

Wellington Youth Strategy 2017-2020



WELLINGTON
SHIRE COUNCIL
The Heart of Gippsland

Vision

Wellington Shire is a community in which all young people have access to all that they need to thrive: positive relationships, positive experiences and positive environments.

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

Wellington Shire Council, Wellington Shire Youth Council and the Wellington Youth Services Network respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land the Gunaikurnai people – their spirits, ancestors, elders and community members past and present.

Acknowledgement of contributors to Wellington Youth Strategy

We have great young people in Wellington, and without their contribution to this strategy, it would not exist.

We appreciate and acknowledge the commitment, work and passion of the members of the Wellington Youth Services Network (WYSN) in preparing this strategy, and are excited to be working in partnership with them and the young people in Wellington to deliver some of the objectives outlined within it.



Who are the 'youth', the 'young people' of Wellington?

In keeping with the national and state definitions of young people, Wellington Shire Council, Wellington Shire Youth Council and partners within the WYSN, define young people as those aged 12-25 years who are living, studying, working or socialising in Wellington Shire.

It is important to recognise that throughout our engagement and research putting this strategy together, we found it increasingly apparent that children from the age 10 are missing out on key supports to help them thrive. In response, where possible, we will be inclusive of our 10 and 11 year-old young people in our initiatives.

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WHY WE NEED THE YOUTH STRATEGY

Wellington has a small but committed community of youth support services, organisations and volunteers who work tirelessly to ensure our young people are safe, healthy and engaged. We have however lacked the single vision and consolidated data that allows us to work in a truly collaborative space to best support and advocate for the needs of our young people.

We are hearing both anecdotally and through data presented, that our young people are increasingly unable to access support that enables them to thrive. Wellington is situated between two local government areas (Latrobe and East Gippsland) where the data and agency evidence provide concerning pictures for young people that overshadow Wellington. We recognise the needs in those communities but we are seeing evidence that suggests that unless we begin to be proactive in our response to issues within our own community, the data and experiences of our young people in Wellington will be similar to that of our neighbours.

This strategy provides us with a proactive response to issues and desires within our youth communities.

This strategy provides us with that unified voice, and a clear vision to work towards.

This is Wellington's first adopted youth strategy – and we are excited!



HOW THE YOUTH STRATEGY CAME TO BE

This strategy began with media reports in September 2015 about “Sale: The country town being overtaken by ice” (news.com.au), and Sale being the “Ice Capital” of Victoria! That set in motion a generous offer from a philanthropist with a heart for helping young people in need, and a small group of people were tasked to identify the best use of this proposed support.

It was obvious from the divisions within that small group, that Wellington had far greater issues than the drug ice, and that we would need to bring more people working with youth around the table to discuss it. At the same time, the WYSN was being revitalised, so it was under the auspice WYSN that the first forum was hosted and “Speak up for Youth” was born. Ably facilitated by Berry Street, with assistance from Wellington Shire Council, this forum concentrated on what we believed it took for a young person to THRIVE? What did we already have in our community to support this? What were some gaps that made ‘thriving’ challenging?

Two more forums with partners were held, we formed a working group to develop a survey to allow young people to have their voices heard and held a number of focus groups with young people from traditionally more hard-to-reach groups.

We are thrilled with the 1,116 young voices (over 18% of our youth population) that had direct input into this strategy, through the survey and focus groups.

Together with research from a wide range of sources, the voices of Wellington’s youth, community and organisations, we have developed an informed strategy that will enable us to work with focus and determination towards a Wellington where every young person thrives.

WHERE THE STRATEGY FITS

There is strength in numbers, and this strategy relies on that adage. It is a part of a bigger picture and supports at a Council level our Wellington Shire Council Plan 2017-2021, Wellington 2030 Community Vision and our Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Healthy Wellington 2017-2021.

Wellington Shire Council Plan 2017-2021

This document is developed each time a new Council is elected and provides the main planning tool for Council. It outlines what Council is aiming to achieve over its' four-year term. The themes within the Council Plan reflect those within Wellington 2030, the communities long term vision. The themes of these documents are:

- THEME 1** Communities
- THEME 2** Services & Infrastructure
- THEME 3** Natural Environment
- THEME 4** Lifelong Learning
- THEME 5** Economy



Wellington Community Early Years Plan 2017-2021

Wellington Community Early Years Plan was developed by Wellington Shire Council and the Wellington Early Years Network. This network is made up of professionals within the early years field offering support to children aged 0 to 8 years. They include child care, kindergarten, primary schools, and maternal and child health. Similar to the youth strategy, where possible, Wellington Community Early Years Strategy includes actions and project that support families who have children up to the age of 17. The priorities of the Wellington Community Early Years Plan include:

- 1. Collaborate Partnerships**
- 2. Friendly Environments**
- 3. Strong Connected Communities**
- 4. Ongoing Monitor and Reviewing**



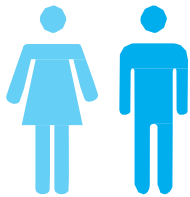
Healthy Wellington 2017-2021

The Healthy Wellington Plan is the Wellington Shire Council's municipal public health and wellbeing plan. Healthy Wellington sets the community priorities and commitment over the next four years to address specific health and wellbeing priorities. The four priorities and focus areas include:

1. **Mental Wellbeing - with a focus on social connection and inclusion, resilience, drug and alcohol, gambling**
2. **Gender Equality - with a focus on gender equity, sexual and reproductive health and prevention of violence against women and children**
3. **Healthy Living - with a focus on physical activity, healthy eating and smoking.**
4. **Climate Change - with a focus on mitigating climate change.**

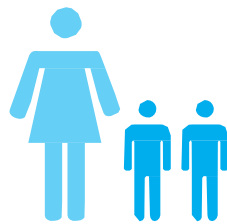
The Wellington Youth Strategy 2017 - 2020 incorporates these themes and becomes the 'how to' guide for Council, Youth Council and the organisations and community members within WYSN to achieve the goals within those larger strategies, specifically in relation to young people. It also acknowledges the work set out in the Wellington Community Early Years Plan 2017 – 2021 to successfully begin a child's transition into adulthood.

YOUNG PEOPLE AT A GLANCE



6,362 people aged 12-24 years making up 15.77% of the total population.

10.4% of women aged 20-24 are caring for children and not in paid employment. (compared to 2.9% across Vic)

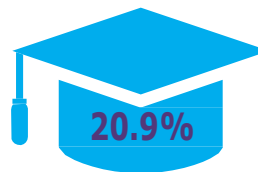


People aged 12-24 years old identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Most common countries of birth for 12-24 year olds other than Australia were;

New Zealand
Philippines

England
Thailand



20-24 year olds in Wellington that left school before completing year 11.



25.4% of people aged 15-24 years old are not employed or attending an educational institution.

19-22 year olds undertaking study (TAFE, Uni and other educational institutions). (compared to 55.5% across VIC)



12-24 year olds speaking a non-English language

Future population-the youth population of Wellington is forecast to decrease, while the general population will grow.

All statistics were sourced from the Australia Bureau of Statistics census data 2016 unless otherwise stated

WHAT GUIDES US... OUR PRINCIPLES

Guiding our work is the Code of Ethical Practice for the Victorian Youth Sector that has been developed by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria.

Underpinning all our actions with young people in Wellington is a framework of **Positive Youth Development**.

Positive Youth Development (PYD) assists young people to meet their basic developmental needs (moral, social, cognitive, emotional and physical) by focussing on the whole child, not just single problems to be fixed. PYD is grounded in the desire to help young people be/become resilient and views three key things as protective factors to help build resiliency:

1. Positive relationships
2. Clear, fair and high expectations and
3. Opportunities to connect, navigate and be productive.

***Positive relationships + positive experiences
+ positive environments***

OUR VALUES

Youth centred

We recognise that young people are the designers of their own futures, that they have voices, ideas, dreams and beliefs that are valuable and have a right to be heard.

Strength based

We recognise that young people all have skills, interests and abilities that make them valuable citizens. Our work with them will develop and support those strengths, empowering young people to lead their own development.

Inclusive for all

We recognise that all young people have unique needs that will require support to enable them to participate fully in their communities.

Partnership.

Council cannot and does not work alone in supporting strategies that ensure our young people's wellbeing is healthy. Indeed, in many cases Council are the support in a partnership lead by another.

OUR VALUES

The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) have developed an evidence based national framework for child and youth wellbeing called "The Nest Action Agenda". Like some of our metropolitan local government areas, we are also ensuring that our youth strategy supports this national action plan at a local level and uses the same action areas to guide our work. Tied into these action areas, are the themes found within the overarching Council plans and strategies that support our young people.

1. Being Loved and being safe
2. Having material basics
3. Being healthy
4. Learning
5. Participating
6. Positive sense of culture and identity

HOW TO READ THE WELLINGTON YOUTH STRATEGY

The action areas of the Wellington Youth Strategy have been broken up into the following sections, so you know exactly where we are headed.

ACTION AREA

The theme of our goal.

GOAL

This is our aspiration- what we are aiming for into the future.

WHAT YOU TOLD US

Through the 'YOUth Speak Survey' and focus groups in 2016.

SNAPSHOT

Here you will find a snippet of what the data, research and experience tells us.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO

Here you will find some broad actions that will support our goals.





ACTION AREA

1: BEING LOVED & SAFE

GOAL: Wellington is a place where every young person feels connected and valued, respected and safe.

Being loved and safe embraces positive family relationships and connections with others, along with personal and community safety. Children and youth who are loved and safe are confident, have a strong sense of self-identity, and have high self-esteem. They form secure attachments, have pro-social peer connections, and positive adult role models or mentors are present in their life. Children and youth who are loved and safe are resilient: they can withstand life's challenges and respond constructively to setbacks and unanticipated events.
(ARACY 2014: The Nest Framework)



WHAT YOU TOLD US

- Young people would like more opportunities outside of sport to connect with each other.
- When needing help, friends and families are the first port of call for young people in Wellington.
- Feeling unaccepted and different is a reason that young people in Wellington can feel alone and unsafe.
- Bullying and bigotry is a big problem for young people in Wellington.
- Knowing the people in their communities makes young people feel safe and connected.
- Perceptions, rather than personal experience, of gangs and drug related anti-social behaviour are the most common cause of young people feeling unsafe after dark in our towns.

SNAPSHOT

- 22.4% of young people in years 7-9 within Wellington reported being bullied recently (compared to 18% in Victoria).
Source: VCAMS 2015.
- There is very little cultural diversity in Wellington – only 5.2% of households in Wellington speak another language.
Source: ABS Census 2016.

- 1 in 4 young people experienced unfair treatment or discrimination in the past year due to gender, race/culture and age (National data).

Source: Mission Australia - Youth Survey 2016.

- 1 in 2 young people witnessed someone being unfairly treated or discriminated against – due to race/culture, sexuality, physical health or ability (National data).

Source: Mission Australia - Youth Survey 2016.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO

1. Build the resilience of young people to be truly themselves
2. Grow parent/carer/community understanding of issues affecting young people.
3. Celebrate young people's achievements and contributions to the community.
4. Celebrate and create safe shared spaces and places within Wellington.

ACTION AREA

2: HAVING MATERIAL BASICS

GOAL: All young people in Wellington have access to material basics enabling them to be safe, nourished and independent.

Children and youth who have material basics have access to the things they need to live a 'normal life'. They live in adequate and stable housing, with adequate clothing, healthy food, and clean water, and the materials they need to participate in education and training pathways.
(ARACY 2014: The Nest Framework)

WHAT YOU TOLD US

- Transport is a major barrier for young people in all areas of their lives: education, employment and social.
- There is a lack of entry level jobs to be found locally
- Young people need assistance in building their job readiness.
- There are still young people who do not attend school regularly because they have no food to bring.
- Whilst living in stable housing is most common for young people, there are far too many people living out of home, homeless or couch surfing.



SNAPSHOT

- Public transport options are significantly absent in most of our communities. There are currently no taxis or public transport options in Dargo, Licola, Briagolong, Boisdale and coastal communities between Port Albert and Woodside.

- 6.1% of Wellington's population live with food insecurity (compared to 4.6% Victorian average).

Source: Department of Health and Human Services, Wellington Profile 2015.

- Alcohol and other drug related problems in Wellington families is 5.1% as reported in the 2014 School Entrant Health Questionnaire (compared to 3.6% in Victoria).

- There are not enough transitional housing options to meet the demand in Wellington.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO

- 1.Support initiatives that provide a diverse range of housing options for young people.

- 2.Support local initiatives that link young people into employment, work experience and volunteering, and traineeships.

ACTION AREA

3: BEING HEALTHY

GOAL: Young people in Wellington feel great in mind, body and spirit.

Healthy children and youth have their physical, developmental, psychosocial and mental health needs met. They achieve their optimal developmental trajectories. They have access to services to support their growth and development, and have access to preventative measures to redress any emerging health or developmental concerns.

(ARACY 2014: The Nest Framework)



WHAT YOU TOLD US

- Being involved in a club or interest group is important
- 1 in 4 young people have mental health concerns for themselves.
- Over a third of young people in Wellington reported feeling stressed.
- 43 % of young people said they were concerned about their body image.
- More young people drink alcohol than take other drugs, yet more young people think other drugs are a bigger issue.
- Only 1/3 of the young people who reported being sexually active used a condom the last time they had sex.

SNAPSHOT

- Wellington has over double the amount of intentional injuries treated in hospital per 1,000 population 6.7, than Victoria, at 3.0.

Source: Department of Health and Human Services, Wellington Profile 2015.

- Body image is one of the top 3 concerns for young people across Australia

Source: Mission Australia Youth Survey 2016.

- Teenage pregnancy across Wellington is high for women aged 15 – 19 years, 18.1% compared to Victorian average of 10.4%.

Source: Department of Health and Human Services, Wellington Profile 2015.

- Rates of chlamydia notifications are high for the 15 – 24 year age group, 22% compared to Victorian average of 18.4%.

Source: Department of Health and Human Services, Wellington Profile 2015.

- Alcohol and drugs, discrimination and equity and mental health are the top 3 national issues for young people.

Source: Mission Australia Youth Survey 2016.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO

1. Improve promotion and access to mental and emotional health services.
2. Provide creative spaces and opportunities for young people to have fun, exercise and maintain physical health.
3. Support initiatives that will equip young people with knowledge and skills to make informed decisions about issues that affect them.
4. Support initiatives that give young people knowledge and skills to recognise, understand and experience healthy relationships.
5. Provide opportunities for young people to learn how to support their peers.

ACTION AREA

4: LEARNING

GOAL: Young people in Wellington value learning and aspire to be their best.

Learning is a continuous process throughout life. Children and youth learn through a variety of formal and informal experiences within the classroom and more broadly in their home and in the community. Children and youth who are learning participate in and experience education that enables them to reach their full potential and maximise their life opportunities.
(ARACY 2014: The Nest Framework)





WHAT YOU TOLD US

- Young people have a desire to use their skills and energy to give back to the community.
- Transport makes it difficult to make decisions about employment and education.
- That relevance of subjects, teaching methods and materials impact greatly on engagement in education

SNAPSHOT

- 21.1% of young people aged 15–19 years are not engaged in education or employment compared to the state average of 10.4%.
Source: Department of Health and Human Services, Wellington Profile 2015.
- 2.2% of students who finished year 12 in 2016 were not engaged in education or employment or training (Victorian average 0.9%).
Source: On Track 2016 survey results.
- The only University in Gippsland is in Churchill and most students living in Wellington Shire need to travel by car to get there.

- The Federation Training TAFE campus is situated at Fulham, 10km out of Sale and in a location with little public transport. Enrolments have dropped 45% in the last 3 years. Discussions to move the campus to Sale have stalled.
- Parental engagement is integral to students' value of education.
- Stress and school are 2 of the 3 top personal concerns for young people nationally.
(Mission Australia Youth Survey 2016)

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO

1. Support initiatives which engage and transition young people between education and employment.
2. Look at the provision of alternative transitional education settings and programs to meet the needs of all young people.
3. Explore transport connections to educational and training settings.
4. Provide opportunities for group and peer mentoring.
5. Advocate for improved services to Wellington in the TAFE and tertiary sectors.

ACTION AREA

5: PARTICIPATING

GOAL: Wellington's young people have the forums to participate in decision making affecting them where their voices will be heard

Participating includes involvement with peers and the community, being able to have a voice and say on matters and, increasingly, access to technology for social connections. In practice, participating means children and youth are supported in expressing their views, their views are taken into account and they are involved in decision-making processes that affect them.
(ARACY 2014: The Nest Framework)

WHAT YOU TOLD US

- Most young people in Wellington feel connected to their community, especially those outside of Sale in our smaller communities.
- Giving back is important to young people in Wellington and contributes to their overall satisfaction with life.

SNAPSHOT

- 939 young people (aged 15 to 24) in Wellington are volunteers. 1 in 5 or 20% of young people in Wellington aged 15 to 24 volunteers.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2016.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO

1. Promote and provide opportunities for young people to strengthen their leadership skills.
2. Promote and provide opportunities for young people to build their decision-making skills.
3. Support young people to participate in volunteering.
4. Provide opportunities for young people to develop their own community projects.



Join us for White Ribbon Day

ACTION AREA

6:

POSITIVE SENSE OF CULTURE & IDENTITY

GOAL: Wellington young people are able to celebrate and be proud of their cultural heritage.

Having a positive sense of culture and identity is central to the wellbeing of children and youth and is particularly important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) children and youth. This outcome includes having a sense of spiritual wellbeing. It underpins and is fundamental to the other Nest child and youth outcome areas, with appropriate measures of a sense of culture and identity to be developed. (ARACY 2014: The Nest Framework)

WHAT YOU TOLD US

- Less than half of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people are involved with a local Aboriginal organisation.

SNAPSHOT

- 211 young people (aged 15 to 24) in Wellington are born outside Australia. (4.5% of young people in Wellington aged 15 to 24).

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2016.

- 177 young people (10 to 24 years of age) in Wellington identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. (7.8% of total young people in Wellington aged 10 to 24 years).

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2016.

- 27.6% of Wellington's Aboriginal population are aged 10–24 years. (177 of 640).

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics Census 2016.

WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO

1. Support young people and organisations to develop and implement programs and initiatives which empower & enhance cultural identity and involvement.
2. Acknowledge the influence of culture and identity on what we do for each of the other 5 action areas in this strategy.



DELIVERING ON THIS STRATEGY

- Wellington Shire Council, Wellington Shire Youth Council, members of the WYSN will all contribute to an annual action plan which will be evaluated against the objectives each year.
- An annual report card to the community on efforts and achievements will be developed, completed and shared.
- An annual Youth gathering will be supported to choose the priority objectives for the following year's action plan.

HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL?

Measures for individual actions found within the Wellington Annual Youth Action Plan (WAYAP) will provide us with a cumulative picture of what we achieve over the life of this strategy.

Other measures we will use will be:

- Ongoing successful collaboration with WYSN members to achieve goals set out in this strategy.
- Youth Council taking up annual actions to support objectives within WAYAP.
- Improved reporting of services meeting demand.
- Increased services for young people to access.
- Greater engagement of young people in community life.
- A more visible and vocal celebration of young people.



YOUR SAY

Everyone in the community is welcome to contribute to the annual Youth Action Plan (a-YAP). They can do so in the first instance by contacting the Shire's Youth Liaison Coordinator by emailing enquiries@wellington.vic.gov.au