

Warren Roberts
25 years old
Marrickville, New South Wales

Warren Roberts is the founder of the Youth Awareness Resource Network (YARN), a proactive group of people who want to discuss and take action on Indigenous Australian issues relating to social justice.

YARN provides a forum that aims to build relationships with the leaders of tomorrow, operating in multiple university campuses across Australia. Its goal is to build stronger links between Indigenous Australians and the rest of the country through storytelling.

The volunteer initiative was established at the University of New South Wales in 2007 and now operates across three states, with plans to expand to more universities in the second half of 2011.

All members are encouraged to take leadership and pose questions to the rest group for discussion about Indigenous issues. This collaborative approach aims to break down the cultural divide between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Having experienced racism growing up and witnessing firsthand the lack of information available about how to engage with Indigenous people, Warren was determined to build a safe place where individuals could congregate, voice their concerns and be part of making a difference.

YARN creates a safe environment for discussion for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students to start an honest dialogue and explore issues that relate to Indigenous culture, people and their experiences.

“Through our work with YARN we are building relationships with local Indigenous students, Indigenous community members, Elders and organisations,” Warren said.

“We invite and welcome anyone who is keen to know more about Indigenous issues, who wants to ask questions, who wants to know how to get involved, or who wants to become a part of the group discussion every week.”

Warren looks forward to the collaborative environment offered by the Foundation for Young Australians’ Young Social Pioneers (YSP) program, which offers twelve months of skills development, mentoring, intensive training and access to a global network of social innovators, and the opportunity to network with other young project leaders.

“I hope that the Young Social Pioneers program will allow our local network to grow across Australia as I gain the necessary skills to do so and build strong professional networks that will enable me to achieve the change that YARN seeks,” Warren says.