

SACOSS Representative: Lucas de Boer

Magill Youth Training Centre Campaign Steering Committee

Background

The Magill Youth Training Centre is the Admission and Assessment Centre in South Australia for all children and young people who are placed into criminal custody between 10 and 18 years of age. The Centre receives all children and young people who have been arrested by the police and refused bail or who have been before a court and remanded into custody. As well as these children and young people who have not been convicted of a crime, the Centre also serves as a detention facility for young males between 10 and 14 years of age and young females between the ages of 10-18.

The conditions within the Magill Centre are inhumane and unsuitable for housing children and young people, particularly since the facility has not been upgraded since 1977. The Magill Youth Training Centre Campaign Steering Committee was organised under the leadership of the Youth Affairs Council of SA in order to advocate for the closure of the Magill Centre, and the construction of a new juvenile detention facility elsewhere in SA.

Key Actions

- Writing to decision-makers (including the Premier and Jennifer Rankine MP) outlining the problems with the Magill Centre.
- Meeting with Minister Rankine's chief of staff to express concerns regarding the Centre.
- Conducted an electronic survey to sound out public opinion about the Centre – over 90% of respondents agreed that living conditions within the Magill Centre are inappropriate for children as young as 10; that conditions in Magill fail to ensure the best opportunity for rehabilitation for the young people detained within the facility; and the state government must reinstate plans to replace Magill Youth Training Centre by 2011.
- Construction of a campaign website (attached to the YACSA website and managed by YACSA's Member Communications Officer).
- An open letter to the Premier calling for Magill to be closed, published in *The Advertiser* on Tuesday 11 August 2009.
- An online petition supporting the open letter.
- Ongoing media comment, press releases and liaison with media agencies.

Outcome

The State Government announced on Wednesday 23 September 2009 that "a new 60-bed secure youth justice facility will be built on a new site at Cavan and the nearby existing 36-bed centre will be upgraded to care for the youngest offenders in the system." (*Government press release*)