

Wingecarribee Youth Strategy & Action Plan 2016 – 2026

(UPDATED 2019)







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Purpose and aims

Wingecarribee Shire Council has always maintained strong support for young people aged between 12 and 24 years, with a long history of financially supporting the development and running of youth programs and activities. It actively supports youth multiple service providers in the community as well as constantly advocating and lobbying for increased opportunities for young people.

By developing the Wingecarribee Youth Strategy, Council aims to set out a five year action plan that is not just to ensure that Council maintains this support of the youth population but that it encourages and promotes new ways of improving services and opportunities for young people.

The Youth Strategy will focus on the key areas of concern for the youth population with the aim to prioritise areas for action that will build a better community for and with young people living in the Southern Highlands.

The strategy will:

- Assist Council and community partners in responding to the needs, expectations and aspirations of local young people
- Encourage young people to actively participate in creating opportunities and positive involvement in the community
- Encourage collaboration and partnerships with the aim to reduce service duplication.
- Improve the wider understanding of the issues affecting young people and how this may impact on their contribution to community.
- Allow for direct input from local young people
- Improve the community's understanding of concerns faced by local young people
- Act as a tool for advocacy and lobbying for increased funding by identifying gaps in youth service provision
- Encourage youth service providers to work together to provide the most effective outcomes for young people



Strategy Development

The purpose of developing a youth strategy for the Wingecarribee is to document how Council aims to provide healthy spaces, places and infrastructure for young people. Ultimately it will identify priority areas and ways to develop a whole of community approach to improve outcomes for young people living, working and learning in the Wingecarribee so that they can live happy healthy lives and maintain connections to the community.

This was achieved by:

- Policy and demographic review
- Service provider questionnaire
- Development of a working group consisting to guide consultation
- Youth Survey
- Youth Forum
- Youth Strategy and Action Plan
- Public exhibition

Service consultation and mapping

Service mapping and consultation was undertaken using a short questionnaire. Thirty three of the more obvious service providers responded indicating a range of services available to young people living in the Wingecarribee area. While a comprehensive list of programs was collated it did not indicate that many of the programs were closed to general use, an example of this is Triple Care Farm which offers an extensive range of programs that are only available to young people in their facility.

The questionnaire did not encompass gyms, sporting clubs, and local pools. As not all service providers responded to the questionnaire it did not form a complete picture of service provision.



Service Gaps

There were however some very clear gaps identified in service availability to young people, such as emergency/crisis accommodation or affordable housing, access to mental health services or general health services that are either inexpensive for young people or provided free of charge. There is very limited access to programs or activities that run outside of school hours. Occasional youth specific weekend events are held across the Shire, aside from these young people only have structured activities to be involved in.

In regard to young people with disabilities, there is a need to be vigilant in regards to the requirements of young people as the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme creates change in service delivery. This will greatly impact families and young people with disabilities.

One of the greatest barriers for young people accessing services is the lack of knowledge of what is available.



Youth consultation

Working Group

To guarantee that there was strong commitment from service providers and young people a working group was developed which consisted of both service providers and local young people to advise on all aspects of consultation. The working group met regularly from July 2015 to aid in the development of a survey, assist with promotion and to organise the Wingecarribee Youth Forum.

The working group consisted of service providers specialising in youth service provision in the Wingecarribee Shire and included: St Vincent de Paul, UnitingCare Burnside, Sector Connect, Youth Solutions, Argyle Housing, Essential Personnel and Barnardos as well as young people from Bowral High School.

Youth Survey

An online survey tool was used to gather information about how young people living in the Wingecarribee Shire perceived their community. The survey was aimed at young people aged between twelve and twenty four who either live in the Wingecarribee or those that grew up in the Wingecarribee and had moved out of the area. The survey was open from 2 September 2015 to 28 September 2015 and was promoted across the community in a variety of mediums.

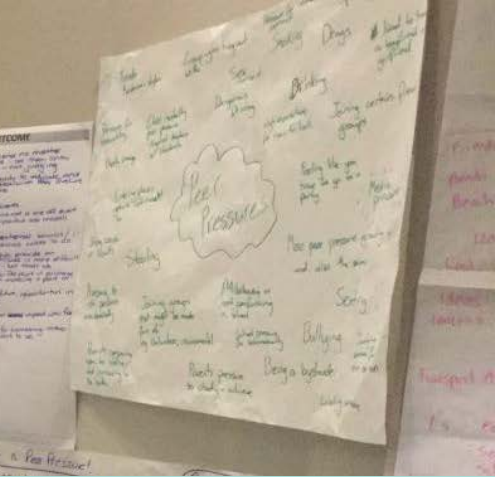
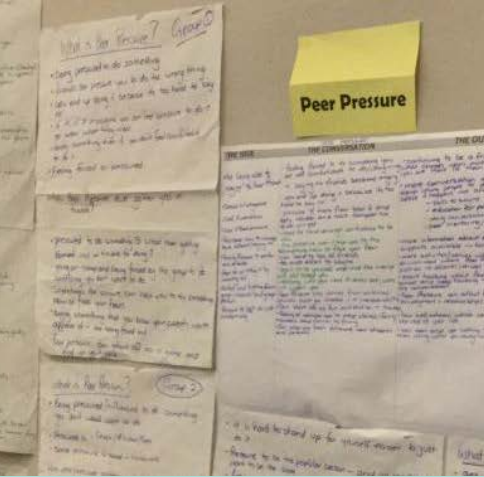
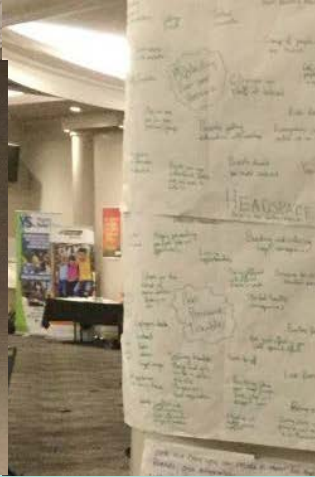
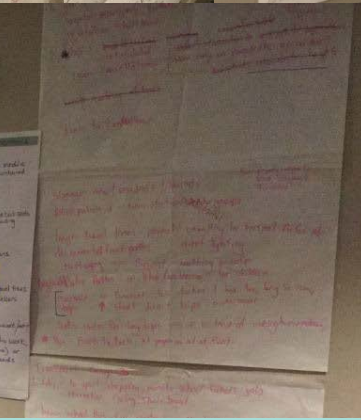
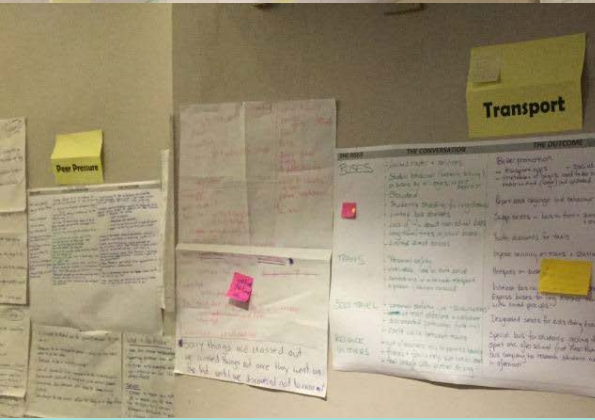
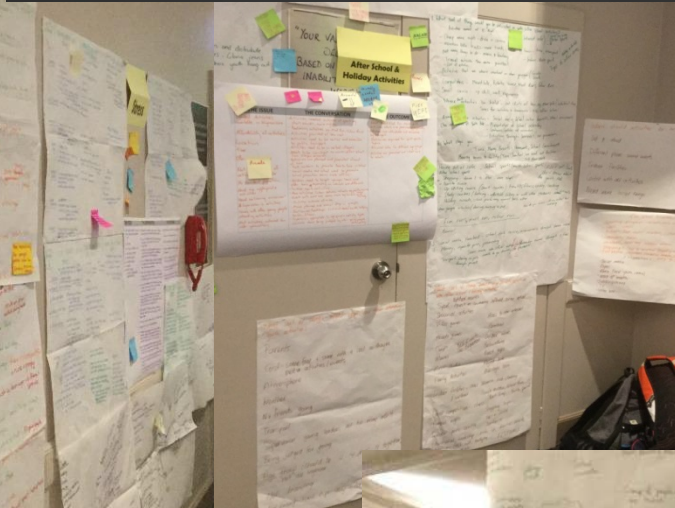
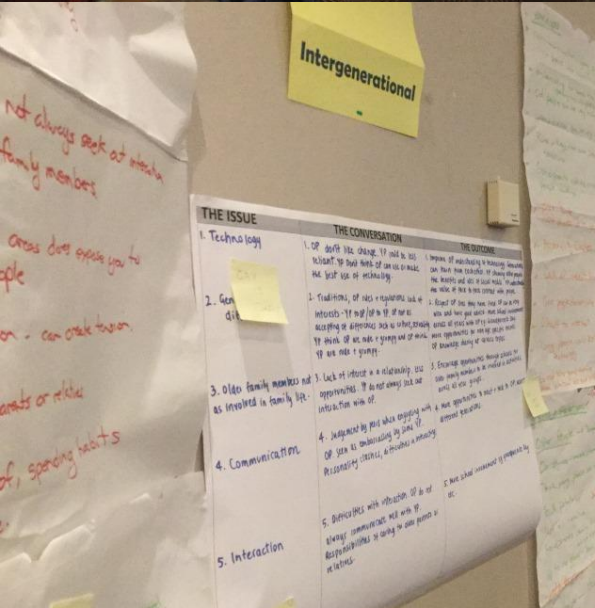
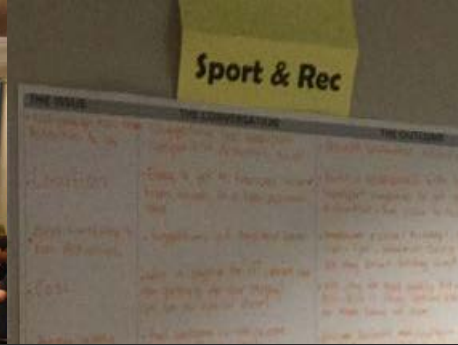
The youth survey was the initial consultation tool for the development of the agenda and themes for the Wingecarribee Youth Forum.

(<http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/uploads/769/v2-survey-report.pdf>)



Youth
Have your say
2015

Wingecarribee Youth Forum



Youth Forum

The Wingecarribee Youth Forum was held on 12 November 2015 with approximately 170 young people attending ranging from Year Six through to Year Eleven from schools across the LGA, along with a range of local service providers.

The forum provided an opportunity for services and young people to enter into more in-depth discussions regarding the information gathered in the survey.

Young people from the steering group facilitated the conversations at the tables, with youth service providers, members of the working group and Council staff from the Community Development Team, Community Engagement, Community Facilities and Parks and Recreation co-facilitating. These people were also on hand to guide and support the young people.

Young people were invited to lead conversations on the following themes that had been identified through the survey:

- Events and festivals
- After school and school holiday activities
- Sports and recreation
- Transport
- Teen hangout spaces
- Arts and culture
- Stress
- Peer pressure
- Sex and sexuality
- Intergenerational issues

Young people were given the opportunity to choose three issues they were interested in discussing, and spent approximately 20 minutes in each of the three discussion groups. During the roundtable discussions, young people's ideas, concerns and issues were recorded. Issues were then prioritised during the afternoon session.

The forum also included workshops provided by specialised service providers on:

- Mental Health
- Body Image
- Personal safety (cyber bullying, bullying, conflict resolution and abuse)
- Education and Employment
- Team work and team building

These themes had been identified by the survey respondents as topics they would like to know more about.

<http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/uploads/769/wcc-report-final-pdf.1.pdf>





Demographic profile

While the youth population in the Wingecarribee is consistent with regional Australia up to the age of 17 years there is a significant shift with the 17 – 24 age groups making up 6.5% of the population compared to 8.1% regionally. This trend continues through to the young workforce with 7.4% compared to 10.4% regionally. [Refer to table 1]

This would indicate that young people are leaving the Wingecarribee region to access further education or employment opportunities.

Indicated by table 2 the distribution of young people is mostly concentrated in the main towns within the Shire with a population of 1,682 in Mittagong, 1,768 residing in Bowral and 1,962 living in Moss Vale. The northern villages of Colo Vale and Hill Top have the highest youth population of all the outlying villages.

One key concern for the Wingecarribee Shire is the decline in the population between the ages of 18 to 33. Numbers start to increase again after the age of 34 (most likely due to people returning to the Shire to raise a family). The community therefore misses out on the vibrancy created by having young people as part of the local scene (a problem common with many rural areas)

Table 1: Age and sex of young people in the Wingecarribee LGA

B04: AGE BY SEX

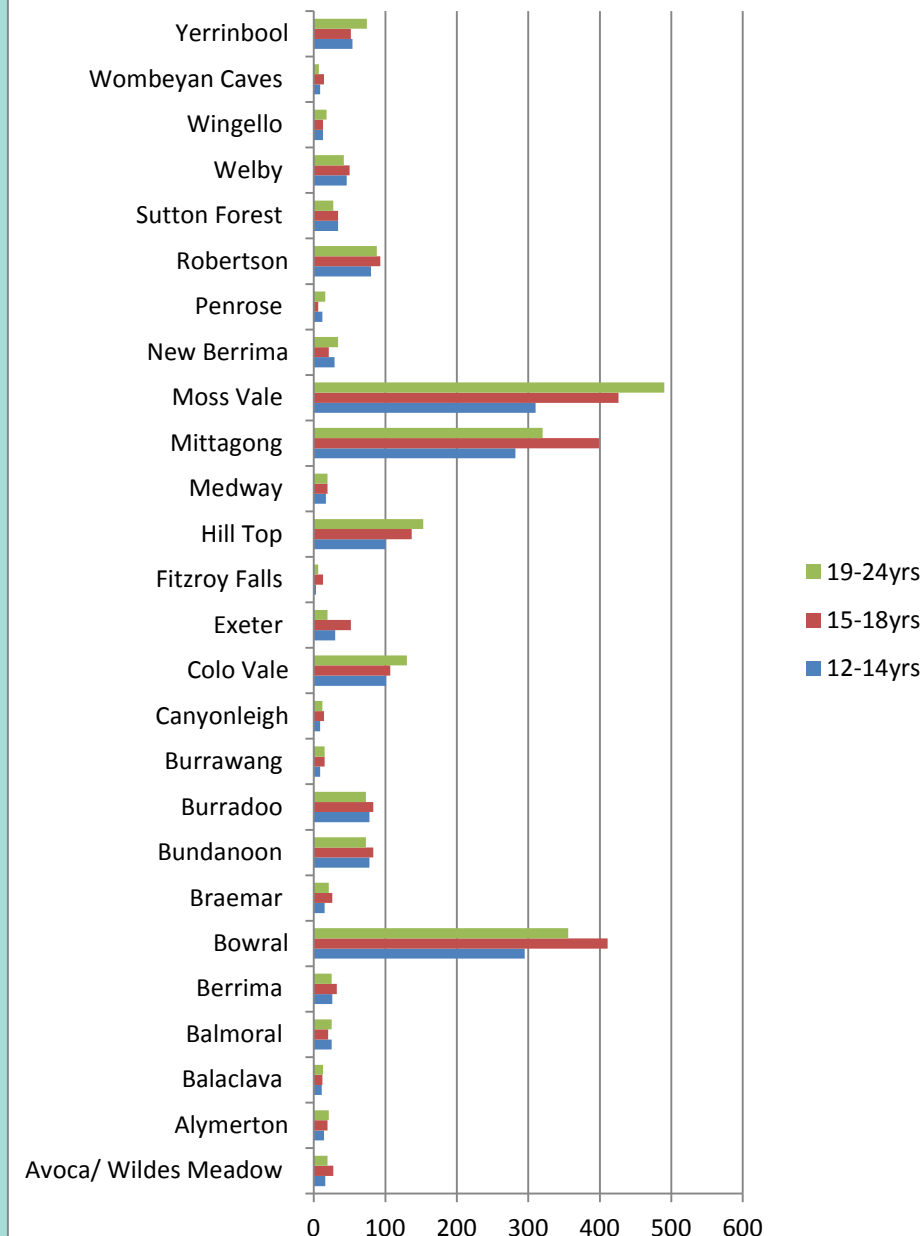
This table is based on place of usual residence.

Persons aged 12 -24 years

Age	Males	Females	Persons
12	288	333	621
13	306	359	665
14	311	322	633
15	287	312	599
16	324	341	665
17	320	329	649
18	289	239	528
19	226	202	428
20	208	232	440
21	220	203	423
22	183	181	364
23	183	181	364
24	152	162	314
Total	3,297	3,396	6,693

Source:
AUSTRALIAN BUREAU OF STATISTICS
2011 Census of Population and Housing
Wingecarribee (A) (LGA18350) 2688.4 sq Kms

Table 2: Distribution of young people across the Wingecarribee LGA





Policy Context

The Wingecarribee Youth Strategy is an important addition to Council's Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework. Wingecarribee Shire Council's Community Strategic Plan W2031+, is the overarching Plan for the Shire and was adopted by Council in 2010 following extensive community consultation. It sets out goals and strategies under five key themes: Leadership, People, Places, Environment and Economy. The diagram on the next page shows Council's key policies and plans.

The Youth Strategy identifies specific priority areas, strategies and performance measures. These will be considered and incorporated in the Delivery Program and Operational Plan as resources allow.

The Youth Strategy will also link to a number of other existing Council plans, processes and documents, many of which include the youth population in their scope and considerations.

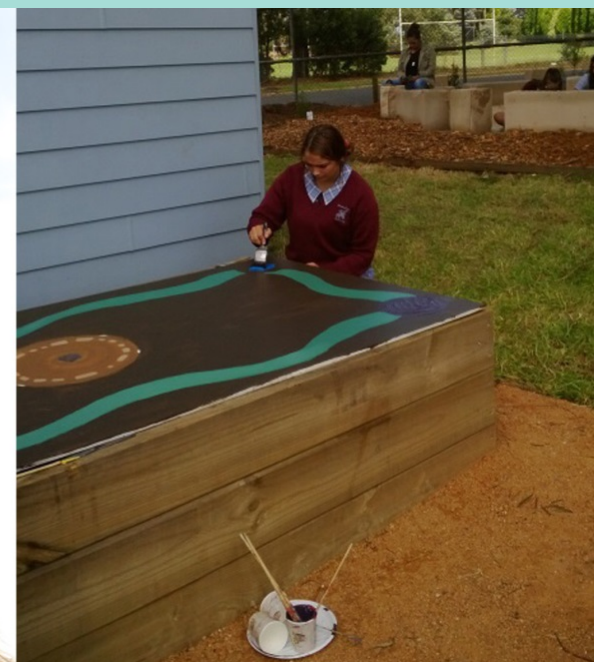
Other plans and strategies include:

- Arts and Culture Strategic Plan
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Community Safety Plan
- Economic Development Strategy
- Local Planning Strategy
- Positive Ageing Strategy
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan (in development)

Policies that are also relevant include those relating to:

- Libraries
- Pools
- Outdoor space
- Recreational areas

The Action Plan of the Wingecarribee Aboriginal Cluster Group is also relevant to the Strategy.



The Wingecarribee Youth Strategy contributes to and is closely aligned with the Community Strategic Plan **Wingecarribee 2031+** by incorporating the perspectives and ideas of young people. The Youth Strategy directly responds to the following W2031+ goals.

Leadership

- 1.2 Wingecarribee leadership is visionary through creative thinking and practical planning
- 1.3 The Wingecarribee community has strong networks that support collaboration, partnerships and empowerment.
- 1.4 We act in an inclusive manner with open information, communication, views and participation.

People

- 2.1 Wingecarribee community has access to a variety of cultural, recreational and sporting opportunities.
- 2.2 Wingecarribee people have a healthy lifestyle and inclusive Community.
- 2.3 Services and facilities are provided locally to meet the needs of our community.
- 2.4 Wingecarribee fosters a diverse, creative and vibrant community.

Places

- 3.1 Wingecarribee is linked by an integrated and efficient transport network
- 3.3 Urban design in the Wingecarribee creates inspiring places where people want to be.
- 3.4 Wingecarribee housing options are diverse.

Economy

- 5.5 Wingecarribee's diverse economy drives a wide range of job and career opportunities.





Action Plan updated 2019

Priority areas

The Action Plan focuses on four priority areas identified through consultation:

1: Participation and Engagement

2: Health and Wellbeing

3: Recreation and Leisure

4: Education and Employment

Action Plan Priority Area 1: Participation and Engagement

No.	Strategic Action	Performance indicator	Key Activity	Timeframe*	Partners**	Resources
1.1	Provide opportunities for young people to be creatively involved in planning and development of policy, services, events and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of young people participating in decision making opportunities Number of young people attending forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support young people in having a voice on issues that matter to them Promote and showcase the positive work of young people Support young people to be involved in developing opportunities (biennial Youth Forum) Encourage the development of youth based working groups for different focus areas 	Short term	Schools, PCYC, Highlands Youth Centre, Highlands Community Centres, Highlands Child, Youth and Family Network, Department of Family and Community Services (FaCs), Sydney South West Area Health Service (SSWAHS), Primary Health Network (PHN) WSC – Community Engagement Coordinator	Within existing staff and resources
1.2	Support and encourage the engagement of young people throughout the wider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of intergenerational activities delivered Work towards a stronger partnership with local school communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intergenerational activities and opportunities Support youth inclusion in all types of arts and cultural activities Increase the distribution of relevant youth information to young people Support and promote opportunities for youth involvement in volunteering 	Short term	Schools, WSC – Community Development team, Highlands Child Youth Family Network Volunteering Wingecarribee	Within existing staff and resources
1.3	Provide information and connect school communities to Aboriginal Cultural programs and educational opportunities that develop positive identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Aboriginal young people participating and attending events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work collaboratively with Elders, schools and Aboriginal Community Groups to encourage and support Aboriginal young people to attend forums and participate in community events 	Short and medium term	Schools, WSC – Community Development team, Aboriginal Community groups and organisations, Elders, Department of Education – Aboriginal team	Within existing staff and resources
1.4	Support and encourage existing transport services to link with planned events and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of young people using transport to attend activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote existing transport services Develop partnerships that support youth transport options 	Medium to long term	Transport NSW and local services including bus, taxi and community transport. Local networks and youth service providers.	Within existing staff and resources or source external funding opportunities

* Short term – will be addressed in a six to twelve month period, Medium term – will be addressed within a two year period, Long term – will be addressed with five years, Ongoing – actions that will continue as part of the Youth Liaison position in Council. ** Potential partners have been identified, however, during the implementation of the Strategy it is likely that some partnerships will change and additional partners may be involved in the implementation of each action.

Action Plan Priority Area 2: Health and Wellbeing

No.	Strategic Action	Performance Indicator	Key Activity	Timeframe	Partners*	Resources
2.1	Advocate for improved health and wellbeing services for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of regional youth services offering programs in the Wingecarribee Representations made to State and Federal Government agencies and Non-Government organisations(NGO's) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify services funded at a regional level that are not currently servicing the Wingecarribee Increase awareness of the needs of young people living in the Wingecarribee at regional level Advocacy submissions made as required 	Short term and ongoing	PCYC, Highlands Youth Centre, Highlands Community Centres, Highlands Child, Youth and Family Network, Macarthur Youth Services Network, Youth Action, FaCs, SSWAHS, PHN	Within existing staff and resources
2.2	Facilitate the development of health and wellbeing support groups to improve networks amongst peers with similar needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of groups / concerns addressed Number of young people attending groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the needs of young people for health and wellbeing support groups including Aboriginal young people and young people with disabilities Support the development of groups 	Short term	PCYC, Highlands Youth Centre, Highlands Community Centres, Highlands Child, Youth and Family Network, Schools, SSWAHS, PHN Aboriginal Community groups	Within existing staff and resources
2.3	Promote services that are available to young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of directories delivered to schools and the wider community Number of young people engaged in Wingecarribee Shire Council social media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide details of available services to young people to local schools and the wider community Assist in the development and distribution of a youth services directory Use social media platforms to promote local service providers 	Short to medium term	PCYC, Highlands Youth Centre, Highlands Community Centres, Highlands Child, Youth and Family Network, Schools. Wingecarribee Youth Radio	Within existing staff and resources
2.4	Develop and connect schools with targeted forums and workshops that promote positive health and wellbeing for young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of workshops/forums conducted annually Number of young people attending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate the delivery of relevant forums and workshops 	Short term	PCYC, Highlands Youth Centre, Highlands Community Centres, Highlands Child, Youth and Family Network, Schools, specialised health and well-being services	Within existing staff and resources
2.5	Normalise access to services that support the health and wellbeing of young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of campaigns delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Run local targeted campaigns that focus on positive interaction with access to services 	Ongoing	Young people, local cinema, radio and media options,	Within existing staff and resources. Source relevant external grants or funding opportunities

Action Plan Priority Area 3: Recreation and Leisure

No.	Strategic Action	Performance Indicator	Key Activity	Timeframe	Partners*	Resources
3.1	Support existing youth service providers to deliver a range of services and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of boards, committees and working groups actively engaged One training opportunity delivered annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate on boards of management, committees and working groups Participate in youth service networks Facilitate training opportunities to service providers 	Ongoing PRIORITY	PCYC, Highlands Youth Centre, Highlands Community Centres, Highlands Child, Youth and Family Network, SSWAHS, PHN WSC – internal partners	Within existing staff and resources
3.2	Develop a variety of quality events and activities of interest to young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of events delivered Number of young people at each event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host 3 Youth week (YW) events Host 2 events other than YW Encourage youth participation Increase promotion of activities via social media Extend events and activities to include outer villages 	YW from January to May annually Ongoing	PCYC, Highlands Youth Centre, Highlands Community Centres, Highlands Child, Youth and Family Network, Wingecarribee Youth Radio, WSC – internal partners	Within existing staff and resources Apply for Youth Week Funding
3.3	Development of a strategic framework that assesses the need and existing service provision for young people in sport and recreational facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of young people giving input Number of consultation opportunities provided to young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include young people in consultation strategies in the planning of recreational facilities and open spaces in the Wingecarribee Ensure youth needs are recognised and incorporated into Council's recreation planning 	Ongoing	WSC – Assets Wingecarribee Youth Radio WSC – Community Engagement Coordinator	Within existing staff and resources
3.4	Support and encourage youth involvement in cultural events across the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of Aboriginal young people participating in cultural events Number of Arts and Cultural strategy actions supported 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide opportunities for young people to contribute, engage and perform in Aboriginal cultural events Increase Aboriginal young people's participation in activities and events Support the implementation of the youth related strategies in the Arts and Cultural Plan 	Long term	PCYC, Highlands Youth Centre, Highlands Community Centres, Highlands Child, Youth and Family Network, Wingecarribee Youth Radio, Aboriginal community groups WSC – internal partners	Within existing staff and resources

* Short term – will be addressed in a six to twelve month period, Medium term – will be addressed within a two year period, Long term – will be addressed with five years, Ongoing – actions that will continue as part of the Youth Liaison position in Council

** Potential partners have been identified, however, during the implementation of the Strategy it is likely that some partnerships will change and additional partners may be involved in the implementation of each action.

Action Plan Priority Area 4: Education and Employment

No.	Strategic Action	Performance Indicator	Key Activity	Timeframe	Partners*	Resources
4.1	Working with stakeholders to increase opportunities for a variety of educational platforms reflective of youth needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research completed Increased educational opportunities locally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research data on what courses young people are leaving the area to study Advocate for a wider variety of educational opportunities for young people Support the development of life-skills training career pathways for all young people in the community 	Short term PRIORITY	TAFE, University of Wollongong, Chambers of Commerce, PCYC, Highlands Youth Centre, Highlands Community Centres, Highlands Child, Youth and Family Network, Wingecarribee Youth Radio, Aboriginal community groups WSC – internal partners	Within existing staff and resources
4.2	Ensure opportunities for youth are recognised and incorporated in the Economic Development Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of youth concerns raised at Economic Development summits Number of schools attending the Careers Expo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Liaison Officer and young people participating in Economic Development summits etc. Being actively involved in local Careers Expo 	Long term and ongoing	WSC Economic Development and Chambers of Commerce. Employment and recruitment organisations. Southern Inlands Jobs Agenda	Within existing staff and resources
4.3	Support opportunities for an increase in local apprenticeships and employment prospects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of employment opportunities created for young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively pursue opportunities and funding that supports the creation of apprenticeships and traineeships in the community Develop a communication plan to share information on employment opportunities 	Long Term	Chambers of Commerce, WSC - Economic Development, Organisational Development Employment and recruitment organisations.	Within existing staff and resources

* Short term – will be addressed in a six to twelve month period, Medium term – will be addressed within a two year period, Long term – will be addressed with five years, Ongoing – actions that will continue as part of the Youth Liaison position in Council

** Potential partners have been identified, however, during the implementation of the Strategy it is likely that some partnerships will change and additional partners may be involved in the implementation of each action.



Reporting and Further Actions

The Wingecarribee Youth Strategy and Action Plan is a flexible document that has the capacity to respond to emerging youth needs over the next ten years. In order to ensure that the Strategy is responsive it will be regularly evaluated and measured against the Action Plans set for each area of development.

A full review of the Action Plan will be conducted with young people and stake holders every two years in the form of a youth forum and alterations will be implemented as necessary.

Progress and changes on the Wingecarribee Youth Strategy and Action Plan will be reported to Council annually as part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

Timeframe Definitions

Short term will be addressed in a six to twelve month period

Medium term will be addressed within a two year period

Long term will be addressed with five years

Ongoing actions that will continue as part of the Youth Liaison position in Council

2018 Supplement

On 1 November 2018, Wingecarribee Shire Council held the 2018 Youth Forum, the objective was to ensure that; as a community we continued to meet the needs of young people in the Wingecarribee. The Forum included 110 young people ranging from year 6 through to year 11 from various schools across the Local Government Area (LGA). The day was organised in conjunction with the Youth Forum Steering Group comprised of youth services and students from Bowral and Moss Vale High schools whose expertise was utilised to create the format of the day. Young people and services met on a regular basis to plan and deliver the 2018 Youth Forum. Young people were provided with training to support them in facilitating conversations with confidence.

Many positive outcomes and performance indicators from the strategic actions identified in the Wingecarribee Youth Strategy and Action Plan 2016 - 2026 have been achieved. The major issues communicated at the 2018 Forum also reflected opinions expressed and anecdotal evidence presented at the 2016 Forum.

Priority Area Outcomes:

Area 1 Participation and Engagement

- Traditional Song and Dance program in 2017
- Poetry in the First Language
- Bush tucker and medicine gardens in primary schools

Area 2 Health and Wellbeing

- ReFrame youth mental health service
- Adolescent specific team separate to Infant, Child, Adolescent Mental health Service
- Increased case management support from a range of Non-Government Organisations in local schools

Area 3 Recreation and Leisure

- Youth Steering Group formed to plan and manage Youth Week events

- Intergenerational activities including Grandparents day and Seniors Festival
- Opening festival at Mittagong pool
- Corbett Gardens crime prevention event
- Outreach school holiday activities and programs

Area 4 Education and Employment

- The launch of the Southern Inlands Jobs Agenda “Job Getter” project
- Councils increased participation in the Careers Advisors of the Southern Highlands (CASH network)
- Stronger partnerships with UOW Moss Vale Campus and TAFE

Updated Statistics:

The youth population remains consistent with the state and national average for the age groups 10 to 14 years and 15 to 19 years, with a noticeable decrease for the 20 to 24 year age group which indicates that young people are leaving the area to pursue further education or employment opportunities.

Feedback received at the forum suggested that high living costs in the Southern Highlands for accommodation and transport restricted young people becoming independent from their families after leaving school.

AGE	Wingecarribee	%	New South Wales	%	Australia	%
10-14 years	3,102	6.5	443,009	5.9	1,397,183	6
15-19 years	3,037	6.3	448,425	6	1,421,595	6.1
20-24 years	1,896	4	489,673	6.5	1,566,793	6.7
Total	8,035					

The median age of people in Wingecarribee (A) (Local Government Areas) was 47 years. Children aged 0 - 14 years made up 17.6% of the population and people aged 65 years and over made up 25.9% of the population. *Census 2016

Variations to the Action Plan

The key topics for the Action Plan have remained the same although some changes to the priority's areas have been made.

Over the next two years council will continue to work towards strengthening community partnerships, increasing opportunities and supports for young people who live, work or play in the Wingecarribee.



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- WSC Community Engagement Strategy
<http://www.wsc.nsw.gov.au/uploads/2460/finalcommunityengagementstrategy2014-sept-2014.pdf>



DRAFT **Youth Strategy** and Action Plan exhibited November 2016. Comments welcome at www.yoursaywingecarribee.com.au by 7 December 2016.
For further information contact Michelle Williams, Youth Liaison Officer on 02 4868 0859 or email michelle.williams@wsc.nsw.gov.au

