The 2010 National Strategy for Young Australians defines youth in general as 12-24 years of age. Youth is also split into categories for certain measurements. For example, youth economic productivity is measured in two age groups: 15-19 and 20-24.

**DEFINITION OF YOUTH**

**Marriageable Age**
- Same Sex
  - Male: 18
  - Female: 18
- Civil unions/partnerships are legal in Australia. Same-sex couples are offered all, most or some of the rights of marriage, depending on state. Source: UNSD, ILGA

**Candidacy Age**
- Lower House: 18
- Upper House: 18

**Criminal Responsibility**
- Majority Age: 10
  - From 10-14 years, the state must prove criminal capacity. A child below 14 cannot be held legally responsible for their actions. Source: Wikipedia

**Population by Age and Sex 2010**

**SITUATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Net Enrolment Rates** (primary school)
- Male: 85.61%
- Female: 85.61%

**Literacy Rates**
- Male: 86.09%
- Female: 85.16%

**Youth Development**
- 0.86
  - 1 out of 170 countries

**Tobacco Use**
- Male (15-24) %: 86.09%
- Female (15-24) %: 85.16%
- Both sexes (15-24) %: 85.61%

**Prevalence of HIV**
- Male (15-24) %: 0.016%
- Female (15-24) %: 0.016%

**Youth Policy & Legislation**

The vision for the national youth strategy is that “all young people grow up safe, healthy, happy and resilient and to have the opportunities and skills they need to learn, work, engage in community life and influence decisions that affect them”.

The Compact with Young Australians (2009) is a commitment from the Australian Government, together with state and territory governments, regarding education and skill training for youth under 25. It seeks to increase qualification and retention levels through initiatives such as the National Youth Participation Requirement, which requires that certain grades be completed as a precondition for obtaining government entitlements, such as the Youth Allowance or the Family Tax Benefit.

**GDP PER CAPITA**
- USD 67,441.59

**HDI**
- 0.938

**GINI**
- 33.40

**Corruption Perception**
- 81

**Press Freedom**
- 15.24

The national youth strategy was launched in 2010, underpinned by two reports on youth and policy.

Is there a national youth policy? 
**Yes**
The Office for Youth is located within the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. It supports policy development, implementation and interdepartmental coordination in areas that affect young people. The office also manages the Australian Youth Forum (AYF), which aims to create a channel of communication between the government, young people and the youth sector.

On 16 September 2013, the incoming Cabinet announced that it will no longer include a Minister for Youth, however the Office for Youth is still in existence.

The 2013-14 budget for the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations allocates AUS 127.6 million (USD 117.5 million) to Youth Support (Program 2.8), which includes the Office for Youth.

However, on 16 September 2013, the incoming Cabinet did not include Minister for Youth, and it is unclear how the budget will be affected.

According to the World Bank, Australia spent 5.12% of its GDP on education in 2009, but does not calculate what this translates to in terms of percentage of government expenditure.

The Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC) is a national umbrella association with members that include state, territory and national youth organisations, as well as networks and individuals. Founded in 2002, it is the successor to the Australian Youth Policy and Action Coalition (AYPAC). It is non-governmental, though funded by the federal government. Its activities include advocacy, research and policy development, youth sector development and youth engagement.

On 16 September 2013, the incoming Cabinet announced that it will no longer include a Minister for Youth, however the Office for Youth is still in existence.

Visit our library for further reading: http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/australia

Footnotes
1) A Human Development Index (HDI) value of zero means low human development, and a value of 1 means very high human development. HDI is a composite index measuring three dimensions: a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living. (UNDP)

2) An Income Gini coefficient of zero means absolute equality, and a coefficient of 100 means absolute inequality. Note: figures multiplied by 100 for OECD data. (World Bank/OECD)

3) A Corruption Perception Index (CPI) value of zero means that a country is perceived as highly corrupt, and a value of 100 means it is perceived as very clean. (Transparency International)

4) A Press Freedom Index (PFI) value of zero means the highest degree of freedom that journalists, news organisations and netizens enjoy, and a value of 100 means the lowest. (Reporters Without Borders)

5) A Youth Development Index (YDI) value of zero means little or absolutely no youth development, and a value of 1 means the highest possible level of youth development attainable. YDI is a composite index measuring five domains: education, health, employment, political, and civic participation. (Commonwealth Youth Programme)