

Our Home Holiday Town

A youth social theatre research project on the impacts of tourism



What is this project about?

This research project aims to engage young members of the Byron Youth Theatre (BYT) to actively participate as co-researchers in exploring young peoples' lived experiences of growing up in a tourist destination. Findings will provide evidence to create an original theatre performance devised and performed *by and for* young people.

Why is this research important?

This research builds on previous studies that show that growing up in a tourist destination is a unique experience that shapes children and young people in so many ways. The increased popularity of Byron Shire as a tourist destination, and the growing concerns and issues faced by youth around connection and belonging, make this research timely and significant.

Actively engaging young people in the research process offers a unique and deeper insight into young people's lived experiences and provides the potential for empowering young people to bring about positive transformational change in their lives and communities. The peer-to-peer educational qualities of the theatre performance will also create opportunities for knowledge exchange with other young people in the community about health and safety issues connected to tourism.

What does the research involve?

This study involves three phases:

Phase 1 (completed) – The research team trained and supported BYT members to conduct qualitative interviews with their peers in the community to explore young people's (15-21 years) lived experiences of life in a tourist destination. In this phase they also reflected on their involvement as co-researchers in the data collection and analysis phases.

Phase 2 (planned for 2021) – An original youth-devised theatre production will be created based on the findings from Phase 1. BYT members will also reflect on the creative theatre production process. This phase will document the potential benefits of being involved in the creation of a play from the perspective of the young co-researchers involved.

Phase 3 (planned for 2021) – The performance will be toured to local high schools and information on its impacts will be collected to document the educational benefits of peer-to-peer theatre performances in opening up conversations about important and sensitive issues among youth in the community.

Research Team

SCU Investigators: Antonia Canosa, Catharine Simmons and Peter Cook.
Byron Youth Theatre young co-researchers and Lisa Apostolides, Director.

For further information about this project please contact Dr Antonia Canosa at: antonia.canosa@scu.edu.au

Centre for Children and Young People, School of Arts and Social Sciences, Southern Cross University
<https://www.scu.edu.au/centre-for-children-and-young-people/>

Byron Youth Theatre <http://byronyouththeatre.com/about/>

