

ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

ADVOCATE INSIGHTS



SEPTEMBER 2026
MICRO REPORT



**DOCUMENTARY
AUSTRALIA**

YOUTH ADVOCATES; SHARED VOICES AND EXPERIENCES

Documentary Australia has adopted a participatory approach, collaborating with young people aged 18-30 and those who work with them to co-create our new program, docYOUth. In September, we held our second online focus group with young people and youth advocates around Australia. Participants identified barriers, as well solutions and ideas to help youth advocates hear about and use documentary in their work with young people.

docYOUth officially launched in October 2026, with activities set to take place throughout 2027-2028. Young people's continued involvement throughout every step of this program will remain essential and a key part of our process over the next two years. If you are a young person or youth advocate and have ideas or feedback, or would like to be a part of shaping this initiative as it continues to develop, please email youth@documentaryaustralia.com.au

WE ASKED:

What is an issue you care about that you would like to see explored in documentary?

The death of third spaces.

The radicalisation of young men online.

More about young men in a way we can feel able to do something.

How being a young person now is distinctly different to prior generations.

Something to hold tech companies to account! Gas companies too while we're at it.

The loneliness epidemic. I'd find this one hard to watch though :(

Medical Misogyny; "It's probably in your mind."

The (multi)cultural cringe or reluctance to engage with mental health/illness.

Non-demographic subcultures and their role in our growth and identity.

The scapegoating of immigrants and refugees in Australia for every societal issue. What the actual issues are, and how to address them.

The life (and death) of the NDIS.

**"Everyone always says, 'When I was young it was the best.'
I feel like this is the first generation that won't say that."**

– Focus Group Participant

THE BARRIERS

TO YOUTH ADVOCATES HEARING ABOUT AND USING DOCUMENTARIES IN THEIR WORK



DISCOVERY AND AWARENESS

Youth advocates are unsure how to discover documentaries, how they relate to viewers, and how the format is relevant to advocacy aims.

SECTOR COMPATIBILITY

Youth advocates are interested in using documentaries but often struggle with how to practically integrate them into existing programs and advocacy strategies.

TRUST

There is a perception that documentary is a one-way format which frequently “scolds” the audience. There are also concerns about quality, objectivity, trust, and hidden agendas posing issues in a “risk-averse” industry.

CAPACITY

Youth advocates described being passionate but time-poor. There are knowledge gaps as to how to access resources and tools to make integrating documentary into their work easier.

“For the regular person who wants to advocate for something, documentary is not the first thing that pops into your head.”

– Focus Group Participant

WHAT WOULD HELP?



ACCORDING TO YOUTH ADVOCATES...

1. Clear pathways with curated recommendations and practical guidance on where documentaries fit into organisational planning
2. Discoverable and accessible resources, such as case studies demonstrating the practical value of documentary in advocacy aims
3. Capacity building initiatives tailored to youth advocates, providing skills and training as to how to use documentaries in their work
4. Strengthened partnerships to connect with youth organisations, communities and networks to increase awareness
5. Increased information to build documentary literacy, debunk myths and develop confidence in the format amongst advocates

“I’d love to see documentaries about issues or topics I’m passionate about, and use that in my work, but I don’t know where to start.”

– Focus Group Participant

“We go to a lot of conferences. Being where we already are, and being the unexpected, interesting, shiny thing, would draw a lot of people. They’d come just out of curiosity, and then become more aware.”

– Focus Group Participant



We would like to thank
everyone who participated
and shared their invaluable
insights with us.

**WANT TO LEARN MORE,
SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS
OR GET INVOLVED?**

YOUTH@DOCUMENTARYAUSTRALIA.COM.AU