

Launch of 2nd Edition of "Know your Rights" causes controversy

from Michael Antrum, Director, NYYLC

As many of you probably are aware, the centre launched the second edition of the NSW Know your Rights at School kit last month in the State Library of NSW. I had underestimated the controversy it would create, thinking that the first edition was now an accepted school resource, and was widely accepted in the community. I have received complaints from all round the country, and media coverage has been very selective and generally sensational (surprise, surprise) One of the outcomes is that I have received a good deal of hate calls and personal threats.

This second edition is largely the same as the first edition. Everybody who complains has not read the kit, and generally are placated when they

notice that the kit does promote mutual respect and courtesy between teachers and students. The other thing

to emphasise is that students are entitled to human rights and fairness in the schools, and the professional experience of good teachers where students actually appreciate that sort of knowledge, and this contributes to a more harmonious environment in schools. Student participation in decision making forges commitment to the outcomes.

The kit was received extremely well in SA with parents groups and teachers groups joining youth advocates in supporting material of this type being made available to kids. Even the Gov't, after seeing the egeneral support, changed its line to offer lukewarm support of children having information about their rights.

The kits are available from the National Children's & Youth Law Centre for \$25.

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