



YARRIAMBIACK YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2019-2022

LISTEN
TO US

ENGAGE
US

EMPOWER
US





ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

“The Yarriambiack Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the country, the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk people and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Yarriambiack Shire Council Vision

“In consultation with our community Yarriambiack Shire Council will provide a viable, sustainable and vibrant future”

Contents

Introduction	3
Development of Youth Engagement Strategy	3
Yarriambiack Youth Profile	4
Victorian Government Context	5
Community & Stakeholder Consultation	7
Summary of Themes from Community & Stakeholder Consultation	8
Yarriambiack Youth Action & Engagement Plan:	10
- Priority Area 1. Encouraging Youth Engagement	
- Priority Area 2. Support and Development of Youth Leadership	
- Priority Area 3. Supporting Youth Health and Wellbeing	
- Priority Area 4. Engagement for the 8-12 young people	
Thank you & Acknowledgements	17

INTRODUCTION

Throughout 2019, the Yarriambiack Shire Council started a process to develop a new Youth Engagement Strategy. This new Strategy will oversee the transition of Youth Services in Yarriambiack, from the 12-25 year age group to the 8-25 year age group. This will provide engagement and support to the 8-12 year age group that often miss specialist support from Local Government Areas.

The aim of the Yarriambiack Youth Engagement Strategy is to provide a strategic direction for the development and coordination of youth services and infrastructure in Yarriambiack Shire Council for the period 2019-2022. It builds on the last Youth Plan (2014-2018) which provided a Youth Engagement Officer and was successful in receiving much valued Victorian Government funding, to support our many youth programs. This previous plan has placed the Shire in a strong position to consolidate, enhance and initiate programs that the young people see as important into the next 4 years and beyond.

Providing this ongoing support for Youth, enables us to “provide a viable, sustainable and vibrant future” in line with the Yarriambiack Shire Council Vision.



DEVELOPMENT OF THE YARRIAMBIACK YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The development of this strategy took place after consultation with young people, key stakeholders within the Yarriambiack LGA and also several Stakeholders who service our LGA. The Yarriambiack Youth Engagement Strategy Core Reference Group was formed to develop the strategy. One of its first decisions was to support the inclusion of the extended age group, so that there was no gap in the planning, support and engagement that Yarriambiack Shire Council provides for its younger community.

Information for the strategy was sourced through discussions with Young People at:

- Yarriambiack Youth Action Council
- Surveys and Interviews
- Workshops
- Youth Summits

YARRIAMBIACK YOUTH PROFILE

The 2016 census figures place approximately 1180 young people between the ages of 8-25 as residing in the Yarriambiack Shire Council.

(Selected Key Statistics ABS Census data 2016-<https://quickstats.censusdata.abs.gov.au>)

Age	Yarriambiack (S)	%	Victoria	%	Australia	%
Median Age	50	-	37	-	38	-
5 - 9 Years	402	6.0%	368,631	6.2%	1,502,646	6.4%
10 - 14 Years	370	5.5%	341,063	5.8%	1,397,183	6.0%
15 - 19 Years	366	5.5%	356,340	6.0%	1,421,595	6.1%
20 - 24 Years	283	4.2%	413,792	7.0%	1,566,793	6.7%
25 - 29 Years	293	4.4%	441,266	7.4%	1,664,602	7.1%

The median age of people in Yarriambiack Local Government Area was 50 years. Children aged 0 - 14 years made up 15.8% of the population and people aged 65 years and over made up 27.4% of the population.

The SEIFA Index of Disadvantage measures the relative level of socio-economic disadvantage based on a range of Census characteristics. Yarriambiack Shire Council ranked the 7th most disadvantaged in the State 2016

A new measure of Household Advantage and Disadvantage, prepared by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, ranks the Yarriambiack Shire Council as the 2nd most disadvantaged Shire in the State in regards to Households. The measure differs from the SIEFA (Socio-economic Indices for Areas) Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage in an important respect: it is a measure of conditions within each household, then sums these results to give a measure of disadvantage for suburbs, municipalities and other areas.

The state's youth unemployment rate is 11.4 per cent, just above the national rate of 11.2 per cent. The Greater Wimmera Region (Including Yarriambiack) has a rate of nearly 14% placing it 4th worst in the state.

Country of Birth for Yarriambiack residents reflects a very strong Australian born population, with 84.9% born in Australia, compared with 66.7 of all Australians born here and 64.9% of all Victorians born in Australia. The most common countries of birth in Yarriambiack after Australia being: England 1.8%, New Zealand 0.7%, India 0.5%, Netherlands 0.3% and Germany 0.3%. This is supported by nearly 90% of the Shire's people only speaking English at home against the state average of 67.9





VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT CONTEXT

2016 saw young people across the state, asked to assist in shaping future government decisions through youth forums. These were held by the Victorian Government and the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic) and gave young people the opportunity to contribute to the agenda of the Victorian Youth Summit, which was held in National Youth Week 2017. Subsequent input at the Youth Summit brought together young people from across the state to identify issues that mattered most.

The Victorian Government's desire is that every young person has the opportunity and support they need to reach their potential. The Victorian Government launched a website for people aged from 12 to 25 called Youth Central and is managed by the Department of Premier and Cabinet.

The current Victorian Government Youth Policy, Building Stronger Youth Engagement in Victoria is available at the Youth Central website <https://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/>

Youth Central is the place to go for information about jobs and careers, services and events in your local area, study, travel, money and more. The Yarriambiack Youth Engagement Strategy will align itself with the engagement pathways that exist online and advocate for local opportunities our young people can find and use their voice. With the inclusion of the young people (aged 8-25) into this strategy, extra engagement activities are needed to be investigated with the extended age group in mind.

Some of the 12-25 Youth Programs listed on the Youth Central Website include:

- Getting politically active
- Tips and advice about democracy and being politically active
- Voting and elections
- Know the difference between local, state and federal elections and ensuring you're enrolled to vote.
- Youth programs and events
- Ways to get involved and be active in your community develop new skills and make new friends.

YOUTH CENTRAL ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES INCLUDE:

- Advance-Advance is a fantastic one-year school-based program that encourages you to get actively involved in your local community.
- Community Radio - SYN Media-Community radio is a great avenue for young people to express themselves and share their views.
- Early Intervention and Support - Programs and initiatives to support and assist young people who are experiencing difficulties.
- Empower Youth-The Victorian Government wants every young person to have the opportunities and support they need to reach their potential
- Engage-Engage! Provides local governments and community organisations with grants of up to \$150,000.

- FReeZA Program-Each year up to 400 supervised drug, alcohol and smoke-free FReeZA events are staged.
- Supporting Multicultural Victoria-Providing a range of services for young people from diverse multicultural backgrounds.
- Scholarships & Philanthropic Programs-People and companies called philanthropists donate to help young people pursue their dreams.
- Schoolies-Get all the information on Schoolies with Youth Central, including places to visit, tips on staying safe and how to register for Schoolies in Victoria.
- Scouts and Guides-Scouts and Girl Guides enable young people to participate in leadership, skill development and community activities.
- Victorian Government Youth Policy-In 2016 young people were asked to help shape future government decisions by taking part in 12 youth forums.
- Young Achiever Awards - Acknowledging and encouraging the achievements of young Victorians.
- Victorian Youth Congress-Victorian Youth Congress wants to hear from you!
- Victorian Youth Week-Applications are open for Victorian Youth Week grants – each year
- Wakakirri Secondary School Challenge-The Wakakirri Secondary School Challenge is a competition for secondary students to create a story and to perform that story through dance.
- Youth Mentoring-Information for if you're looking to get involved in a mentoring program.
- Youth Parliament-YMCA Youth Parliament is an opportunity for young Victorians to stand up and be heard.

(Source September 2019: <https://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au/get-involved/youth-programs-and-events/victorian-government-youth-policy>)

NEWS



Community and Stakeholder Consultation



In June 2019, the Core Reference Group met and approved the commencement of the consultation process. The first phase involved an agreed upon survey, that was approved for appropriateness by a DET representative to ensure distribution in education facilities.

The Core Reference Group agreed that both online and paper based copies would be available for the 12-25 year age groups, and that hard copies would be used for the Primary-aged young people so that they could be supported through the survey, either by the teachers or their parents or guardians.

A letter from the Yarriambiack Shire Council General Manager-Community Development accompanied the survey if it was to be sent home with the Primary aged young people-this letter outlined the reasoning for the capture of this information.

There was an outstanding return from each of the primary schools in the Shire, with teachers supporting the completion of the survey at the school. This resulted in 272 surveys returned from the 8-12 age groups, including multiple schools capturing all students in the age group.

The secondary schools were sent a copy of the online survey which they added to their school based websites for the students to access. Other young people were targeted through sending the link via email, social media (Facebook messenger) and the Yarriambiack Shire Website, which housed the survey link. There was an enthusiastic and substantial response from the 12-25 age groups with 160 young people completing either the online survey or the paper based survey across the shire. Parent and community members completed another 54 surveys. Other consultation and face to face interviews occurred through advertised pop up/vox pop visits across the Yarriambiack Shire including:

- 11th June Woomelang, Hopetoun, Beulah and Brim
- 13th June, Warracknabeal
- 14th June, Murtoa
- 17th June Minyip and Rupanyup

There were further interviews where young people congregated, such as the Warracknabeal Skate Park, the Warracknabeal Indoor Stadium, gaming nights and the Yarriambiack Youth Action Council meetings to name a few. The Home Education Group, which meets in Warracknabeal and have representatives from across the Shire, was also surveyed.

SUMMARY OF THEMES FROM COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS

- Family was seen as the most important theme across the Shire
This was supported by parents and guardians still being the number 1 source of information and support, and also the main conduit for communication about what is happening in the Shire.
- Access to Mental Health Support was the most important issue for 12-25, year olds, where as 8-12 year olds were more concerned about personal safety. parents and guardians and community members were most concerned about employment opportunities
- Strong support for a Learn to Drive Program and support of the L2P program, especially amongst community members.
- The Yarriambiack Youth Action Council and the Ramp It Rage It Stage It FReeZA Committee had created an impact in the Shire and were seen as having a strong profile. The continuation of these programs was well supported
- The amount of time young people of all ages are spending on devices is of major concern. How this impacts on young people and their community's welfare in the future is a big issue. The survey results indicated 1 in 5, 8-12 year olds are spending 5+hours on devices and this figure rises to 1in 4, 12-25year olds spending 5+ hours on screens outside of School or Work.
- Support for increased activities, entertainment, events, festivals, youth events and things to do (recreational and art based programs especially, need to be improved and better coordinated across the Shire).
- A calendar of events and variety of venues could be implemented to support young people in isolated areas.
- Strong support for Improvements to recreational areas (e.g. more fish in the lake, creeks, extending the playground, updating the skate park and pool)
- Reducing barriers to engagement was very important with barriers listed as; location, transport, communication and other commitments
- The positive response to the desire to engage the 8-12 year old cohort in the school was reciprocated by the number of surveys with young people wanting to have a voice. The Yarriambiack Engagement Strategy needs to accurately reflect this response,



PRIORITY AREA 1



Encouraging Youth Engagement

STRATEGIES:

1.1

Continued Support of Community Engagement Officer (Youth) within Council.

1.2

Target Youth Engagement Programs and reduce barriers to Youth Engagement.

1.3

Support Community Development Initiatives for young people

Strategy	Actions	Time frame	Resources	What success looks like
1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource the Community Engagement Officer (Youth) Position Ensure ongoing 	H	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of Community Engagement Officer (Youth) Position
1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and coordinate all engagement opportunities 	M	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement Officer (Youth) to continue to advocate for disadvantaged youth, and attend networking meetings to support this. • Reduction in barriers to youth engagement including: improvements to communication of events, timing and access to events plus coordination of venues, and transport • Improvements to current youth engagement programs such as the FReeZA funded activities • Encourage youth engagement through the Yarriambiack Young Achiever Awards and other opportunities for media coverage and support of Youth excellence or events • Investigation and implementation of new youth engagement initiatives
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve communication of events 	M	Council and other Services	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport coordination across the Shire for events 	M	Council and other Services	
1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support Collaborative Community initiatives that are focused toward inclusion of disadvantaged Youth. Inclusive events such as YHT and school or community based events like Mates Mentoring-involve Key stakeholders and services 	H	Council WSMLEN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make YHT and other events even more inclusive. • Work with key stakeholders and community organisations to support and deliver youth friendly all ability activities and collaborative community initiatives • Community Engagement Officer (Youth) to continue to chase grant and engagement opportunities to Yarriambiack programs • Work with council to provide appropriate training for young people around grant writing, and other innovative opportunities for young people to develop new skills
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to advocate for young people to have access to a range of employment and education opportunities. These include Careers expos, Uni and TAFE open days, Free TAFE courses, etc... 	M	Council WSMLEN Schools Fed UNI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support youth initiatives through available grants. 	M	Council Project Officer	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support young people writing their own grants for events to build their capacity 	M	Council Project Officer	

High, Medium and Low

H = Implemented over the next 2 years

M = Implemented over the next 2 to 4 years

L = Implemented over the next 5 years or ongoing

PRIORITY AREA

2



Support and Development of Youth Leadership

STRATEGIES:

2.1

Support Continuation and Development of Yarriambiack Youth Action Council and Ramp It Rage It Stage It FReeZA Committee.

2.2

Advocate for opportunities to engage in Leadership Programs.

Strategy	Actions	Time frame	Resources	What success looks like
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue Engagement of Youth in the Yarriambiack Youth Action Council and the Ramp It Rage It Stage It Yarriambiack FReeZA Committee -improve their voice within the Shire and projects they wish to engage in 	M	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidation of Yarriambiack Youth Action Council and its role as the most prominent youth voice in the Shire Opportunities for Yarriambiack Youth Action Council to continue to take the lead in activities they deem important for youth, and to investigate how they can engage young people with outcomes for other young people. Opportunities to be a mentor to other members of the Yarriambiack Youth Action Council and Ramp It Rage It Stage It FReeZA Committee.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the reach of the Youth Council and FReeZA Committee so representation is more even across the Shire 	M	Council	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource the Youth Council and FReeZA Committee through the Community Engagement Officer (Youth) 	M	Council	
2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore Opportunities within the Engage Funded program "Thrive not Survive" to provide leadership opportunities and training. 	M	Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidation of Ramp It Rage It Stage It FReeZA Committee as the FReeZA arm of the Youth Action Council and the continued setting of FReeZA events for the Shire. Providing opportunities for Young people to attain skills to assist with planning and event management of FReeZA events as well as production of events. Minimum of 6 FReeZA Events annually and Minimum of 8 Engage Programs Opportunities for organising training to participate in FReeZA events, such as art or film training. Training for Council/Committee young people in sound/lighting or First Aid. Opportunities to source funds through Council to run events. Help direct funding through the Yarriambiack Engage Funded Program "Thrive not Survive" to provide leadership opportunities and training that is deemed necessary. This includes the continued advocacy for the "Youth Shed". Provide direction on the next Engage and FReeZA application periods as well as the yearly Victorian Youth Week Event grants. Support youth leadership, volunteering and mentoring opportunities, acknowledge and celebrate this so it becomes more regular.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek other funding streams and programs to support leadership opportunities such as Heywire, Leadership Wimmera Training or Rotary Youth Leadership Award (RYLA) 	M	Council	

PRIORITY AREA

3



Supporting Youth Health and Wellbeing

STRATEGIES:

3.1

Advocate for health and wellbeing services for young people.

3.2

Facilitate access to a range of health and wellbeing programs.

3.3

Facilitating programs for Disadvantaged Young People.

Strategy	Actions	Time frame	Resources	What success looks like
3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for young people to be able to access outreach services that provide counselling, careers advice and employment, , Centrelink, driver training. 	H	Council Other Services Headspace Horsham Uniting VT WNHHLC WSMLEN Vic Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued advocacy for health and well-being services for young people being available locally in the Shire so that barriers such as transport or cost don't prohibit their ability to access necessary services. Strengthened partnerships with other service providers and key stakeholders to ensure the best possible outcomes for youth in the Yarriambiack Shire Support the Yarriambiack Youth Action Council in targeting areas they believe they can make a difference in health and well-being including events in outreach areas rather than in the main towns of the Shire.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Engagement Officer (Youth) to initiate and participate, and or advise new and established youth networks e.g. CANs, FReeZA and Engage Groups, WDAT and YACVIC. 	L	Council Other Services Headspace Horsham Uniting VT WNHHLC WSMLEN Schools	
3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and support well-being needs for young people through regular consultation with the schools and the Yarriambiack Youth Action Council and FReeZA Committee, other key stake holders and providers. 	M	Council Other Services Headspace Horsham Uniting VT WNHHLC WSMLEN Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for the Hopetoun CAN to be reconvened. Continue to advocate for regional service providers such as WDAT and YACVIC to provide better coverage of their programs in Yarriambiack Facilitate access to a range of health and wellbeing programs for disadvantaged young people through regular contact with schools and other service providers Support the Mates Mentoring Program that is run by WSMLEN. Provide opportunities for young people involved with diversions models to re-engage with the community, and youth engagement programs. Support where appropriate school programs which require YSC involvement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate information and resources that support the access to services, e.g. a clear referral pathway for after hours services-access for significantly disadvantaged and vulnerable young people 	M	Council and Health Services	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for young people to be able to access a range of health and well-being programs by facilitating delivery through a collaborative program that involves a range of service providers 	L	Council Other Services Headspace Horsham Uniting VT WNHHLC WSMLEN Schools	
3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and facilitate the delivery of mentoring programs through the YYAC and FReeZA committees as well as the Mates Mentoring program by the WSMLEN 	H	Council WSMLEN Schools	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore opportunities to support significantly disadvantaged young people involved in community based diversion models 	M	Council Youth Justice Victoria Police	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate for specific programs and opportunities within the Shire that support alternative education settings, Centrelink support, such as Satellite VCAL or off school campuses, computer programs, such as at the WNHHLC 	M	Council Other Services WNHHLC WSMLEN Schools BIC Gateway BEET	

PRIORITY AREA

4



Engagement for the 8-12 young people

STRATEGIES:

4.1

Developing Engagement Strategies for the 8-12 year cohort.

4.2

Facilitate a range of activities for 8-12 cohort

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Resources</i>	<i>What success looks like</i>
4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate with primary schools in Yarriambiack to find the best way to engage the 8-12 year cohort with them. Provide ongoing support and access to activities where it best suits the schools and doesn't interrupt their curriculum. 	H	Council WRSA Schools Art Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of engagement strategies for the 8-12 cohort across the Shire with the primary schools, so that a more coordinated approach to engagement can be achieved for events during school times, which doesn't unsettle the curriculum at each school.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate community consultation with community groups, parents and friends groups, community clubs and the service providers, to develop strategies for engagement with the 8-12 year cohort outside of the school environment. 	H	Council WRSA Schools Art Groups Community Clubs NHHs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community consultation with Clubs and local services to best prepare for the deliver of engagement activities • Development of engagement strategies for the 8-12 cohort across the Shire for the periods outside school times, so that we reduce barriers to participation, especially for the more regionally isolated young people
4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Engagement Officer (Youth) to work in partnership with other service providers to prepare and initiate a plan for the Yarriambiack Shire to roll out engagement activities for the 8-12 year cohort through out the year. Special emphasis on supporting activities in holiday periods. 	H	Council WRSA Schools Community Clubs NHHs Art Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened partnerships with other service providers such as the Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly, The Push, and Regional Arts Council to provide regular and diverse events across the shire. • 2019 Yarriambiack Youth Engagement Survey, to be utilised to best inform the activities that will be supported by young people.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Yarriambiack Shire Council wishes to acknowledge and thank the dedicated work of the Youth Strategy Project Reference Group in preparing this document and who also gave their time to contribute, and provide oversight to the development of this Strategy.

Kylie Zanker (Yarriambiack Shire Councillor, Warracknabeal Secondary College, School Council President)
Karen Fuller (Manager - Warracknabeal Neighbourhood House & Learning Centre)
Louise Barnett (Youth Engagement & Community Development Coordinator Headspace Horsham)
Dorothy McLaren (Health Promotion Manager West Wimmera Health Service)
Tim Shaw (EO Wimmera Southern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network)
Jessie Holmes (Yarriambiack Shire Council, Chief Executive Officer)
Aiden Ciemcioch (Yarriambiack Youth Action Council - Youth Representative)
Jo Martin (Rural North West Health Service Community Health Manager)
Gavin Blinman (Yarriambiack Shire Council, General Manager Community Development)
Clyde Lourensz (Victoria Police, Senior Constable 36121 - Youth Specialist Officer – Western Region – WD4)
Therese Allen (Principal, Warracknabeal Secondary College - Representing DET)
Linda McLennan (Victoria Police, A/Sergeant – Wimmera Proactive Policing Unit - Western Region - WD4)
Kate Waterworth (Program Leader: Youth Support, Uniting Wimmera)
Murray McKenzie (Yarriambiack Shire Council, Community Engagement Officer - Youth)

ABBREVIATIONS

YYES	Yarriambiack Youth Engagement Survey
YSC	Yarriambiack Shire Council
YYAC	Yarriambiack Youth Action Council
WRSA	Wimmera Regional Sports Assembly
NHHs	Neighbourhood Houses
WNHHLC	Warracknabeal Neighbourhood House and Learning Centre
WSMLLEN	Wimmera Southern Mallee Learning and Education Network
BIC	Beulah Information centre
CAN	Community Action Network
WDAT	Wimmera Drug Action Taskforce
Hopetoun Gateway BEET	Hopetoun Gateway Business Education Employment Training

DRAFT



Yarriambiack
SHIRE COUNCIL

www.yarriambiack.vic.gov.au