The notion that these "business bureaucrats" were attempting to "solve" social problems with the use of economic and individualised business management practices emphasises the depth of neoliberal philosophy within the government bureaucracy (Bevir, 1999).

In 1996, as shown in Figure 4.10 below, the administration of Youth Affairs moved from the Department of Business and Employment to the DHS. Most participants saw this as a positive outcome for the Youth Affairs ministerial portfolio. However, the closure of the Office of Youth Affairs was seen by the youth sector as a backwards step.

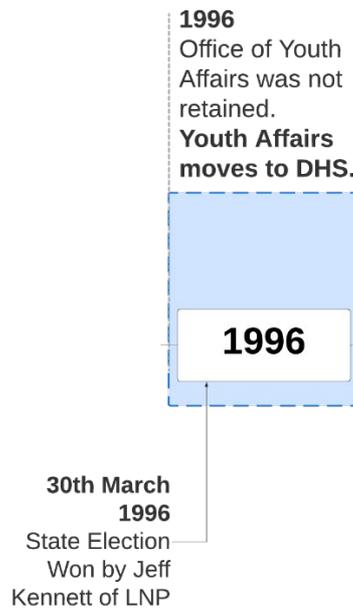
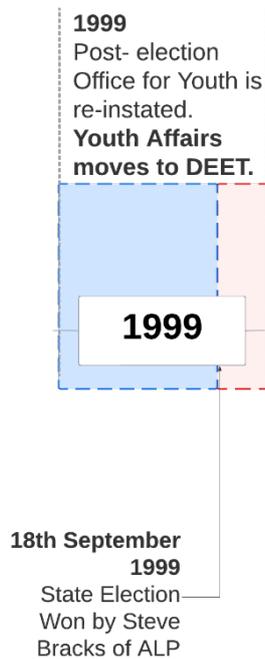


Figure 4.10: Excerpt from Figure 4.2

The consensus was that within a community services department, the Youth Affairs ministerial portfolio had more power to work for the most marginalised young people and influence policy to provide positive outcomes for all young people although, as referenced in the *Briefing notes for meeting with the Minister for Youth and Community Services the Hon. Dr Denis Napthine MP (1996)*, YACVic would have preferred the administration of Youth Affairs to be located within the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Participant 3 agreeing. In the briefing notes YACVic stated that "such placement would ensure a strong lead agency and cross-departmental coordination style" (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1996, p. 4) and identified that it had concerns about the Youth Affairs ministerial portfolio getting "lost" in the "welfare culture" of the DHS.

As per the Office of Youth Affairs timeline (Figure 4.2), upon the 1999 election of the ALP government the Youth Affairs ministerial portfolio was again moved to the Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET), as seen in Figure 4.11 below (Australian Research Data Commons, n.d.).



*Figure 4.11: Excerpt from Figure 4.2*

Participant 3 discussed the move to DEET, recalling how it created instability with YACVic's ability to influence policy, as being situated within DEET made it challenging to cater to the socioeconomic needs of young people. However, it resulted in Youth Affairs policy focusing on youth participation, further verifying that the ministerial and government department location of the Youth Affairs ministerial portfolio affects its focus and the focus of the youth sector and its peak bodies. Participant 3 illustrated the importance of where the Youth Affairs portfolio is situated and where policy can target the most marginalised by also emphasising how the actors worked interdependently:

Where YACVic sits and where they report to within government impacts enormously their ability to influence different bits of government or which department it was that best fit in. And it's always a debate about whether or not they should be in [the Department of] Premiers, Social Inclusion Unit, or whether they should fit in the Health and Human Services kind of portfolio area or whether

they should sit in an Education area. My view is that if the focus is on the poor, disadvantaged young people, you need to be in Health and Human Services. And that's where most of the program funding is for the sector. – Participant 3

Regarding contemporaneous times, the Youth Affairs ministerial portfolio still moves between departments and is currently sitting in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, 2022). Participant 2 elaborated on this point whilst emphasising how it can influence the youth sector, showing the significance of its location in the time under investigation. Moreover, the participant provided insight into how the connection between ministerial representation and the youth sector can influence the sector:

[Talking about the Youth Affairs portfolio] Where it's administered from within government still bounces around all over the place, you still do not get the sense that governments really grasp why they have a Minister for Youth Affairs or a Minister for Young People and I think there's been the loss of probably a distinguishable youth service and youth sector [as a result]. – Participant 2

#### 4.4.1.2.2 The impacts of the amalgamation and movement of Youth Affairs on the actors

Prior to the closure of the Office of Youth Affairs, participants identified a positive connection between YACVic and the Office of Youth Affairs and they were perceived to have a "very good working relationship" (Participant 1). This interdependent relationship was critical to YACVic as the Office of Youth Affairs was a direct line to government and policy. The joint partnerships of these two actors contrasts with that between the Kennett Government and YACVic. Participant 4 explained further:

So, Jeff Kennett, as Premier, might not have listened to YACVic. But I think the Office of Youth [Affairs] did ... That's my memory, trying to work collaboratively

with the Office of Youth [Affairs] on what we were doing. And I remember talking a lot about supporting youth workers to implement what they were rolling out, like changes to the Child Youth Act or mandatory reporting or understanding the Premier's Drug Advisory Council. – Participant 4

Participant 2 further verified this positive relationship. However, they emphasised that the Kennett Government influenced the Office of Youth Affairs and policy implementation during this time:

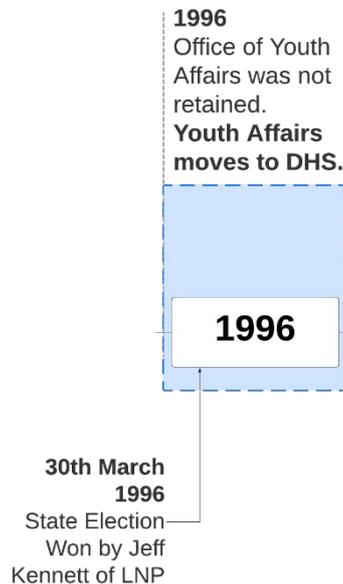
I've still got a letter from [an Office of Youth Affairs employee] from my time at YACVic and how much they enjoyed working with YACVic at that time. My strong impression was YACVic maintained a good and productive relationship with the Office of Youth Affairs right through the years of the Kennett Government and with previous governments ... [but] ultimately the Office of Youth Affairs is bound by the policy of the government of the day. – Participant 2

Participant 1 outlined that YACVic felt support from the Office of Youth Affairs and that people working within the office were facing adversity from within the government because of their advocacy for YACVic:

I think there was a lot of support within the [Office of Youth Affairs] Department for legitimate advocacy and voices ... That clashed with government and the politics of the Kennett Government, but they were certainly supportive within the bureaucracy of a good strong advocacy and a strong voice. So in effect, the kind of voice that we were getting from supporters within the bureaucracy was quite helpful strategically to battle the political environment. – Participant 1

This contrasting level of government support between the positive relationship of YACVic with the bureaucratic Office of Youth Affairs but conflict with the broader aims of the Kennett Government and its economic policies is represented in the Kennett government

closing of the Office of Youth Affairs in 1996, as shown below in Figure 4.12. This further evidences neoliberal governmentality, showcasing another instance of how power was used as a way to control and shape youth sector outcomes (Rooney, 1997).



*Figure 4.12: Excerpt from Figure 4.2*

#### 4.4.1.2.3 Neoliberalism and youth policy

Through the amalgamation of government departments (Costar & Economou, 1999), the movement of the Youth Affairs ministerial portfolio and the closure of the Office of Youth Affairs, it is apparent that the Kennett Government sought to inflict its neoliberal philosophy on the young people of Victoria, consistent with Maunders (1996) claim of youth policy in Australia being a social control method. The 1996 Office of Youth Affairs closure meant that YACVic and the youth sector lost a positive and collaborative partnership within the Victorian government.

In 1995, there was a broader conversation in Australia at a federal government level with an inquiry into youth homelessness. This inquiry stressed that multiple contributing

factors lead to young people experiencing homelessness. The inquiry itself in the preamble stated:

Any consideration of the nature and extent of youth homelessness, including its impact on individuals and families, must be viewed within a larger societal and cultural context. Whereas youth homelessness, in itself, is a symptom of the breakdown of internal and external support systems, it is influenced by lack of employment opportunities, family disharmony, shifting duties of care between parents and the State and a constellation of other factors which may contribute to the loss of security and accommodation for a young person (Parliament. House of Representatives. Standing Committee on Community Affairs, 1995, p. ii).

This response to the issue of young people experiencing homelessness in Australia shows a disconnect between Victorian government youth policy and the research that informed federal government policy. As the federal inquiry discussed numerous elements that contribute to young people experiencing homelessness, the policy response by the Kennett Government did not encompass the unique complexities of being a young person, displaying a neoliberal approach to policy development. Furthermore, the federal inquiry highlighted some of the neoliberal philosophies employed by the Kennett Government as risk factors for young people experiencing homelessness, including the breakdown of internal and external support (amalgamations and funding cuts to human services) and the importance of the reflection on more significant societal issues, which is the opposite of small-government philosophies. Participant 5 shared that the policies enacted by the Kennett Government were based on the Kennett Government's perception of young people, consistent with Maunders (1996) and Woodman and Wyn (2013):

[Kennett Government] It was really ideologically driven by what they personally thought ... What they bucked against was any analysis of the structural impediments to young people's participation. – Participant 5

During this time, YACVic also discussed the concern that the government was not viewing the issues young people faced seriously, asserting, "We raised the concern about consultation with young people being a vacuum cleaner job rather than being undertaken seriously" (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1999, p. 21). Interview Participants discussed the lack of understanding of young people from a government perspective, with Participant 2 further describing the experience of young people at this time:

I'd say that the main issue for young people at that time, particularly marginalised young people, was just the lack of visibility [to government] of what life was really like for them. And the lack of truthful responses [from government] that had integrity to what lots of young people were facing. – Participant 2

Although the Kennett Government did have intrinsically neoliberal values, participants described the political landscape in which Kennett worked as "a strange dichotomy" (Participant 5). For example, in contrast to some of the neoliberal policies enacted at the time, there were specific areas, such as youth unemployment, suicide and drug misuse, and young people who are CALD and/or from a migrant background, that the government was focusing on.

Providing more context on the perplexing matter, Participant 5 stated:

What the interesting thing about that was, that [Kennett Government] was very conservative economically, but under the Kennett years, on a social policy lens more broadly, the government was quite progressive in other ways ... There are quite a few ironic situations actually under that time, even though there was a

concern about the youth sector broadly, the sector I worked in, which was this kind of crossing the youth and multicultural sectors that the Kennett Government was very supportive. – Participant 5

However, the participant did continue to provide a reason as to why the Kennett Government was focused on multicultural young people, stating this was due to the stereotype that the Liberal government saw multicultural communities as "self-driven" individuals that "work hard" (Participant 5) and therefore fit within the Kennett Government's neoliberal agenda. This "progressive" social policy lens is consistent throughout the interviews with participants, who commented on the irony of the Premier's interests. Some youth policy focus areas were deemed essential and could be engaged in, while others were more challenging to engage the Premier in. Participant 4 explained further:

You could not get them [government] to come to the table and say, just because it's a rights issue, we need to have better support. You had to tell them a story about what happened to a young person who had a bad experience and then their emotions would be engaged ... You had to form a relationship with them as a person and convince them that what you were doing was important, and we could not get to the table. So, I think the ideology was he [Kennett] was keen to cut the expenditure. He thought that state government should not invest a whole lot of money in things that would have supported people like social housing, the decimation of social housing, community housing, and all those welfare services. But on the other hand, it was often what appealed to Jeff Kennett, really. So that's my view, if he thought what you were doing was okay. But, you know, he had no empathy for issues like family violence back then. – Participant 4

Participant 4, through sharing their experience of attempting to empower change through lobbying the Premier, highlighted the stark power deficiencies between these actors,

those of the power and the subject (Joseph, 2010). Although the Kennett Government had youth policy focuses, this needed to be expanded in the areas where it would work. It was speculated to have been based on how much media attention these issues would garner. The aforementioned areas of focus of the Kennett Government's youth policies are only a small number of the areas identified by participants and the annual reports that were areas that needed improvement for young people, as shown in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Issues young people faced in the time under investigation.

Issues young people faced in the time under investigation	
Young people experiencing homelessness at a high rate	Youth people with disability further marginalised
Koori young people facing cultural issues and recognition	Young people wanting First Nations Reconciliation
Access to preventive care	Young people not being represented
Access to income support	LGBTIQA+ young people being left out, less awareness around gender and sexual diversity
Power imbalances with police	Lack of youth participation
Sexual abuse	AOD use

The data shows that the Kennett Government wanted the sector to focus on "disadvantaged youth" or a more "crisis-focused" youth work sector. Focusing on the "crisis end" of young people's issues was discussed throughout the Kennett Government's 1996 policy publication *Youth affairs* (Liberal Party Victoria, 1996) and by the participants. This approach correlates with neoliberal philosophy and "shrinking the welfare state" and a focus on individualised responses (Harvey, 2007; Peck & Tickell, 1994) as it encourages social assistance to the young people who are determined to be the "most disadvantaged", whilst those who may be experiencing temporary

disadvantage but complex issues are omitted, going against the "best interests" of all young people not just those deemed to be most deserving (UNICEF, 1989).

From a policy perspective, the participants shared that from their experience the Kennett Government was concerned with issues young people were facing but did not address these issues using a young person-centred approach. Participant 2 stated:

They viewed those issues for young people often as things that were sort of transitory issues that young people who would somehow get over and get through this without the assistance of government. – Participant 2

Participant 5 described the Kennett Government's youth policies as "piecemeal and haphazard". *Youth affairs* (Liberal Party Victoria, 1996) further corroborated this individualised and responsabilisation ideology; this publication was used as promotional material to make election promises and priorities. It was written in a manner that consistently mentioned young people experiencing homelessness and unemployment issues as acute concerns, yet described the risk factors that lead to young people experiencing homelessness as stemming from within the family home, supplying divorce statistics as the responsible factor, declaring:

Families in which parents have repartnered or where other stresses such as unemployment, or simply, busy lives are operating can all result in major stresses on adolescent-parent relationships (Liberal Party Victoria, 1996, p. 10).

This rhetoric highlighted divorce rates, unemployment and parents' "busy lives" as the reasons behind young people experiencing homelessness, excluding socio-economic structural issues like poverty and other external risk factors such as systemic disadvantage connected to colonisation and institutional racism, for example, that may impact a young person leading to homelessness. This entirely removed the responsibility

from the government, creating less reliance on the state (Harvey, 2007) and focusing on individuals and their families. The *Youth affairs* policy document continued by remarking:

The rate of family breakdown and of young people leaving the family home prematurely suggests a need for better communication and negotiation between adolescents and their parents (Liberal Party Victoria, 1996, p. 10).

Participant 2 noted that the government tended to respond to issues such as young people experiencing homelessness by minimising the role of government. The interventions and services for young people experiencing homelessness provided by the Kennett Government were a family intervention program, parent education programs and the creation of a youth hostel in metropolitan Melbourne "with the dual aims of reducing the risks experienced by rural young people during their transition from country to city" (Liberal Party Victoria, 1996, p. 8), which eliminated intervention by the Kennett Government for rural young people who wanted to stay living rurally, disregarding the need for a rural workforce in the process. This rhetoric was further confirmed by Participant 5, who emphasised:

[Talking about the Kennett Government] Their notion was, we give young people an opportunity and they will help themselves and find their way. They weren't buying into the systems and structures in society that actually contribute to some of that [disadvantage]. – Participant 5

Whilst the Kennett Government was putting out its "piecemeal and haphazard" (Participant 5) policies, YACVic responded consistently. Figures 4.13 and 4.14 below detail the Kennett Government's youth policy from 1992 and 1996 and YACVic's responses to them. As depicted in the figures, comparing the two timelines of actor 1 the Kennett Government and actor 3 YACVic, confirms that YACVic was responsive to the Kennett Government's youth policy.

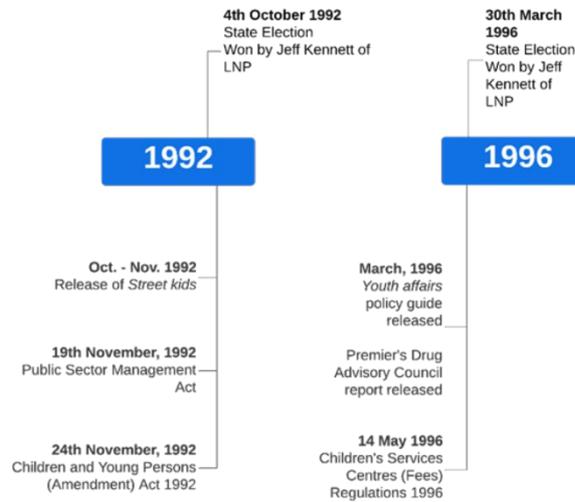


Figure 4.13: Excerpt from Figure 4.1

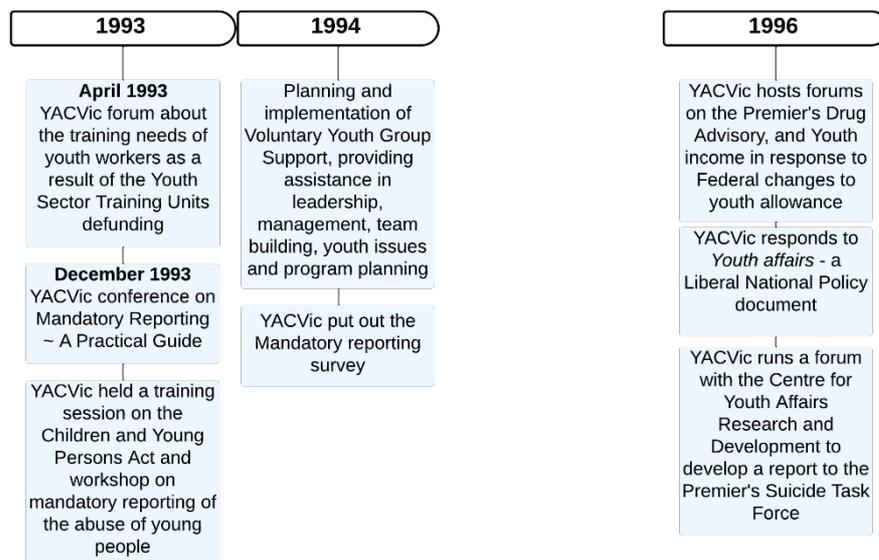


Figure 4.14: Excerpt from Figures 4.3 and 4.4

The focus of YACVic's forums and reports, which confirm YACVic was responsive to the Kennett Government's policies, is shown below in Table 4.3. It is evident that YACVic consistently worked within the youth affairs policy areas throughout the Kennett

Government tenure, including young people using AOD, suicide, youth unemployment and young people experiencing homelessness.

Table 4.3: Comparison of Kennett policy areas and YACVic's forums and reports.

Kennett Government policy areas	YACVic forums and reports
Young people experiencing homelessness	- Family Violence and Young People project
Young people using AOD	- <i>Minor tranquilisers project</i> - <i>Young people and the use of prescription pills</i> - Reports and forum for the Premier's Drug Advisory Council
Suicide	- Forums to develop reports for the Premier's Suicide Task Force
Youth unemployment	- <i>Towards 2000 – an employment odyssey</i> - <i>A living wage</i> - Analysis of <i>Working nation</i> by the federal government - Forum on changes to youth allowance

YACVic also operated within the policy target areas by supporting the youth sector through holding training sessions on team building, leadership, management, youth issues and program planning, showcasing a more administration-based youth sector and training workers to adjust to the changes brought about by government policy. Participant 2 commented on YACVic's agenda at the time, highlighting the complexities of working within the Kennett Government:

What YACVic did manage to do was articulate an agenda that the youth sector was strongly supportive of. And it managed to keep to that agenda in the face of a pretty negative mindset within the state government. – Participant 2

Other areas that YACVic concentrated on were LGBTIQA+ young people, child sexual abuse, disabled young people, youth health issues, young women's issues, the needs

for and provision of services, youth worker training and education, Koori and First Nations young people focusing on Reconciliation, regional and rural issues young people faced and CALD young people.

As seen in the below Figure 4.15 *Objectives* excerpt from the 1993–1994 *Annual report*, YACVic's purpose and objectives were to advocate for young people and influence structures, emphasising young people's lack of access to power. These objectives involved advocating to the government and informing the community about issues that impacted young people. In comparison, the Kennett Government had a conservative approach to young people that, as participants described, was “anti-advocacy” and “anti-empowerment” (Participant 1), which followed the neoliberal ethos (Harvey, 2007; Peck & Tickell, 1994). In contrast, YACVic was representative of the power and resource discrepancies that young people faced, meaning that although YACVic was outspoken against the government, it was fulfilling its organisational objectives.

The purpose and objectives of the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria Inc. (YACVic) are outlined in the Constitution of the organisation. These are as follows:

## Purpose

'The prime purpose of the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria Inc. is to influence the structures which affect young people towards a more equitable distribution of power and resources to young people, recognising that there are wide discrepancies between groups of young people in terms of their access to such power and resources.'

## Objectives

The main objectives of YACVic are (inter alia):

- \*To assist young people to participate meaningfully in the various processes which formulate and implement social policy in Victoria.
- \*To develop a framework which integrates youth affairs into social policy process and to use that framework to advocate to government and other institutions on matters affecting young people.
- \*To provide a focus for organisations and individuals who support YACVic's purpose to share perspectives on youth affairs issues.
- \*To provide an information and resources base which will:
  - assist groups of young people working on issues of concern to them;
  - assist service providers to increase their effectiveness;
  - inform the community about issues affecting young people.

Other objectives related to securing and managing the Council's resources and the employment of staff are detailed in the Constitution.

2 Annual

Figure 4.15: Objectives

Objectives (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1994, p. 2)

Another example of the Kennett Government's youth policies disregarding the issues young people faced is the cadet program within the Youth Development Scheme from the 1996 election campaign (Liberal Party Victoria, 1996, p. 8). The below newspaper article (Figure 4.16) in *The Age* expressed that Kennett had remarked on his concern about how young people used their time, with "easy access to drugs and alcohol",

highlighting his perception of young people and indicating the use of policy at this time was to control young people as subjects and was uninformed on the risk factors and socio-economic structural disadvantage young people experienced (Herbert-Cheshire, 2000). As discussed in the literature review, using a military-based youth program relates to Maunder's (1996) assertion that Australian youth policies were being used as a control measure to keep young people off the streets and in school or work.

Figure 4.16 offers another example of youth policy in Australia being based on the Premiers' previous experiences, as discussed in the literature review on Woodman and Wyn (2013) and Maunder (1996), as it was stated, that Kennett had been a cadet leader at the elite Melbourne private school, Scotch College. Further, this premise could be related to the closing of 300 state schools (Costar & Economou, 1999), as Premier Kennett did not have the experience of needing a state education. The 'Cadet' Youth Development Scheme was criticised in *The Age* newspaper by YACVic, the Opposition at the time and the Australian Education Union.

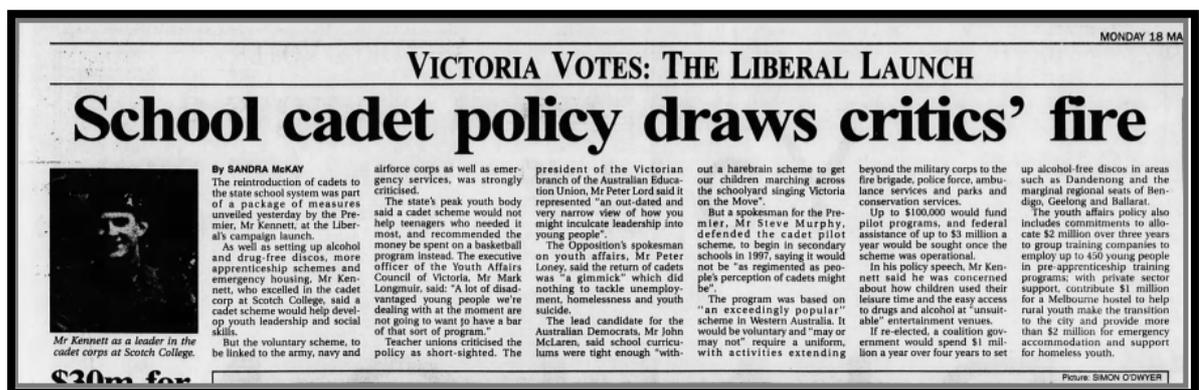


Figure 4.16: School cadet policy draws critics' fire

*School cadet policy draws critics' fire*, 18 March 1996, *The Age* (McKay, 1996).

Farewell YACVic remarked that the Kennett Government would provide the appearance that it was "taking up" what was determined to be the "bigger issues" but there was minimal interest by the general media on these matters, and commented that there was

"absolutely no legislative provision" to support these "bigger issues" (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1999, p. 8). Participant 5 emphasised the occurrence of tokenistic youth policy simply relating back to the lack of access to political spaces:

Young people were ignored, they always are, because they don't vote. –  
Participant 5

It is apparent that the youth policies that the Kennett Government was proposing and implementing were inadequate when confronted with the complex issues young people faced, with the imbalances in power becoming more evident as YACVic struggled to engage government in the issues young people faced. Instead of encouraging the "best interests" of young people, and involving young people in decision making (UNICEF, 1989), the neoliberal underpinning of youth policies was shrinking the welfare state and marginalising young people further (Harvey, 2007; Peck & Tickell, 1994). Through this, the Kennett Government used neoliberal policies to individualise young people pushing the responsibilities for solving youth issues onto young people and their families.

#### 4.4.2 Theme 2: Control

From the analysis process, "control" was another prevailing theme that emerged from the archival and interview data. In this instance, control is derivative of state power, that of the movement of the "assemblage of technologies" (Lemke, 2015). The subthemes identified within the theme of "control" were "resistance", "vulnerable" and "discipline". These subthemes have been classified as the outcomes of the technologies of power and neoliberal governmentality, particularly what these outcomes signify for a peak advisory body. These themes and subthemes sit within the Foucauldian governmentality theory as they identify the "action at a distance" and how it morphed into methods of control (Herbert-Cheshire, 2000). What is of interest is how these subthemes interrelate within control, as one subtheme begets the others. Through the resistance of control, adverse outcomes led to vulnerability and discipline.

#### 4.4.2.1 Subtheme 2a: Resistance

In the time under investigation, YACVic was consistent in its resistance to the Kennett Government and resistance was prevalent throughout the archival data and participant interviews. Resistance was enacted through policy critique and disregarding the government's directions. This resistance is an outcome of control as it correlates with YACVic's urge to resist the Kennett Government and its policies.

##### 4.4.2.1.1 Critique of the Kennett Government

Examples of resistance stem from one of YACVic's more direct critiques of the Kennett Government, which was YACVic's response to the *Youth affairs* policy document. YACVic released its briefing notes to the Minister for Youth Affairs, Denis Napthine (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1996). After an initial introduction, the document's first topic was '*The urgent need for more focussed youth policy*'. The document outlined that although the government had certain policy positions, from YACVic's perspective there were too many gaps within the policies that left certain demographics of young people out. YACVic believed these policies were a way to gather positive media attention rather than address the areas that young people needed the most. This document emphasised that youth policy needed to be broader, suggesting schools as a place for intervention with at-risk young people and advising that there was a need for youth participation when it came to youth policy making and addressing youth issues. The irony in schools being a place for young people to receive support is that the Kennett Government was closing many of these schools down (Costar & Economou, 1999; Pascoe & Pascoe, 1998). Furthermore, YACVic regarded the Kennett Government's "crisis response" to youth policy as reductive to assisting young people. This YACVic policy advice document was overall written critically of the government, stating:

The failure of government policy to arrest the increasing number of young people falling into the various categories of disadvantage can be traced to the dominant [government] policy context response to crisis rather than development of effective prevention and early intervention strategies (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1996, p. 2).

Participant 3 contributed to this critique of government, expressing that YACVic "spoke critically about government policy, so certainly wasn't making any friends."

YACVic acknowledged that there were policy commitments aimed at young people, but pointed out that the areas targeted by the Kennett Government remained unchanged from the previous four years.

Whilst young people have been the target of specific commitments on the part of successive State and Federal Governments increasing rates of homelessness, drug use, suicide, poverty and a continued high rate of youth unemployment would indicate that there is a gap between the political rhetoric often espoused at election time and the reality of the continued deterioration of standards of living and quality of life opportunity amongst young people in Victoria (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1996, p. 1).

Additionally, YACVic mentioned that the policies were introduced close to an election, raising concerns about their sincerity, as demonstrated in Figure 4.17 below.

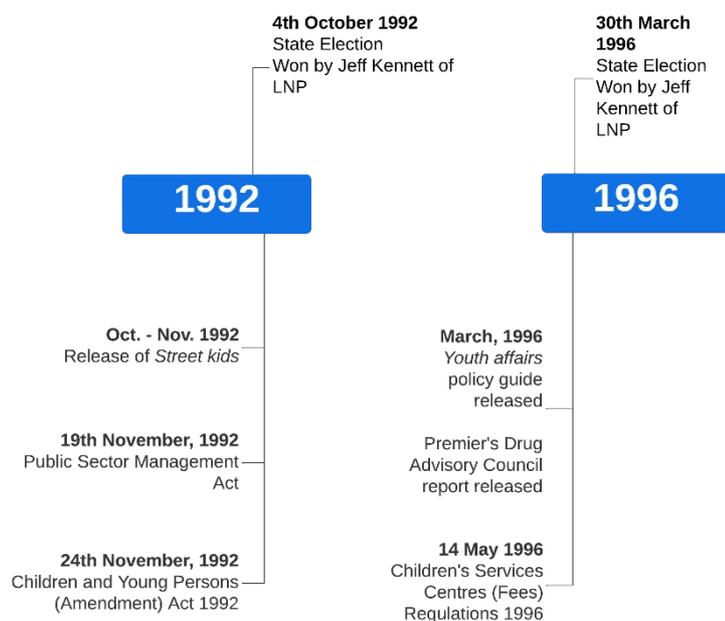


Figure 4.17: Kennett Government's youth policies in election years

Furthermore, YACVic being openly critical of the government and as a result, having its funding withdrawn were known to the sector and seen as directly linked, as evidenced in an article in Figure 4.18 below from *The Age* newspaper dated 5 September 1999.

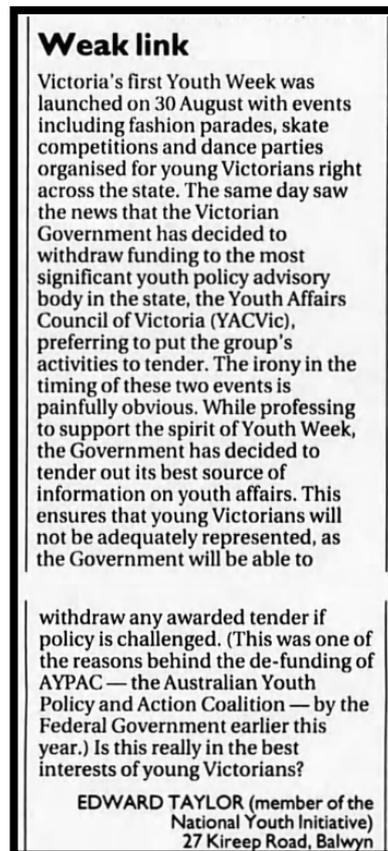


Figure 4.18: Excerpt from *Opinion, The Age*

Excerpt from *Opinion, The Age* (Taylor, 1999)

The article discussed the significance of YACVic having its funding withdrawn and its services tendered out alluding to the reason being that YACVic had 'challenged' the government's policy positions. The irony of withdrawing funding from YACVic during the first Youth Week was not lost on the author and guaranteed that YACVic "ensures that young Victorians will not be adequately represented." This strongly communicated to the youth sector the views of the government toward YACVic and the juxtaposition of the loss of YACVic in a week to celebrate young people.

#### 4.4.2.2 Subtheme 2b: Vulnerability

Vulnerability, as an outcome of neoliberal governmentality of the Kennett Government, was evident throughout the participant interviews and archival data. One of the main

discussions surrounding the topic of YACVic losing its core funding was vulnerability and how YACVic became vulnerable. As the neoliberal economic philosophy is to shrink the welfare state, encourage privatisation and withdraw government funding (Harvey, 2007; Peck & Tickell, 1994), it is logical that these compounding changes impacted YACVic. From the research data, Table 4.4 shows how the Kennett Government's neoliberal policies impacted YACVic at this time based on the definition of neoliberalism in the literature review.

*Table 4.4: How neoliberal policy impacted YACVic.*

<b>Neoliberal policy</b>	<b>YACVic</b>
<b>Withdraw government influence and funds from service provision</b>	Funding cuts and amalgamation of youth and community services
<b>Sell government services and contract out to the private sector</b>	CCT of services, tendering out of YACVic, private market replacing publicly funded services, case management replacing holistic youth work
<b>Promote successful outcomes through efficiency</b>	Enforced administrative legislation, less face-to-face/holistic youth work, tighter deadlines, stricter program criteria and shorter tendering timelines
<b>Encourage competition over cooperation</b>	Encouragement of a competitive environment, making the sector compete for funding and contracts, undermining collaboration within the sector
<b>Shrink the welfare state (Harvey, 2007; Peck &amp; Tickell, 1994).</b>	Focus on “crisis end” young people, individualism of youth issues, focus on families as harbouring responsibility for a young person's outcomes, individualising and responsabilising young people, removing government intervention

Table 4.4 provides a framework to understand the implications of neoliberal governmentality and how it rendered YACVic vulnerable. Participants provided evidence to substantiate how vulnerability was an outcome of the use of government power, with the Kennett Government using its power to control YACVic through indirect action (Herbert-Cheshire, 2000; Lemke, 2015). Participants discussed how YACVic was vulnerable, in the way they described the state of the organisation at the time of the loss of core funding. They discussed how the impacts of power used as a control method provided the means to create a vulnerable environment for YACVic. Participant 2 referenced YACVic being “vulnerable”, recognising that this was due to the Kennett Government and the "adverse, unsympathetic environment" it was operating in:

YACVic's run its race, it doesn't seem to have any energy. It's in a pretty vulnerable space. And that was the atmosphere when I started working there. It was pretty gloomy ... they were operating in a pretty adverse, unsympathetic environment, but in terms of what else they might have done to stave off the Kennett Government's desire to get rid of them? – Participant 2

When further discussing YACVic's vulnerabilities, participants articulated that although there were issues due to the political environment, other issues were also impacting YACVic's operation. Participant 1 emphasised that the issues YACVic was facing were similar to what has been discussed under the “power” theme, funding and amalgamations of organisations, stating:

The peak body was old and tired in a lot of ways, had been around for a long time but had not done a really major review. I think it was vulnerable when there were issues about funding, when there were issues about amalgamations being driven by a conservative Liberal government. – Participant 1

Whilst also referencing that YACVic was "old and tired in a lot of ways", was individualising the problem, what is of note is that after stating the factors that made YACVic "vulnerable" the participant stated that it was the government that was responsible, as these matters were being "driven by a conservative Liberal government". On reflection, this participant was able to isolate the vulnerable state that YACVic was in as the outcome of the sitting Kennett Government.

However, it was evident throughout the archival and interview data that YACVic being vulnerable was not just a result of the political environment in the time under investigation. Participant 5 provided an alternative opinion, sharing that there were issues within YACVic that were both related and unrelated to the political environment:

A lack of leadership, lack of direction, lack of real purpose, I think they were struggling during that time to know what they should do and be. And I think that then played out. – Participant 5

This alternative opinion correlates with what the other participants verbalised as negative parts of the organisation: the board's structure, the times they met, staffing and leadership instability. Participant 5 also shared that they believed YACVic was not speaking strongly enough to all areas of the youth sector, like CALD young people, which the Kennett Government happened to have an interest in, leading to it missing out on potential funding. The notion that YACVic was not operating on an effective level, yet was also impacted by the political environment, is prevalent throughout the data, with both factors influencing and impeding each other.

#### 4.4.2.3 Subtheme 2c: Discipline

"Discipline" is a subtheme prevalent within the theme of "control". In the case of YACVic, discipline was the direct outcome of power utilised as a control method, with the state employing the technologies purposely to discipline YACVic through regulation and

funding control (Lemke, 2015). As discussed in the literature, Corney (2021) noted that YACVic's critique of the Kennett Government's policies was a primary motivation for losing its core funding. With the discussion surrounding the Kennett Government's reactionary responses to criticism by John and McDonald (2020), Smith (1999) and Costar and Economou (1999), this relates to the restrictions that those working under the power of the Kennett Government faced. Corney (2021) stated that YACVic was critical of the sitting government and there was an understanding that YACVic and the youth sector were made vulnerable through neoliberal governmentality, which contributed to the loss of representation and support for young people.

The major determining factor as to why YACVic was being disciplined was the notion that YACVic was critical of the Kennett Government and the Kennett Government wanted to control YACVic. Stressing this fact, Participant 3 stated, "Kennett wasn't particularly fond of dissenting voices. And YACVic was a pretty lefty organisation in those days". Participants described Premier Kennett as "fairly hostile" (Participant 3), agreeing that YACVic, the peak advisory body, had issues with the state government. Although YACVic was aware of the government's hostility towards it, this came with "implied threats", as Participant 1 commented:

I think when YACVic did represent a voice that was against government policy, there were certainly implied threats, there was pushback from government. –

Participant 1

The control methods of "implied threats" and "pushback" further evidence how YACVic was being controlled and disciplined by the State government (Foucault, 1975; Lemke, 2015). Participant 5 added to the evidence of discipline by stating that the aforementioned "implied threats" were actual threats as the Kennett Government had explicitly told them [multicultural services] to leave YACVic or risk defunding:

Government didn't want to fund YACVic, but they wanted to fund a peak body. It was clear. They told me that, in fact ... they also said to me "get out of YACVic" and "We will defund you. If you stay there, you won't get funded." – Participant 5

Reflecting on this evidence and comparing the policy position mentioned in Table 4.4 that YACVic was adhering to the Kennett Government's youth policies and Corney's (2021, p. 5) statement that YACVic was critical of the sitting government, the Kennett Government's reactionary removal of core funding became an act of discipline (Lemke, 2015).

The duty of YACVic within this political environment was seemingly strained; having to contend with the duality of being a peak organisation that was advocacy based and whose primary function was to be an advisory body to the government that it had to be critical of would have been a difficult position. Participant 1 outlined some of the complexities of this role and how this was an adverse environment:

In effect, for the peak role, the Kennett Government really wasn't that supportive of having a loud representative voice that was challenging ... And it was clear that on some levels, YACVic was too much of an annoying and loud advocacy voice. And so the threat of funding was really used quite deliberately in that process too. – Participant 1

Whilst discussing this complicated atmosphere, Participant 5 shared an insight into how the Kennett Government viewed YACVic:

Conservative Liberals saw YACVic as being a bunch of ratbags. – Participant 5

While discussing YACVic's role for the Kennett Government, participants conveyed their opinion of the state government at the time, stating it was:

Anti-empowerment and not really supportive of young voices and challenging voices arising from the field. – Participant 1

The Kennett Government being “anti-empowerment” of young people and viewing YACVic as a “bunch of ratbags” underscores that it did not take YACVic seriously as the peak youth advisory body representing all young people, but rather as a politicised body not representative of LNP cohorts or interests and were outspoken and were oppositional to it. This did not assist these two actors to work harmoniously, but the opposite led to the Kennett Government disciplining this “bunch of ratbags”. The disciplining of YACVic is consistent within the views of interview participants and, as discussed by Costar and Economou (1999), with issues within the government and the media about silencing critique. An added complexity to the relationship between YACVic and the government was that the two separate entities had entirely different frameworks for viewing young people, which was further recognised in *Farewell YACVic*, as it discussed the government and YACVic’s relationship:

But how can a peak body perform its role and provide a critical framework that government doesn't then see as being criticising? I think this is part of the larger question which affects all of the community sector: the degree to which dissenting voices can be heard at all. There is such a fear even within the public service, with the development of a culture of people who are bowing and scraping to the ministers, of second-guessing what the correct line is that is coming from above and not daring to put up a contradictory position (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1999, p. 5).

The questioning of the disciplining of YACVic is warranted considering the undertone of threats and reprimand from the Kennett Government and the unfortunate fact is that these two actors could not come together due to their differences.

Despite YACVic's critique of the government and whether the Kennett Government was disciplining it for its advocacy, YACVic emphasised that it believed it was important for

there to be open communication with the government, referencing the importance for both actors in order for there to be the best outcomes for young people:

YACVic has always tried to keep the channels open with those who make the decisions, such as government, funders and the political structures. This I consider is essential for an effective peak body, that somehow the doors must be kept open between those who pay for and those who provide services. The channels are often weak or ineffective, particularly when hard messages must be transmitted. However, I believe it is the responsibility of both the peak body and government/departments, to keep building those partnerships and relationships. This must continue, regardless of political issues, for the sake of the sector and young people. We are all likely to make mistakes, but it is crucial that there is always a voice to keep working for the interest of young people (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1999, p. 2).

YACVic reflecting on and acknowledging the importance of the relationship, even in the face of its own closure, shows that inherently it did want to do right by young people and was coaching others on the importance of working with the sitting government.

#### 4.4.3 Theme 3: Competition

As neoliberal policy encourages competition over cooperation while also selling government assets and privatising government services (Harvey, 2007), competition was another way in which the Kennett Government could enforce what it considered to be greater market efficiency across the youth and community services sector, enabling competition through tendering and privatisation to reduce government expenditure and further decrease reliance on government funding (Harvey, 2007; Martinez & Garcia, 1997).

#### 4.4.3.1 Subtheme 3a: Privatisation

As a means of ensuring competition, privatisation is important. As such “privatisation” was a key subtheme evident throughout the archival data and participant interviews. The “privatisation” subtheme emerged throughout the two datasets and appears to be linked to interventions by government as methods of control (Herbert-Cheshire, 2000; Lemke, 2015; Rooney, 1997).

The use of private markets for service delivery in the youth sector was introduced by Kennett himself in the forward to the *Youth affairs* (Liberal Party Victoria, 1996, p. 4) policy document:

For the first time, Government in Victoria has forged partnerships between the community, government and the private sector to work towards the interests of our disadvantaged youth.

Through the use of privatisation, competition was increased throughout the youth sector. This competition was evident at this time through the amalgamations of small youth and community services organisations, coming together as larger entities in order to successfully compete with larger agencies in the competitive service tendering process through economies of scale. The privatisation and amalgamation of youth and community services organisations meant reduced support for smaller organisations within the sector and, as they responded to competition by amalgamating, resulting in diminished collaboration across the sector.

Competition and privatisation were present issues in Australia at the time, as referenced in the 1997 (Broadbent (1997, p. 3) consultation report *National youth work training project*:

The impact of privatisation and competition requires workers to deal with the application of new employment relations legislation, including contract and short-term tenured staff and managing change.

Participant 1 recognised how the Kennett Government was pushing for the amalgamation of peak sector bodies at this time to reduce government funding of the youth sector:

So there were peaks or semi-peaks [peak bodies], a whole range of NGOs, but often they had some peak functions and some collaborative functions that were at a broader level. And what the Kennett Government was doing was amalgamating, or pushing for amalgamations, with a whole range of different subsectors. – Participant 1

The implications of the government forcing the sector to work within the parameters of competition and privatisation meant that YACVic was weakened by this process of social control (Lemke, 2015). Participant 3 conveyed how the privatisation of the youth and community services sector, through the case-management approach, introduced a focus on the “crisis end” of youth work:

So it was a neoliberal government that believed in small government. As not conservative, but Liberal governments believe that if you leave it to private enterprise, then they will come up with the best price and the best option. And that was the philosophy that saw competitive tendering introduced into the human services sector ... The Kennett years were very much about introducing competitive tendering, reducing the cost of human service delivery. – Participant

3

YACVic shared the sentiment of the youth sector struggling under competition and privatisation in the *Briefing notes for meeting with the Minister for Youth and Community*

*Services the Hon. Dr Denis Napthine MP* (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1996, p. 3): "YACVic feels that infrastructure support and development within the sector has been [an] area of neglect." This "neglect" referred to a lack of financial support and development of the sector particularly for advocacy bodies like YACVic, which adds further weight to the small-government philosophy of governmentality of the Kennett Government governing at a distance (Herbert-Cheshire, 2000).

To further confirm the "action at a distance" concept, Participant 1 detailed how amalgamations affected the youth sector:

There was the pressure from the Kennett Government [which] had been pushing for amalgamations for quite a while and that was all for the community services sector to reduce funding, to try and pull together a less broadly representative sector, if you like ... And what I think it also did was, across the whole community services and welfare sector, was force organisations who had been cooperative, collaborative and able to work well together, it pushed them into that competitive process, to compete for funds, to compete for tenders, just to lose trust in each other. It really undermined the sector ... But in that competitive nature, which really came out of the Liberal politics of, you know, the economic framework that competition equals better quality, what it really did was undermined the collaboration in the sector and pushed organisations for their own survival into competing against each other, which undermined a lot of trust and was very destructive. – Participant 1

Participant 1 articulated that the amalgamations brought individualisation's "destructive" qualities through privatisation and competition as organisations in the youth sector were obligated to compete against each other or risk closure, emphasising how the youth sector had been "undermined" by governmentality (Lemke, 2015). The sentiment that the youth sector was now a competitive environment is consistent with Russell (1999)

and Smith (1999), who mentioned that the Victorian public sector was no longer collaborative. It is evident from the participants that this non-collaborative environment extended further into the youth sector. *Farewell YACVic* continued to confirm that the youth sector was no longer as collaborative as it once was:

Over those 37 years, the goal posts shift, the language changes, as do our expectations of government and of each other. A disturbing consequence of working in a sector that seems to be characterised by perpetual change and the need to be responsive to external influences is that we risk losing sight of ourselves as agents and contributors. We run the risk of seeing ourselves as nothing more than providers of services purchased by government, rather than voices that contribute to setting the agenda (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1999, p. 1).

In writing this, YACVic was commenting on how the sector had morphed within the parameters of competition, highlighting the results of privatisation as being a “disturbing consequence” of losing the core values and principles that underpinned the youth sector, reducing the sector to “providers of services”; this adds to the argument that the youth sector was struggling with the change within the sector and as a result was aware of how privatisation was impacting the sector.

Further examples from the literature that support the “privatisation” subtheme within “competition” are the beginning of case management, which was identified by Irving et al. (1995), who discouraged using case management when applying youth work practice. Case planning/management was another method of privatisation and competition implemented by the Kennett Government. This was also noted in the *Youth affairs* (Liberal Party Victoria, 1996, p. 6) policy document as an:

Approach to youth service delivery to prevent young people from drifting between services and in and out of homelessness without any single worker taking responsibility for their overall welfare.

The Kennett Government's case-management approach became one of the direct outcomes of neoliberal policy and a further example of governmentality regarding the controlling of the youth sector. In order to facilitate and manage this new approach to youth work, "integrated youth services" were also introduced. The Kennett Government presented these new policies as:

Mechanisms characterised by seamless service delivery for young people at the client end of delivery. These mechanisms will include: co-location of different service types, and where physical co-locations is not possible – formal referral protocols between agencies: formal agreements on the sharing of resources; appointment of joint case work officers; and agreement on consistent definitions and approaches to case planning. Service agreements will formalise this new co-operative approach (Liberal Party Victoria, 1996, p. 7).

The introduction of this new type of youth work approach, case management, had a neoliberal economic focus, consistent with Harvey (2007) and Peck and Tickell (1994). These so-called reforms have been long lasting and exist in various forms within the youth sector today.

Another layer to the Kennett Government's neoliberal approach to youth work and service delivery through integrated hubs was the terminology used by the Kennett Government in policy documents, recommending the use of "formal referral protocols" with "formal agreements", accentuating the managerial aspect of the approach. The introduction of the document, written by Kennett, remarked:

The private sector, under this Government's encouragement, has demonstrated it can provide leadership in youth affairs. It has shown an ability and desire to work in partnership with youth workers and the community to enhance the interests of youth in this State (Liberal Party Victoria, 1996).

Through the encouragement of the Kennett Government, the private sector was delivered an opportunity for private industry within the youth and community services sector, with minimal intervention from the government (Harvey, 2007). Participants discussed the implications within the youth sector as to how this impacted not only youth workers and the sector but also young people. Participants conceded that the amalgamations of youth and community service organisations and the changes introducing CCT to funding streams meant more holistic youth work, such as youth clubs and drop-in centres, was disbanded and caseworkers that specialised in different areas replaced holistic youth workers. Participant 3 discussed this, stressing the impacts on youth work:

In terms of policy, what it really meant for young people was they'd have a lot more workers in their lives, and for feeling like somebody actually cares about them, it is harder ... And, their needs weren't really necessarily being considered in a holistic way, it was really about we've got. – Participant 3

The implications of this system were that youth workers had to prioritise administration to meet specific criteria. With traditional methods of youth work changing, workers were struggling to adapt to the new changes. Furthermore, as Corney (2004) suggested, this new case-management system was not seen as valuable to youth work practice in the time under investigation. The previous familiar models of youth work were "disappearing", along with the expertise. An example of this was shared by Participants 3 and 4, with Participant 3 explaining:

You would have a homeless kid who might have a drug and alcohol issue, and maybe even a mental health issue, who needed to get a job, and they needed housing, and they could have five workers. So the end result was that workers were restricted to work within tighter program guidelines and with particular criteria. And, it also meant that you could not, because you were working at more of a “crisis end” with kids in a particular program area, you would not coordinate with those other people, the young person's experience was that they would have a whole lot of workers working with them. And then service coordination becomes a really big issue. And there is overlap and in that sense, definitely, young people could fall through, or they do not really feel like there is any kind of one adult they are connecting with. – Participant 3

The document *Farewell YACVic* (1999, p. 2) also remarked on the new multi-person youth work practices, mentioning that there were now people calling themselves youth workers working in the sector as a consequence of the case-management framework who had no previous experience or qualifications working with young people. Workers not having experience or qualifications within a youth work context raises ethical issues relating to the suitability of the employees; in particular, Article 3.3 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* stated:

3. States' Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision (UNICEF, 1989, p. 2).

Participant 3 explained the complexities of working with young people under this framework of service delivery:

[Talking about case planning/management] On paper, it looks great. But if you take this kid with the drug and alcohol issue to this service, but they also have a mental health issue, the drug and alcohol service says we do not have the capacity. But when you go to the mental health service, they say we cannot work with his drug and alcohol. He'll need to get clean. So, there were youth workers that were pointing out where the system was struggling and this model was not really interested in hearing from youth workers. – Participant 3

These incidents of young people not receiving the intervention they required from integrated youth services were consistent across participants. Although there were policies in place to aid young people, the methods of service delivery through case management may not have ensured the best interests of young people as the primary consideration (UNICEF, 1989). Instead, this created an environment where young people might be excluded from intervention. Reflecting on the *Youth affairs* (Liberal Party Victoria, 1996, p. 6) policy document, this was the opposite of what the Kennett Government had stated it was trying to achieve, causing young people to potentially "drift between services". Instead, the case-management structure could not provide adequate intervention for young people facing complex issues. Additionally, this model not being interested in hearing from trained and experienced youth workers who were sharing concerns through the peak body YACVic accentuates the "action at a distance" (Harvey, 2007), demonstrating that the government was compliant in creating an environment that facilitated negative feedback on its implemented policies being disregarded.

The impacts of the case-management focus on youth work resonated with participants, highlighting that it completely transformed the youth sector. Even today case management is still prevalent, against the advice of academics and people working within the youth work sector. Participant 5 commented on case management and its impact on the youth sector:

It is a problem that we haven't completely removed even now twenty-five years later, in fact ... What we lost that we haven't quite regained, that is the notion that youth workers are important, we have never regained that, that youth workers are an important part of the ecosystem, as opposed to a youth AOD use, [or a] mental health youth worker. – Participant 5

This reflection on the legacy of the Kennett Government and the impact of its policies on the youth sector and youth work in Victoria highlights how the professionalisation of youth work has been devalued through privatisation.

#### 4.4.3.2 Subtheme 3b: Tendering

Tendering out of services to privatised service providers is important for ensuring competition. The theme of “tendering” is based on evidence correlating with YACVic’s services being put out for tender. This theme provides context to the tendering process and how YACVic approached this process as an already vulnerable organisation within the privatised and considerably more competitive environment of CCT, as discussed by Steane and Walker, who stated clearly:

The advent of adversarial tendering has resulted in the separation and alienation of stakeholders that used to collaborate to achieve the best overall service result for clients. If power is understood as being able to understand, influence and make decisions, such adversarial arrangements have formalised the tendering process as a political process where community groups are either not powerful enough or not experienced enough to compete with other private sector tenderers (Steane & Walker, 2000, p. 249).

The notion of the separation and alienation of stakeholders in the youth sector described by Steane and Walker is consistent with YACVic and the tendering out of its services, which were alienated and separated from the youth sector.

With YACVic in a vulnerable state already and the tendering processes being rapid, YACVic having its core funding removed and being put out for tender added to the complexities the youth sector was facing at the time, with the events leading up to the tendering contributing to the youth sector's "alienation and separation". Participant 3 detailed how these processes worked against the participatory and collaborative structural model of YACVic:

The Kennett Government was putting out tenders and they had a five-week turnaround, and there was no way a twenty-person board that met four times a year could make a decision about these things. So there was a big push to professionalise a whole lot of sectors and organisations and YACVic wasn't the only one. And so basically Kennett defunded YACVic. – Participant 3

Participant 3, discussing YACVic's structure and how the decision-making processes were not benefiting YACVic in this time, made the conclusion that there may have been issues or distraction internally. The discussion about YACVic not being the only one to suffer from the "push to professionalise" indicates that YACVic being "defunded" may not have been an individual issue but a systemic reform.

Further verifying the view of Participant 3, Ellis (1999) confirmed this process was only allowed five weeks. YACVic's notification of being put out for tender occurred during its strategic review, which ran from February to May 1999, with the tender closing on 10 June 1999. Participants discussed this time, with Participant 1 recalling that in this time YACVic called on the youth sector to support it:

When the quality of what was being produced by YACVic was not as strong as it needed to be, you know, in terms of skill sets, in terms of capacity to do high-level stakeholder engagement with government and with other key players. The capacity of the staffing was under question and that was what was reviewed in

the process. But then also that same component, was the sector still supporting YACVic as a peak [body]? And would go to bat for it? – Participant 1

At this time, YACVic was reliant on the sector for support to continue as the peak body, with also YACVic's capacity and staffing "under question". This shows that YACVic was "not as strong as it needed to be", which questions the efficacy of YACVic, especially when it was so reliant on the sector to continue. Participant 1 described the "call to the sector" as a campaign that was trying to recapture the support of the membership, indicating that:

Without their support, YACVic, would fold and or potentially be defunded. So, it was it was not clear a hundred per cent what the funding situation was going to be. The Department, in effect, wanted to fund a viable peak body, but needed to know that it was well representative. So, on one level, there was a threat to funding in that if YACVic wasn't seen to be viable, the funding would be pulled; if it was viable, there was the potential for a newly constituted and constructed YACVic to be funded. – Participant 1

The idea that YACVic was not seen as "viable" by the membership is prevalent in this discussion as if YACVic had not already been vulnerable, it would not have been in this position of potentially having its funding withdrawn. This notion that YACVic was not "viable" was supported by Participant 3, who remarked:

I think that strong membership-driven organisations are very difficult for government to completely get rid of and the fact was that the Centre of Excellence, Victoria University of Technology and others were willing to compete for the funding, because YACVic had lost the confidence of government and was unlikely to win the funding. – Participant 3

Furthermore, the notion that YACVic had lost the support of the government because they were critical of it is not the whole story it was also because the government believed YACVic to be dysfunctional as was confirmed by Participant 5, who stated:

So, they [government] were actually saying "We want a functional body. Yes, maybe one that speaks to us." But I actually think they just wanted one that was seen to be functioning, because it was so dysfunctional. I know, because I worked there for ten years. They were hopeless, couldn't organise themselves out of a paper bag. – Participant 5

The notion that the government wanted to fund a peak body is consistent throughout the data, as it still put the tender out and was taking bids for the tender, further evidencing the relationship between the two actors and the outcome of YACVic's resistance to the Kennett Government, resulting in this disciplinary action and even turning to punish those associated with YACVic.

In the publication *Farewell YACVic*, the tendering process was discussed:

Internally YACVic undergoes a full review of operations. At the point of implementation of the review recommendations, it is announced that the funding for the peak body function will be put out for tender. Given the acceptance of the need for major organisational change and the tight tender timelines the Executive decide that it is not possible for YACVic to tender in its own right and determines that the best option for the sector is to support a Children's Welfare Association of Victoria [CWAV] bid. A Special General Meeting of the membership is called for the 9th September to formally put the motion to wind up the organisation (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1999, p. 17).

In announcing that it was not going to compete for its own tender, this confirmed that YACVic lacked the organisational stamina and functionality to succeed in the tender.

YACVic recognised it could not compete for the tender, opting to close as an organisation rather than compete. In this excerpt, YACVic stressed its support of CWAV, which successfully won the tender bid.

Participant 5 believed that YACVic made a "wise decision" by not competing for the tender during the discussed time. YACVic not competing for the tender made a very significant statement to the government and the sector at the time, reflecting its critical stance on the Kennett Government's neoliberal policies. However, it also highlights that it was not "powerful enough" or resilient enough to contend with the process of tendering (Steane & Walker, 2000). This was made more difficult by previous ally organisations in the youth sector opportunistically seizing the opportunity to compete and offering tender bids for YACVic's services. The organisations competing for the tender were perceived as undermining any solidarity with YACVic's criticisms of the government's policies and processes. In the final year of YACVic, before it was meant to be wound up, the neoliberal competition and privatisation policies of the Kennett Government contributed directly to the loss of core government funding, weakening YACVic's organisational strength and further destabilising YACVic by imposing swift tendering deadlines.

What is of note is that this tendering process individualised and cemented competition within the youth sector and seemingly caused a rift within the sector; different agencies were vying for the tendering contract, including the Children's Welfare Association of Victoria, and a consortium comprising Victoria University of Technology, Institute for Youth, Education and Community, Melbourne City Mission, along with other such as the Trust for Young Australians and Scouts Victoria, with YACVic being angry at the lack of support from the membership but also the competition of the sector for the tender:

YACVic has not been afforded the same level of support from its peers as it demonstrated to a fledging peak body. The response from potential competitors should have been based on the philosophy that an injury to one is an injury to all.

I'm aware that the Children's Welfare Association of Victoria, CWAV, have with YACVic's support, submitted a tender application, my comment is not directed at CWAV (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1999, p. 22).

The sentiment that the sector should have supported YACVic more is consistent with the interviews, with Participant 5 describing the loss of support: "the whole thing was ugly and the sector was at each other's throats. There was no collaboration." The contrasting opinion, revealed by participants and discussed under the subtheme of "funding" and the theme of "distraction", is that YACVic was not seen to be doing enough to afford the sector's support at the time.

#### 4.4.4 Theme 4: Distraction

The theme of "distraction" was evident from the two datasets. This theme encompasses how YACVic reacted to the political climate and responded to the discipline of the Kennett Government. This theme is informed by the action or inaction of YACVic at the time leading up to the tendering out of its services. Within "distraction", the subthemes "support" and "representation" represent how YACVic being distracted promoted adverse outcomes for the organisation.

Throughout the period under investigation, substantial amounts of data show that YACVic was distracted. As early as the 1993–1994 *Annual report*, YACVic was citing not only facing staffing issues but also, due to government processes, having to focus on critical policy response rather than positive policy advising:

The rate of change of government policy and legislation also meant that much of the Working Group's efforts have been directed to responding to rather than proposing new policy (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1994, p. 9).

Although this is remarking on the political environment and the struggles of working within it, it signifies that, in these initial years under investigation, YACVic was focused

on critiquing the policies established by the government, which did not meet the views of the youth sector peak body, showing that YACVic was distracted by critiquing the policies. While YACVic was critical of the Kennett Government at this time, it is noteworthy that this distraction allowed YACVic to miss opportunities that could have led to better outcomes. For example, when YACVic was put out to tender, EYIN was also put out to tender. EYIN managed to become very successful after its split from YACVic. When discussing EYIN and how it was able to find success in the "unsympathetic" (Participant 2) environment of the Kennett Government, a common belief the participants shared was that YACVic did not excel at being neutral or "strategic" (Participant 3) in its relationship with the Kennett Government. As Participant 1 described, this contrasts with the auspiced arm of YACVic, as EYIN:

Had found a way to speak into that conservative space, as well as the more radical space that they had, they'd found a way to be representative but still to have the political nouse to be able to work with government. They had persuasions to take a neutral path. – Participant 1

As the participants articulated, this area could have been improved upon, specifically in an example of this demonstrated by EYIN when YACVic was losing its funding. Participants believed YACVic, through being more "strategic" (Participant 3), could have achieved more favourable outcomes by remaining politically impartial and building stronger relationships with other stakeholders and organisations. Participant 5 discussed EYIN keeping its funding due to the Kennett Government valuing multiculturalism and migrant contribution, as espoused in neoliberal ideology:

Multiculturalism was a big thing and the belief in the contribution that migrants made to the Victorian society and economy was seen to be a positive thing ... in this youth sector that was being decimated, EYIN, and that then became CMY,

survived. So it was very weird at the time, it was a very uncomfortable space to be when [EYIN] were not being targeted and the work [EYIN was doing] was not, but the broader work of the youth sector was. – Participant 5

Discussing how EYIN endured despite the adversity within the "decimated" youth sector and participants remarking on EYIN being "uncomfortable" about its survival shows the understanding that EYIN prevailing went against what was expected to happen under the neoliberal Kennett Government. The juxtaposition of YACVic's auspiced arm flourishing and growing in this "unsympathetic" (Participant 2) environment, whilst YACVic did not, also shows that there was a way to work with this government, and to receive government funding, and to represent the needs of young people successfully. EYIN was able to successfully and un-critically navigate a working relationship with the Kennett Government through strategic compromise, where YACVic could not. Participant 5 discussed this further, stating:

The youth sector was very human rights focused, which is good, not that that is wrong, but in a context of a Western model of this is what you do, whereas [EYIN gave a] voice to young people who were not heard. That often means you have to play in the tent, not outside the tent, the whole time. Whereas I think YACVic saw itself as activist driven, really wanting to fight for the rights at all costs, meaning that often you did not compromise ...You have to compromise your values, but you have to work the system and work it through, which is now common knowledge, twenty years later. It is nothing [now], but then it was quite radical [to compromise]. – Participant 5

YACVic's criticism of government and being unable to find compromise, and work successfully with the Kennett Government ultimately led to YACVic losing its funding. Whilst YACVic lost its funding at this stage, EYIN managed to navigate this environment successfully. Participant 4 provided more context on how certain specialised areas, in a

similar way to case management, or because of it, were able to rise above the “decimation” (Participant 5) that was happening at the time:

Some of the good things were that we started to have a discussion around the need for a youth specific drug and alcohol service [e.g., YSAS], or a youth specific mental health support services. And I think young people, like Aboriginal young people and LGBTIQA+ young people, saw enormous gains, because people started talking about those issues and forming relationships. – Participant 4

When case management was introduced, these more specialised services (e.g., Youth Support + Advocacy Service, YSAS) adapted being able to cater to the young people within the demographics they were representing. Providing insight into how YACVic could have been less distracted by the conflict and criticism of the Kennett Government and more focused on pragmatically responding to these new service delivery areas that were emerging at the time.

The notion that YACVic was collaborating less with the youth sector is confirmed by *Farewell YACVic*, which, on reflection, was able to identify its role in not working well within neoliberal governmentality:

Often [the youth sector] resorted to fighting amongst ourselves; we have not often been a disciplined force with which the government has had to contend; and we have struggled to be equals in our dealing with government. Of course, the latter will always be difficult given our status of a child getting pocket money. However, we must face these "realities", not by accepting the neo-liberal paradigm, or by being "pragmatic" (Bob Hawke style), or even "realistic" aka Thatcher or Keating, but by sharpening our arguments by which to contest it; and by learning to be strategic and at least publicly, being united (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1999, p. 18).

However, even this quote, while recognising YACVic's inability at the time to work co-operatively with both government and the youth sector, is still critical of the Kennett Government.

Participants discussed ways in which YACVic was distracted by the framing of policies and language that the Kennett Government used; what is evident from the two datasets is that in some ways YACVic was losing sight of its intended goals and focusing on being critical of the government meaning there was no room to build better partnerships with the government. Participant 2 shared that the Kennett Government had issues with the language that YACVic used, especially in a public capacity:

[On discussing a meeting with the 1996 Minister for Youth] He [The Minister for Youth] said, "It's just typical of YACVic to pick such three negative agendas." I kind of got what he was saying. One of his points was, why don't you focus on youth employment, as opposed to youth unemployment? And we thought that was just semantics ... He would have tolerated YACVic if what it did was focus on promoting the success of young people, good things that were happening to young people ... happy stories about "young achievers". And there's nothing wrong with doing those things. But it's not the only thing you should be doing. He was not interested in YACVic having an agenda that painted a true picture of what life was like for so many young people in Victoria. He wanted promotional pieces about the young people doing well. – Participant 2

This statement highlights the contrasting ideologies between YACVic and the Kennett Government. With the government insisting on positive language when discussing youth issues, YACVic was more pessimistic and sought the importance of the reality of the experience of being a young person. The participants' memories of this meeting also highlighted that the Kennett Government was giving YACVic direction it was not following

although, as Participant 2 stated, it believed that was "just semantics", which depicts the level of resistance YACVic was operating with. From a youth work perspective, it makes sense that YACVic would be highlighting the negative aspects of what was happening in the lives of young people to the Kennett Government, as from the literature youth policy is primarily based on politicians' experience of youth (Maunder, 1996; Woodman & Wyn, 2013).

If YACVic, as participants and *Farewell YACVic* stated in reflection, had been more "strategic" (Participant 3) (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1999, p. 18), the outcomes for YACVic and the youth sector in this time may have been vastly different. Participant 5 provided more context to the situation, discussing how to work with the government successfully:

You walk that line in government and you can use their language to do what you want to do. But you have to play their game, not to the point where you cross the line. Never that, but enough to say, let us talk the same language because we may get there differently. But if you are going to fund me to get there, that is a good thing. Whereas YACVic was not willing to compromise and I think that went to the leadership. – Participant 5

By stating this, the participant confirmed that by not being willing to work with the government, YACVic was distracted by its unwillingness to compromise and to use its relationship with the government to continue its role as the peak advisory body for the youth sector.

YACVic's failure to acknowledge that the Kennett Government was operating in this manner and its inability to form a better partnership with the government contributed to the perception that YACVic was not deserving of funding. Participant 4 shared their thoughts on the matter:

I think we failed to win the battle to say that YACVic supported government to do what they wanted to do. – Participant 4

YACVic failing to support the government, shows how far its criticism of the Kennett Government ran, that it could not set aside philosophical and ideological differences to work within the parameters of the Kennett Government.

#### 4.4.4.1 Subtheme 4a: Support

A prevalent subtheme within “distraction” was “support” and how YACVic’s vulnerability due to funding and competition privatisation meant that YACVic lost the support of stakeholders, the youth sector and its membership base. These factors played key roles in the Kennett Government motivating the technologies of power, with the loss of representation being the outcome of control (Foucault, 1991). Participants discussed the period from 1999–2000, as shown in Figure 4.19 below, when YACVic had lost its tender and funding, staff had received redundancy packages and YACVic was operating voluntarily.

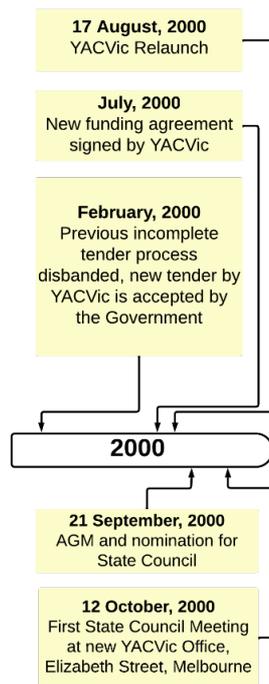


Figure 4.19: Excerpt from Figure 4.4

The perception was at this time YACVic was reflecting on its previous performance as the peak advisory body and reviewing it, while also reaching out to the sector for support:

Without support from key players in the sector, YACVic will have to fold. –  
Participant 1

Losing the support of the "key players in the sector" was detrimental to the vulnerable YACVic, which correlates with Steane and Walker (2000) view of the “alienation and separation” of the youth sector. This became more complex for YACVic, as it knew there was pressure from its membership, the sector and the Kennett Government even in 1994:

I am acutely conscious of the expectations that our membership, the youth sector generally and the Minister have of YACVic as the peak body for the youth sector. Whilst it is extremely difficult to please all the people all the time, I have no doubt

that YACVic has the basic ingredients of skill, vision and resources to meet the many (and often competing) expectations placed upon us (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1994, p. 8).

Participant 2 had a similar opinion to Participant 1, that with YACVic winding up and losing the tendering process, it had lost the support of other community sector organisations:

YACVic gave up on itself. But something I noticed when I got there was, I had a sense that a lot of other community sector organisations had kind of given up on YACVic. – Participant 2

This loss of support extended to other state-funded institutions, such as the Regional Youth Committees (RYC), with YACVic being consistently critical of the RYC from 1995, stating that they found "youth workers require more effective input into and [a] relationship with Regional Youth Committees" (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1999, p. 17), and eventually writing to the Kennett Government about the relationship between YACVic and the RYC. This led to another distraction resulting in YACVic having issues fulfilling its role as it felt it could not communicate effectively with the RYC and emphasised that YACVic was again distracted by feeling overlooked by the RYC's. Further, YACVic in the *Briefing notes for meeting with the Minister for Youth and Community Services, the Hon. Dr Denis Napthine MP* (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1996, p. 17) YACVic requested clarification of the funding position of the RYC, clarification of their relationship with YACVic, by "creating a place for the YACVic Chair at statewide meetings of RYC Chairs" and expressing that "there appears to be a great deal of confusion as to the exact roles and responsibilities of RYC's". YACVic's response to the *Youth affairs* policy document when discussing the RYC was seemingly unsure of the role of the RYC concerning YACVic and could have felt threatened by their position

with government, weakening the relationship between the two actors. Furthermore, Participant 4 shared that they recognised that the RYC could replace YACVic:

Was that shift that I'm [Kennett] going to use Regional Youth communities or talk directly to young people? They [Kennett Government] didn't need YACVic. And then I think there was that larger, you know, shift that they didn't want to fund peaks. – Participant 4

In *Farewell YACVic* (1999, p. 23), YACVic discussed its relationship with the government reflectively, emphasising that there had been difficulties within the relationship between the actors:

At times the relationships between the peak [body] and the government has been tense while at others there was a strong sense of mutual obligation and partnership. Alongside this has been the sometimes uneasy partnerships between the various interest groups within the sector and the debate.

Despite the “tense” relationships between actor 1 and actor 3, Participant 1 outlined that YACVic felt support from the Office of Youth Affairs and that people working within the government were facing adversity within the government system by promoting advocacy:

I think there was a lot of support within the Department for legitimate advocacy and voices ... That clashed with government, the politics of the Kennett Government, but they were certainly supportive within the bureaucracy of a good strong advocacy and a strong voice. So, in effect, the kind of voice that we were getting from supporters within the bureaucracy was quite helpful strategically to battle the political environment. – Participant 1

The closure of the Office of Youth Affairs emphasises how YACVic continued to lose support as it had lost one of its allies. The loss of support was consistent with the membership base. During the period after the loss of YACVic funding and tender,

YACVic set out to speak to members within Victoria. As described in the 1992–1993 *Annual report*, YACVic was reliant on its membership:

As long as the membership maintains its enthusiasm and continues to support the Council, YACVic will be available to service a great diversity of needs and continue to represent (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1993, p. 1).

Losing the support of YACVic's membership is another example of how YACVic was experiencing the ramifications of neoliberal governmentality, but also shows how distracted YACVic was. Through the technologies of power exerted on YACVic, the Kennett Government used “action at a distance”, making YACVic so vulnerable that it would lose the support of the people who previously supported it (Herbert-Cheshire, 2000). From Participant 3's experience, YACVic could not have lost its funding or been defunded without the loss of support from its members:

I believe that the YACVic had lost sufficient support of its members in order to be fully protected. And maybe that was because of the structural issues around the machinery of government changes, and so on and so forth. So that's my take on it. I just don't think that you can get defunded. Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe I'm naive, but I think you could be starved, you could be, you know, have your funding cut, all sorts of things, but they can't usually totally defund their peak body. Unless you've got the strong support of your membership ... If the members rally to support you, and not enough members did, and that's, and that's part of why I think YACVic was defunded. – Participant 3

Participant 3 emphasised that part of the reason why YACVic did lose the support of the membership was due to its organisational structure, stressing that the sector was unhappy with YACVic because of the “organisational chaos” and structure of the 20-person State Council, which would meet four times per year, making it hard to make

decisions promptly, especially in the face of the rapid changes put in place by the Kennett Government, such as the five-week tender process for YACVic. This shows ways in which YACVic was not functioning well within its structure; infrequent meetings and a large State Council may have hindered the ability to respond to the neoliberal environment. Discussing this fact, Participant 5 shared that in losing the support of the membership, YACVic lost the right in the eyes of the youth sector to continue as the peak advisory body for the sector:

The membership not rising up tells you we lost everything. That means that they have lost trust, faith of a whole lot of people, which meant you were right for killing off, weren't you? – Participant 5

The lack of support within the membership and also the sector was reflected by Participant 2 in discussing the loss of funding:

Is there anything else they could have done to prevent the government making that decision [the decision of the Kennett Government withdrawing funding]? YACVic had been in a sort of deflated state for a number of years. I mean, the fact that YACVic gave up on itself [chose to not compete for its tender and close]. But something I noticed when I got there was, I had a sense that a lot of other community sector organisations had kind of given up on YACVic. – Participant 2

Participant 3 continued by discussing that YACVic's reception after the loss of core funding, or "defunding", was met with anger:

[YACVic staff] went around and did a lot of travelling around and visited all of the members. Some people were quite angry with YACVic. So my reflection from that was that YACVic had lost the confidence of its members. – Participant 3

The loss of support in the “confidence of its members” within the context of YACVic being vulnerable, as a direct result of the neoliberal philosophy imposed by the Kennett Government, illuminates the indirect and direct ways in which the Kennett Government sought to exercise its power on the other actor (Foucault, 1991), reducing its foundation of support. Further, it contributes to the Steane and Walker (2000) view of CCT as “alienation and separation”. What is noteworthy is that participants believed YACVic could have been more effective when working with the youth sector and membership base during tendering in that, by not rallying the support of the membership and youth sector, YACVic did not act quickly enough to save itself. Participant 2 further discussed this factor whilst also acknowledging the political environment of the time:

I'm not seeking to criticise whoever the officeholders or staff were at the top of the day, they were operating in a pretty adverse, unsympathetic environment, but in terms of what else they might have done to stave off the Kennett Government's desire to get rid of them, I think they could have done more work just really shoring up their alliances with groups like VCOSS [Victorian Council of Social Service] and Trades Hall Council, Children's Welfare Association of Victoria and, indeed, their members, and my perception is they could have asked the Office of Youth Affairs and other bureaucrats ... [for] some clear advice on how YACVic was perceived at a sort of ministerial government level. Now, whether that would have prevented them being defunded? Probably not. But you never know. It might have. And I don't know. – Participant 2

The question of whether "shoring up alliances" would have resulted in YACVic not being "defunded" is of interest as it emphasises the participants' awareness that YACVic losing its funding may not have been a deliberate attack to silence a critical body, but more an inevitable consequence of neoliberal governmentality that any government-funded service at this time might have encountered. What is more, there was rhetoric that

YACVic was not of use to the Kennett Government or the youth sector at the time, with participants speculating that the RYC would eventually replace YACVic:

[The Kennett Government believed] “We don't need to talk. We don't need a YACVic. We don't need people that tell us what, because all youth workers are telling us is that this isn't good enough. We don't want that.” So, we were [YACVic] kind of being pushed out. – Participant 4

With YACVic being “pushed out” by the government and unaware of the loss of support by the membership and youth sector until it was too late, YACVic was aligned to not be at a capacity where it could logically compete for the tender.

#### 4.4.4.2 Subtheme 4b: Representation

“Representation” is a significant subtheme emergent from the data. When discussing the implications of YACVic running at a lower capacity from 1998–1999 and the eventual closure of YACVic, participants discussed that this signified a loss of representation for young people and the youth sector. This loss of representation was an outcome of the distraction of YACVic and neoliberal governmentality.

Although leading up to YACVic's closure in September 1999 there had already been a change in how it was operating to combat internal issues such as staff retention and burnout, by the time YACVic was put out for tender, resources and morale were low. This sentiment is demonstrated by its inability to respond to policies and continue to operate at the level that YACVic had been in previous years. Participant 1 shared their perspective on how YACVic losing its funding and operating at a voluntary level impacted young people:

It diminished the voice for a period of time because if you don't have a peak that's got its act together, it means it does not spend the time and energy engaging with government as well on policy matters. It doesn't help them to push up the voice

engaging with government as well on policy matters. It doesn't help them to push up the voice of young people and their representative organisations. It loses that point of contact and point of influence. So if the organisation doesn't have strong credibility, which it had lost, I think it had lost some of its credibility through that time. And then it's not operating because it's trying to sort itself out and get its act together. Then through that period of time, I think there were opportunities lost for representation for young people and their representative organisations. – Participant 1

Participant 1 articulated that through the loss of YACVic there was not a “representative” voice to the government speaking on the “best interests” (UNICEF, 1989) of young people and with young people in this time losing this representation, “opportunities were lost”. At this time, YACVic could not bridge the gap between the government and youth sector organisations, particularly when the sector faced the “decimation” of services, consistent CCT and funding cuts driven by the Kennett Government and its magnified state power (Joseph, 2010). Participant 3 shared an example of how losing the representation that was YACVic at the time created a “disconnect”:

As a peak body, you can't influence or even speak to government on their [young people and the youth sector] behalf. The big challenge with peak bodies is you are an issues peak [body], which is Youth Affairs, but you're also got members, who are organisations that are receiving funding to work with young people, but you also have to represent those to be able to make changes in funding areas and influence policy. It created a disconnect between the peak body and its members. – Participant 3

Other areas detected that had a loss of representation were data collection and information sharing, resulting in the individualisation of issues and the loss of advocacy. For example, Participant 1 described the implications of YACVic losing its funding:

I think it was a mess really for probably a two-year defunding transition period [1999–2001]. There was less advocacy, less time for representing the needs and the rights of, of young people in their organisation. There was a less powerful voice that could challenge government, challenge the bureaucracy, challenge the policy environment, because the organisation was so caught up in sorting itself out as a peak [body] and the stakeholder arrangements etc. I think for that period, some of that youth representation directly or indirectly from its organisations was reduced and impacted for sure. – Participant 1

This was affirmed by Participant 4 and Participant 5, explaining that the loss of information sharing had significant impacts on young people and youth workers. Furthermore, they emphasised that peak bodies such as YACVic play a crucial “conduit role” (Participant 4) between young people, youth workers and the government, whilst also being able to provide insight into what issues are impacting young people. The loss of YACVic's expertise to disseminate information resulted in the disconnection of these three groups and the feedback loop to the sector was disconnected during this time. As a result, youth workers were less informed about vital matters. Participant 4 provided an example of this:

So, you see it when you have a forum and you bring a whole lot of youth workers that work with young women who are pregnant and then they get to meet all the workers in the health sector. You really get a narrative around where [these] young women are actually really vulnerable. YACVic not being there would have meant our analysis of what was missing and what the support needs were would have been so much poorer information and there would have been all sorts of problems, like the stupid "youth labour market program", which completely didn't meet the needs of young people. You're not going to get that feedback. Often the

peak [body] actually collects the data, and that data can be really, really powerful.

We would have lost that important feedback loop. – Participant 4

Participant 3 expressed their view that young people might "fall into holes" that could result from policy issues rather than individual problems. This highlights the importance of youth workers in identifying and addressing underlying policy problems that may not be immediately apparent and that the loss of information sharing at this time may have aggravated this further, magnifying the loss of representation:

Without youth workers feeding that [information] back, something which looks like an individual problem is often actually a policy problem. – Participant 3

The participant's identification that an "individual problem is often actually a policy problem" indicates that young people were again victims of neoliberal governmentality. Although Participant 3 stated it was a "policy problem", the problems were entrenched far within the state powers meaning that the inaction of government to provide adequate youth policy was deliberate (Foucault, 1991).

Comparisons were made between the Kennett Government, within what was described as "one of the ugliest periods of history" (Participant 5) in Victoria, and other neoliberal governments around the world such as the Reagan and Thatcher governments, conceding that the Kennett Government was not "as bad" but that the push for small government had weakened human rights:

If you look at the Kennett years, off the back of the Thatcher and the Reagan years, which was to move away from collective action or devalue collective action in favour of individual achievement, definitely Kennett was part of that school. Not quite, in my view, as bad as, as either Reagan or particularly Margaret Thatcher.

– Participant 3

Participant 3 provided an example of how the Kennett Government used its power to control representation, moving actors to provide outcomes representing governmentality (Joseph, 2010; Rooney, 1997):

The attack on the Anti-Discrimination Commission at the time, which was replaced by, some would argue, a much-weakened Human Rights Commission or Opportunity Commission, or I think it was Equal Opportunity Commission, as opposed to an anti-discrimination commission, and even just to change your name or give you an indication of what that was about. – Participant 3

This example of the movement of technology structures is subliminal until the consequence of something as minute as changing the name results in less power and advocacy to stand up for marginalised and vulnerable people.

Overall, through the use of this example Participant 3 showed their belief that the Kennett Government at this time was striving to "undermine institutions" by seeking to "discredit them, to discredit the people who were running them or to defund or starve them of funding". In conjunction with this illustration of how the Kennett Government indirectly approached discrimination, it represents how neoliberal governmentality was systematic in its movements.

Participants described the impacts on the broader community in Victoria. Participant 1 agreed that social capital was declining and the "empowered voices" of the community were dampened, emphasising the political environment in which society was living at the time to be discursive of growth:

That's a fair call on some levels that by having that political squashing of empowered voices from young people and people in the community represented by the organisations across the sector, I think that it had a dampening effect. It didn't encourage growth of those forces. It wasn't a positive environment. And for

young people and others who were part of the welfare and community services sector to speak up. And for those who are disempowered in the sector, as well across the society, I guess, to be able to represent themselves and to have a strong voice and to build that social capital, there has to be an encouraging environment, and if the political will from the government of the day that was entrenched and very powerful, if that didn't enable those things, then it created less opportunities for a lot of young people and a lot of community members to speak to engage to be part of the process. – Participant 1

Loss of representation signifies that there was no formal voice for young people in Victoria at this time. In the absence of a peak advisory body to the government, there was no formal body to hold the government further to account for its decisions or to provide advice to the government on youth policies (Bessant & Webber, 2001; Edwards, 2006; Maunders, 1996). The surmountable evidence analysed through the subtheme of “representation” connects the loss of representation as an outcome of power used to regulate social control (Foucault, 1991).

#### 4.4.5 Theme 5: Betrayal

The theme of “betrayal” discusses the impacts of betrayal as an implication of the differing moving parts that led to YACVic losing its core funding and having its services tendered out. “Betrayal” is informed by the implications of the actors and youth sector and how they betrayed the other parties and, ultimately, young people. The critical factor in this betrayal and why it is young people who were ultimately impacted by this betrayal stems from the fact that the Kennett Government, the youth sector and YACVic were all complicit in betraying their core values and mission objectives. Each of these actors and entities had an ethical and, in some cases, legal responsibility to young people, such as the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNICEF, 1989); therefore, by not working together and for young people, they all betrayed young people.

#### 4.4.5.1 Subtheme 5a: The Kennett Government

When discussing betrayal by the Kennett Government, participants shared many ways in which the Kennett Government betrayed young people and the people of Victoria.

Participant 5 shared how the neoliberal policies impacted the communities:

Communities were being fractured. Yeah, and there was no investment in community. It was like, scale back everything, and then it will be that notion of survival of the fittest. That is what he [Kennett] did: let's just slash everyone and those who can survive will remain and everyone else will go. Which means that you've killed off a whole lot of the innovative grassroots programs and activities that really, that we now all know. And we know through literature and history that is how you actually make real change ... Innovation doesn't happen in a bureaucracy, it happens in communities, but when you take away that infrastructure for them, whether it's youth workers, teachers, you're losing the capacity for in those communities to trial and error and try new things to know what works. – Participant 5

The betrayal of the community was especially felt by the rural community, which had public transport and other essential services cut and removed. Participants shared that it created issues connecting to young people in rural communities, especially when they had restricted access to schools due to the 300 state schools that were closed (Costar & Economou, 1999). The Kennett Government extended this betrayal to the young people of Victoria, not only through restricting access to education and movement, both of which are imperative but also by cutting funding to services that young people require for support.

The betrayal of young people continued through to the youth sector and youth work as a profession due to the neoliberal changes invoked by the Kennett Government and its response to the youth sector, young people and their issues:

Whereas the sector was trying to coalesce the voice of young people and empower them collectively and individually, and trying to get young people onto their committees and their boards and, you know, trying to build that strength and capacity and encouraging people into courses and all of those kinds of things. And certainly, the Kennett Government, a Liberal government, was doing whatever it could to push back against that. – Participant 1

As described by participants, youth work as a profession struggled in this period to continue to operate in the way it previously had. This betrayal began by cutting funding to services and ended with young people having less support. This was compounded by youth workers attempting to move into the new roles, with confusion about what their defined roles were:

The Kennett Government cut a lot of human services and really decimated what I would call the old youth work. You know, the old model of youth work where you would have a youth centre ... So basically the idea of holistic youth work was being dismantled by the government at the time. And dedicated youth resources were also being dismantled ... The concept of a holistic youth service and a holistic youth worker was disappearing. And what you had was a homelessness worker, or a drug and alcohol worker, or an employment worker, but not somebody who would run a centre, [or] a drop-in place for young people where they could really access adult support for a whole lot of things in a holistic way. – Participant 3

Participant 1 commented on the youth sector further under the Kennett Government, how community services generally were influenced by the government and how this related to the betrayal of young people:

Who were youth workers? Were they this generic? They were, in some ways, pushed to become a less specialist sector. So even the clarification about whether youth work was a valid profession and occupation. That was part of the general debate as well. There was this push to genericise occupations in the community services sector that was almost part of that same push for amalgamation. It was "should youth workers still exist as an occupation?". Whether the engagement with young people could be happening from a generic point of view, from Community Services trained workers or social workers etc., or whether there was still even a role for youth workers? So that was kind of sitting in the background too, as a bit of a debate that was coming out of the training area. I think that the voice of young people was a bit questioned in a range of different places. – Participant 1

The sentiment that youth work was being transformed or erased was consistent with participants. Participant 2 discussed this further, remarking on youth work today in Victoria:

You don't see many youth workers employed anywhere anymore. I mean, the youth justice workers. But that whole sort of field of generalist youth work, I think it's really disappeared. It's sort of been replaced by more of a case-management approach. – Participant 2

One of the roles of YACVic at this time was to provide training for youth workers to keep them informed about the new changes and regulations enforced by the Kennett Government. Betrayal is further evidenced by the Kennett Government's inability to

provide youth workers with the information that accompanied these new regulations, meaning that YACVic was needed to provide the information:

Youth workers, who, at this stage will be mandated by the new law, in November 1994 have not featured in professional training campaigns and have not been formally consulted regarding the reporting of physical and sexual abuse ... In response to requests from members, YACVic will hold training sessions on the nature of the new legislation during 1994. Due to the lack of published material concerning the issues of mandatory reporting as it specifically relates to young people rather than younger children (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1994, p. 20).

Through this disregard for providing youth workers with appropriate information about these new regulations, the Kennett Government furthered its betrayal of young people and the people who worked with them.

In the publication *Farewell YACVic*, it was stated that YACVic's closure in the Kennett Government's tenure was "fitting" due to the environment. Participant 1 agreed, describing it as a "dampening" time for advocacy:

That YACVic should disappear under the Kennett Government is fitting. Any dissenting voice, organised or singular, which seeks to provide a voice to or protect the rights of people who are less powerful, money and resource poor, disadvantaged, discriminated against, harassed, ignored or just forgotten was attacked mercilessly, undermined and pilloried by this poor excuse for a government in Victoria. This was just another shameful act in the almost endless list as Tory ideology and the free-market were given priority over people (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1999, p. 24).

This betrayal of young people was multilayered through the changes to youth work and the sector and the undermining of advocacy and growth in the community. In a society where growth was reduced in many ways, the most marginalised young people were the most impacted and lost even more of their voice.

Another betrayal was the betrayal of Victorians by the LNP coalition through blocking drug policies. As described by participants, the Kennett Government was working within a "complex state" (Participant 4). Despite not fitting within neoliberal philosophy, policies such as the Premier's Drug Advisory Council, which the state government funded, was an area where Kennett was passionate. Participant 4 discussed this further:

And no neoliberal would have set up the Premier's Drug Advisory Council, because it cost a fortune setting up like that. It was not always small government is always better, if something appealed to him. That's my memory. Overall, he [Kennett] was slashing hospitals and funding for local government, was defunding trains and there were no more [tram] conductors ... And then, you know, sometimes they did things that did not really fit in the conventional neoliberal lens. Again, it's a complex state. – Participant 4

One of the primary outcomes of the Premier's Drug Advisory Council for the Kennett Government was a contentious introduction to safe injecting rooms for intravenous drug users. The safe injecting rooms were deemed a necessary boost to harm reduction as the death rate for intravenous drug users increased. Due to the sensationalisation of this subject, the Kennett Government, which was attempting to introduce safe injecting rooms, dropped this policy position for the 1999 Victorian state election (Mendes, 2002, 2022). This drug policy with a harm-minimisation focus was intended to save lives, especially those of young people. This is an example of where the Kennett Government, separate from Kennett, failed and betrayed the people of Victoria. In this instance, the

moral panic surrounding this policy won and the opposition within the media and the Kennett Government all betrayed young people.

Kennett has continued to be a supporter of safe injecting rooms. He has also spoken out against previous Liberal Party opposition to safe injecting rooms, remarking that the Liberal Party's rejection of the safe injection rooms was:

Ill-conceived and wrong. It sent an unambiguous message that the Party did not grasp that so many of our children are losing the shocking battle with drugs and that we must try a different approach. We must care for every citizen equally (Kennett, 2018).

It is interesting to note that Kennett's view of young people and drug use changed throughout his time as premier. At the start of his premiership, as stated in *The Age* in 1996 (McKay, 1996), he believed that young people had too easy access to drugs and alcohol and he was quite negative towards these issues. However, his opinion has changed, which could be linked to his involvement with the Pennington Institute. This harm-minimisation stance has been consistent with Kennett since his premiership, which led to this betrayal of young people and the community through the inability to push this policy with the Liberal Party members who were against the policy. This betrayal may have cost many lives. As per the Victorian government website, since 2018:

There have been almost 6,000 overdose events safely managed in the MSIR [Medically supervised injecting room] trial, and up to 63 lives have been saved (State Government of Victoria, 2023c).

The initial trial has since been legislated with a new name, the Medically Supervised Injecting Service, at its location in North Richmond, Melbourne, in 2023, twenty-five years later (State Government of Victoria, 2023b).

#### 4.4.5.2 Subtheme 5b: The youth sector

At this time, the youth sector was also complicit in the betrayal of young people, to a lesser extent than the Kennett Government, but still participated in the betrayal. The youth sector betrayed young people through the inability to see through the neoliberal ideology that was infiltrating the youth sector at the time and band together before the loss of YACVic. Instead, Participant 5 shared that breaking off to compete for the tender and not collaborating assisted in this betrayal:

What we needed was a new peak body that involved all those groups that they were trying to break up, but the sector was not coordinated enough to go, fuck you all. We are going to combine into one because then you can't [remove funding from the youth sector and YACVic]. We were so divided that people took the bait. And off they went. That spoke to the fact that the sector was decimated. Government had picked winners, bit of money here, bit of money to you, bit of money there, you know, etc. So they completely undermined YACVic the whole time. – Participant 5

Although, as discussed previously, YACVic was not functioning on a level that was working to its full potential, regardless, if the sector had moved as one this would have made the Kennett Government putting YACVic out for tender a more challenging task. YACVic was aware of this lack of support, as demonstrated in *Farewell YACVic*:

YACVic has not been afforded the same level of support from its peers as it demonstrated to a fledging peak body (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 1999, p. 22).

Through this strained youth sector and the inability to work together, the impacts of neoliberal governmentality and CCT are stark.

#### 4.4.5.3 Subtheme 5c: YACVic

Within the subtheme of “betrayal”, YACVic was also one of the actors involved in the betrayal of young people. Although YACVic never intended to betray young people, through the misdirection of its management and not working well with the government, YACVic did betray young people. Participant 5 articulated that within the structure of YACVic, the skills and expertise of the employees were more youth work focused, which created problems from an organisational standpoint as they needed to work on governance. Participant 5 emphasised that by not having a wider variety of expertise, YACVic was missing out on representing a broader youth sector:

They were all what you would now say were "real lefties" who were great intellectuals, but they did not speak to the broader youth sector. In fact, they spoke to a very small group and did not speak to the majority of young people who did not come across that way. It is not surprising that then a Liberal government goes, "you guys are just out to get us." I think that's leftover baggage. And that was what the people at YACVic were trying to do and got caught up in that notion. And I think, once you, once you almost create that caricature, it's very hard to shift it. – Participant 5

It is evident that the betrayal by YACVic was unintentional. YACVic was attempting to do the best for young people, which is unfortunate as the leadership within YACVic at the time may have flourished in previous years, but had not been under neoliberal rule before. However, in an adverse political environment, the opposition from YACVic contributed to its closure.

#### 4.4.6 Theme 6: Reinstatement

An emergent theme throughout the two datasets was “reinstatement” concerning YACVic. Although this happened after the events that led to the loss of funding and

tendering out of YACVic’s services, within this theme lies reflective and essential information on how YACVic recovered from the loss of core funding, closure and subsequent reopening. The process of YACVic having its funding reinstated coincided with the 1999 election of the Bracks Government, as detailed in Figures 4.20 and 4.21.



Figure 4.20: Excerpt from Figure 4.1

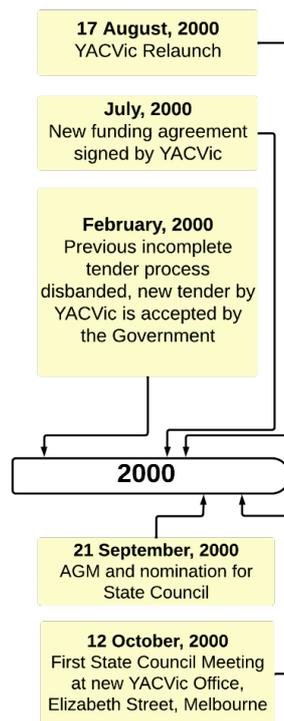


Figure 4.21: Excerpt from Figure 4.4

When discussing this time, participants articulated that the way YACVic was reinstated was that it had been lobbying the ALP government to reinstate its core funding and

reinstating YACVic was part of the election promises of the Bracks Government, as an “ideological” (Participant 5) decision, similar to that of the previous Cain–Kirner ALP Government to fund YACVic. At this time, YACVic closed and then re-established itself but operating voluntarily without government funding. Participant 1 stated:

[After the closure of YACVic] Funding was stopped, as at least an interim measure, while YACVic had to demonstrate that it could be reconstituted in a really solid way. In that process, all the staff were dismissed and given a redundancy package because it was not clear whether there would be funding again ... then with the new board and a new plan to re-establish YACVic, negotiations started again with [the Bracks] government for funding to be allocated. – Participant 1

With this, YACVic had to work to show that it had changed and demonstrate to the newly elected Bracks Labor Government that it should be refunded by reconnecting to the membership and sector, evidencing that its previous vulnerability had been rectified. Further, YACVic reopened with more of a focus on youth participation. As participants discussed, the focus of YACVic after its closure and reopening saw it moving away from “marginalised and disadvantaged youth” (Participant 3). This was consistent with the Youth Affairs ministerial portfolio moving to DEET under the Bracks ALP Government. What is of note is that youth participation is an area that YACVic continues to have a significant focus on to this day:

[With the Youth Affairs portfolio moving to DEET, there was a focus on youth participation] It went much more towards citizenship and youth participation, and away from working with marginalised and disadvantaged young people or being concerned about marginalised and disadvantaged young people. And I would argue that we continue to see some of that legacy now with YACVic. I think that they do a great job, don't get me wrong, but their ability to influence program

funding and program areas, and the government ... The government would be happier if they stayed in the participation and democracy kind of area. – Participant 3

This participant identified that YACVic focusing on youth participation as opposed to marginalisation and disadvantage has rectified its previous standpoints that led to the tendering out of its services and withdrawal of its funding to become more politically strategic and aligned with the wants of the government. Participant 5 discussed how the loss of YACVic's funding was necessary to provide the foundation for YACVic to be reinstated:

In the nineties, YACVic as an organisation was in an identity crisis. I don't think it knew who it wanted to be or what it should do. I think sometimes getting defunded and having to relook at yourself made YACVic a much stronger organisation. When they got funding in 2000, they were much clearer on their purpose and mission. I think that's why they were able to rise from the ashes. And whereas [previously] I think they just got lost in who they should be. And that happens with organisations. – Participant 5

Through this reinstatement Participants 1 and 5 used the symbol of the mythical bird, the phoenix, to reflect on the death and rebirth of YACVic describing it as "rising from the ashes". Through this renewal and reinstatement, YACVic has continued to grow as the peak advisory body for the youth sector. Evidence of its growth and sector trust can be seen in its further auspicing of key sector youth agencies, such as the Youth Disability Advocacy Service, Koorie Youth Council, Victorian Student Representative Council, CMY, many other organisations that have grown from YACVic since its reestablishment and refunding, and significantly it has not lost any of its funding since 1999 (Youth Affairs Council Victoria, 2021, p. 7).

## **Chapter 5: Conclusions, Findings and Recommendations**

This critical historical study bridges a gap in the historical record through documenting and examining the research question: “What contributed to the Kennett Government not renewing core funding to the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria in 1999?” The thesis has documented and critically engaged with the events and policy decisions of the key historical actors in youth affairs during the period of the Victorian LNP coalition government 1992–1999 led by Jeff Kennett (i.e., the Kennett Government). In particular, it has critically analysed the Kennett Government's decisions concerning youth policy and service provision in its second term of government 1996–1999.

The use of critical historical research methods (Given, 2008; Lune & Berg, 2017; Marwick, 2001) has enabled the creation of three timelines of the activities and decisions of the three key actors. These were created to show the events of YACVic in relation to the movements of the Office of Youth Affairs portfolio and the Kennett Government's youth policy, in chronological order (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 161; Marwick, 2001; Porra et al., 2014). Semi-structured interviews with five eyewitnesses enhanced the historical data for the timelines and added depth to the examination of events through the thematic analysis. This analysis of the eyewitness interviews showed the complex and nuanced interrelationships of power operating between the three actors (Foucault, 1991; Rooney, 1997).

### **5.1 Findings**

Specifically, the thesis finds that the Kennett Government and the Office of Youth Affairs acted in a manner consistent with their stated neoliberal policy agenda. The government's decision in 1999 to not renew core funding to the youth sector peak advisory body, YACVIC, and to competitively put out to tender its advisory and other

services is therefore emblematic of the way the government acted during this period, epitomising the free-market principles it espoused and the neoliberal values it embodied.

The Foucauldian theoretical lens of governmentality has enabled the research to critically examine the exercising of power and control in youth affairs policy in the state of Victoria by the neoliberal Kennett Government, finding that the neoliberal consequences for youth affairs policy and service provision were significant and that YACVic having its core funding removed by the Kennett Government was an act of power and control consistent with neoliberal governmentality in disciplining a loud and critical peak advisory body.

The outcome of YACVic having its core funding not renewed was complex and multifactorial. The data shows that there were a number of contributing factors that influenced the decision of government. These were the Kennett Government's ideological commitment to neoliberal free-market economics in youth affairs policy delivery, and YACVic's inability to be more strategic, and less overtly critical whilst working in the neoliberal landscape the Kennett Government had created, and also failing to adequately serve its members interests. Further issues emerged from these starting points, exacerbating problems for YACVic, the youth sector and young people.

The removal of core funding and tendering out of YACVic's services confirmed the consensus in the literature that the Kennett Government was reactionary in relation to criticism. The historical research confirms this use of power and control to discipline a critical voice and influential policy actor, which ultimately revealed the power deficiencies between the actors. The processes that led to YACVic's closure was a systematic weakening of the organisation, internally and externally. Externally this was through the government continually withholding and re-negotiating of funding, making access to funding unstable in the years under investigation. The long-term issue of funding instability led to broader internal organisational issues, particularly the lack of service to

members, which began the weakening of YACVic, contributing to the factors that meant YACVic was in a vulnerable position at the time that its services were put out to tender. YACVic at this time lost the support of its members and the broader youth sector due to its inability to function under the neoliberal reforms, the competition policies of government were influential on the broader youth sector, creating a sector that competed with itself instead of collaborating. This competitive environment fostered a situation where support within the youth sector for YACVic dwindled. Internally, this was magnified by YACVic's inability to produce resources, focus on particular youth issues and work at the capacity it once did, which impeded its original and intended role within the youth sector, making the previous supports and members of YACVic lose their confidence in YACVic. By the time the government tender was put out in 1999, YACVic had lost the support of the youth sector and its membership base, resulting in YACVic choosing not to compete for its own tender, rather leaving other youth organisations to compete for the tender, creating further disharmony in the youth sector.

The Kennett Government was removing funding to public services and public-owned entities in the time under investigation, making the removal of YACVic's funding complex. It was a targeted attack on the peak advisory body due to the critique from YACVic, but also an assumed inevitability in a time when funding was being cut to services all around. It is understood from the evidence that YACVic was unable to operate in a politically neutral way when working with the Kennett Government and had been coached by the Minister for Youth to further conform to the government's use of language, with the Kennett Government being "unsympathetic" (Participant 2) towards YACVic. In the eyes of the Kennett Government, YACVic was not fulfilling its role as a bi-partisan peak advisory body.

It is evident from the data analysis that whilst the Kennett Government was not funding YACVic to be critical of the government, YACVic also lost favour with its membership

and the wider youth sector by not delivering basic services to its members as the peak advisory body of the youth sector. Through the inability to work effectively with the government, YACVic was unsuccessful in keeping the support of the membership and the wider youth sector, becoming a contributing factor in the government's decision to not renew funding.

## 5.2 Research aims

The research has met its overall aim to document and critically examine, through the lens of Foucault's governmentality (1991), the historical events and their significance concerning youth policy in the state of Victoria and their relationship to the withdrawal of funding to the youth sector's peak advisory body by the Kennett Government.

Through the lens of governmentality, the processes and practices of the technologies of governmentality were identified, the Kennett Government was found to be using funding instability to control organisations, creating competition between organisations and privatising the delivery of services to young people by the youth sector through neoliberal policy changes, moving the Youth Affairs ministerial portfolio to different departments, closing the Office of Youth Affairs, and implementing case planning/management practices.

The implications of the government's promotion of neoliberalism, economic rationalism, privatisation and CCT were interpreted and the results of this "action at a distance" philosophy of governing was identified as resulting in the loss of core funding for YACVic, with its subsequent closure leaving the sector and young people without a peak advisory body. This impacted the youth sector greatly at the time as it meant there was a loss of expertise, information sharing and collaboration within the youth sector. Representation for the youth sector and young people declined in this time, leading up to YACVic's closure and, until it was reopened, there was less representation and voice to

government with YACVic unable to fulfil its role as a peak advisory body to the Kennett Government.

Due to the loss of YACVic and increased competition and privatisation, the youth sector was less collaborative, going against youth work principles. Subsequently, the policies legislated by the Kennett Government went against the human rights principle of acting in the “best interests” of young people and they were not the government's “primary consideration” (UNICEF, 1989), leading to youth policies that did not meet the needs of all young people in Victoria at this time.

The outcomes of neoliberal policy approaches introduced during the period of the Kennett Government in youth affairs continue to contribute to youth service provision today and impact approaches to youth work practice, such as the compulsory use of case-management/planning approaches in government-funded youth work; CCT is still used within a government setting, although now there are policies to create a fairer tendering process within the department that houses the youth portfolio (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, 2023b).

### 5.3 Recommendations

The research has shown that within government where the ministerial portfolio of Youth Affairs is located influences the policy focuses of youth services. Currently, the Youth Affairs ministerial portfolio is located within the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. It is recommended that the Youth Affairs portfolio is located within the department where it can best inform policy, and the adequate funding of services, that provides the best possible outcomes for young people. As such, it is the view of this research that it resides in the Department of Premier and Cabinet and is advised and led by experienced, qualified youth workers and young people. This would enable clear communication and policy advice from the peak advisory body to the peak ministerial

department and decision-making area of government in regard to youth affairs policymaking and funding and may assist in reducing the barriers experienced by YACVic in this study in regard to its dealing with government.

This study recommends further research, in particular, further examination of the historical records in regard to youth policies and procedures of government and the contemporary implications of these for young people. Further research would contribute to the knowledge base within youth policy history in Victoria meeting gaps in knowledge and contributing to the small but growing body of knowledge in this important area of research.

In particular, further investigation is recommended into the implications of neoliberal governmentality beyond the specific example of YACVic's loss of funding to the wider youth and community services sector in Victoria during the period of the 1992–1999 Kennett Government, including:

- analysis of the socioeconomic impacts of neoliberal governmentality on young people in Victoria over 1992–1999
- replication of this study using participants who were policymakers and/or young people at this time
- replication of this study with other advisory bodies, government departments, organisations and services that were threatened, defunded or lost their core funding in Victoria over 1992–1999

On a wider scale, further research could consider the spread of neoliberalism throughout Australian states from the 1980s onwards, and the impact on youth policy, offices for youth affairs and peak youth advisory bodies around Australia and potential ongoing and contemporaneous implications for young people.

#### 5.4 Conclusion

Over the period 1992–1999, the research has found that through neoliberal governmentality the Kennett Government shaped the outcomes of YACVic, the youth sector and young people by adopting the neoliberal free-market philosophies and policy positions that contributed to YACVic losing its core funding. The methods used to create these changes over an extended period were the government's use of systematic control methods, combined with YACVic's critiques of government and opposition to working within the paradigms of neoliberal governmentality and in turn created implications for the internal and external governance of YACVic impacting on YACVic's management. The cautionary tale within these historical events is that those that work with and are funded by government, need to collaborate with government in a bi-partisan way towards meeting the “best interests” of young people as the “primary consideration” (UNICEF, 1989), regardless of the actor's political underpinnings or risk losing government support and funding. An important lesson for YACVic was exhibited by the bi-partisan work of EYIN, showing that there was a way to navigate the Kennett Government's neoliberal governmentality successfully, and for a peak youth advisory body, such as CMY, to not only survive but to thrive and prosper while representing the needs of young people successfully.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Sample interview questions

1. What was your role in the youth sector during the period of the Kennett Government from 1992–1999 and in the period immediately following the election of the Bracks Government?
2. How did your work or role impact young people during this period?
3. What do you believe were the major issues impacting young people at this time?
4. How did the Kennett Government address these issues?
5. What were some of the major changes/reforms introduced by the Kennett Government that impacted young people at this time? Positive or negative?
6. Is there a specific political ideology that you believe correlates with the changes made by the Kennett Government?
7. Were you aware of any legislation from the time that caused a significant change in the private or public sector? In what way did it change?
  - In your opinion, what did these legislations achieve? And how do you think these legislations impacted young people and the youth sector?
8. In their book 'The Kennett revolution', Brian Costar and Nick Economou suggest that the Kennett Government was an "... activist, controversial and ideological government" that "relentlessly applied neo-liberal economic theory" to public policy. Do you think this statement accurately reflects the Kennett Government and its policies?
9. Literature at the time suggests that social capital was declining. Do you believe this was the case?
10. The Youth Affairs portfolio and the Office of Youth Affairs were consistently moving with the machinery of government and amalgamations of departments at this time. Were you aware of this, or did you notice any impacts/changes?

11. What was your role with YACVic during the period of the Kennett Government and in the period immediately following the election of the Brack's Government 2000?
12. What did you know about how YACVic operated at this time, for example, funding, service delivery, and advocacy?
13. What events do you believe led to YACVic having its core funding removed by the Kennett Government?
14. Why did you think YACVic was being put out for tender?
15. Were you aware of the process of compulsory competitive tendering? How did you think YACVic handled being put out for tender and the tendering process?
16. How do you think the youth sector responded to YACVic not competing for its tender?
17. Do you think there were any benefits to YACVic or the youth sector coming out of this process?
18. Do you believe any other contributing factors led to YACVic not having its core funding renewed?
19. Do you believe government policy helped or hindered these contributing factors?
20. How do you think losing YACVic's funding impacted young people in the time under investigation?
21. Do you believe the changes made in this time have impacted the current youth sector? Why/why not?
22. What led to YACVic's core funding being restored?
23. Are there others that I should interview regarding the impact of the Kennett Government on the youth sector and YACVic particularly?
24. And finally, is there anything else you would like to add or say about the time under investigation?

Appendix B: List of archives accessed

List of archives accessed			
Year	Name	Author	Institution
N.D.	91/019 Ministry of Ethnic, Municipal & Community Affairs / formation	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	PROV
N.D.	Vol No. 4 Jul 1988 - Jun 1990	Department of Business and Employment	PROV
N.D.	Vol No. 5 Jul 1990 - Jun 1992	Department of Business and Employment	PROV
N.D.	Vol No. 6 Jul 1992 - Apr 1993. VPRS 8872/P0001, Vol No. 6	Department of Business and Employment	PROV
N.D.	Group No: 11 Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training & Youth Affairs	Department of Education	PROV
N.D.	Victorian Youth Strategy - Youth Affairs Council YACVic - 1996 To 2001 PYR/0246	Department of Justice and Regulation	PROV
N.D.	19960040 Department of Human Services, Intensive Youth Support Services	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	PROV
N.D.	VPRS 8869/P0001	Department of Business and Employment	PROV
N.D.	Round Tables - Transcripts & Summaries	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	PROV
N.D.	98/0146 Youth Council; Agencies & Organisations	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	PROV
N.D.	2000/0004 pt2 Youth Envoys; Commonwealth Issues	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	PROV

N.D.	2001/0107 pt3 Youth Envoys - Unsuccessful Submissions; Commonwealth Issues	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	PROV
N.D.	98/0126 Tenders & Companies; Communications	Department of the Premier and Cabinet	PROV
N.D.	Victorian Youth Strategy - Youth Affairs Council YACVic - 1996 To 2001 PYR/0246	Department of Justice and Regulation	PROV
N.D.	83/1260/2 YOUTH AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF VICTORIA - YAC VIC	Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions	PROV
1952-1993	Administrative records and publications of the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria	YACVic/ Social Policy Archive	University of Melbourne
1972-1990	Administrative records and publications of the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria	YACVic/ Social Policy Archive	University of Melbourne
1990-1991	Youth Affairs Council of Victoria: [Literacy Project newsletter]	Youth Affairs Council of Victoria	SLV
1990-1999	YACVicbits: a newsletter of the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria incorporated. (Summer editions)	Youth Affairs Council of Victoria	SLV
1990-1999	YACVicbits: a newsletter of the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria incorporated. (Winter editions)	Youth Affairs Council of Victoria	SLV
2000	Yikes!: the newsletter of the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria Inc.	Youth Affairs Council of Victoria	SLV