

LAKE  
MACQUARIE  
CITY

#LAKEMACNEXTGEN

YOUTH  
STRATEGY  
2020-2023



## Why a youth strategy?

Growing up in Lake Macquarie should be exciting for young people, and a place where they can see genuine potential for their future. We want young people to thrive in our City by helping provide opportunities for employment and social connection, and ensuring they feel safe and have a voice.

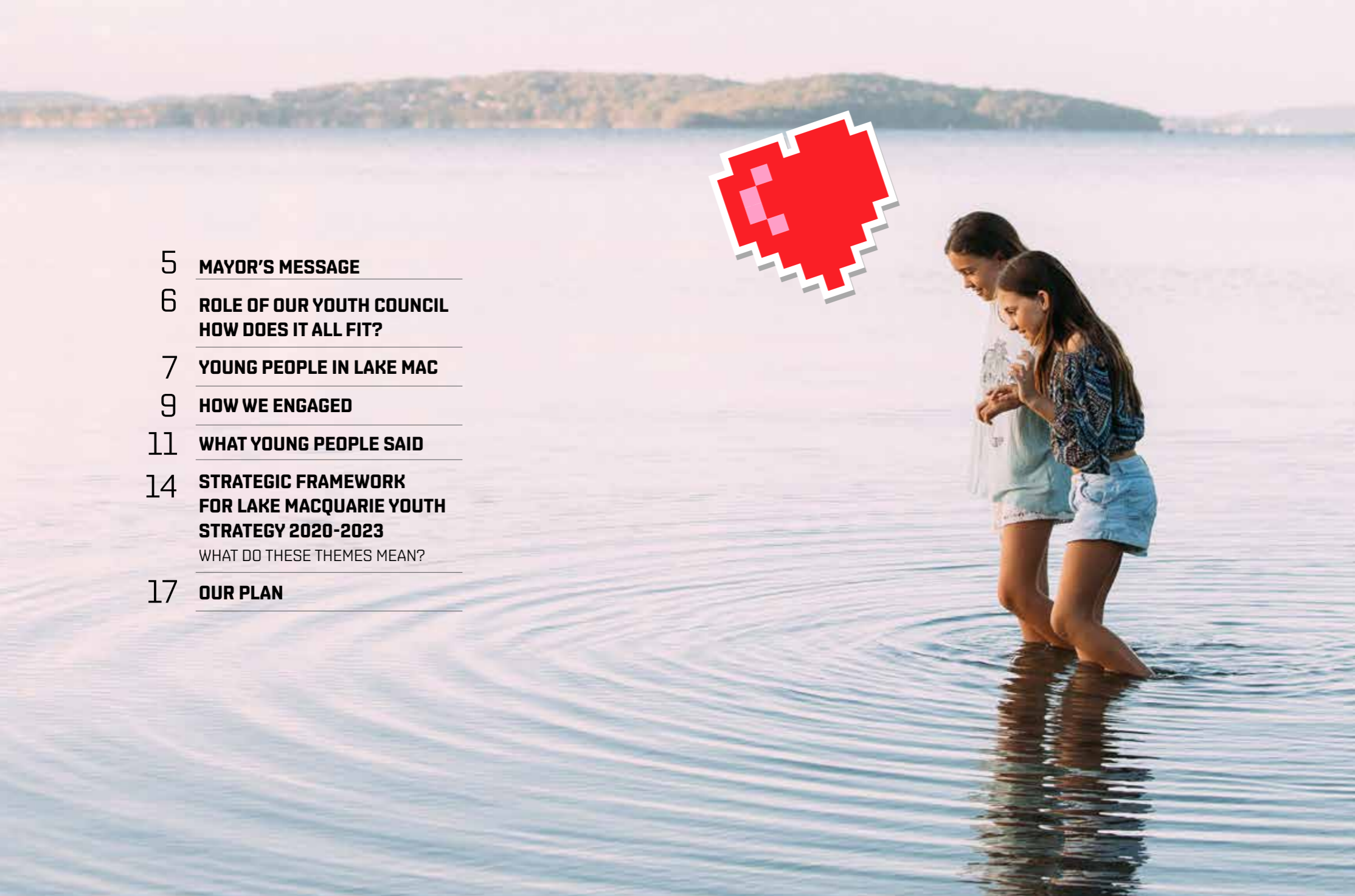
More than 30,000 young people call Lake Macquarie home, representing 15 per cent of our population. Our young people are essential to the future of our City and their ideas, opinions and passion shape our community's direction now and into the future.

The development of this strategy has been a youth-led process, beginning with 60 young people from eight local high schools, brought together with members of the Lake Macquarie

Youth Advisory Council to explore their ideas and priorities. We then reached out through face-to-face workshops, focus groups, an online survey and a social media engagement campaign to get a clearer picture of what life is like for a young person living in Lake Mac.

Feedback collected throughout the consultation phase is reflected in this strategy, which provides a three-year strategic direction for the delivery of contemporary programs, activities and events that meet the needs of our diverse population of young people.

To implement the plan, Council will work alongside young people, the local youth sector, schools, the community and all levels of government to make living in Lake Mac even better for young people.



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# MAYOR'S MESSAGE

## Looking to our #nextgen

To our young people in Lake Macquarie, you are strong, you are intelligent and you have a voice that needs to be heard. We want you to be proud of your City and to be able to see a future for where you come from. This Youth Strategy is first and foremost for you.

Young people have an incredible ability to see things from a different angle and a passion to make things happen. It has always been important for young people to have a voice, but more so than ever, it is our duty to listen. Young people's ideas need to be valued now and it is essential we involve them to help shape our future. They hold our ideas for the future, they are our next innovators and creators, and will be the leaders who will see our City reach new heights.

We've spoken to young people right across our City about the things that are important to them, like access to technology and better transport, increasing arts and music events, and doing more to address issues of wellbeing, including mental health and body image.

The actions in this strategy will help take the next steps to improve the lives of young people across our community and make living in Lake Mac even better.



# THE ROLE OF OUR YOUTH COUNCIL

The Lake Macquarie Youth Advisory Council provides an important opportunity for young people to have input into Council decisions. It offers young people a chance to participate in planning, running and evaluating local initiatives and projects for young people and acts as an outlet to provide advice to Council and the community about addressing issues that young people face.

If young people are keen to join or find out more about the Youth Advisory Council, they can visit [lakemac.com.au/YouthCouncil](http://lakemac.com.au/YouthCouncil)



# HOW DOES IT ALL FIT?

The Youth Strategy aims to highlight the needs of young people who reside in Lake Macquarie and contains strategies and actions that reflect Council's commitment to meet the needs and challenges facing young people aged 12 year to 24 years old.

The strategy supports the achievement of our City's overarching 10 year Community Strategic Plan, 'Our Future in Focus' 2017-2027, as well as our four-year delivery program and related Council community and operational strategies. Council's Community Strategic Plan has provided

the primary consultative framework for this strategy with a view to identifying and delivering actions in-line with community values and expectations, and the core business of Council.

The Youth Strategy has been developed in reference to NSW Government strategies, including the guidelines for round three of Stronger Country Communities Fund, Greater Newcastle Metropolitan Plan 2036 and Hunter Regional Plan 2036 to align with the broader effort to improve the lives of young people across NSW and the Hunter.

## NSW GOVERNMENT KEY FOCUS AREAS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN REGIONAL AREAS

### COMMUNITY

Enhancing young people's artistic, civic, cultural, leadership, recreational and sporting development.

### WELLBEING

Supporting young people to understand, improve and maintain their physical and mental health.


### CONNECTIVITY

Providing young people access to activities and digital options.

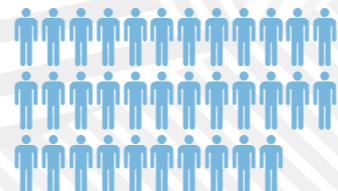
### WORK READY


Supporting young people to pursue further education and training to develop key employability skills.

# YOUNG PEOPLE IN LAKE MAC

15% OF THE PEOPLE LIVING IN LAKE MAC ARE AGED 12-24 YEARS 

30,750 total number of young people living in Lake Mac

Projected population growth  >34,000 BY 2036

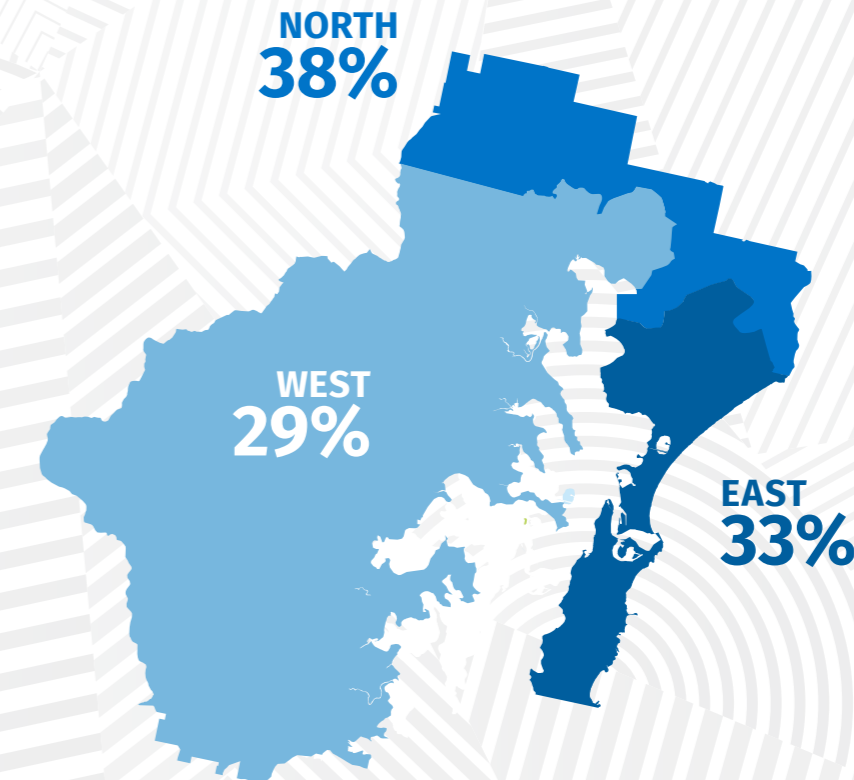
young people in EDUCATION  12,795

12,522 young people employed

number of young people who identify as Aboriginal or TSI 2128

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE 10.7%

## WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE LIVE IN LAKE MAC





# HOW WE ENGAGED

## SCHOOL WORKSHOPS – YOUTH FORUM

In April 2019, 53 students aged 12-18 years from eight high schools across Lake Macquarie participated in a consultation based on the seven Focus Areas identified in Our Future In Focus - Lake Macquarie Community Strategic Plan 2017 – 2027. Participating schools included Belmont Whitebridge, Swansea, West Wallsend, Glendale, Morisset, Hunter Sports and Lake Macquarie High Schools.

## LAKE MACQUARIE YOUTH INTERAGENCY

A face-to-face workshop was held in July 2019 with 19 participants of the Lake Macquarie Youth Interagency. This included four high school staff, 10 community organisation workers and five government agencies.

## LAKE MACQUARIE YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOCUS GROUP

A focus group was conducted with the Lake Macquarie Youth Advisory Committee in August 2019. The Youth Council members assisted with improving the accuracy of responses about the needs of young people as they relate to each of the key themes.

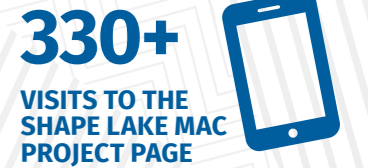
## SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

A social media campaign was also undertaken, which targeted young people not previously engaged with the earlier phases of the consultation. The campaign utilised Instagram polls and a photographic competition, and provided a direct link to the online survey

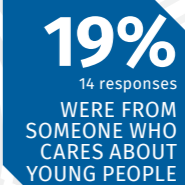
## ONLINE SURVEY

The next phase of consultation commenced in October through to November 2019. It included an online survey that targeted the community more broadly with a focus on the three key target groups – young people, those who work with young people, and those who care about young people.

## HOW WE REACHED PARTICIPANTS



## WHO COMPLETED THE ONLINE SURVEY





# WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE SAID

## KEY FINDINGS

**YOUNG PEOPLE WANT**

**ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY** and are interested in technological industries



**TO PARTICIPATE IN creative mediums** SUCH AS ART AND MUSIC



More to be done to address

**HEALTH ISSUES**

faced by young people



**activities and events**

THAT ARE EASY TO GET TO AND ARE LOW COST

## SOCIAL MEDIA QUESTIONS



## WE ASKED

Where are the most youth friendly and easy to get to places in Lake Mac?

**Speers Point Park or Belmont Baths?**

**58%** SPEERS POINT PARK  
**42%** BELMONT BATHS

**32%** SHOPPING CENTRES  
**68%** BEACH

**Shopping centres or the beach?**

**Art Gallery Booragul or Toronto Foreshore**

**15%** ART GALLERY BOORAGUL  
**85%** TORONTO FORESHORE


WHERE DO YOUNG PEOPLE GO USING PUBLIC TRANSPORT?

AVERAGE ANSWER  
**SHOPPING CENTRES**



## ONLINE SURVEY








Respondents to the online survey were asked to rank their preferred options to the below questions with (1) representing the most preferred option.

<p><b>MOST YOUTH FRIENDLY AND ACCESSIBLE LOCATIONS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Beaches</li> <li>2. Local shopping centres</li> <li>3. Speers Point Park</li> </ol>	<p><b>ACTIVITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD BE FREE OR LOW COST</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Free</li> <li>2. \$1-5</li> <li>3. \$6-14</li> </ol>	<p><b>YOUNG PEOPLE ARE INTERESTED IN</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Music festivals</li> <li>2. Youth-led mixed community festival</li> <li>3. Video/film festival</li> </ol>	<p><b>HEALTH ISSUES THAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MOST CONCERNED WITH</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mental health</li> <li>2. Body image</li> <li>3. Healthy eating</li> </ol> 
<p><b>THE BEST TIMES TO ORGANISE RECREATION OPTIONS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Weekends</li> <li>2. School holidays</li> <li>3. After school (4-8pm)</li> </ol>	<p><b>YOUNG PEOPLE WANT ACCESS TO</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Free Wi-Fi in public spaces</li> <li>2. Gaming opportunities</li> <li>3. Music and recording studios</li> </ol>	<p><b>SAFE PLACES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Easy to get to/close to public transport</li> <li>2. No cost</li> <li>3. Youth designed</li> </ol>	<p><b>BIGGEST PUBLIC TRANSPORT ISSUES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Infrequent bus services when provided</li> <li>2. Lack of buses linking to train stations in the west and north</li> <li>3. Lack of affordable public transport</li> </ol>
<p><b>TOP CREATIVE MEDIUMS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Street art walls and other public spaces and music and music productions</li> <li>2. Photography – film and processing</li> <li>3. Dance</li> </ol>	<p><b>MOST POPULAR SELF-EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Technology/computing</li> <li>2. Graphic design and arts</li> <li>3. Music production and performance</li> </ol>	<p><b>BEST WAY TO GET YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Low or no cost</li> <li>2. Give young people ownership</li> <li>3. Make sure young people are informed</li> </ol>	<p><b>YOUNG PEOPLE WANT TO HAVE A SAY ABOUT</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How services are provided to young people</li> <li>2. Public spaces/facilities</li> <li>3. The natural environment</li> </ol>



# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR LAKE MACQUARIE YOUTH STRATEGY 2020-2023

The creation of #LakeMacNextGen has been youth-led and includes feedback from young people across Lake Macquarie. With help from Council's Youth Council, the feedback was analysed with seven key themes emerging. The key themes have been linked directly to Council's key focus areas included in the Community Strategic Plan.

 <p><b>SENSE OF BELONGING</b> <i>Connected communities</i> Increasing a sense of belonging through clean, green, safe and affordable recreational opportunities.</p>	 <p><b>EXPRESSING CREATIVITY</b> <i>Creativity</i> Working with creative processes and new technologies to support emerging local artists and increase art for sustainability.</p>	 <p><b>SKILLED &amp; READY</b> <i>Diverse economy</i> Ensuring the economy is adaptable to change and provide entry-level opportunities.</p>	 <p><b>FEELING SAFE AND HEALTHY</b> <i>Lifestyle &amp; wellbeing</i> Providing safe places that encourage participation and cultural learning experiences, and address health needs.</p>	 <p><b>ACCESS TO TRANSPORT</b> <i>Mobility &amp; accessibility</i> Providing frequent, convenient, low cost and safe transport.</p>	 <p><b>INCLUDING US</b> <i>Shared decision making</i> Strengthening links between Youth Council, the community and schools.</p>	 <p><b>ECO-FRIENDLY LIVING</b> <i>Unique landscape</i> Ensuring our natural environment is looked after.</p>
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# OUR PLAN

The results of the consultation process have been used to develop an action plan identifying 29 key action areas.

## SENSE OF BELONGING

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN THEME  
**Connected communities**

ACTION DELIVERABLE OVER THE LIFECYCLE OF THE STRATEGY	STATE PRIORITIES	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Deliver annual Youth Week grants program making available \$7000 for activities, events and programs	Community, Connectivity	Ongoing	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning
2. Ensure consultation with Youth Council about Council events for young people	Connectivity	Ongoing	Arts Culture & Tourism - Events
3. Work with Youth Council to deliver annual youth events at swim centres	Community, Wellbeing, Connectivity	Ongoing	Leisure Services
4. Deliver a minimum of two public festival type events for young people (low or no cost participation) in areas of emerging interest (e.g. music, street arts, theatre) in locations accessible to young people	Community, Connectivity	New commencing 2021 where additional resources are identified	Arts Culture & Tourism - Events
5. Work with shopping centre management, local businesses, NSW Police and community services sector to make town centres youth friendly environments	Community, Wellbeing	Ongoing	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning
6. Attend Youth Interagency and networking meetings to ensure Council is informed, and where relevant, collaborate with the youth service sector to achieve improved outcomes for young people	Connectivity	Ongoing	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning
7. Provide advice to Councillors and Executive in relation to the needs of young people and activities undertaken by Council for young people	Community, Connectivity	Ongoing	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning
8. Ensure Council maintains contact with peak sector organisations and other Government Departments about youth sector changes and opportunities to ensure Council officers can provide advice on industry changes and that Council approaches align with industry good practice	Community, Connectivity	Ongoing	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning
9. Provide information and support to youth sector agencies seeking grants and/or deliver innovative programs/projects	Community	Ongoing	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning



**EXPRESSING CREATIVITY**

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN THEME

**Creativity**

ACTION DELIVERABLE OVER THE LIFECYCLE OF THE STRATEGY	STATE PRIORITIES	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
10. Create opportunities for young people interested in digital mediums and music recording in partnership with local youth service providers	Connectivity, Work ready	Ongoing	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning
11. Provide an annual workshop for young people interested in digital mediums (e.g. gaming, social media) to be held in nominated Libraries across the City	Connectivity, Work ready	Ongoing	Arts Culture & Tourism - Events

**SKILLED & READY**

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN THEME

**Diverse economy**

ACTION DELIVERABLE OVER THE LIFECYCLE OF THE STRATEGY	STATE PRIORITIES	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
12. Provide at least two training workshops each year for members of Youth Council in areas of relevant interest and promote opportunity for any resident aged 12-24 years to attend	Community, Connectivity, Work ready	Ongoing	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning
13. Engage with local business networks to connect with three high schools each year about career pathways and local employment opportunities	Community, Connectivity, Work ready	New where additional resources are identified	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning
14. Work with employment support providers to engage with three high schools each year to coordinate workshops for young people interested in entrepreneurial opportunities	Community, Connectivity, Work ready	New where additional resources are identified	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning
15. Work with Children's Court, NSW Police, support services and local businesses to identify work experience and employment opportunities for young people at risk of disengaging with community	Community, Wellbeing, Work ready	Ongoing	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning

**FEELING SAFE & HEALTHY**

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN THEME

**Lifestyle & wellbeing**

ACTION DELIVERABLE OVER THE LIFECYCLE OF THE STRATEGY	STATE PRIORITIES	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
16. Provide support to the local youth sector to create more opportunities for young people to access health services and support	Community, Wellbeing, Connectivity	Ongoing	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning
17. Advocate with Hunter primary care network to identify resources to provide youth-specific mental health services in locations across the City accessible to young people	Community, Wellbeing	New where additional resources are identified	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning
18. Work with NSW Communities and Justice/Juvenile Justice to deliver projects that provide opportunity for young people to reconnect with community	Community, Wellbeing, Connectivity	Ongoing	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning
19. Respond to enquiries (including service requests) from young people, families and community regarding the needs of young people	Wellbeing	Ongoing	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning

**ACCESS TO TRANSPORT**

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN THEME

**Mobility & accessibility**

ACTION DELIVERABLE OVER THE LIFECYCLE OF THE STRATEGY	STATE PRIORITIES	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
20. Advocate for improvements in public transport accessibility for young people living in isolated locations across the City	Community, Connectivity	New 2019-2020, 2020-2021	Integrated Planning / Asset Management
21. Ensure planning controls have an increased emphasis on linking modes of transport that are accessible to young people	Connectivity	New 2019-2020, 2020-2021	Asset Management / Integrated Planning - Development Contributions
22. Work with local youth service providers to provide driver training opportunities to 15 young people each year	Community	New where additional resources are identified	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning

**INCLUDING US**

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN THEME

**Shared decision making**

ACTION DELIVERABLE OVER THE LIFECYCLE OF THE STRATEGY	STATE PRIORITIES	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
23. Facilitate opportunity for Council and external organisations to consult Youth Council to better understand the needs of young people as part of organisation planning and program delivery	Community, Wellbeing, Connectivity	Ongoing	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning
24. Work with Youth Council to conduct weekly social media promotions about the work of Youth Council and opportunities for young people across the City	Connectivity	Ongoing	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning
25. Coordinate a program to develop relationship between Youth Council and six high school communities each year	Community, Connectivity	New where additional resources are identified	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning
26. Support and resource Youth Council to hold a minimum of 11 regular meetings, deliver annual planning, provide information to young people of Council's Youth Council	Connectivity	Ongoing	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning
27. Support the participation of Youth Council in community events and celebrations	Community, Connectivity	Ongoing	Community Partnerships – Social and Community Planning

**ECO-FRIENDLY LIVING**

COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLAN THEME

**Unique landscape**

ACTION DELIVERABLE OVER THE LIFE CYCLE OF THE STRATEGY	STATE PRIORITIES	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
28. Develop targeted promotion about waste services and/or environmental issues to young people across the City	Community	Ongoing	Sustainability Engagement
29. Work with stakeholders and Youth Council for more waste infrastructure at locations popular with young people	Community	New 2019-2020	Sustainability Engagement





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