

United Nations Youth Association of Australia

MEDIA RELEASE

7th September 2009

Australia's Youth Representative to the United Nations heads to the Big Apple

Chris Varney, 2009 Australian Youth Representative to the United Nations is set to depart for the UN General Assembly in New York after a five-month national tour engaging the voices and perspectives of a broad range of young Australians.

Chris, a 22-year-old Arts/Law student from Victoria, will be a fully accredited member of the Australian Delegation to the 64th UN General Assembly. As part of his role as Youth Delegate in the Australian Permanent Mission to the UN, Chris will work in the UNGA Third Committee where he will deliver an address that discusses the global and local concerns of young Australians and negotiate various resolutions, including the Youth Resolution. After his time in New York, Chris will travel to the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference to advocate for the interests of young people in world climate debates.

"I am really looking forward to taking the voices of my generation to the world stage, where I will proudly speak out on the ideas and opinions of young Australians" Chris said.

In announcing Chris' appointment in March this year, The Hon. Kate Ellis, Federal Minister for Youth said, "The Government is committed to giving young Australians a voice in our community and Chris will be representing the views of youth from across Australia," Chris was appointed as Youth Representative out of 200 applicants by the United Nations Youth Association (UNYA) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. UNYA and DFAT have partnered together since 1999 to select and support the Youth Representative.

To ensure he represents the will and confidence of young people Chris has travelled all States and Territories to hear youth views.

"I have been really inspired by the contribution I have seen young people make to their communities. Unfortunately young people are given an unfair and inaccurate negative image in the community as being apathetic, self-absorbed and selfish. Contrary to this condemnation, I see my generation as having incredible hope and potential."

"Throughout my Tour I have consistently heard youth concerns on climate change and the poor, education quality, Indigenous equality and youth involvement in decision-making. I am excited about sharing these concerns to other Youth Delegates and world leaders."

Youth concerns such as the above have been shared in the *Dear Kevin* book, which is a collection of young people's stories, letters and artwork that captures what young people are thankful for, what they hope for and what they would like to recommend for a better Australia. The book will be showcased at the UN and later presented to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and the Federal Parliament in early 2010.

Chris departs for New York on 12th September.

Media contact:

Chris Varney

2009 Australian Youth Representative to the United Nations

(mob) 0432 405 384

(email) youthrep09@unya.asn.au

The Youth Representative is a fully accredited member of the Australian Delegation to the United Nations in New York, and has been managed in partnership between the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the United Nations Youth Association of Australia (UNYA Australia) since 1999. UNYA Australia is a national youth network strengthening the global awareness of young people, and their voice and participation in the community, www.unya.org.au.