



Youth Strategy 2015-2018

Part A

Introduction, Key Principles and Strategic Alignment

*Young people are sufficiently resourced and supported to participate in the community as role
models of today and leaders of the future*

Port Stephens Futures Strategy 2010

February 2015

Definitions and Acronyms

Young person is a person who is aged 12 to 24 years.

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
CSP	Community Strategic Plan
PSC	Port Stephens Council
LGA	Local Government Area
YAP	Port Stephens Youth Advisory Panel Strategy

Acknowledgments

The Port Stephens Youth Strategy was developed in close partnership with the Port Stephens Youth Advisory Panel. The Panel provided significant input, support and drove the engagement process for the Strategy.

Council would also like to thank other project partners including local high schools, youth sector organisations and the various community networks that worked with the local young people and provided input into the process.

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As a local young person directly involved in the development of the Port Stephens Youth Strategy 2015 - 2018 I am thrilled to be able to introduce this important strategic document to the wider community.

It has been a privilege and an honour, as a foundation member of the Port Stephens Youth Advisory Panel which commenced in 2013, to have been involved in the initial research work undertaken for this strategy.

As youth ambassador's panel members now look forward to taking measured steps towards the implementation of a strategy that will help focus on youth initiatives in Port Stephens.

During our time as 'co- researchers', members of the youth panel including myself, have had the opportunity to learn research skills from professional mentors and develop our individual leadership abilities. We have worked closely as a team, first to assist with the gathering of research data, and then to code and priorities key findings. We hope that the end result of our involvement has led to a youth strategy that is young person centred.

With just over 10,000 young people between the ages of 12 and 24 years living in Port Stephens, accounting for approximately 16% of the total population of the Local Government Area (LGA) I am proud and honoured that the Port Stephens Youth Advisory Panel has been able to assist council to develop a thorough plan which will benefit not just young people, but all residents living in the Port Stephens electorate.

Adrian Solomons
Port Stephens Youth Advisory Panel member

INTRODUCTION

Port Stephens Council is committed to supporting young people in its community by providing opportunities that inspire social cohesion and a sense of belonging.

Council has a strong track record of delivering facilities and services for young people. As a demographic, 12 – 24 year olds make up approximately 16% (or 10,242) of the Port Stephens population (Census 2011, ABS : see Youth Profile, Youth Strategy Part D for more demographic detail). This strategy recognises the strengths and needs of these young people and will assist Council in building a community that supports them and most importantly, provides opportunity for young people to actively participate in very diverse aspects of community life.

To create this strategy, Council adopted a participatory research model with young people engaged throughout the process. They were collaborators in the final research findings report, including its presentation to Council in April 2014.

The Youth Advisory Panel was central to the development of this strategy. The panel gathered information from peers through a variety of consultation methods and has assisted in data analysis and the presentation of findings to Councillors through a Two-way Conversation in October 2014.

This collaborative process ensured strong and relevant alignment between strategic directions in the strategy and the business activities of Council.

This strategy is important as it:

1. Sets a clear direction for council and the broader youth and community sector;
2. Acts as a funding and advocacy tool;
3. Encourages collaboration and partnership;
4. Ensures that young people are engaged in planning and decision- making processes ;
5. Identifies pathways for young people to contribute to community building and local activities; and
6. Improves community understanding of young people and their capacity to contribute.

The strategy draws on a range of quantitative and qualitative datasets from a variety of sources at the local, state, and national level. Care was taken to ensure an appropriate mix of local information was gathered to compliment work done outside of Port Stephens, whilst also making sure the strategy is in alignment with other council policies, plans, and strategies.

KEY PRINCIPLES

The Strategy is based on the underlying principle that young people are an important asset to the community and that they have skills, knowledge, capacities and the desire to be a part of creating Port Stephens' future.

It is guided by the principles of **people**, **participation** and **place** to connect young people, Council and the broader community ensuring Port Stephens is a community that is inclusive of young people.



Figure 1: Three key principles underpinning the Strategy

PARTICIPATION

The benefit of meaningful consultation and involving young people in developing and managing strategies increases their level of ownership and responsibility for decisions being made.

Youth Councils, Advisory Panels or Committees are an integral tool in achieving true participation of young people, and fostering leadership and relationships between the community and Council.

Advisory Panel is continuing to deliver outcomes through this Youth Leadership model, assisting in the delivery of the Youth Strategy 2015-2018.

PLACE

Planning for the local community is one of the key functions of Local Government and arguably the most significant way for Council to have a positive impact on the lives of young people.

Planning for employment, recreation, transport, housing, education and training can be complex with solutions and improvements often being part of a long term plan, requiring an agency or community member to take a lead role and responsibility for achieving outcomes.

Opportunities need to be created for young people to participate in the planning process. The result is the fostering of relationships and networks built between differing demographic groups in the community and at all levels within Council.

PEOPLE

Policy is about deciding what your Council's position or direction is on a particular issue. It is important for Council to be very clear on its position and communicate this to the community and other tiers of government. Policy helps distinguish what Local Government commits to its people within the community and what local government might see as a State or Federal Government responsibility.

ALIGNING THE STRATEGY

A review of international, national, state, regional and local policies was undertaken to ensure connectivity at all levels in relation to young people.

International

From an International level the framework for youth policy is largely set by the United Nations and its various agencies and subsidiaries.

The most important piece of legislation at this level is the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) which addresses a range of human rights (civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights) for children and young people up to the age of 18 years.

The *World Programme of Action for Youth* (2010) is an international youth strategy which provides a policy framework and practical guidelines for national action and international support to improve the situation of young people. Priority areas are: education; employment; hunger and poverty; health; environment; drug abuse; juvenile delinquency; leisure-time activities; girls and young women; full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and in decision-making; globalization; information and communications technology; HIV/AIDS; armed conflict; intergenerational issues.

Federal

The *National Strategy for young Australians* (2010) is part of the Australian Government's ongoing process of giving young people (12-24 years) a voice in decisions that affect them. The Australian Government's vision is: *for all young people to 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.* Developed with young Australians, the Strategy describes what it is like to young in Australia today and highlights eight priority areas:

1. Improving the health and wellbeing of all young people;
2. Equipping young Australians to shape their own futures through education;
3. Supporting young Australians within their families;
4. Empowering young Australians to take part and be active in their communities;
5. Equipping young Australians with the skills and personal networks they need to gain, and be successful in employment;
6. Enabling young Australians to participate confidently and safely online;

7. Strengthening early intervention with young Australians to help prevent problems and to help young people get their lives back on track; and
8. Establishing clear cut legal consequences for behaviours that endanger the safety of others.

State

The New South Wales Government's State Plan, *NSW 2021* is based around five strategies that include: Rebuild the Economy; Return Quality Services; Renovate Infrastructure; Strengthen our Local Environment and Communities and; Restore Accountability to Government.

There are numerous State Government plans and policies relating to young people. From a review of these documents, the following priority areas relate to young people:

1. Supporting young people in post school education, training and employment (apprenticeships and traineeships);
2. Increasing young people's participation and engagement in decisions and process such as policy, programs and services that impact upon them;
3. Building and maintaining the connections and relationships young people have with their communities and neighbourhoods (e.g. transport);
4. Building on young people's knowledge and skills (youth leadership); Supportive pathways and access to allow young people to achieve their optimal health and wellbeing;
5. The diversity, talents and abilities of young people are celebrated and fostered;
6. Supporting young people to allow them to reach their potential;
7. Responses to the needs of young people are evidence-based, promote prevention and early intervention and are delivered efficiently and effectively; and
8. Young people experience services as positive, respectful, and supportive.

The Strategy will also assist Council in meeting its obligations under Section 8 of the Local Government Act (1993). The Charter states NSW Councils are required to '*promote and to provide and plan for the needs of children*' – this also includes young people. Included in this Charter is the requirement for Council's to exercise its functions in a manner that is consistent with and promotes social justice principles of equity, access, participation and rights. These principles were applied to the development of this Strategy.

Regional

Regional priorities in the Hunter Regional Action Plan are to drive economic growth and diversity, invest in critical infrastructure and integrated transport, improve the liveability of our City and regional areas and better support the most vulnerable members of our community.

Local

This Strategy aligns with the following Port Stephens Council integrated plans:

Community Strategic Plan 2013- 2023

- 1.1 *Port Stephens is a community where people feel safe.*
- 5.1 *Young people have safe and appropriate places to learn, develop and interact.*
- 6.1 *The community is a partner in developing the future of the local government area.*
- 9.1 *Manage the natural environment for existing and future generations.*
- 12.1 *Port Stephens has a sustainable and diverse economy.*
- 14.1 *Port Stephens has education and training opportunities for people of all ages.*
- 16.1 *Port Stephen's infrastructure and utilities meet the needs of all sections of the community.*
- 19.1 *Port Stephens Council is recognised as a leading local government organisation across the state.*

Delivery Program 2013-2017

- 5.1.1 *Council will provide resources and support for young people appropriate to their needs in the Port Stephens Local government area.*

Operational Plan 2014-2015

- 5.1.1.1 *Convene and support the port Stephens Youth interagency*
- 5.1.1.2 *Complete a Skate Parks Needs Analysis to guide the provision of skate parks*
- 5.1.1.3 *Facilitate the Youth Advisory Panel*
- 5.1.1.4 *Implement the Youth Advisory Strategy*
- 5.1.1.5 *Review Council's involvement in the Real Futures program*

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