

**A COMMUNITY
OF OPPORTUNITY
AND EQUALITY**
**THE CITY OF
WYNDHAM
YOUTH PLAN**





Acknowledgements

The City of Wyndham acknowledges the people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the land.

The City of Wyndham acknowledges and thanks all community members, including young people, their families, service providers and City of Wyndham personnel, who contributed to the consultation process. Their insights, reflections and comments were critical in the development of Wyndham's Youth Plan.

The title of this Youth Plan '*A Community of Opportunity and Equality*' was derived from a contribution made by a young person living in Wyndham, when asked about their opinion and hopes for the community.

The research that informed this project and the final report was undertaken and written by Semann & Slattery.

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Foreword

Young people in Wyndham

Wyndham City Council is committed to ensuring that all young people have the opportunity to participate and engage in the social, economic and cultural life of the city. Council also aims to ensure that all young people have access to and benefit from a range of educational, social, cultural, recreational activities and facilities. Council works actively with young people, schools, universities and community organisations to ensure that young people are valued and contributing members of their communities.

Council's vision, to make Wyndham a great place to live, work and play for young people, cannot be realised alone. Rather, it must be achieved through collaborative efforts of the range of organisations currently providing services and programs for young people within the city. As such, this youth plan is a Council-wide and community partnership document. It informed the strategic direction and outlines the roles and responsibilities of Council and non-Council organisations, working with and for young people over the next four years.

Wyndham's youth plan is a key policy for Wyndham City Council, which sets out strategy and actions for Council to meet the priority needs of young people in Wyndham.

The Plan is based on extensive research and consultation with a range of key stakeholders in the Wyndham community. The key actions incorporated within the Youth Plan have been developed through comprehensive consultation with internal stakeholders, youth sector services, and young people.

The Wyndham youth plan has identified a number of priority actions matched to the four key themes. These are:

1. Meeting complex needs;
2. Accessing support early;
3. Creating community connectedness; and
4. Promoting an integrated approach.

This plan is informed by the opinions and four key theme perspectives of young people, their families, and service providers for young people, who participated in community consultations. The plan includes a number of actions relating to four key themes that emerged from these consultations. These actions are the responsibility of a range of Council service areas and wider community service providers. They aim to provide the most effective use of Council and service provider's resources, strengths and expertise, to meet the needs of Wyndham's young people.

Finally, the success of this plan will ultimately result in a more liveable, inclusive, and healthy community for the young people of Wyndham and therefore their perspectives matter. A commitment to hearing the voices of young people through the sharing of their experiences and stories will be the most useful evaluation measure of this plan. Council and external agencies will pledge a commitment to working alongside young people who have contributed so freely their stories and perspectives which have made this plan what it is.

To ensure the success of the plan, these actions will be regularly reviewed to track progress and celebrate key achievements. This ongoing process of review and evaluation will also allow Council and non-Council service providers to remain responsive to new and emerging needs of young people and their families, now and into the future.

CR BOB FAIRCLOUGH
MAYOR



THE IDEAL CITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD BE...

Executive Summary

In 2013, the City of Wyndham began an important journey in bringing together its 2013–2017 Youth Plan titled ‘*A Community of Opportunity and Equality - The City of Wyndham Youth Plan*’. The aim of this youth plan is to identify the hopes, aspirations, and challenges affecting young people across the community. In achieving this, the Wyndham City Council undertook a journey of consultation, collaboration, and exploration with young people, community members and partnering agencies. This journey included a range of processes in order to bring together the data and ensuing themes and actions included within the youth plan.

There was a commitment from the early stages of the project to ensure that young people were provided with an opportunity to have their voices heard. In ensuring this was made possible several approaches were implemented, including a campaign promoting the development of the youth plan, sharing the findings of the youth plan consultations, and promoting the range of ways young people could participate. Whilst a survey was seen as a safe way for young people to share their views, there was also a commitment to bringing young people together to share their stories, aspirations, and dreams about their ideal community. This was made possible through the facilitation of three art classes where young people could paint their ideal city and this was facilitated by three well known street artists.

In summary the processes for collecting data to inform the development of the youth plan were as follows:

- Survey of young people across the City of Wyndham (203 completed);
- Survey of community members and service providers (39 completed);
- Community consultations and focus groups with service providers (59 participated);
- Internal consultation and focus group with Council officers (10 participated); and
- Series of art workshops with young people (50 participated).

Combined over 360 individuals contributed to this youth plan. In bringing together the data from these contributions a number of issues emerged and ultimately formed the themes of the youth plan. These themes included:

- Meeting complex needs;
- Accessing support early;
- Creating community connectedness; and
- Promoting an integrated approach.



What did young people tell us?

Most young people who completed the survey said that people in their community, including family members, teachers, neighbours, community workers and sporting teams, supported them to make great decisions in their lives. About three quarters of young people said their local neighbourhood was 'youth friendly', and about half felt that their local community accepted and supported people from diverse cultural backgrounds, sexual orientation and abilities.

Young people advised that they valued programs that were inclusive and welcoming, staffed by adults who were approachable, listened and understood them. Many young people rated sporting activities as something they enjoyed as it provided an opportunity for them to participate in a social environment with their friends. In addition, young people valued the opportunity to have a range of activities across the community that allowed them to remain engaged.

Young people believed that Wyndham is a youth friendly city, and that this was a positive aspect of their community.

What did Service Providers tell us?

Service providers suggested that there was a need for greater number of services, facilities and functions to better support youth across the community. A major concern was the lack of public transport, and this was seen as a critical issue that affected young people's ability to access the services and programs they require. Other critical issues included the geographic location of services, a lack of services in some parts of the community, long waiting lists for services, and the diverse linguistic and cultural needs of young people.

The key issues identified by service providers were:

- mental health,
- social and family dislocation;
- bullying;
- drugs and alcohol; and
- homelessness.

There was a shared agreement amongst service providers for a need to work in more collaborative ways, in order to ensure that the needs of young people are met, and that the resources are put to best use. This youth plan is the commencement of this collaborative journey.

Background

'A Community of Opportunity and Equality - The City of Wyndham Youth Plan' has been developed to inform the planning and delivery of services, programs and facilities for young people aged 12-25 years residing across the City of Wyndham. It has been designed to ensure that Wyndham City Council and partnering organisations providing youth services across the municipality are actively engaged with young people and their families, and are aware of and responsive to their needs.

Council is already working towards addressing many issues which affect young people including:

- advocating for better transport systems;
- advocacy to ensure that young people have access to a range of employment and educational opportunities; and
- attracting and retaining community service organisations which work in the youth space in Wyndham.

This youth plan is intended to assist both Council and other organisations to deliver a full range of quality services for young people, in response to their diverse and varied needs, interests, and priorities. Such responsiveness requires a deep connection between those *delivering* programs and services, and those *accessing* programs and services. During times of unprecedented global and local changes, young people are finding out what it means to be active citizens of their community, whilst at the same time grappling with the complexities of moving through their teens and into adulthood. As such, those individuals armed with the responsibility to support young people, require an acute understanding of the competing and at times complex agendas and decisions young people are faced with.

The Wyndham Youth Plan is an initiative driven by Wyndham City Council, however ultimately all agencies will play a role in successfully contributing to and implementing the plan. Hence, opportunities for agencies to come together to review individual and collective contributions and successes on a regular basis will be critical. Challenges identified will be approached with a solution-focused framework where clarity of purpose and optimistic mindsets will be applied.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011), young people aged 12 to 25 years make up 17.6% of the resident population in Wyndham City¹. Young people aged 12 to 25 who live, work, visit or study in Wyndham City, include:

- young Indigenous people;
- local, interstate and international students;
- young workers;
- marginalised young people, including homeless young people;
- young people in the juvenile justice system;
- refugees and newly-arrived young people;
- young people with a disability;
- young mums and dads;
- gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered and inter-sexed young people; and
- young people who visit the city from within Australia and overseas.

Wyndham City is committed to ensuring that all young people have the opportunity to participate and engage in the social, economic and cultural life of the city. Council also aims to ensure that all young people have access to, and benefit from, a range of educational, social, cultural, recreational activities and facilities. Council works actively with young people, schools, universities, and community organisations to ensure that young people are valued and contributing members of their communities.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011)





YOUTH



Council's vision, to make Wyndham a great place to live, work and play for young people, cannot be realised alone. Rather, it must be achieved through the collaborative efforts of the range of organisations currently providing services and programs for young people within the city. As such, this youth plan is a Council-wide and community partnership document. It informs the strategic direction, and outlines the roles and responsibilities of Council and non-Council organisations, working with and for young people over the next four years.

This plan is also a clear commitment from all agencies to help young people find connectedness and a sense of belonging to their community. The plan aims to see young people making decisions for themselves around issues which directly impact them. It also looks to empower young people with sound knowledge regarding the purpose and workings of this plan, resulting in effective access of the services offered to them within their community.

Guiding principles

The following principles underpin and guide the development of the Wyndham Youth Plan:

- **Developmentally Focussed**
Developmentally appropriate focussed on transitional stages impacting young people 10–25 years.
- **Evidence Based**
All programs and services will follow a consistent planning process and be informed by evidence, and include clear measures and outcomes.
- **Place Based**
Planning at this level enables barriers to active participation to be identified and responded to through better engagement with the community.

- **Prevention and Early Intervention**

Council to focus on the delivery of services to young people in the prevention, and early intervention levels of risk in the Victorian Government's *Positive Pathways for Victoria's Young People Framework*. Council will actively partner with specialist service providers to support higher risk and more complex needs young people.

Wyndham City Plan, 2013–2017

The Wyndham youth plan has been developed in the context of the range of local, state and commonwealth policies and initiatives promoting the best possible outcomes for young people.

At a local level, the plan acknowledges and reflects Council's vision and mission, as outlined in the Wyndham City Plan 2013–17. The vision of Wyndham City Council is:

"Diverse people, One community, Our future".

This is achieved through its mission:

"to serve the best interests of the Wyndham community by providing quality services; managing growth; and supporting residents to lead healthy, safe, vibrant and productive lives, while protecting our local environment".²

Both the vision and the mission reflect Council's commitment to working with its community partners in order to identify and effectively respond to community aspirations and needs.

This intention lies at the heart of the planning document, with a specific focus on service provision for the young people of the community.

² Wyndham City Council City Plan 2013–2017

Context

The Wyndham youth plan aims to ensure there is a collaborative approach across Council programs and community organisations to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people.

The Wyndham youth plan is one of a number of policy and planning documents that guide Council and community organisations to address the issues and needs of specific population groups within Wyndham City. Other relevant policies and plans which have informed the development of the Wyndham youth plan are outlined as follows:

- Wyndham City Council City Plan 2013-17;
- Community Health, Wellbeing and Safety Plan 2010-2013;
- Wyndham City Advocacy Strategy;
- Wyndham's Bus Network & Young People;
- Strategy for Managing Growth;
- Municipal Early Years Plan;
- Wyndham Social Infrastructure Planning 2040;
- Quality Community Plan;
- Disability Action Plan 2011; and
- Cultural Diversity Policy.

The draft Wyndham Learning Community Strategy (still under development) was also considered in the development of the Youth Plan.

At a state level, the Wyndham youth plan is informed by Victorian State Government's Youth Statement (2012), Engage, Involve, Create. The vision of this policy is *"that all young Victorians experience, healthy, active and fulfilling lives and have the opportunity to achieve their full potential, participate in the workforce and be involved in their community"*.³

The three key priorities identified in this document are all pertinent to the young people of Wyndham. They are:

1. getting young people involved;
2. services that meet the needs of young people; and
3. create new ideas and partnerships.

At a federal level, this plan draws on the Commonwealth Government's National Strategy For Young Australians (2010). This strategy is an important part of providing a youth perspective on the Government's broader agenda and aspirations for all Australians. It provides a framework for governments, the youth sector and communities, including the Wyndham community, working with Australia's young people to:

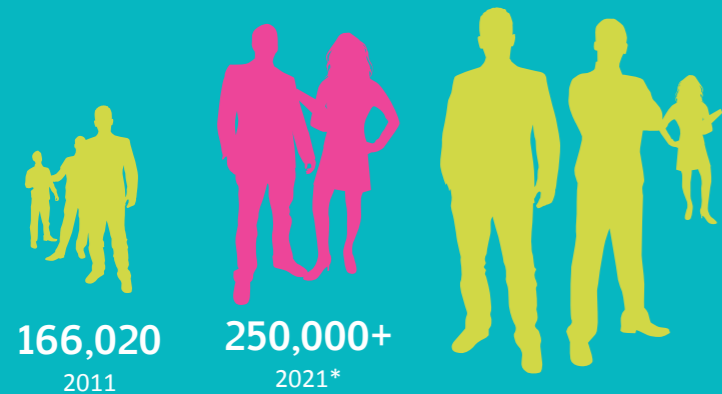
- empower young people to build their own lives;
- enable young Australians to learn and to take responsibility for their actions;
- build resilience in young Australians to navigate life's challenges; and
- build a healthier, safer and more productive Australia.⁴

Collectively, these local, state and federal documents create a platform on which existing and future programs, services and facilities for young people in Wyndham, and their families, can be prioritised, developed and implemented.

³ Victorian Government Department of Human Services (2012)

⁴ Commonwealth of Australia (2010)





POPULATION

*forecasted data

20%
aged
10-24

8.2%
aged
12-17

9.4%
aged
18-24

ABORIGINAL
AND/OR
TORRES
STRAIT
ISLANDER
POPULATION

0.7%
1,187
people

32%
are aged
10-24

Wyndham has
the fourth highest
proportion of
humanitarian
youth arrivals aged
12 to 24 in Victoria,
with 86 people,
representing 9.35%
of youth arrivals in
2009-2010.

86
people

<2%
of people
aged
12-17

Stated a
need for
assistance for
day to day
activities*

*2011 census data

60%

of people
aged 20-24
had a Year
12 or higher
qualification*

This compares with
78.7% in 2006.

clerical and
administrative

13%

sales workers

24%

technicians and
trade workers

18%

WORKFORCE

According to 2011 census data,
young people aged 15 – 24 years,
make up **14.5%** of the total
number of people in the workforce

UNEMPLOYMENT

In 2011, 13.2% of the City of Wyndham's labour
force (i.e. people aged 15 to 24 years)
was classed as unemployed compared to 12.3% in
Greater Melbourne. Rates of unemployment
varied across the city, ranging from a low of 0.0%
in Little River to a high of 23.5% in Heathdale.

0.0%

23.5%



In 2007 & 2008, **11%** of all
referrals to the **Wyndham
Salvation Army** were
made up of young people
aged between 10 and 25.

2,283

people aged 12-18 in
Victoria are homeless

3,847

people aged 19-24 in
Victoria are homeless

Youth aged 15 – 24 remains the largest cohort at
30.11%.



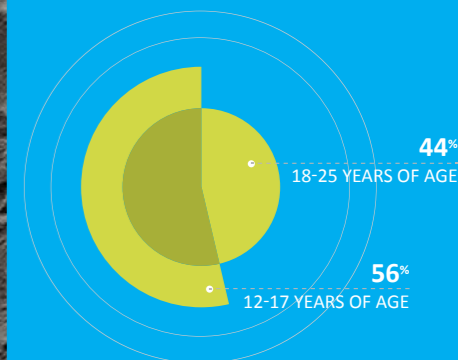
of females aged
15-19 years
have had one or
more children

1.5%

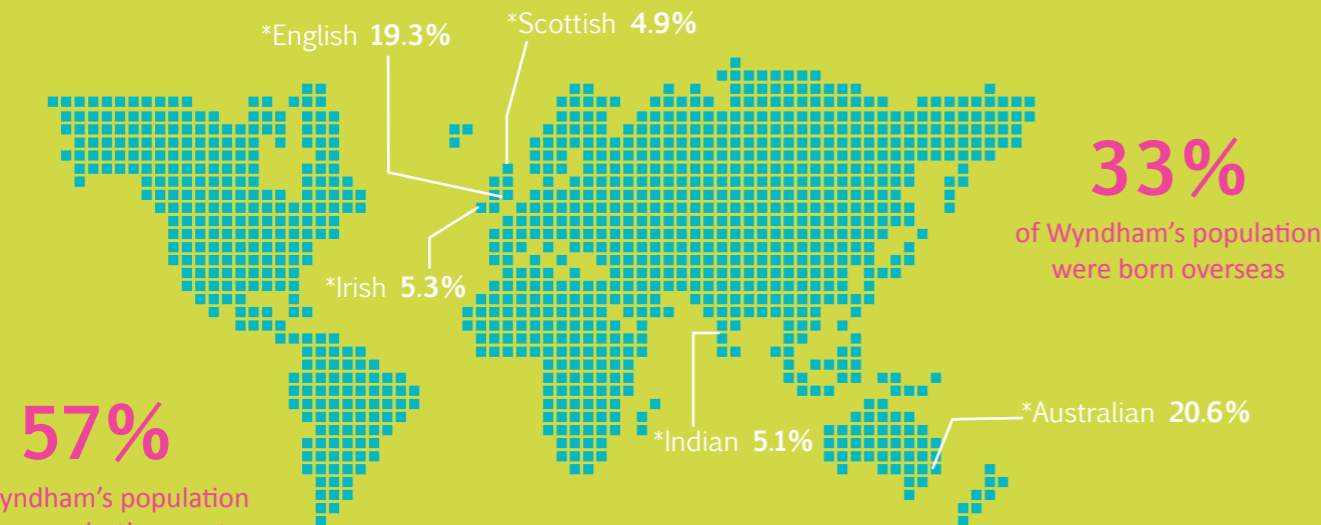
of females aged
20-24 years
have had one or
more children

15%

In 2009, Headspace Western
Melbourne reported that more
than 19% of young people using
their services were from Wyndham.



Depression and anxiety were the
two most common diagnoses
present (approximately 60%
of young people). In addition,
approximately 21% of young
people experienced problems
related to alcohol and/or drug use.



*The most common ancestries of Wyndham residents

Hindi

Italian

Mandarin

Arabic

Punjabi

COMMUNITY LANGUAGES

Top 5, other than English. 2011.

64%

of residents
speak
English
only

26%

who speak
a community
language
also speak
English well
or very well

4%

speak English
not well or
not at all

79%

of households have
Internet connection

This includes **71.8%** with broadband connection, which
is a higher proportion of households compared with
Greater Melbourne (at **70%**).

Between 2006 and 2011 the number of households
with an Internet connection increased by **18,816**.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Strategic Directions

The Wyndham youth plan is based on extensive research and consultation with a range of key stakeholders in the Wyndham community. The key actions incorporated within the plan have been developed through comprehensive consultation with internal stakeholders, youth sector services and young people.

The Wyndham youth plan has identified five key strategic directions Council will focus on in the future.

Sector Planning and Coordination

Wyndham Youth Services will work with other agencies to plan and facilitate effective and coordinated services for young people in the municipality. This will be achieved through direct service delivery and the provision of information and transitional support services for young people.

Working in Partnership

Council will work in partnership to build a strong local youth service system that values and supports young people in Wyndham.

Service Delivery

Council will use a place-based approach and broader community strengthening initiatives. Council will offer a range of recreation and support programs to young people and their families through local neighbourhoods.

Leadership

Council will focus on our internal policies and practices to offer a role model to other organisations in Wyndham.

Council will facilitate and support business and community networks to achieve greater outcomes for young people in the municipality.

Advocacy

Council will advocate on behalf of young people and youth agencies to support the provision of youth services that respond to the local needs in Wyndham.

Key Themes

The Wyndham youth plan focuses on four key themes that emerged from community consultations with young people, their families, and service providers for young people. These themes provide a starting point for future planning, to ensure all young people residing in Wyndham can access and engage with a range of quality services to meet their identified needs, interest and priorities. These themes are:

1. Meeting complex needs.
2. Accessing support early.
3. Creating community connectedness.
4. Promoting an integrated approach.

Implementation, evaluation and monitoring

The Wyndham youth plan will rely on an evidence-based approach for the development of services, programs and partnerships.

It is therefore essential that the implementation of the plan be monitored and reviewed regularly. The results from this monitoring and review will ensure that programs are producing the required outcomes.

The table below shows the annual monitoring that will be undertaken.

Strategic Directions Monitoring / Evaluation

Sector Planning And Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> mapping of emerging issues and service coverage and duplication annual surveying of young people in Wyndham to ascertain levels of health and wellbeing/risk and resilience factors levels of youth participation in service coordination and development municipal-wide plan responding to current and emerging youth needs effective and relevant web based information strong youth sector networks and partnerships collaboration on identified issues, internally and with local agencies
Working In Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sector engagement in leadership groups and functioning of networks combined activities, events, initiatives and training with local agencies strengthened relationships with local schools
Direct Service Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> numbers of young people, parents, service providers accessing information support and referral numbers of young people accessing services success of services in meeting the current issues outlined in the Wyndham youth plan number and nature of referrals regular program review and evaluation against outcomes
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> youth needs reflected in the policies and practices of other Departments within Council development of direct training and employment opportunities for young people collaboration on identified issues both internally and externally with local agencies Established links with business and other networks to develop transitional pathways for young people
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council-led advocacy on issues identified by the youth sector requiring collaborative effort funding leveraged by advocacy role of Council

The successful implementation of the Wyndham youth plan and the associated actions will, in part, result from a whole of community approach. Such an approach embraces the notion that all those involved in the development and delivery of programs for young people have a critical part to play in bringing to fruition the aspirations and desired goals outlined within the plan.

Meeting complex needs

Currently the emerging complex needs of young people across Wyndham are requiring a higher level of service provision and service provider collaboration and integration. The nature of this complexity was identified through the community consultations, with service providers articulating the need to offer more long-term support to ensure opportunities for significant change. Similarly, young people expressed a desire for the service sector to move beyond a “one size fits all” model, beginning with a greater understanding of the contexts in which they lived.

Some of the complex needs identified in community consultations included:

- homelessness;
- alcohol and other drugs;
- sexual health;
- mental health;
- youth violence and bullying; and
- diversity and equity issues.

In addition to developing an awareness of the complex needs of young people living in Wyndham, the provision of services that is a good fit with these needs is critical. Young people who participated in the community consultations were clear about what they like and don’t like about the youth services in the community. One consistent request was for assistance to make better decisions. This was facilitated through support and guidance, where people are friendly, approachable and caring. Similarly, having fun, being offered choice and opportunities to excel was also seen as being important. Continuing to consult with young people to determine what is working well in understanding and responding to their needs, however complex, is critical.

Creating a service network to meet the complex needs of young people is not likely to have an impact if young people aren’t aware of the range of services and programs available across the community. In the community consultations, 43% of young people noted that they have some awareness, and 7.2% said they had no awareness of the services and programs available in the community. A pilot project of Wyndham City Council, the *Wyndham Youth Directory*, is seeking to address this issue by supporting young people, their families and service providers, to find the most appropriate service for their needs.

An integrated service delivery model is also a key component of meeting the complex needs of young people. In the community consultations, 37.5% of service providers who completed the online survey identified that a lack of youth and family services working cooperatively together was a barrier young people may face in using or accessing a service within the municipality. However, there was agreement that there is an increasing commitment to work more effectively together to improve the municipality for young people and their families. This included a desire to work towards more organic referrals, as opposed to more formalised referral processes.

Accessing Support Early

Building the capacity of young people and their families is a critical process that enables optimal learning and development, whilst also acting as a form of early intervention.

Early intervention for young people is a key priority of commonwealth and state governments. Early intervention, coupled with early identification, means young people and their families, where relevant, can access the information, resources and support required to prevent issues from worsening, and in some instances, from occurring at all. This early support is critical given young people’s greater vulnerability to risk taking behaviours, which can result in serious consequences.⁵

Early intervention for young people and their families can have a significant positive impact on their health and wellbeing. It is also in the broader national interests, reducing the demand and costs on health care or extra resources and support required later in life. Early intervention works not only to prevent future problems, such as mental health issues, but also creates conditions that enable young people to maximise the opportunities available to them.⁶

The importance of early intervention for young people in Wyndham was highlighted in community consultations. This was particularly true for young Indigenous people, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and particularly refugees, young people with a disability, and those from low socio-economic communities.⁷ Service providers and young people also shared a desire for personal and professional learning opportunities, along with resources and supports, delivered in a coordinated and comprehensive manner across the community.

Young people and families commented that they were aware of learning opportunities available within the community, noting that this was an area that warranted further attention. Specifically, young people noted that Wyndham offered a good level of support in relation to promoting wellbeing, and that more support in this area would be valuable. One 23 year old male put it this way: *“In my honest opinion, it is this type of support that is lacking within schools, neighbours and even within families. I think there needs to be a greater awareness about helping young people; not just making great decisions, but also making the ‘right’ decisions”*. Families and service providers endorsed this sentiment.

State government policy concurs with this flexible and responsive approach to early intervention, including educational opportunities, for the purpose of developing transferable skills, which can be applied and adapted across different contexts.⁸ This policy also identified families as the most important source of information, support and role modelling for young people. With this in mind, the provision of appropriate resources and support to families with young people is also a key consideration in early intervention.⁹

⁵ Commonwealth of Australia (2010)

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Victorian Government Department of Human Services (2012)

⁹ Ibid



IF I COULD
MAKE A
CHANGE TO MY
COMMUNITY TO
IMPROVE IT FOR
YOUNG PEOPLE
IT WOULD BE...

By raising awareness of the varied and complex needs of young people residing in Wyndham, and the benefits of intervening early to best support them, Wyndham City and other service providers can begin conversations with schools and community organisations as to the range of strategies and approaches to resource young people and their families.

Areas of notable concern warranting further action, education, resources and support are summarised below:

Young people stated the following areas were needing to be addressed	Families stated the following areas were needing to be addressed	Service Providers stated the following areas were needing to be addressed
-	Mental health	Mental health: depression anxiety, self esteem
Technology: how it empowers young people to reach their goals and inspires them	Use of technology	Technology and sexting
Creation of healthy self expression	Creation of healthy self expression	-
Understanding culturally and diverse communities and young people	Learning about cultural diversity and inclusive behaviours	-
Developing awareness of why ‘right decisions’ are right for young people	-	-
Understanding self: self esteem, managing loneliness, diversity, emotional and physical developmental awareness	-	-
Bullying, drugs and alcohol	-	Drugs, alcohol and bullying
Engaging with the developing mind of a young person i.e. offering experiences in school which accurately reflect the developmental needs of a young person	-	-
Engaging school experiences for all i.e. not a one size fits all approach	-	Engagement in school
-	-	Financial literacy
-	-	Young motherhood

By working in this way, Council and their service provider partners will be better able to identify and respond early to the issues and concerns impacting on young people and their families. It is anticipated that this early engagement will reduce stress and enhance relationships between young people and their families. It will also bridge the widening gap of disengaged young people across the municipality, though early connection, engagement and action. In addition, it will also strengthen partnerships between service providers, through increased communication, networking and collaboration.

Creating Opportunity For Community Connectedness And Belonging

Creating and experiencing connectedness within the community is an important theme emerging from consultations with young people, service providers and council representatives. Community connectedness is critical for promoting a sense of identify and belonging, active engagement and participation, and optimal health and wellbeing. In contrast, feeling disconnected can lead to isolation, loneliness, and reduced levels of self-esteem, and a reduction in well-being.¹⁰

Creating community connectedness for young people living within Wyndham requires an appreciation of, and commitment to enacting this vision. Importantly, it requires decision makers to seek out and be responsive to the opinions, preferences, and diverse needs of young people.

Community consultations revealed that not all young people believe there is acceptance of, and support for the diversity represented across their community. This includes culture, sexuality, Aboriginality and economic diversity. Other critical issues impacting on the lives of young people, including mental health, drug and alcohol related issues, and homelessness also warrant careful consideration and planning. Importantly, young people expressed a strong desire to be consulted, and have their opinions reflected in both the planning and provisioning of youth programs across the community.

Ensuring young people are connected to community, requires a number of factors to be addressed, as evidenced in the feedback from the community consultations that informed the development of this plan. In order to be connected to community, young people need knowledge of, and access to the full range of services, in order to make informed decisions about service selection and engagement. Access also includes being physically able to get to and from services, for example, through the provision of efficient and effective public transport systems. This was identified as the most significant barrier young people faced in accessing services within the municipality. Other barriers to participation warranting consideration include the costs to participate, and long waiting lists to access services.

Central to connectedness is a place, or places, within the community for young people to come together. Community spaces for young people provide opportunities for mutual support, shared learning, and increased engagement and purpose. Providing opportunities for young people to come together, through the provision of permanent spaces, as well as regular community events that reflect their interests and needs, promotes a sense of belonging and relatedness.

Further, creating a sense of community requires those individuals other than young people, to develop an understanding of youth culture. Over-generalisations and stereotypes attached to young people, lead to stigmatisation, and further heightens a sense of disconnect between young people and the remainder of the community. An appreciation of, and valuing the skills, talent and contributions young people make to communities requires adults to connect with, and lend a hand to young people as required.

¹⁰ Townsend & McWhiter, (2005)

Promoting an Integrated Approach

The creation of a more comprehensive and coordinated service delivery system, through an integrated approach, has real potential for the provision of programs for young people in Wyndham. Integrated service delivery is gaining increasing attention in the professional literature. Moreover, integration is seen as a way in which organisations can come together to achieve shared goals, and promote the best possible outcomes for young people, and their families.¹¹

The majority of service providers who took part in the community consultations described their current approach to working together as collaborative and coordinated. A smaller number of service providers described their approach as co-existence and communication exchange. An even smaller number described their current approach as integrated. However, there is a genuine commitment by service providers to come together to ensure optimal outcomes for young people in the community. In addition, there is great potential to achieve this shared vision through the continued leadership of the Senior Alliance Group. This includes shared decision-making in relation to current challenges, such as funding models, strategic planning and service integration.

The funding system under which service providers operate has led to a fractured provisioning of programs for young people. Uncertainty with respect to funding and restrictive guidelines has put pressure on service providers to meet both the short and long term needs of young people. Research suggests that working in partnership assists service providers to leverage and coordinate funding in more strategic and effective ways.¹² It is prudent therefore, for the Senior Alliance Group to explore possible funding models in order to determine the most appropriate model for the Wyndham service sector. This might include pooled or shared funding, joint funding, and the identification and use of alternative or additional sources.¹³

As an ever-expanding municipality, service providers in Wyndham are concerned about their capacity to continue to provide essential services to young people. They noted that many young people fall through gaps in the referral system due to the restrictive or limited periods of time that support is often offered. Coordinated services that are focused on young people rather than issues may help address this challenge. Further, as relationships develop, integration processes are strengthened, and referral and transition issues dealt with more seamlessly. This approach has great potential, given the commitment of the service sector to work in an increasingly more collaborative and integrated way. In addition, service providers who took part in the community consultations proposed a number of new and exciting opportunities to improve current approaches to service delivery and inter-agency communication. Such initiatives included:

- joint planning;
- combined professional development;
- integrated hubs of service delivery which work from one disclosure form;
- better service coordination by mainstreaming funding so that services are specialised and strategically located;
- service delivery which uses a program utilized by all workers with select data;
- list of youth services in the area, stating the key contact for other services to contact for quick information;
- inter-agency meetings, newsletters, website specifically for service providers; and
- joint funding with other services.

In order to build the capacity of the service system within Wyndham, such initiatives require further investigation by both Council and the Senior Alliance Group.

¹¹ Keast, Brown & Mandell (2007)

¹² Blank, Berg & Melaville (2006)

¹³ Atkinson, Doherty & Kinder (2005)



Key themes, outcomes and priority areas

In partnership with a range of agencies and partners, Wyndham City Council will develop an annual action plan, which will be in alignment with the themes and outcomes listed below. The actions included in the Annual Action Plan will be developed using a whole of community approach. Council and partners will develop the action plan accordance with the priority areas listed below.

THEME 1 - MEETING COMPLEX NEEDS

Outcomes	Priority Areas	Partner/s
A service sector that has the resources and capacity to be responsive to the emerging complex needs of young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Development of collaborative and planned approaches to accessing both Government and corporate funding	Wyndham Senior Alliance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased opportunities for corporate sponsorship to increase funding options for new and existing programs which address issues such as emergency housing and sporting events	Wyndham Senior Alliance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review and implementation of the Western Region Youth Charter across Wyndham	Wyndham Workers With Young People Network Youth Taskforce, Western Region LGAs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased numbers of service providers in the City of Wyndham to improve the diversity and number of services offered to young people	Wyndham Senior Alliance, service providers



IF I WERE THE MAYOR
OF WYNDHAM CITY
FOR A DAY THE
CHANGES I WOULD
MAKE TO IMPROVE
THIS CITY FOR
YOUNG PEOPLE
WOULD BE....



THEME 2 - ACCESSING SUPPORT EARLY

Outcomes	Priority Areas	Potential Partner/s
Enhanced partnerships across the service sector in order to ensure programs are offered in a timely manner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Expansion of Youth CommitteesAdvocate for options for alternative education opportunities to support the re-engagement of young people in education	Young people, libraries and local schools LLEN, local alternative education providers
Increased capacity building and knowledge attainment for service providers, young people and their families with respect to issues impacting adversely on young people		
Utilise a placed based model for the provision of youth services across Wyndham	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased the presence of youth services staff in all community centresDevelopment of options for locating services which support young people in new and developing suburbs	Young people, Council, schools, welfare services, employment services, mental health services and family support services Young people, Council, schools welfare services, employment services, mental health services and family support services

THEME 3 - CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY CONNECTEDNESS AND BELONGING

Outcomes	Priority Areas	Potential Partner/s
<p>Building opportunities for enhanced social capital amongst young people, through effectively designing and delivering programs and spaces</p> <p>Equitable access across the community to the services required by young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of a place based neighbourhood approach to service delivery and planning Facilitation of Youth committees in all Wyndham suburbs to support the planning and development of programs and services for young people 	<p>Young people, schools and welfares services, employment services, mental health services, family support services</p> <p>Young people, libraries, local schools</p>
<p>Maximise the contribution of youth expertise to the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategies to build the capacity of Council and the community to engage with young people Provision of mechanisms for young people's views and ideas to be considered and heard Build initiatives and programs that provide leadership opportunities for young people 	<p>Agencies, Council, young people, young carers, young people with a disability, same sex attracted and transgender young people, and migrant and refugee young people</p> <p>Young people</p>

THEME 4 - PROMOTING AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Outcomes	Priority Areas	Potential Partner/s
<p>An integrated approach to service delivery across the community which ensures that young people experience a cohesive and seamless approach to support</p> <p>Funding models are planned and provided in a way that addresses both the short and long term needs of young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development and implementation of advocacy strategies to support the development of sustainable funding models which enable the development of high quality ongoing programs for young people Availability of data and evidence about needs in Wyndham is accessible for agencies to support and strengthen funding applications 	<p>Senior Alliance</p> <p>Senior Alliance</p>
<p>Utilise a place based model for the provision of youth services across Wyndham</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the presence of youth services staff in all community centres Development of options for locating services which support young people in new and developing suburbs 	<p>Young people, Council, schools, welfare services, employment services, mental health services and family support services</p> <p>Young people, Council, schools welfare services, employment services, mental health services and family support services</p>

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