

## **A brief history of Lifeline Youth Services:**

1971 1986 1998 2002 2003

**1971: Lifeline Canberra begins**

**1986: The creation of Youthline:**

**1998: Youthline goes 24/7 – the NEXUS**

**2002: Youthline review**

By 2002, a lot had changed since the creation of Youthline 16 years earlier...

A review was commissioned of Youthline and its current target audience: who are they? what do they want? are we providing the most appropriate service for them? are they getting any measurably different service from Youthline than from Lifeline?

What we had known anecdotally for a while was reinforced: young people are more likely to talk to their friends than to someone they don't know. The very anonymity that was one of the bonuses of Lifeline (and Youthline in the 80s and 90s) was now a drawback. Many young people weren't ringing, because they wanted more personal contact, many others were ringing Lifeline, because they didn't want to feel they were ringing a 'kids' line. Since the Nexus in 1998, Youthliners and Lifeliners were taking more of each other's calls, and more teachers and parents were ringing for information and referrals on youth issues. Youthline was still providing a valuable service to the community, but there were potentially better ways of reaching the young people we wanted to help...

Add to this that Youthliners themselves were longing for more contact with young people, and we wanted to be more involved in early intervention, in creating resilience in young people, rather than the follow up provided by a crisis counselling service... Something was bound to change...

**2003: LYNX**

In 2003 LYNX – Lifeline Youth NetworX – was born, and Youthline was incorporated into Lifeline. LYNX aims to be more practical and proactive than the passive and reactive youth service offered by Youthline. LYNX has so far been involved in: training young people in 'accidental counselling' skills; raising awareness of Youth suicide, and of Lifeline as a support for young people; educating teachers in ways to engage and support young people; developing mentoring and other programs to create resilience in Canberra's youth community. It's a very exciting time for Lifeline Youth Services!