

MOYNE AND WARRNAMBOOL YOUTH STRATEGY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Moyne Shire Council and Warrnambool City Council acknowledge the Gunditjmara and Eastern Maar People as the Traditional Custodians of the lands that encompass the region. We recognise Traditional Owners' care for and connection to Country, a relationship which has endured for tens of thousands of years and continues today. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and emerging, as well as to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in the region.

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

This **SHARED** Youth Strategy guides how Moyne Shire Council and Warrnambool City Council will work **TOGETHER** to **ENHANCE** the lives of young people across the region.

Young people are defined as those aged between 12 and 25 years old. This time encompasses key stages of life and essential moments of development. The goal of this strategy is to articulate what the councils can do to enhance this important time in the lives of young people and set them up for the future.

Our region is undergoing significant transformation, driven by a growing population and changes to industry and employment. It is home to approximately 8000 young people. Supporting them, creating an environment where they can thrive, and ensuring they can make a life here significantly benefits our whole community.

While delivery of support services for young people are handled by a range of organisations and agencies, there are significant opportunities for the councils to make a positive impact. This includes shaping the way places are designed, nurturing community connections, and creating opportunities for growth and empowerment. These works will support the crucial activities of the wider youth sector.

In delivering the actions outlined in this strategy, Moyne Shire Council and Warrnambool City Council

are committed to upholding the Victorian Government's Child Safe Standards and will work to ensure spaces, programs and events are inclusive to and respectful of all youth in the region – regardless of location, identity or ability.

The two councils are cooperating on this strategy to provide a consistent regional approach and ensure benefits flow to both rural and urban young people. It builds on past collaborations, formalises the partnership, and positions the organisations to capitalise on future opportunities.

Finally, the councils would like to thank representatives of the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, First Peoples State Relations and Councillors who guided the development of this strategy, as well as all the young people, community members and key stakeholders who shared their perspectives and insights.

The following pages present the different elements of the strategy and what the councils will do to achieve its aims.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This **SHARED** strategy is informed
by and responds to a range of
ASPIRATIONS and **OBJECTIVES**.

MOYNE

WARRNAMBOOL



COMMUNITY VISION

COMMUNITY VISION



COUNCIL PLAN

COUNCIL PLAN



YOUTH STRATEGY

STATE
GOVERNMENT
STRATEGIES

FEDERAL
GOVERNMENT
STRATEGIES

REGIONAL
STRATEGIES AND
INITIATIVES

HOW WE DEVELOPED THE STRATEGY

The strategy was developed through a rigorous process, **INFORMED** and **GUIDED** by **YOUNG PEOPLE** and relevant local, regional and national strategies.

ONE

WE CONVENED A YOUTH
CO-DESIGN PANEL

TWO

MET YOUNG PEOPLE
WHERE THEY WERE

THREE

RESPONDED TO
WHAT WE HEARD

OUR YOUTH CO-DESIGN PANEL

This strategy was developed in partnership with representatives of the region's youth. A Co-Design Panel comprising 20 young people (10 from Warrnambool and 10 from Moyne) was convened. They met at key stages throughout the process to guide the work and make key decisions about the shape of the strategy and its direction.

The Youth Co-design Panel consisted of:

ARTHUR BREUNIG
JESS BUSHELL
EVIE DALTON
JULIA DELANEY
NAEVE DENIGAN
BAILEY ELSE
LIAM FLAHERTY
JAALI LANG
MADELINE MAIN
BRIAR MERRETT
NICK NORTHEAST
LILY POTTER
EMMA RAG
ISABELLA REESINK
FRANCES ROBERTS
SHARNA ROGERS
MITCHELL SPENCER
BRYANNA WILLIE
JENNA WINNEN
TILLY WOODWARD

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Extensive consultations were undertaken with young people across the region, as well as with the various adults in their lives. This included:

CONSULTATIONS with schools, support service providers, sporting clubs, community organisations, employers, Traditional Owners, and council stakeholders

41 IN-PERSON CONVERSATIONS engaging 271 young people and 126 adults

TWO ONLINE SURVEYS capturing the views of 389 young people and 69 adults

KEY FINDINGS

The engagements produced a series of key findings:

YOUNG PEOPLE LOVE THE REGION

Despite some challenges and discontent, there was an overwhelming gratitude for where they live

HANGING OUT IN-PERSON IS THE MOST VALUED TYPE OF CONNECTION

Yes, screens are a constant part of life, but unstructured time together is what young people crave

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR A SENSE OF BELONGING

They want to feel like an accepted part of the community (in all their diversity) and be connected to it

THE WEIGHT OF THE WORLD HANGS HEAVY ON YOUNG PEOPLE

Cost of living, mental health and housing challenges lead to many either not engaging with the future or reducing their vision for what it could be

ISSUES AROUND TRANSPORTATION HAVE A HUGE IMPACT

Getting around is a perennial challenge impacting autonomy, safety and career opportunities

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE DISCONNECTED FROM OPPORTUNITIES, SERVICES AND RESOURCES

While many are available, they are either invisible to young people or there are significant barriers to accessing them

PROGRAMMING SOMETIMES MISSES THE MARK

There's lots for children and adults, but limited opportunities reflecting the tastes of young people.

The Youth Co-Design Panel considered these findings to decide on the AREAS OF FOCUS for the strategy.

The full context and engagement report is available at either moynes.vic.gov.au/our-community/youth or warrnambool.vic.gov.au/youth.

VISION FOR THE *FUTURE*

This vision statement articulates an ideal **FUTURE** young people want for **THEMSELVES**. It describes what they want their lives in the region to be like.

The Moyne and Warrnambool region is full of **ACCESSIBLE** and **AFFORDABLE** opportunities for young people. It's a **FUN** and **EXCITING** place to be! Young people are a prominent part of our community. They feel **COMFORTABLE, SAFE** and **AT HOME**, surrounded by and part of an accepting community open to new ideas and change.

Realising this vision is a shared community responsibility and requires the energies and input of:

FAMILIES

SCHOOL AND EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

YOUTH SERVICE PROVIDERS

COMMUNITY GROUPS

EMPLOYERS

PEAK BODIES

THE COUNCILS

STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENTS

The following sections outline the councils' contributions to achieving these aspirations.

THE COUNCILS' ROLE

There are a number of **KEY WAYS** the councils will foster a **POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT** for young people and support the work of the youth sector.

BE THE CONNECTOR

Between resources, opportunities and young people. The councils will actively engage with relevant parties, fostering links between groups, communities, support services, opportunities, and resources.

GENUINELY ENGAGE YOUNG PEOPLE

The councils will actively involve young people when developing strategies and plans or undertaking major projects, valuing their contributions and responding to their perspectives and insights.

SEEK FUNDING FOR INITIATIVES

The councils will pursue external funding to deliver programs and initiatives for and with young people across the region, continuously monitoring and assessing opportunities.

UNDERTAKE ADVOCACY WORK

The councils will advocate to state and federal governments for the needs of young people, working with strategic partners on changes that will enhance their experiences and opportunities.

DELIVER TARGETED PROGRAMS

The councils will use secured funding to provide a range of programs to support, delight and expand the lives of young people across the region, from practical upskilling to creative entertainment.

AREAS OF FOCUS

These are the areas the councils will **FOCUS** on over the five year life of the Strategy. All the **PROGRAMS**, initiatives, and behind the scenes activities the councils do will be to further these **GOALS**.

CREATING BETTER SPACES AND PLACES

Young people need places to connect with their peers, enjoy unstructured hang outs and just be. These should encourage connections between young people and increase their visibility in community life, whether they are in the city or out in the regions. This could involve better utilisation of existing spaces or tweaks to public infrastructure. The goal is to provide accessible spaces where young people feel comfortable.

IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY AND ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION

Enabling young people to participate in the life of the community increases their connections, fosters good mental health, and enhances their quality of life. Being able to access opportunities and develop their capabilities will expand their worldviews and prospects. This could include improvements to transportation, greater visibility of assets, better connection to employment opportunities, and smoother processes for accessing resources. The goal is to widen the scope of what's possible for young people.

FOSTERING BELONGING AND ACCEPTANCE

For young people to feel part of their community they need to feel safe and free to express their ideas and identities. Achieving this will require the removal of stigma and the enthusiastic embrace of all people and cultures by the community. This could include increasing the visibility of difference and diversity, and celebrating young people's activities, interests and achievements. The goal is to create a supportive and inclusive environment where young people can thrive.

These areas reflect ways the councils can improve the environment for young people and empower them to participate in community life. This complements and supports the delivery of essential support services by the youth sector and other stakeholders.

PROGRAMS *AND* INITIATIVES

The councils will undertake a series of **INITIATIVES**, **PROGRAMS** and behind the scenes **ACTIVITIES** to deliver the strategy.

JOINT PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES

YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

The councils will establish an advisory board which they will report to and consult with on key council business impacting young people. The team will comprise half Moyne and half Warrnambool youth and be refreshed every year. Its members will receive training in governance, be paid, and actively participate in driving the Youth Strategy.

REIMAGINING VOLUNTEERING

Creating ways for young people to participate in volunteering opportunities will support the goals of creating connections across the community and enhancing their capabilities. This will require a change in the way volunteering operates in the region, working with organisations to adjust the way they offer and manage volunteer opportunities, as well as developing new ways of engaging and supporting young people to take them up. It will be a major project, including extensive work with community organisations, development of a new online platform, and promotion to young people.

PROGRAM AREAS

COLLABORATIVE EVENT PROGRAMMING

Create a consistent and engaging calendar of events for young people across the urban and rural parts of the region

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

Provide training opportunities that fill gaps not covered by other organisations, with an eye to creating pathways that support skill development

PUBLIC SPACE UPGRADES

Identify and pursue opportunities to create spaces for young people to gather, connect and hang out in unstructured ways

SUPPORT FOR EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Work with partners in government, academia and industry to establish new job opportunities for the region's youth

RESOURCE AND OPPORTUNITIES HUB

Make the assets, resources and opportunities available to young people visible and accessible

STRATEGIC CONNECTION FORUMS

Regularly bring together key stakeholders to align activities and planning, and consider insights, needs and opportunities

ADVOCACY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS

Represent the needs of young people to government bodies and push for changes to make their lives better

PLANNING AND STRATEGY INCLUSION

Undertake genuine engagement with young people when developing new strategies or major projects to ensure their needs are considered

CELEBRATE YOUNG PEOPLE

Promote the incredible achievements and diversity of our region's young people

YOUTH GRANTS

Opening up access to the councils' community grants programs for young people to deliver initiatives for their peers, either through dedicated streams or targeted promotion

ALIGNMENT WITH AREAS OF FOCUS

	SPACES & PLACES	ACCESSIBILITY & PARTICIPATION	BELONGING & ACCEPTANCE
Youth Advisory Board			
Reimagining volunteering			
Collaborative event programming			
Skills development training			
Public space upgrades			
Support for employment opportunities			
Resource and opportunities hub			
Strategic connection forums			
Advocacy for young people's needs			
Planning and strategy inclusion			
Celebrate young people			
Youth grants			

BEHIND THE SCENES ACTIVITIES

These are the actions the two councils will undertake to enable the initiatives and programs to take place. This section of the strategy will be updated each year to reflect progress and the evolving requirements of the programs and initiatives.

ACTION	TIMING	RESOURCE	RESPONSIBILITY
Formalise collaborative processes between the two councils	2025	Staff time	Joint activity
Establish internal collaboration mechanisms within each council	2025	Staff time	Both councils
Design the Youth Advisory Board and training program	2025	Existing budget	Joint activity
Convene the Youth Advisory Board	Ongoing	External Funding	Joint activity
Develop scope, pitch and project plan for the Reimagining Volunteering initiative to take to potential funders	2025	External Funding	Joint activity
Design and deliver year-round FReeZA programs, identifying collaborative opportunities with relevant partners	2025–27	External funding	Both councils
Review training and skills development options for young people, and identify gaps, opportunities, and potential partners to meet these needs	2025	Staff time	Both councils
Design and deliver training and skills development programs with Engage funding	2025–27	External funding	Both councils

ACTION	TIMING	RESOURCE	RESPONSIBILITY
Establish a youth stream within the community grants programs	2025	Staff time	Moyne
Promote opportunities within community grants programs to young people	2025	Staff time	Warrnambool
Identify improvements to street furniture in laneways	2025	Staff time	Warrnambool
Scope potential enhancements to Koroit Youth Space	2025	Staff time	Moyne
Scope potential enhancements to Mortlake Market Square	2025	External funding	Moyne
Identify potential upgrades or changes to public spaces across the municipalities	2025	Staff time	Both councils
Explore adjusted opening times for libraries to create after school hang out spaces	2025	Existing budget	Both councils
Consider establishing dedicated spaces for young people to stage events without Council involvement	2025	Staff time	Both councils

ACTION	TIMING	RESOURCE	RESPONSIBILITY
Engage industry to understand future workforce needs and advocate for local job opportunities	2025	Staff time	Moyne
Engage stakeholders to understand future workforce needs and advocate for local job opportunities	2025	Staff time	Warrnambool
Establish a free public art wall	2025	External funding	Warrnambool
Regularly meet with schools, service providers and community groups to understand current situation, needs and opportunities	Ongoing	Staff time	Joint activity
Monitor funding bodies for relevant opportunities	Ongoing	Staff time	Both councils
Regularly profile young people from across the region on council channels	Ongoing	Staff time	Both councils
Host strategic connection forums throughout the year to bring relevant stakeholders together	Ongoing	Staff time	Joint activity
Youth Officer participation on strategic working groups relevant to young people	Ongoing	Staff time	Both councils

ACTION	TIMING	RESOURCE	RESPONSIBILITY
Report on progress of the Strategy and update behind the scenes actions annually	Ongoing	Staff time	Join activity
Consider access processes for community assets and consider changes to improve youth participation	2026	Staff time	Both councils
Develop a scope for a collaborative online resource and opportunities hub	2026	External Funding	Joint activity
Identify improvements to bike paths and footpaths to foster greater use by young people	2026	Staff time	Both councils
Advocate to relevant authorities for upgrades to public transport options and safer roads	2026	Staff time	Joint activity
Work with transport partners to investigate holiday services to key facilities and events	2026	Staff time / External funding	Joint activity
Apply to FReeZA and Engage for new round of funding	2027	Staff time	Both councils

**THE IMPACT WE
WANT TO SEE**

ACTIVITY

OUTCOMES

SHORT TERM

Improve connections between young people and existing resources, support and opportunities

Young people are able to participate in community life more easily

MEDIUM TERM

Transform spaces to be welcoming to young people and encourage connection and play

Young people have an improved sense of belonging and connection to community

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LONG TERM

Fully integrate young people's needs into decision making and project delivery

Young people are living flourishing lives in the region

GOVERNANCE
GOVERNANCE
GOVERNANCE

RESPONSIBILITY

Delivering the Youth Strategy is a whole of council responsibility. While the community development units of each council will take the lead, the actions encompass all areas of the organisations. The Youth Officers will drive the relationship building and program delivery, drawing on resources from across council departments and foster collaborations.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The Youth Advisory Board will meet regularly to review the councils' progress and provide input, direction and insights as relevant. The councils will update the Board on progress of the Youth Strategy and any relevant developments from other strategies, plans or projects.

REPORTING

The councils will report annually to the community on the progress of the strategy. This will include updates on each of the initiatives, programs and actions listed in the strategy. The list of behind the scenes activities will be updated each year to reflect developments in projects and incorporate any new actions being undertaken. This allows the strategy to evolve and respond to opportunities as they arise and ensure the community can see what is happening.

For more information visit
moyne.vic.gov.au/Our-community/youth and warrnambool.vic.gov.au/youth.

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