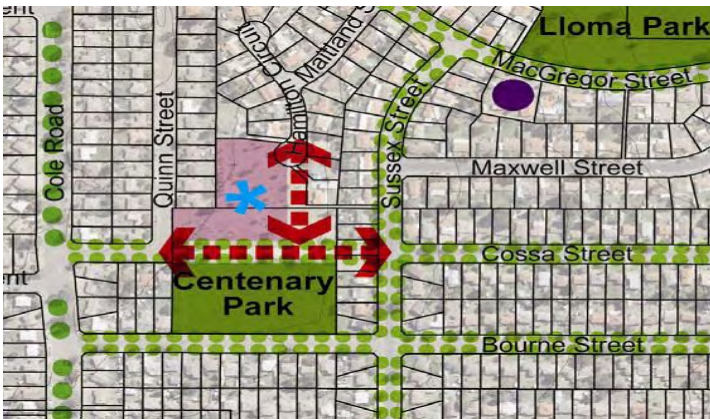
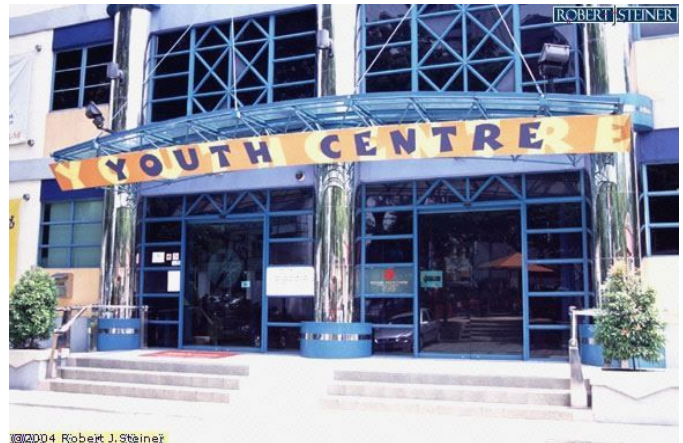


Final Report

Tamworth Youth Hub & Service Integration

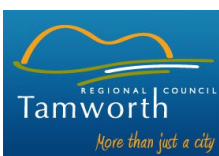


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Executive Summary

The purpose of the Tamworth Youth Spaces & Services research project was to extend upon the conclusions from existing targeted research, including the Youth in Action Survey, Coledale Action Plan and Coledale Youth Space Report, and provide an evidence based platform from which to design a collaborative business model to improve integration and coordination of service delivery for youth and better outcomes for youth throughout Tamworth and surrounding regions.

In this way the findings and recommendations presented in this Final Report reflect more than four years of local research identifying the needs and strategies based on the involvement of literally hundreds of youth, service providers, key stakeholders and community members in a comprehensive and extensive planning and research process.

At the same time, these findings are strongly aligned with clear trends reflected in international literature as well as the wide range of existing strategic plans (such as Tamworth Regional Council's Key Change and the NSW Government's 2021 Action Plan)

Three strategic priorities have consistently emerged as important to progressing greater outcomes for youth in regards to their development, social inclusion and social justice, each of which is interconnected and complementary:

1. Creation of the new purpose-built youth facility in Coledale ~ providing a high profile and easily accessible access point for youth services, supports and activities;
2. Positive Youth Development ~ reflecting current trends and understanding of youth development in terms of both its importance and value as a time of life in itself as well as the factors which influence later adult life and broader society; and,
3. Youth Services and Sector Integration ~ to enhance the seamless, accountable, complementary and complete range of services and supports for youth and their families.

Key themes which come through the research (from literature, expert interviews, analysis of other youth centres and youth sector coordination structures) include a visible international movements towards: positive youth development (more than a focus solely on interventions to address youth 'problems'); purpose-designed and built facilities for youth (often working as a key coordinating centre and access point to youth services-at-large); and the integration of youth services (moving towards place-based and whole-of-sector models that better facilitate and support the development of the whole young person rather than a crazy patchwork of different services and interventions).

During the course of this work over the last four years the Tamworth Youth Opportunities Working Group (YOWG) has strengthened its position as the identifiable lead for these strategic priorities and broadened its participation and engagement with the wider youth sector and community. This is particularly reflected in the common and aligned priorities which have recently emerged from the Tamworth Youth Sector Workshop, the Tamworth Youth Accommodation Forum and the Building Connections Forum hosted by NSW Department of Education and Communities.

The discourse around youth opportunities is changing ~ with momentum for service collaboration and partnership; positive portrayals of youth; pro-active media and communication; responsiveness to identified gaps (such as the alternative education centre); as well as increasing direct involvement of youth, business and community leaders ~ all of which are signals of this important shift taking place.

The timing of this Report coincides with a point of readiness to move to implementation and action for the sector integration (through structures for collaboration and partnership) which, together with community development, will be key to the successful utilisation and optimisation of the new youth hub at Coledale.

The positive announcement of funding for the new youth hub has arrived just as this current phase of work is being completed, and it adds to the wave of connected developments including funding for the: Coledale Revitalisation Strategy; Hillvue School Connected Communities; redevelopment of the Coledale Community Centre; headspace; and the TAFE Aboriginal Education Centre.

This work has identified a critical need to balance the focus on infrastructure (such as the youth centre and physical revitalisation of Coledale) with soft systems (service integration, partnerships and community development). As one project participant remarked, the new youth centre needs to be viewed as a "relationship building" ~ referring to the equally important work to be done in strengthening relationships between youth services as well as with youth, their families and the wider community.

While the youth development philosophy behind this project is asset based and positively oriented, the key impetus for this work has of course been Tamworth's significant youth challenges and issues. The community of Windale near Newcastle provides a shining beacon for the potential benefits which can arise from effective, place-based integration of services deployed in partnership with local business and the wider community. Following this comprehensive three-year community renewal process, similar to that which is being undertaken for Coledale, Windale moved in its NSW ranking from being in the worst 1% of post-code areas in terms of child protection notifications to being in the best 25%.

Results such as these need to be well resourced, with clear leadership and sustained. It is clear from this research that Tamworth's own endeavours will need to be resourced for 3-4 years for planning, establishment and initial implementation, and then sustained beyond that.

In addition to securing sufficient and well-aligned funding and resources there are risks to be considered such as the potential over-reliance or dependency on Tamworth Regional Council, who have played such a strong leadership role throughout this work, and the need to concertedly deploy strategies that re-define Coledale in becoming the new hub for youth services and activities for the Tamworth region. Now is the time to formalise the YOWG governance structure and partnerships to share leadership and investment between multiple key agencies and stakeholders.

It is also important to be mindful that the focus of this work on youth development needs to be complemented with, and by, the broader range of initiatives focused on the community as a whole (for example the Coledale Revitalisation Strategy and Coledale Action Plan).

At the same time it is clear that in considering all of these changes Tamworth is now positioned near the leading edge of innovation in youth development and service delivery. However it is not alone. The City of Bendigo has been working towards a similar approach for several years and their successes and lessons provide a useful point of reference. It is proposed that a sister-city partnership would provide value in terms of technical assistance, knowledge and systems exchange.

A wide range of concrete actions and commitments have already been identified by the youth sector and key stakeholders towards achieving three strategic priorities. Further, there is a basis to now expand upon this work and formulate a comprehensive Tamworth Youth Strategy as a central tool for the necessarily collaboration, partnerships and formal alignment of effort and resource investment.

Swift action to concretise and implement the governance structure for the YOWG is especially key as it further strengthens is youth sector leadership and coordination role.

Practical priorities and opportunities also exist in establishing a common referral system, shared information systems, co-case management, processes for quality management and accountability, and a wide reaching social marketing and communications plan including easy-to-use on-line resources for youth and their families.

Recommendations

Work over the last nine months has built considerably wider engagement, visibility and momentum behind the three strategic priorities to enhance outcomes for Tamworth youth: the establishment of a purpose-built youth hub; a collaborative and partnership-based approach to service integration; and adopting a positive youth development model.

It is key to now move swiftly on the various agreed priorities and actions to sustain and ideally further accelerate the momentum for change.

The following recommendations are made with a view to progress and realise these three strategic priorities and secure the necessary support, capacity, systems and resources required.

R1 ~ Continued Strategic Approach to Youth Development

The YOWG has taken a strategic approach to the positive development of youth for several years, including the foundational work on the Coledale Youth Space, incorporation of the new Youth Hub into the Coledale Revitalisation Strategy and the research and evaluation partnership with The University of New England.

It is recommended that this comprehensive and strategic approach be continued, embedding research and evidence into planning, programs and initiatives.

R1.1 ~ Develop a Tamworth Youth Strategy

It is recommended that the YOWG incorporate and extend upon the work done to date to develop a Tamworth Youth Strategy.

This would incorporate the three strategic priorities ~ the new youth hub, youth service integration and positive youth development ~ and associated actions for implementation (detailed in the Appendix as agreed at the Tamworth Youth Sector Workshop) within the broader suite of regional, NSW and national priorities for youth.

Keeping in line with the findings from this research the Strategy needs to be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders (the youth sector, business community, youth and wider community) to optimise ownership and in turn be a key mechanism for aligning effort, investment of resources and more formal agreements (as detailed in the collaborative governance structure on page 22 of this Report).

A high level structure and outline of such a Tamworth Youth Strategy is detailed in the Appendix.

R1.2 ~ Sister City arrangement with Bendigo

It is recommended that a sister-city partnership with Bendigo be investigated given the significant level of alignment and stage of implementation in these approaches to youth development and youth sector integration. It may well be that the potential for sourcing innovation funding, as well as technical exchange of know-how, is enhanced through such a partnership.

R1.3 ~ Quality Management, Performance & Accountability

It is recommended that all services and organisations delivering to youth should conduct their own internal gap analysis as part of their quality assurance and performance assessments. This analysis would complement and reinforce the findings from the Tamworth Youth Services Survey service mapping and analysis detailed in this Report.

It is further recommended that a place-based, region-wide and sector-wide measurement and reporting system be developed to track the progress and performance of the three priority strategies. This will provide essential monitoring and feedback for the YOWG and members of the youth services sector to ensure genuine progress in outcomes for youth are being achieved.

The Ideas2Action unit of the University of New England are developing an Australian Research Council application in partnership with the YOWG to assess the potential of this multi-organisation strategy for servicing youth needs. This has the potential to build upon the UNE's past involvement as an independent and professional researcher and evaluator of the YOWG's work, as was the case with the earlier Youth Space research.

Further, there is potential for UNE students to link with the YOWG in providing practical training and work placement opportunities, as are required for their social work programs.

It is recommended that the YOWG pro-actively engage with these opportunities and incorporate them into its work.

R1.4 ~ Media, Communications & Social Marketing

It is recommended that the YOWG develop on its initial work with communications ~ the Champions and media and promotions plan ~ to develop a comprehensive approach to media, communications and social marketing.

Over the period of this research project, and throughout this report, the need for strategic communications has been highlighted – both internal to the YOWG network and key stakeholders in the new Youth Hub as well as externally to the larger community of Tamworth and region and to the wider youth services sector. As the YOWG brief has broadened over time, and as more communities-of-interest have contributed to the youth sector/hub discourse, so the need for coordinated and targeted communications has grown.

The work of YOWG and the Coledale Revitalisation Plan have become increasingly visible in the community in recent times and this opens up the opportunities to continue to articulate the vision for both the new youth hub and the cultural change that youth service integration presents.

That these form part of what could be called a larger youth strategy for Tamworth indicates that a narrative of change and development is emerging.

In terms of communications and media activity the next phase of the project will reflect this change and provides opportunity to “re-frame” the narrative of Coledale and of service provision to Tamworth's youth. Additionally, the relocation of the Youth Centre from the existing Youthies facility to Coledale requires the “re-mapping” of the centre of youth focussed activity through media, promotion and marketing campaigns - particularly in the period leading to the opening of the new facility.

Underpinning all communications on these issues are some basic objectives:

- Increasing awareness;
- Changing attitudes;
- Building knowledge; and,
- Improving practice.

In the process of realising these four key objectives, strategic work needs to continue on the design and implementation of communications around: youth engagement; community advocacy; public diplomacy; and partnership building.

As stated earlier, the work undertaken by YOWG and TRC on the Youth Hub project has brought change to the local youth services sector. There is emerging “...a new narrative and working model for youth and youth-focussed services embodying partnerships, innovation and integration for greater engagement, outcomes and results.”

This new narrative needs to be reinforced in all external communication including promotion, marketing and branding.

In the shorter term (between the end of this project and the opening of the new Youth Hub) it will help to think of communications as part of a larger social marketing strategy.

Social Marketing is the “selling” of ideas, employing the very same principles and methods used in product marketing with attention shifting to:

- Publics ~ targeted and regular communication with all identified stakeholders and communities-of-interest. These include external and internal groups involved in the Youth Hub project. External publics include specific target audiences, secondary audiences, policy makers and gatekeepers, while the internal publics are those who are involved in the project – i.e. all in the YOWG and Tamworth Place Team network;
- Partnerships ~ organisations and services with similar or compatible interests teaming up to conduct messaging/information campaigns. To foster and encourage a culture of collaboration and participation, not only between services but also with the wider community. This includes other local government authorities that may benefit from the Youth Hub or service integration;
- Policy ~ influencing key policy and decision makers in community, organisations and government to understand emerging needs and plans. It is important to anticipate these and strategically plan to include these in any communications strategy. Every opportunity to communicate plans for the future need to be considered.
- Fundraising ~ targeting all identified potential sources of financial support within community, government and private sectors and establishing a culture that encourages private and philanthropic support. Deliberate and pro-active strategies for ongoing funding/financial support need to be embedded in communications strategies. Campaigning to raise funds becomes a permanent agenda issue for YOWG and the new Youth Hub.

As referred to earlier in relation to the UK Every Child Matters initiative, it is imperative to continue to leverage support and engagement from the three tiers of government, the service sector, community, business and philanthropic partnerships, leadership, planning and investment.

Finally, communications need to concertedly work towards committed engagement of youth and Aboriginal communities and the community of Coledale. Plans and strategies should help build structures by which members of the community can be included in planning, decision making and then eventually in the day-to-day operation and use of the new Youth Hub.

R1.5 ~ Map & Position into the Wider Context

It is recommended that the Tamworth Youth Strategy map, analyse and clearly position its priorities and actions within the wider context of other relevant policies, strategic plans and initiatives (as listed in the outline of the Strategy on p.47).

This exercise is particularly important to demonstrate alignment and complementarity of the YOWG's work as well as identify opportunities for partnerships and funding.

R2 ~ Youth Service Integration

The following recommendations are focussed upon progressing the integration of youth services.

R2.1 ~ YOWG Governance

It is recommended that the YOWG prioritise further developing and formalising its governance structures, systems and policies as well as securing appropriate resources for its critical role.

Specific actions already agreed at the Youth Sector Workshop for the YOWG were to develop: Terms of Reference, Mission, Vision & Values; Membership Terms of Reference; and a Memorandum of Understanding as a formal agreement structure to negotiate and confirm the roles, responsibilities and contributions of the wide range of youth services and key stakeholders necessarily involved to successfully progress the service integration, collaboration and partnerships.

Implementing these structures is especially important to addressing the obvious risk of an over-reliance on Tamworth Regional Council who have provided the most continuous and extensive leadership and investment into this work to date.

Dedicated resources, roles and responsibility will be required to successfully create, implement and sustain the partnership and collaboration based service integration system which was agreed as the best fit and way forward. The level of central coordination resources will increase with the desired scale and complexity of the integration.

Bendigo have identified that 2-4 years of investment are required to build the foundations for this form of governance system, particularly the regular provision of data and information based on established information sharing protocols, and identification of service gaps, and evaluation of programs that may be used to address these gaps undertaken through a longer term “reform action plan”. Key success factors for this form of governance model include:

- A willingness of key stakeholders to put young people at the centre of their practice;
- A commitment of key stakeholders to working in partnership with other agencies and stakeholders;
- A willingness of funding bodies, particular State and Federal Governments to alter funding processes to support a “place based” funding approach directed through the established local governance structure;
- A well established operational and accountability framework on which the local governance structure is convened;
- The establishment of shared data collection and sharing process by which the local governance structure can be informed as to where resources should be best allocated to ensure that vulnerable young people are supported in the most effective manner;
- The development of a long-term, strategic, whole of community plan which outlines key directions and initiatives in service coordination and delivery for young people; and,
- The employment of facilitation staff to ensure the implementation of the strategic plan on behalf of the local governance group.

The University of New England have acted as an independent research partner with the YOWG for several years and are now actively working on further research to assist enhance this youth service coordination work, in collaboration with NSW Family & Community Services.

R2.2 ~ Common Referral System

It is recommended that a Common Referral System be established for youth and include the following key components:

- A common service directory and database, ideally that is online, easily accessible and self-managed. HS Net provides for a basic level of shared information and could potentially become a common registry for all Tamworth youth services;
- Utilisation of the Family Referral Service (FRS) operated by Pathfinders to manage and deliver the common referral system;
- Extend upon the FRS to enable a 24 Hour hotline service (perhaps in partnership with Kids Helpline) as well as develop a youth-friendly on-line portal to service information and access; and,
- Regular reporting to the YOWG with activity-based and analytical assessment of referral activity considering usage levels, user profiles, service outcomes, gaps, barriers and so on.

Successfully developing this System will require thorough analysis and design, particularly noting that there have already been considerable efforts to enhance the FRS and HS Net services in the above direction, however this has been challenging to progress thus far. A round table planning meeting bringing together each of the key stakeholders under the auspice of YOWG is suggested as the immediate next step.

There is potential alignment with the emerging partnership with the Ideas2Action (i2A) unit at UNE to assist with the system analysis and design.

Bendigo are currently developing a similar system to: have an extensive intake, assessment and response system; with outreach and placed based casework in communities and schools; a well developed practice framework incorporating the strengths approach, trauma informed practice, and developmental frameworks; service responses and interventions that are youth centred and family focused; development of youth support teams around young people and their families that includes the young person, their family, their primary worker, school representative and relevant services; access to and formalised arrangements with specialist services (such as youth housing, AOD services) that enhance the service response to young people and contribute to the achievement of the one common case plan.

R2.3 ~ Co-Case Management

It is recommended that the YOWG investigate scope to support the Supporting Children, Supporting Families Program, which is a single gateway into human services and participating agencies can exchange information, work together and tailor each integrated case management plan to the needs of the individual. This is a new program and only just being implemented at the time of concluding this report. Further, it is recommended that this research considers the voluntary co-case management work being coordinated between various community-based services providers already.

R2.4 ~ Shared Information Systems

It is recommended that a more comprehensive Shared Information System be established. This needs to take into account a wider range of information than that solely required for the purpose of the Common Referral System detailed above. *Every Child Matters* (UK) identified such shared information systems as one of the most key “top down” components that contribute to successful service integration, specifically standards for information sharing across agencies.

While it was found in the course of this project that there are high level limitations on the use of online co-working technologies (such as Wiggio) in many workplaces, this should not hinder the exploration of methods and processes underpinning best practice in “Social Business”. This is crucial in terms of speed of information flow and sharing within the network and ultimately to the responsiveness and transparency of process to community.

As more community participation and advocacy is sought there will be increasing benefits from swift and shared information flow and knowledge management. Establishing an effective on-line shared working space, tailored to the project needs will accelerate the work flow around the project, and help to nurture the cultural and work practise change that such an undertaking requires.

The provision of shared calendars is one specific and practical use of such the Shared Information System which was regularly identified as needed during the course of this project. This would comprise both a sector-only access calendar for scheduling meetings and ensuring an effective series of connected meeting processes as well as a sector and public access calendar to publicise youth related events and activities.

The City of Greater Bendigo have developed procedures and protocols which provide a useful point of reference, to ensure that data is used in a pro-active manner with a focus on a culture of improvement rather than blame and identified the following barriers to sharing information for youth, including:

- A desire to protect the organisational interests when it comes to tendering for service contracts;
- A fear that the data being made available could be used as a basis for criticism of the service;
- Concerns that privacy legislation may be breached;
- A lack of coordinated protocols and processes by which data can be shared between agencies;
- A lack of discussion having occurred at higher level management within organisations of what data is required for local planning; and
- The large amount of time taken for local data to be extracted from centralised systems, particularly within government departments.

R2.5 ~ Common Professional Development

The benefit of shared and common staff training was rated strongly in the Tamworth Youth Services Survey (63%) however common professional development was rated lowly at the Youth Sector Workshop (refer red dots in diagram on page 22).

It is recommended that the merit and support for common professional development be further investigated.

Bendigo, *headspace*, Frontyard and Every Child Matters each have a specific strategy for common professional development to strengthen capacity, service delivery and the common platform of capability, terminology and systems for collaboration and integration.

Bendigo have Youth Focused Practice Frameworks which specific standards that are common across professional roles to ensure a consistent approach to working with young people. *headspace* have the collaborative learning network to enable shared practice between sites and Every Child Matters have adopted a shared language so that profession specific jargon is eliminated and all professionals working in front-line delivery speak and understand a common language.

Frontyard Youth Services have found that the knowledge base behind their work to be very valuable and links to universities and centres of excellence to be an important enabler by providing the evidence to inform services.

R2.6 ~ Funding & Resources

It is recommended that the YOWG formalise a process of ongoing negotiations with existing funded services to re-prioritise and re-deploy existing resources towards the priorities and actions identified in this report.

It is further recommended that formal proposals be made to each of the NSW and Australian Government annual budgeting processes.

Considerable resources will be required to fully implement the three identified priority strategies, and ideally the broader proposed Tamworth Youth Strategy. Further work is required to accurately cost each of these, however it is clear that multi-year commitments will be required to sustainably embed the desired collaborative service delivery model in terms of structures, practices and culture.

It is also recommended that the YOWG investigate the merits of developing a structure to be able to access and utilise philanthropic funding, such as a Tamworth Youth Trust, as an important addition to the existing government and community sector investment. Most of the comprehensive youth models as being pursued by Tamworth that were identified in the literature research had significant philanthropic partnerships and investment.

And lastly it is recommended that the innovative models of enterprise-based activity be further pursued ~ whether that is a youth enterprise such as the envisaged Coledale Cafe & Corner Store or whether it is simply incorporating a user-pays system for co-location and usage of the new youth hub.

R3 ~ Youth Hub

At the time of concluding this report the positive announcement was received that funding for the new Tamworth Youth Hub, to be located in Coledale, has been awarded. This is a significant milestone and accomplishment and provides a once-in-a-generation opportunity and platform to advance the various recommendations, priorities and issues identified within this report.

R3.1 ~ Youth Involvement

It is recommended that the engagement, participation and development of youth continues to be placed at the heart of all this work, including the specific priorities and actions already identified in the earlier Coledale Youth Space work and as detailed in the Appendix. Participants at both the Youth Sector Workshop and the Business Round Table emphasised the critical role this will place in ensuring genuine ownership and meaningful take-up and participation in services.

The youth directly involved with this project, particularly those through The Youthie and at the Youth Sector Workshop, expressed a keen desire for direct involvement through mechanisms such as a Youth Committee, a youth-led communications and engagement strategy and youth-led programs.

It is further recommended that ongoing monitoring and research of youth involvement strategies be sustained. This is a relatively new field and practice which is rapidly growing to keep up with the desires of youth and the potential benefits.

R3.2 ~ Youth Sector Partnership & Collaboration

It is recommended that the various commitments and actions already made (and detailed in the Appendix) be incorporated into the YOWG's agenda to ensure they are actively pursued and followed through.

Further, it is recommended that a gap analysis is made of the various commitments and actions made by specific youth service providers and key stakeholders at the Tamworth Youth Sector Workshop (as detailed in the Appendix) as compared with the requirements to implement the three strategic priorities.

R3.3 ~ Co-Location of Youth Services

It is recommended that the YOWG utilise the construction period (14-18 months) to prioritise efforts to re-negotiate with youth services to consider co-location to optimise youth engagement with services and utilisation of the new youth hub.

The evidence base detailed in this report clearly identifies the importance and benefits of such co-location, however there was instead a preference expressed for collaborative service delivery at the Youth Sector Workshop.

R3.4 ~ Partnerships with Other Youth Spaces

It is recommended that formal partnerships be developed with each of the other key youth spaces and services hubs ~ the new headspace, Coledale Community Centre, PCYC, The Youthie (presuming that it continues to operate once the new youth hub is established), the new Hillvue School Connected Communities and the new TAFE Aboriginal Education Centre. These partnerships form an important part of the broader youth service integration work.

While the new youth hub will be a critically important point for service access and integration, consideration is also required of the many other youth spaces throughout the greater Tamworth Region.

R3.5 ~ Redefining Coledale

It is recommended that a comprehensive community development and capacity building strategy be developed to successfully re-map and re-define the perceptions of Coledale for youth and the wider community to ensure the successful utilisation of the new youth hub to be situated there. Accessibility with transportation for youth and their parents and carers is key, as is ensuring that the new youth hub is clearly recognised and used by all youth.

This work is especially important to ensure key stakeholders can clearly differentiate the focus of this work with youth with the broader range of initiatives focused on the Coledale community as a whole (such as the Coledale Revitalisation Strategy and Coledale Action Plan). Likewise it is important to ensure these priorities for youth complement and are integrated with the wider range of work for the revitalisation.

There is an immediate opportunity to celebrate with the community, both Coledale and more widely, the successful funding and commencement of work on the new youth hub.

The strength of situating the new youth hub in Coledale in regards to accessing its primary youth target in that region of Tamworth is also its weakness in regards to ensuring that perceptions and matters of safety, accessibility and inclusion are addressed. These issues have been raised as concerns broadly by all participants in this project ~ services, young people, parents, carers and others ~ and the obvious hesitation of services to utilise the existing Coledale Community Centre evidences the near endemic nature of this challenge.

One participant in this project astutely observed that the new youth hub needs to be viewed as a 'relationship building', recognising that it will be the 'soft work' in regards to community relationship, capacity building and perceptions which will make the critical different to the success of the 'hard work' being the physical construction of the new youth hub.

This is particularly key to address the obvious risk of an over-reliance on the build process of new youth hub as the impetus and driver for change ~ be that in terms of service integration, youth engagement or positive youth developmental outcomes. Constraints on usage of the Coledale Community Centre by services and the community are a poignant reminder of how important it will be that cultural change is interwoven with construction.

Achieving this will reflect a significant milestone in re-mapping the perceived epicentre of Tamworth for youth to become Coledale, which is strongly aligned with the objectives for the Coledale Revitalisation Strategy, which in turn is the very reason why the capital funding for the new youth hub is a possibility. The value of this unique opportunity cannot be under estimated.

While this is challenging it is not insoluble. Again the exemplar of Windale is a key point of reference as detailed earlier in this Report.

There is a breadth of capability in the existing youth service network to develop and lead an effective community development and capacity building strategy to achieve these objectives, integrating grass-roots interventions into the three priority strategies, and building on the successful work already in place with Coledale such as the sport and culture-based initiatives.

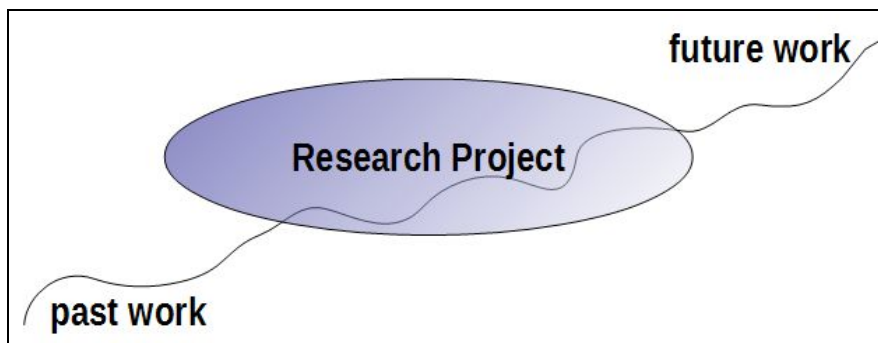
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Scope of Work

Purpose

The purpose of the Tamworth Youth Spaces & Services research project was to extend upon the conclusions from existing targeted research, Youth in Action Survey, Coledale Action Plan and Coledale Youth Space Report, to provide an evidence based platform from which to design a collaborative business model to improve integration and coordination of service delivery for youth and better outcomes for youth throughout Tamworth and surrounding regions.



The project was contracted by Tamworth Regional Council with the Youth Opportunities Working Group (YOWG) responsible as a reference and steering group for the wider place-based and sector-wide engagement and participation.

The project built on the findings and outcomes of the Coledale Youth Space which pointed to the need for a greater level of coordination and integration of services for youth in the Tamworth region as a vital underpinning of the new youth hub.

That preliminary research pointed to the need for a greater level of coordination and integration of services for youth in the Tamworth region and this direction has been strongly reinforced by the findings from this current phase of literature research, and research and planning with stakeholders from across the youth sector.

YOWG is a sub-committee of the Tamworth Place Team which brings together senior staff from NSW Government Agencies and NSW Government funded non-government services providers. The Place Team have identified both the area of youth development and improved integration of services (including youth) as priorities for Tamworth.

The YOWG was originally formed with a specific focus on the community of Coledale as a sub-committee of the Coledale Action Team. This role expanded with the Coledale Revitalisation Strategy led by NSW Housing to also include a focus on the new youth hub to be established there. Youth service integration is being considered as part of the co-location model for the youth hub, which in turn has influenced the YOWG to take an even broader role of engaging with the youth services sector on a region-wide basis.

In addition to the support for this work described above (Tamworth Place Team, YOWG, Youth Inter-Agency, Coledale Action Team and Coledale Revitalisation Strategy) there has been strong Councillor support for the Building Better Regions funding application, of which a key component is the new youth hub.

Tamworth has recently been awarded a *headspace* youth mental health facility which will service the local and Gunnedah region. This is currently under competitive tender. *headspace* is a recognised model of effective integrated service delivery for young people and will provide a useful benchmark and opportunity for wider application of this approach across the youth sector-at-large.

Objectives

The core objectives for the Tamworth Youth Spaces & Services research project were to:

- Complete mapping of services available for youth across the Tamworth Region, building upon existing draft service mapping and gap analysis prepared by the youth opportunities working group;
- Identify and document any gaps in service for youth;
- Identify and document any barriers faced by youth in accessing services;
- Identify and document potential solutions for overcoming barriers;
- Identify and document ways/models and infrastructure required for improving outcomes for youth through improved coordination and integration of government and non government services;
- Prepare a Discussion Paper on research findings, including potential solutions/way/models for overcoming barriers and improving outcomes for youth;
- Facilitate a workshop with targeted government and non government agencies on content of the Discussion Paper;
- Provide regular updates to the Youth Opportunities Working Group and Tamworth Place Team and seek input and feedback on findings; and,
- Document research findings and make recommendations for action and report back to Tamworth Regional Council, Tamworth Place Team, Coledale Directors' Meeting and the Department of Premier and Cabinet on completion of the Project.

In addition, the project team extended these objectives to also include the following performance measures:

- Demonstrated examples of, and strategies for, enhanced service integration;
- Demonstrated instances of, and strategies which, enhanced youth wellness and protective factors (which in turn reduce or ameliorate risk factors);
- Strengthened key stakeholder and community partnerships and emerging new initiatives; and,
- The emergence of a new narrative and working model for youth and youth-focussed services embodying partnerships, innovation and integration for greater engagement, outcomes and results.

Participatory Design Principles

The Project methodology embodied the below participatory design principles to utilise action-based approaches which are best able to deliver the required research, learning and planning while concurrently enhancing partnerships and integration.

The processes were designed to build on strengths and best practice in a bid to make this transition both viable and effective. An effective and inclusive process is one that works to minimise risk, make the best use of available resources and build partnerships that are appropriate, pro-active, sustainable and solution-focussed.

A strengths and best practice based approach, rather than deficits based, was the focus for all activities.

- Real-world modelling integration and partnerships. Project partners and key stakeholders were directly involved in the participatory research, design and selection of identified frameworks for service integration, coordination of delivery and supporting partnerships;
- Participatory planning and decision making. Partners and key stakeholders were widely involved in workshops, strategic analysis and presentations to build the shared understanding, strategies and increase the impetus and likelihood for partnerships and integration;

- Youth participation and mentoring. Through structured participation and mentoring young people were involved in the research process and the final Youth Sector Workshop to complement the professional strategic analysis, build direct relationships and encourage participation;
- Action learning and action research. Learning by doing is a powerful and essential ingredient for complex change processes. The direct involvement of, and collaboration between, the Tamworth Place Team, Youth Opportunities Working Group, youth service sector and young people provided key opportunities for capacity building among all stakeholders advocating for adapting practice to the new and emerging environment of service delivery to young people in the Tamworth region; and,
- Creative challenges for change, responsibility and initiative. The need for change was inherent in the context and background for this project. Change is a challenging process that requires experimentation, reflection, learning, adaptation and a willingness to stretch into new frontiers and beyond comfort zones. Opportunities were provided to take responsibility and initiative for these changes in ways that are supported and safe.

Background & Context

There are strong and clear policy trends for effective youth services emerging from Australian and international literature which include: a prevention focus; partnership and integrated service delivery; holistic care and strengths-based youth participation (Bond et al).

Positive change is possible, with Windale as an exemplar of the possibility for profound change. Tony Vinson's landmark 'postcode study' of Australia found that just 1.7 percent of postcodes and communities across Australia account for more than seven times their share of top rank positions of the major factors that cause intergenerational poverty, including: low income, limited computer and internet access, early school leaving, physical and mental disabilities, long-term unemployment, prison admissions and confirmed child maltreatment.

Windale transformed itself following a three-year place-based, integrated community-professional partnership intervention. In 1999 Windale was rated as the most socially disadvantaged community (by postcode) in New South Wales. Following a comprehensive three-year community renewal process Windale moved from the worst 1% in terms of child protection notifications to the best 25%. A wide range of linked initiatives contributed to this outcome including dedicated positions for place-based service coordination and a service access hub at the primary school, known as the Alcazar Centre, which was later used as a blueprint for the Schools as Community Centres initiative across New South Wales.

Vinson warns however that in such highly disadvantaged areas programs need to be sustained for a substantial period ~ say eight years or longer ~ otherwise there is a demonstrated risk of a 'boomerang effect'; that is, the reassertion of the previous problems.

Youth Centres

Youth-specific centres are similarly growing in their recognition as an important, if not essential, investment for contemporary societies.

The UK *myplace* initiative is one of the most dramatic demonstrations of this ~ a nation-wide £34Bn program to create youth facilities right across England, including some of their most disadvantaged communities. The programme provides capital grants of between £1-£5m per community to purpose-build a youth facility. In the words of Sir Steve Redgrave, *myplace* Support Team Ambassador:

"Young people need exciting places where they can just be themselves and safe places where they can access support and grasp opportunity. Places where we can offer positive challenges. Places that say 'you are important; we care.'"

On a city-wide scale both New York and Vancouver have created distributed networks of dozens of youth-specific centres to reach young people right across their large urban landscapes and populations.

Each of the above youth centre models has leveraged funding from philanthropic, business and government sources and so creating much larger investment pools. This model exists in Australia (such as the Youth Junction Visy Cares Hub) however has not taken root to the systemic scale reflected in these international examples.

Service Integration

The Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth (ARACY) have highlighted that the integrated service delivery model is seen as one of the most efficient ways of promoting optimal child development, ameliorating family risk factors and enhancing child and family well-being.

Assumptions underlying the success of such an integrated model include an easier to navigate service system (such as easily accessible centres, common intake, referral and shared systems rather than multiple assessments), more timely service delivery (such as through co-case management) and reduced risks of young people falling through the cracks.

Vinson's *Dropping Off the Edge* formed a similar view and recommended "...integrated planning between government departments and between all levels of government to address the compounding effects of disadvantage experienced in identified areas."

The Youth Affairs Policy Association's NSW (YAPA) current youth sector survey (which compiles the views of 565 youth workers from across the state) reports that for a lot of youth workers there is a need for more collaboration between all agencies working with young people (see excerpt right). This could include basic information and communication strategies to jointly promote services through to shared service delivery (to lessen duplication), shared costs, shared resources, joint case management, professional development, learning and planning.

Many workers feel that increased competition, such as for scarce funding, has been counter productive to meeting young peoples' needs and building trust with young people, with many agencies operating as independent silos. Schools were especially singled out for being challenging to collaborate with.

These issues echo similar challenges identified in Tamworth.

Work by the City of Greater Bendigo is tracking a pathway that is remarkably similar to that of Tamworth. They have identified the following key limitations to more coordinated youth services to support vulnerable young people, which are remarkably similar to the some of the key limitations for Tamworth:

- Delivery of services focused on youth issues and barriers rather than being based on the whole person;
- A lack of inter-agency, community-wide planning;
- A lack of community structures by which community-wide planning can occur;
- The lack of shared and up-to-date data;
- Agencies seeking to protect territory or working in isolation; and
- State and Federal Government imposed criteria which pre-determine the manner in which youth resources can be utilised.

Evidence Base

However, at the same time as this growing impetus for greater service integration, ARACY have found no evidence of a comprehensive review into integrated services for youth either in Australia or internationally. Further, they identify that there is limited knowledge of the effectiveness of integrated interventions or the barriers to such service integration, even while the community of Windale proves the efficacy of this model.

While noting this gap in the evidence base there is a clearly visible trend towards greater service integration, perhaps most significantly demonstrated by the United Kingdom *Every Child Matters* which is a national strategy for region-wide integrated place-based service delivery to leverage government, services, community, business and philanthropic partnerships, leadership, planning and investment.

In Australia, Bendigo has been working towards youth service integration for several years and provides a useful point of reference for Tamworth. Bendigo has committed to achieve the UNICEF 'child friendly city' status and has recognised the considerable potential benefits from achieving a high level of service integration such as that described by YAPA.

collaboration and communication between services

A lot of workers noted that there needs to be more collaboration between all agencies working with young people. At a practical level, this includes coordinating with each other to advertise and deliver services together (and lessen the duplication that currently occurs), sharing costs and resources providing joint case management and training, and greater sharing of information about young peoples' needs, challenges and history. Furthermore, it was reported that there has been an increase in a competitive environment between non government agencies over the past few years which is counterproductive to meeting young peoples' needs and building trust with young people, as expressed by one worker:

"[To improve the sector we need] better communication and networking between service providers that offer services to young people. At the moment it seems that there is much more competition than cooperation and this is not good for the young people as they miss out on assistance and support."

And another, who along with others, also argued that competition between services makes it more difficult for young people to access services:

"A collaborative approach would yield more sustainable and long term outcomes because at present many young people end up confused, unsure, overwhelmed and disillusioned by the number of services competing for their 'business' and end up being more disadvantaged."

Illustration 1: Youth Work Survey 2011, YAPA

Youth Development

Youth is an important stage of development and life, with major changes in brain and other development providing a potent opportunity for effective early intervention to positively affect possible negative developmental pathways, with the experiences and developmental challenges faced by young people being critical to their capacity to achieve their personal potential and to engage constructively with society.

Importantly, young people need not only be seen in terms of what they will become in the future. When young people are valued for what they contribute in the present and exclusionary processes are challenged, the benefits to the individual and society are clear (Burns et al).

There is an urgency to this focus on youth according to research findings by Richard Eckersley: "...contrary to the usual story that young people's health is continuing to improve in line with historic trends, with declining mortality and high levels of self-reported health and happiness, it is arguable that their health and well-being have declined in the developed world. This situation partly reflects chronic, physical conditions, especially those associated with increasing obesity, which have led to predictions of a decline in life expectancy. However, it rests more on the importance of the growing burden of mental illness in youth, which appears to have increased markedly in prevalence in many Western nations in the second half of the 20th century.

"Socio-economic factors, such as social class and family structure, are not the main drivers of the patterns and trends in youth mental health. Some studies show no socio-economic differences in the prevalence of mental health problems, and some even higher rates among the rich; other research has found increasing rates have occurred in all socio-economic groups and family types. The causes appear to be more existential and relational than material and structural, linked to factors associated with rising materialism and individualism.

"Thus a central feature of the changed patterns and trends in the health of Western youth over several generations is a shift in emphasis from socio-economic deprivation to psychosocial deprivation; from a problem of material scarcity to one of excess."

In line with Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of child development, attention is increasingly being paid to integrated and multi-pronged approaches which address a number of areas of the young person's well-being as well as to those that involve family and community in the intervention process. In addition, from a preventative science viewpoint, the capacity for an integrated model to provide universal, targeted and clinical services that address multiple risk and protective factors and operate across multiple environments such as school, home and the community, increases the likelihood that the holistic needs of the developing youth will be met.

Young people themselves are increasingly being recognised as key actors in their own development, as well as agents for changes in their broader social setting. Youth leadership and youth led, designed, informed and run programs are some of the many examples of this growing trend.

In the upper age range of youth this self-agency and emphasis shifts into a focus on independent living, with youth enterprise, vocational training and professional development becoming key processes for both engagement and development as well as the desired outcomes of youth becoming independent, healthy, self-sufficient and pro-social young adults.

Research & Planning Processes

The major parts and processes undertaken to deliver the Project are depicted in the process map on the following page and described following.

Situation Analysis Workshop

An initial Situation Analysis Workshop was undertaken with the YOWG at the commencement of the project with the purpose of:

- Reviewing and finalising the Project Plan;
- Mapping key stakeholders and finalising research processes for stakeholder and community engagement and communication; and,
- Reviewing the design of the service mapping survey and analysis.

Youth Services Survey

Few services were mapped and none fully in the first phase survey work. Nor was it apparent whether many had conducted their own internal gap analysis as part of their quality assurance and performance assessments.

The Tamworth Youth Services Survey was designed to address this shortfall in data. The Survey was also aligned with the current Youth Action and Policy Association NSW sector survey to provide an initial basis for benchmarking.

The survey was developed with an action-oriented approach with considerable review and input from service stakeholders. The questions were designed to role-model a process for internal organisational review for those services and organisations that have not yet, or not recently, undertaken their own analysis of strengths, gaps and barriers. Other questions covered areas including referral and communication procedures, client profiles and engagement with other services.

The service mapping and gap analysis incorporated both the survey and the collation of a current youth-specific service directory. The service directory was extracted from contact lists and directories from six Tamworth based organisations and committees. The directory was created within the boundaries of focusing on specifically targeted, ongoing, youth programs and organisations in the Tamworth area.

The survey was distributed on-line and widely to more than seven hundred Tamworth community service employees and service providers. The final number of respondents was 45 services, within the tight boundary described above. This wider promotion was intended to ensure a high level of awareness of the survey and as complete a response from the youth-specific sector as possible.

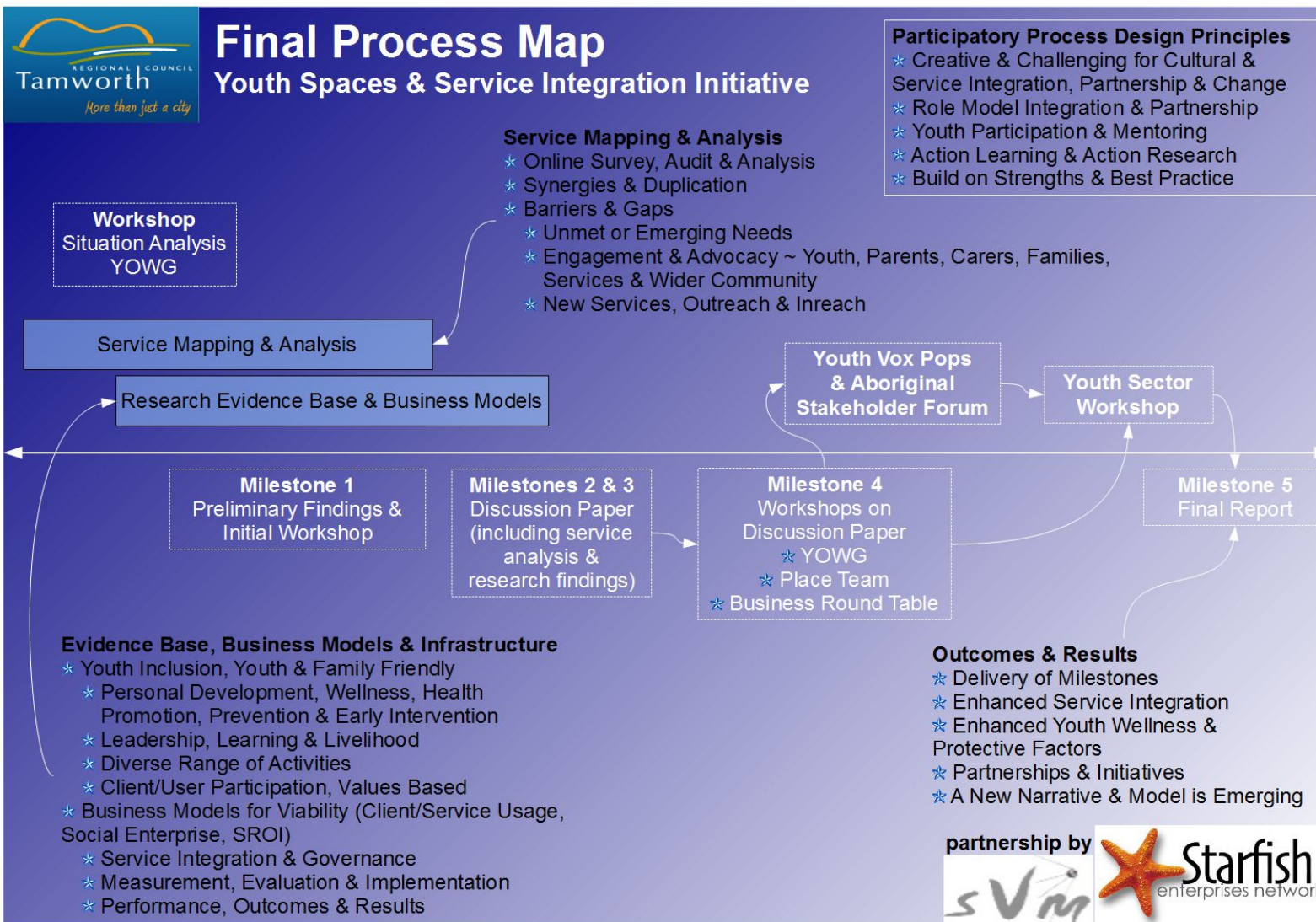
The survey was hosted by the University of New England.

Literature Research & Discussion Paper

A Discussion Paper was prepared to present findings from research of existing literature, including interviews with a range of experts, identifying relevant strategies, initiatives, examples, evidence and business models, including success factors, for youth spaces, youth development and youth service integration.

The purpose of the Discussion Paper was to present a range of different models and options for consideration in the establishment of a new youth centre in Coledale ~ the Tamworth Youth Hub ~ and to progress the integration of youth services, including co-location of services at the youth centre.

The Discussion Paper provided a key tool for more focussed discussion with the various stakeholders, youth and community members to clarify the best model and way forward in regards to improved outcomes for young people. These discussions initiated with the Youth Opportunities Working Group and then moved outwards to involve the youth service sector, Tamworth Place Team, youth and community leaders.



This research considered:

- Factors which enhance youth inclusion and participation as well as youth and family friendly design;
- Consideration of the full diversity of the youth communities and cultures throughout the Tamworth Region;
- The breadth of youth needs including personal development, wellness, health promotion, prevention and early intervention;
- Provision of opportunities for leadership, learning and livelihood as well as a diverse range of activities (such as those detailed in the Coledale Youth Space Concept Brief);
- Incorporation of principles for client/user participation, values based operation and service integration;
- Identifying key design features for governance and business models that strengthen viability in terms of client and service usage, social enterprise and social return on investment; and,
- Systems for measurement, evaluation and then implementation with performance delivering outcomes and tangible results.

Business Round Table

The purpose of the Business Round Table was to bring together a range of business leaders (ten) to consider the research findings as presented in the Discussion Paper (detailed above) with a view to identifying the interests and possible roles from the perspective of the business community.

The following questions were used to focus this discussion:

- What are your views on the various business and governance models for the new youth centre in Coledale?
- Where do you see the youth sector working well? Where do you see need for improvement?
- Are there any other matters that need to be considered which aren't in the Discussion Paper?
- What is the current involvement of business with young people and youth development?
- Are there other ways business can be involved? Consider examples you are aware of from other places.
- What is required for effective engagement and collaboration by the business community and youth sector?

Aboriginal Stakeholder Forum

A similarly targeted forum was held with Aboriginal community members, elders and service providers (fourteen) to obtain their views on the Discussion Paper. Similar questions were posed for discussion.

- What in your view is most important in regards to the governance and leadership of the new youth centre proposed to be established in Coledale?
- Where do you see the youth sector working well? Where do you see most need for improvement?
- Are there any other matters that need to be considered which aren't in the Discussion Paper?
- What is the current involvement of Aboriginal community leaders and services with young people and youth development? Where do you see this needs to be strengthened?
- What is required for effective engagement and collaboration by the Aboriginal community and youth sector?

Youth Sector Workshop

The purpose of the Youth Sector Workshop was to bring together a wide range of key stakeholders (sixty) to identify and agree a practical set of priorities and actions that would most benefit Tamworth's youth in respect to the new Youth Centre, the pursuit of an integrated sector of youth services and supports consistent with a positive development model.

A comprehensive Background Briefing was developed to provide a common basis of research and other information for these considerations. Short presentations were made at the commencement of the Workshop to reiterate key messages regarding:

- The case for change (reform, service and sector integration);
- Details regarding the new Tamworth Youth Hub and inter-relationship with the Coledale Community Centre;
- An overview of a positive youth development model;
- TAFE New England Institute's new Aboriginal Learning Centre; and
- Vox Pops from the youth interviews.

Community members and young people were also involved to provide further review, analysis and identification of solutions and strategies.

Promotion, Communications & Engagement

As at the time of commencing the project there had been little strategic or unified communications output for the Tamworth Youth Spaces and Service Integration initiative.

Key components to developing a communications strategy were outlined in a discussion paper drafted by Social Ventures Media (SVM) for consideration by the YOWG with consideration of four key areas ~ Youth Engagement; Community Advocacy; Public Diplomacy; and Partnership Building.

Regional print and broadcast media were monitored throughout the course of the project ~ Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth City News, Prime TV, NBN Regional evening news and ABC regional. This included stories on youth issues, sport, education, crime, cultural events, Coledale, regional development and the youth services sector. This monitoring has given context to the project as well as provided an indicator of how organisations and services are using the traditional outlets of print and broadcast media.

The purpose of the communications strategy were twofold:

- Bring change to perceptions (these may be preconceived and stereotypical) across the whole of community. Media stories, events and other communications processes should prioritise the change stories of young people, beginning with the impact that both the Youthie's and the Coledale Community Centre youth activities have had and are having on young people who participate and engage already; and,
- Stimulate the development of a youth services sector (with both internal and public communications) to enhance the visibility of the growing, cohesive coalition of services.

The YOWG stepped up their work in these areas, particularly with the development of a Champions initiative to engaged leadership for youth from across the sector and wider community. A strategic media promotional plan is under development and considerable, and positive, media coverage was achieved for the Youth Sector Workshop.

Shared Information Systems

An online co-working space was established (Wiggio) as preliminary step towards a shared information system: co-working space, information repository and communications tool for YOWG and ultimately the wider youth services sector.

Findings

The findings detailed below reflect the integration of direct research with experts, stakeholders and community members (with some 250 direct participants in the course of this project) as well as literature research of evidence from Australia and internationally.

Emerging Vision

The preliminary work done at the outset of the project with the YOWG began the process of describing the vision for two of the three key points of focus for this project ~ the new youth hub and an integrated service sector.

Youth Hub

- A place that enables young people with the courage to have a go (enthusiasm and commitment; extend themselves for the challenge; and excitement);
- Changing negative trajectories and preventing the 'car crashes';
- Somewhere for youth to go ~ Someone for youth to talk to ~ Something for youth to do;
- A wide range of good things for all youth;
- Being adaptable over time as things change; and,
- Joining together of youth services.

Service Integration

- Working together for higher level of outcomes;
- Unlocking services for good outcomes (being tough, reflective and cutting edge as well as bridging the gap between good intentions and effective implementation);
- Involvement of youth and other service users; and,
- Keeping the heart of youth needs and potential at the centre.

Situation Analysis

The Situation Analysis Workshop at the commencement of the project identified that the shift and momentum for change was growing as evidenced by:

- High public and media profile of issues (noting that the community is frustrated by wanting for solutions);
- Aboriginal communities reconnecting and reinvigorating with culture (with a boost from the reconciliation initiatives) and reaching into popular culture and media too (like the Goomeroi Dancers); and,
- Mentors are linking more widely, nationally even (though men more than women at this stage).

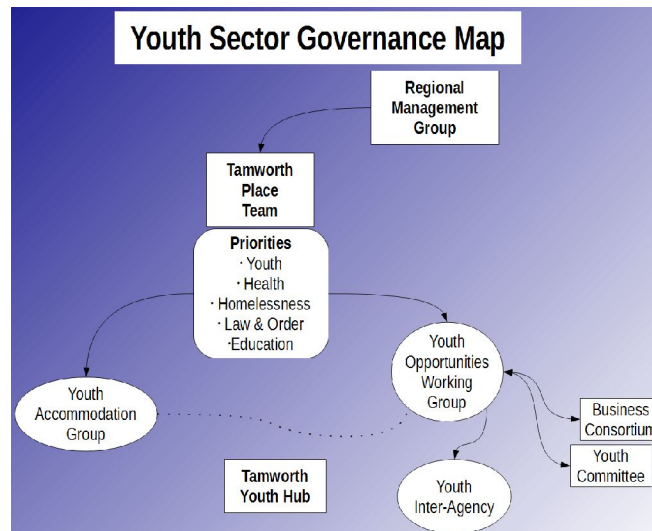
Part of the impetus for this project and the changes it considers are the fact that:

- Younger and younger children are having troubles;
- Demographic change with Aboriginal youth population growing while mainstream youth population is declining;
- The funding environment is changing, with community created and led ideas being more supported;
- Growing disengagement from traditional education; and,
- That there is an increasing expectation for services to work in a coordinated way, particularly with new services and more services coming from out-of-town.

These issues prompted the need to consider different models of working with young people such as:

- More opportunities for the 'inner work';
- Taking a broad focus including all domains of youth development, ie. including theatre, arts, conservatorium, dance; and,
- Utilising the dramatic increase in technology such as social media.

Governance & Coordination (YOWG)



A preliminary outline of the Governance Structure for this work was developed at the Youth Sector Workshop, with the addition of a Business Consortium to lead engagement and initiatives from the business community (identified at the Business Round Table).

The purpose, role and responsibility for the YOWG was defined as including:

- Providing links between the Tamworth Youth Sector and the Tamworth Place Team and Regional Management Group;
- Leading the Tamworth Youth Sector, particularly in keeping a clear focus on the needs of youth and being a champion for youth;
- Looking widely at what is working and sharing this knowledge;
- Influencing government and public policy, programs and funding;
- Ensuring accountability (place-wide planning, holistic evaluation and reflection, reporting progress and performance);
- Mentoring the (new) Youth Committee and supporting and resourcing Youth Leaders (new);
- Communication with stakeholders (all with an interest) via a range of media: Facebook, Newsletters, Website email lists and mainstream media; and,
- Developing policy and procedures for the YOWG.

With regards to membership structure for the YOWG it was agreed:

- There needs to be a clear role for Members;
- Change and rotation (12-24 months terms);
- Inclusive of representation from schools and the wider community too (Lions, Rotary, CWA); and,
- Creation of a means for a large membership though perhaps not every meeting, rather regular participation.

Key principles for governing the emerging Tamworth Youth Strategy (see recommendations) were:

- Having a shared responsibility, common goals and interest;
- Social justice and inclusion;
- Innovation, consideration of new models and an openness to re-design the service system;
- Evidence-based approaches;
- Minimum required (light governance) ~ KISS; and,
- Integration (internally consistent).

Finally, the resources required for governance, coordination and communication were considered with the following strategies identified:

- Rotating the role of the secretariat (provided by Tamworth Regional Council to date);
- Being able to access philanthropic funding sources;
- Preparing government budget proposals (NSW, Australian);
- Seeking local business support (eg. Mining);
- Developing youth enterprises (eg. shop/cafe detailed later in this Report); and,
- Fund raising.

Tamworth Youth Hub

Summary

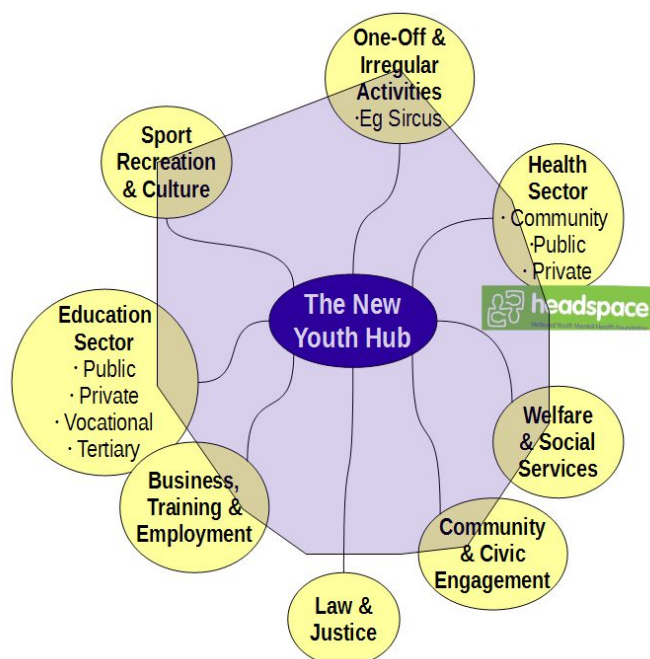
According to the UWS School of Social Sciences and Psychology a good practice youth centre model mixes key ingredients together to:

- Provide a safe space for young people to be;
- Promote pro-social activities;
- Offer innovative and structured services and programs that meet their needs and reflect the needs of the community; and,
- Collaborate with other services and stakeholders.

Strategic Positioning

It is important that the new youth hub is strategically positioned to enhance, complement and address identified gaps in the youth service mix of Tamworth. Its physical location and marketing are equally important in this regard.

The diagram (right) provides a visual picture of this concept, with the broad domains of services for youth (education, health, sport, etc) and the shaded area around the new youth hub depicting the possible strategic mix of services and activities which are accessible through the hub. It also highlights the inter-connections and inter-relationships with other major areas and organisations ~ with the shading representing a focus on specifically targeted, ongoing, youth programs or organisations in the Tamworth area (as distinct to the much larger spectrum of offerings who provide some level of service for youth though are not specialised in this focus).



As way of practical example to make this model clear the need for alternative education was widely identified throughout this project (stakeholder interviews, workshops and the Tamworth Youth Services Survey) as a service gap and area of need. This program could be delivered from the new youth hub and would form part of the larger mainstream education sector, requiring close collaboration with mainstream providers. Such a focus could also provide clarity in regards to where the new youth hub and the profoundly larger education sector needed to collaborate, share information and ensure young people were engaged in one system of education or the other, being always encouraged towards the mainstream system, and not falling between the cracks.

This example provides possible insight for how other services and supports at the new youth hub can inter-relate to other mainstream areas of health, welfare and social services, with the hub providing a critical link and service access point, particularly for youth and youth issues which are marginalised from mainstream systems.

Business Model

Three broad categories of different business models for youth centre were identified as most relevant for Tamworth:

1. Community & Independent ~ which is useful for consideration as part of a multi-site model where a dedicated community youth facility could be developed in Coledale with strong links with a more central down-town facility such as The Youthie. This is similar to the model used by the City of Sydney.
2. Government & Service Sector ~ the model most similar to that currently articulated for the new Tamworth youth space, where the major funding bodies and influence are government, services or a combination of both.
3. Professional & Enterprise ~ the newest and most contemporary model being used for youth centres where they have grown in scale to have professional staffing and deep diversity of funding and/or generate their own revenue through some form of youth enterprise or enterprise for youth.

Stakeholders at the Youth Sector Workshop identified the Government & Service Sector Business Model as the best fit. (as depicted in the diagram on the following below by the red dots).

Each stakeholder was given a single red dot to identify the realistic and short-term priority for each attribute of the Tamworth Youth Hub, while the green dot reflects their view on the most strategic and long-term priority. Stakeholders were encouraged to only place a dot if they felt confident in their understanding of the attribute and the lower number of dots reflects this. For some stakeholders a given attribute was realistic, strategic and doable in the short-term, in which case they placed both their red and green dots for that attribute.

The key strength of this model is the relative certainty of the funding and service base which can be established, be that from Council alone or Council with a mix of confirmed co-located services, while its challenge may be from being perceived as an institutional model which in turn could limit community involvement and ownership.

Four broad categories of service integration were identified as being relevant for the physical youth hub itself, as distinct to the broader region-wide integration of services of which the youth hub would be one of many locations and services.

- Stakeholders identified the Service Collaboration and Co-location of the youth hub with existing services (outreach) as the best fit (refer again to the red dots in the diagram above and right). The Business Round Table also identified this as the preferred structure.

Co-location of the youth hub with existing services is where the youth centre is located in close proximity to where the services are, or at a well used youth space (such as schools). In simple terms this model of locating the youth centre with or near existing is intended to overcome the challenge described above by placing the centre where young people already are ~ such as at schools, sporting venues or other community facilities. The challenge of this more mainstream approach is to ensure effective accessibility and inclusion for marginalised youth. Importantly, integration and collaboration with these other community centres and facilities ~ particularly schools, health centres, sporting and recreation venues ~ will be key whether or not they are utilised as the location or locations for youth centres.



There are two implications of the current low level of interest and support for co-location of services at the new youth hub:

- The more challenging task of providing a seamless and integrated access to services which are situated across the wider Tamworth-region; and,
- Reduced financial viability for the hub in light of a reduced stream of income from services as tenants.

Social Enterprise

In contrast, there is considerable interest to extend on the business model to incorporate a youth social enterprise (cafe, corner store) which was strongly identified at both the Youth Sector Workshop and by the Business Round Table.

A strength of this business model is the combination of independence and income diversity, however it is important to remember that succeeding in this regard requires capable expertise to blend youth and business development, such as common examples where cafés and cycle shops are run to provide training opportunities for young people and generate income for the centre.

Rather than being necessarily an income-producing strategy, the more common outcome is a revenue-neutral strategy which self-funds a range of hands-on work-based training, learning and development opportunities for youth. The idea of a Coledale cafe and corner store would provide a much needed service to the community as well.

Examples of the professional and enterprise business model identified, with details of their enterprise activities include:

- Youth Junction (Visy Cares) ~ co-located services generate 40% of income as rent with the balance of income roughly split 50/50 between contributions from all levels of government and the business and philanthropic community;
- Byron Youth Service ~ vocational training services (hospitality, barrista, events management) and an enterprise incubator;
- Byron Youth Service ~ Trailblazers - supporting youth enterprise;
- Hopeworks, USA ~ training and enterprise development in web-based technologies, student and transition shared accommodation facility;
- Noffs Foundation ~ pre-loved goods operations in books and clothing;
- The Riekes Center for Human Enhancement, USA ~ fee-based youth development programs as services with scholarships available; and,
- Wandsworth Youth Enterprise Centre ~ business start-up programs for young entrepreneurs and a shared serviced business facility.

Governance

It is essential that the governance model used for the new youth hub is fit-for-purpose in regards to being matched with the nature of the business model, service expertise and desired facilities structure. In addition to the business, service and infrastructure expertise and interests there is also a need to take considerations of the interests of youth and the wider community ~ which is especially important in regards to engagement and responsiveness to their needs.

For the purpose of the Tamworth youth centre the below continuum was suggested for consideration in regards to the extent that various interests and necessary expertise are involved in the governance structure:

- Consultation ~ where views and interests are canvassed though the extent to which they are integrated into decision-making is fully the decision of the formal governing body;
- Participatory Planning ~ where plans are developed collaboratively with external stakeholders, experts, youth and community members; and,

- Shared Authority ~ where the range of external stakeholders, experts, youth and community members are formally integrated and hold formal roles within the system of governance.

Stakeholders identified the Participatory Planning model of governance as the best fit (refer again to the red dots in the diagram on the previous page). This model is where plans are developed collaboratively with external stakeholders, experts, youth and community members. At the simplest and most basic level participatory planning is where individual services and agencies include other services and agencies in their discreet planning processes. For a youth centre which houses multiple services this approach is particularly important for planning regarding the centre itself, in terms of shared services, referral and information systems and often common professional development. In this model of governance the governing body of the youth centre would include co-located and possibly other youth services in their planning processes.

The approach taken with this project, particularly the participatory principles, are strongly aligned with this model.

Service Features

The creation of a shared intake and referral system is something of a holy grail for services, youth included. From a client/youth perspective there are very important reasons to seek this grail too, with the potential benefits for young people of only needing to tell your story once, and update it over time, and receiving a more seamless response from a range of services and supports to meet your needs. For example, the SDN Family Resource Centre describes how “families experience a seamless transition from one program to another... [with] no troublesome referral processes that families must complete in order to access programs, and no additional criteria are required (families must simply be members of the Centre).”

With regards to community participation, Community Committees are a common approach to providing a direct governance influence, such as the Community Reference Group used by SDN Family Resource Centre. The profoundly successful Windale Alcazar Centre was led by a community committee, who over time developed and refined a program mix which was strongly aligned with their community's needs. It is important to note that these directions were followed even during the critical establishment phase when community capacity was at its weakest and trust-building at its most sensitive. While some of the earliest initiatives (such as providing exercise classes for young mothers) had weaker links to their rock-hard objective of preventing child abuse, they laid the foundations of trust and understanding which in turn led to the holy-grail when parents began voluntarily asking for parenting support and education programs. By way of contrast, forcing education on unwilling parents can often result in too little engagement, ownership and in turn low transfer of skills.

Youth participation was identified strongly at the Youth Sector Workshop as a key service feature. The Business Round Table also emphasised how critical this was in their view to ensuring genuine ownership and meaningful take-up and participation in services.

Bellingham EYE youth work hand in hand with staff and mentors to plan and lead the program and activities. In fact, the very origins of EYE arose when a group of students who had been on nature camps during primary and middle schooling successfully convinced two former teachers that it would be a good idea to get out into the bush for weekend camps on a more regular and structured basis. Youth Insearch take this approach one step further with their programs build on the basis of “peers supporting peers”, utilising the experience of extensively trained young people to support and guide other young people. This model has proven highly successful.

Re-Defining Coledale

There were widely held views identified, across different services and sectors of the community, in regards to perceived barriers to broader community utilisation of the proposed location for the new Tamworth Youth Hub at Coledale. There is considerable stigma and prejudice pertaining to the Coledale area, particularly in respect of safety, crime, law and order. Whilst seeking to “re-map” the geographical centre of Tamworth's youth activity and services, by locating the Hub in close proximity to an area of greatest need, as well as utilising the opportunities presented by the Building Better Regional Cities funding, this approach does carry with it the need to address public perceptions of the extent to which youth anti-social behaviour, crime rates and the residents of Coledale are associated.

Summary

- Bottom-up Integration, which seeks to pool grass-roots resources to meet local need. Potential barriers can be concern over turf loss (for example, competitive tendering does not encourage cooperation), reliance on champions, failure to formalise partnerships and lack of funding for integration or evaluation. Enablers, however, include a common vision, commitment to partnership and honouring agency expertise, knowledge and resource sharing and a 'whatever it takes' philosophy in addressing the challenges faced by clients; and,
- Top-down Integration where barriers can include time-limited funding, withdrawal of government interest over time, lack of funding for the integration process, differing agency philosophies, lack of clearly defined roles and difficulty assisting hard-to-reach groups. Enablers on the other hand can include early community consultation, establishing a shared vision and communicating the strategic and operational model, vertical and horizontal engagement (e.g. spanning government departments and community agencies, and tasks from policy and finance to local participation and needs assessment), 'soft entry' programs (e.g. recreational activities) and built-in evaluation.

- Informal ~ relies on goodwill, information exchange, communication, list-servers, networking (such as currently in place in Tamworth);
- Partnership & Collaboration ~ above plus formal, MoU, place-based/sector-wide/participatory planning, network governance (such as the City of Greater Bendigo); and,
- Integrated ~ above plus place-based governance structure (such as *Every Child Matters*, UK and Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly).

Governance

This approach is also most similar to the desired role for the Youth Opportunities Working Group and the NSW Families and Communities Services One Place One Plan initiative. It is also consistent with the agreed outcomes from the recent Tamworth Youth Accommodation Forum and the Building Connections Forum hosted by NSW Department of Education & Communities.

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Effective leadership and governance of this governance system particularly requires an action and performance-oriented mix of know-how, expertise and reach throughout the network of services.

One of the most advanced forms of this approach is the Constellation Model of Collaborative Governance, which emerged out of the necessity to support the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment (CPCHE) ~ a cross sectoral, multi-organisational partnership. It is a complexity-inspired framework designed to 'hold' collaborations within dynamic systems, balancing chaos and order, energy and structure, the governance model supports multi-organisation partnerships and networks within complex and dynamic systems.

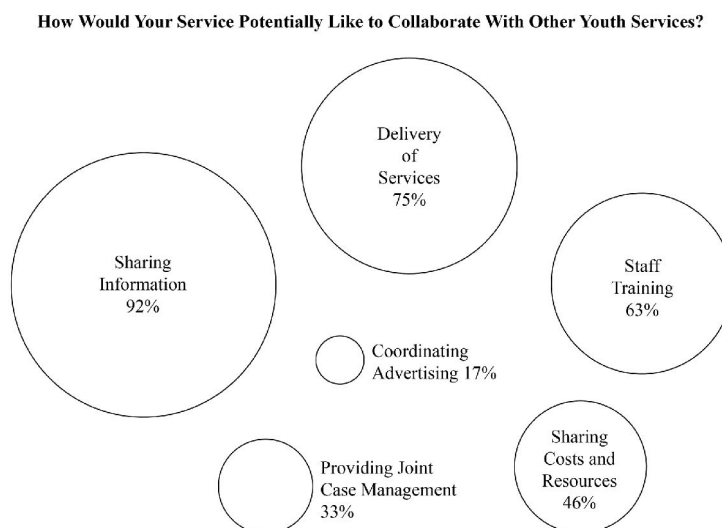


Illustration 2: Tamworth Youth Services Survey Mapping & Analysis

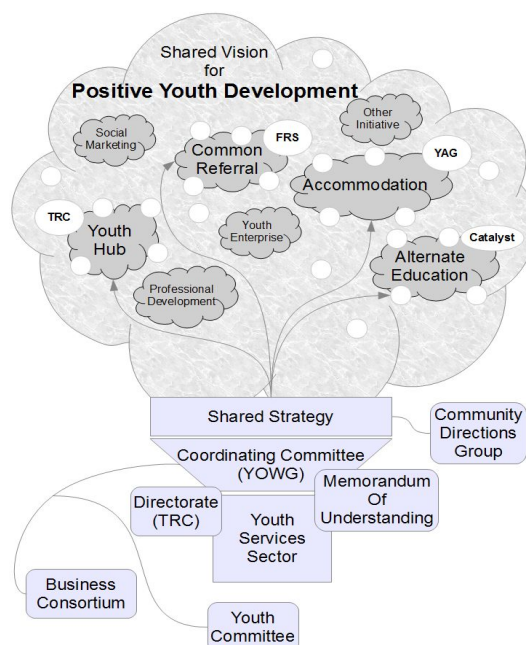
This model of 'network-governance' (depicted right) is relatively cutting-edge and is especially designed to enable a bold and inclusive vision (say for positive youth development and easily accessible and timely youth services and supports) to be achieved through a shared strategy (developed collaboratively) by the range of stakeholders (youth services sector and wider community).

This work is governed by a Coordinating Committee (such as the YOWG) and delegated through the sector by way of partnership or collaboration agreements.

The Coordinating Committee are supported by a Directorate (TRC) which is responsible to the day-to-day coordination of implementing the Strategy and priority initiatives. Each of the specific priority initiatives (such as work on the new youth hub) have a lead partner and involve other services as appropriate.

Wider community stakeholders can also be involved. For example Windale created a Community Directions Group who took leadership with one of their initiatives being the creation of a drug and alcohol position which was boldly located in one of the primary schools and funded by two local businesspeople.

It is noteworthy that this kind of broader engagement of community and business is in line with Bronfenbrenner's ecological model of development where attention is paid to initiatives that address a number of areas of the young person's well being as well as to those that involve family and community in the intervention process.



A key strength of this partner-network governance approach is that the progress of the overall vision is a reflection of the success of the various discreet services and the common agreed priority initiatives.

Conversely, there is of course also a risk that implementation will be compromised because it is beyond the responsibility of one service alone. The Shared Strategy and Partnership Agreements (such as Memorandums of Understanding) are a key mechanism to address and minimise this risk.

Common Referral & Co-Case Management

Common Referral Systems were strongly supported at the Youth Sector Workshop (see red dots in diagram on page 22) and Co-Case Management was rated positively by 33% of respondents to the Youth Services Survey (diagram page 22).

Together these systems reflect a 'no wrong door' approach to service delivery in which standard intake, assessment and referral protocols are established. This model is a common part of co-located service models as detailed earlier and efforts are now expanding to develop regional place-based, rather than space-based, multi-service models.

This service sector strategy requires a holistic approach to be taken during intake and assessment to link young people with all of the appropriate services. It requires a central database to enable the collection and secure transfer of information between service providers.

This service integration strategy is particularly important for Tamworth given the findings of the current Youth Services Mapping & Analysis research, where one-in-three youth services indicated they did not follow up referrals (and so are unlikely to have much knowledge as to its benefit for the young person involved).

Issues for Further Consideration

The benefit of shared and common staff training was rated strongly in the Tamworth Youth Services Survey (63%) however common professional development was rated lowly at the Youth Sector Workshop (refer red dots in diagram on page 22).

This is an area worthy of further investigation.

Bendigo, *headspace*, Frontyard and Every Child Matters each have a specific strategy for common professional development to strengthen capacity, service delivery and the common platform of capability, terminology and systems for collaboration and integration.

Bendigo have Youth Focused Practice Frameworks which specific standards that are common across professional roles to ensure a consistent approach to working with young people. *headspace* have the collaborative learning network to enable shared practice between sites and Every Child Matters have adopted a shared language so that profession specific jargon is eliminated and all professionals working in front-line delivery speak and understand a common language.

Frontyard Youth Services have found that the knowledge base behind their work to be very valuable and links to universities and centres of excellence to be an important enabler by providing the evidence to inform services.

Youth Development

Summary

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (formally ratified by the Australia Government on 17 December 1990) provides a useful high-level framework for youth development. It details four broad areas of focus for young people to grow up well and safe:

1. Play a Part ~ being included in decisions that affect them, are free to participate in community life, express themselves and to receive information that they need;
2. Supported to Reach their Potential ~ receiving the education and opportunities required to be able to fully develop socially, emotionally, culturally, physically and spiritually;

3. Needs met to Live well ~ receiving all their basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, health care, education, transportation, information and communication technology; and,
4. Are free from harm ~ protected from all forms of abuse, neglect, discrimination and maltreatment.

The NSW Commission for Children & Young People have worked with young people to describe these needs in their own terms. There are clear similarities. The Commission notes that "...most research defines well-being in terms of what is negative in children's lives... children tell us their well-being is about their emotional life..."

- Agency ~ the power to take independent action, being able to make choices in everyday situations and influence everyday occurrences (noting that these boundaries change over time and need to be negotiated as young people grow in age and capability);
- Safety & Feeling Secure ~ with parents are seen as protectors, home as a safe haven and being with trusted people. Kids feel most unsafe when they are alone;
- Sense of Self ~ being a good person, feeling appreciated for who you are and what you do rather than pretending to be someone else for the sake of others, being valued by others and respected;
- Activities ~ freedom and fun, from formal sport to just mucking around, hobbies, special occasions with family and friends and hanging out with friends, free from pressure and constraint;
- Supported to Deal with Adversity ~ adversity is recognised as a part of life, supporting and understanding kids through adversity develops their ability and relationships to use in the future and better cope with adversity;
- Material & Economic Resources ~ to have enough money for a reasonable standard of living, with poverty including the emotional costs that impact on their sense of wellbeing;
- Physical Environments ~ natural and built, places to meet friends, have fun and simply be, including time alone;
- Physical Health & Activity ~ to stay healthy they need care, healthy food, be active and avoid illness; and,
- Social Responsibility ~ helping friends, doing well at school and looking out for parents.

Positive Youth Development Movement

There is a noticeable shift and trend in evidence and literature towards the kind of positive development model described above, and the involvement of young people in all stages of an activity allows young people to be part of the solution, building their capabilities, self-esteem, profile and public image.

To quote the Commission again: "... the best way to prevent negative outcomes for children is to promote well-being throughout their lives, rather than only responding to vulnerability and crisis."

In part this movement is attempting to shift prevailing negative perceptions of youth. In one poll 60% of young people believed that older generations had a negative perception of them and 64% of adults over-estimated the amount of young people involved in crime. This perception is being fuelled by the media with over half of media stories about young people being negative and involving reporting on crime and anti-social behaviour (Martin et al.).

Overall this shift and positive youth development movement is recognising young people for their assets, strengths and contributions to the community. It also reflects the growing evidence base that this focus is the best way to minimise and avoid negative outcomes for youth, and negative impacts by youth on society.

Service Mix

Three broad categories of youth development services and supports are identified in the literature:

- Universal ~ being services and supports focussed on positive youth development, assets, strengths, protective factors, wellness and of broadly being of benefit to all young people (also described as wellness promotion or primary prevention ~ preventing harm before it happens);

- In reality each of these categories are interlinked and overlap. Many, if not most, youth would have different domains in their lives which fall into each category, highlighting the importance of a developmental and integrated approach to the delivery of services and supports.

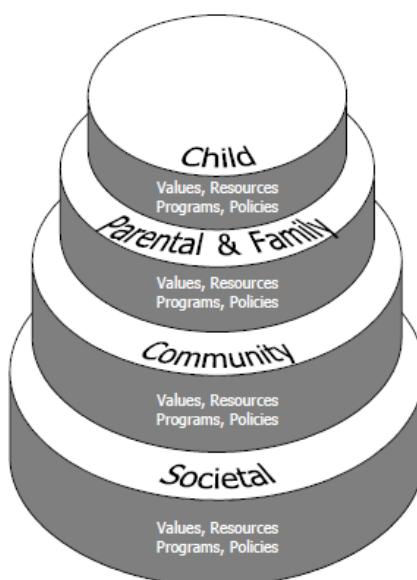
STRENGTH FACTORS

- supportive peer relationships • reliable adult relationship • intelligence • hobbies & interests • good health

- secure attachment • extended family involvement • parent coping skills • parent links with school/care • non-violent conflict resolution

- mid socio-economic status • adequate housing • community connection & involvement – groups, faith organisations • pro-social peers

- social and cultural pride • access to services – health, education, community
- social norm of preventative support
- supportive work practices



- disability • mental, physical and emotional health and developmental issues

- substance abuse • disability • mental, physical and emotional health issues • burden of sole parenting • poor parenting abilities, personal adaptability, family support

- crime • poor social relationships and networks • disability – mental, physical

- social and cultural discrimination • norms of violence – physical and emotional • poverty • lack of infrastructure and services • social norm of providing 'cures rather than preventative support' • unfair work practices

Service Mix & Focus

Universal (p.19) 

Targetted (p.20) 

Therapeutic (p.21) ●●●

Features & Options

Inclusion & Engagement (p.21)

Self-Agency & Leadership (p.22)

Youth Led Initiatives (p.23) 

Enterprise, Training, Employment (p.23)

Civic & Citizenship (p.23) ●●●●●

By contrast, targeted services are focussed on specific risk factors where youth are experiencing some problems or challenges such as school absenteeism, mental illness, disability, delinquency, substance misuse, bullying, early

sexualisation, cultural and linguistic diversity (also described as secondary prevention and early intervention ~ addressing harm risk factors).

Studies by the Search Institute of more than 2.2 million young people in the United States consistently show that the more assets young people have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviours and the more likely they are to thrive. Assets have power for all young people, regardless of their gender, economic status, family, or race/ethnicity. Furthermore, levels of assets are better predictors of high-risk involvement and thriving than poverty or being from a single-parent family. However they also find that the average young person experiences fewer than half of the “40 assets”, with boys experiencing three fewer assets than girls (17.2 assets for boys vs. 19.9 for girls). Closing this gap is a key guide for targeted youth development and service provision.

Youth Inclusion & Leadership

Stakeholders strongly identified the importance of a youth development approach which incorporates youth leadership and inclusion of youth from all walks of life and social circumstances.

Young people who feel valued, are provided with opportunities to participate and have the skills and capacity to participate and feel connected to family, friends and their community are less likely to experience disengagement. Social networks and structures that support diversity can provide support, influence and opportunities for engagement, thus facilitating links to others that promote a sense of belonging and meaningful connections, fostering social inclusion and reducing disengagement. In this way, engagement is both a means or process (such as youth participation and leadership) and an outcome or end (that is, youth are included, involved and engaged). The involvement of young people in decision making can improve policy, services and have positive outcomes for the young people themselves. A strong sense of self-agency and being able to make personal decisions in regards to education, employment and health are key areas that are impacted on by young people feeling engaged. In contrast, being told what to do and having few options for involvement contributes to youth disengagement.



ARACY identified the above continuum of engagement and a map of engagement (depicted below):

DISENGAGED ~ young people feel alienated or disconnected, unvalued or unable to contribute in a meaningful way. They may lack knowledge and skills or face structural barriers that limit their engagement, such as prejudice or limited resources and opportunities. Young people are also excluded from particular processes because they are considered to be deficient in skills or knowledge.

ENGAGED WITH RISK ~ young people feel connected and valued but their relationships or the activities they engage in put them at risk i.e. gang violence, drug and alcohol use. Because of this kind of engagement, they may be excluded from other 'more appropriate' or socially sanctioned forms of engagement.

UNDER-ENGAGED ~ young people are concerned about issues and want to be engaged in a range of settings but face barriers to participation (political, socio-economic, cultural, etc.). They lack access to resources and opportunities.

ENGAGED ~ young people are aware of issues, want to make a difference and are positively connected to institutions which support their engagement. They are moved to act in formal and/or informal contexts. They have access to resources and are motivated to engage with others.

HIGHLY-ENGAGED ~ young people have a heightened understanding and involvement in issues of concern, and a strong desire and capacity to participate in conventional ways and institutions. These young people have significant experience and skills, are often turned to for advice and are seen as experts in youth experience. These young people are typically structurally privileged (through access to economic, educational and cultural resources).

OVER-ENGAGED ~ young people undertake a high level of commitment and address focused issues of concern. Organisations often rely on these young people for their expertise and ability to 'represent' youth. Organisational expectations place these young people at risk of burn out or emotional stress.

Other Youth Spaces

While the new youth hub will be a critically important point for service access and integration, consideration is also required of the many other youth spaces throughout the greater Tamworth Region.

Achieving region-wide youth service integration requires a focus on service integration in three ways:

1. At and through the new youth centre;
2. Between the new youth centre and the other key physical youth spaces such as schools (particularly the two new expanded community centre schools), *headspace*, the new TAFE Aboriginal Education Centre, public facilities, health centres, hot spots (such as the library) and so on; and,
3. At a strategic level between the various youth services delivered to the Tamworth-region, be they located in Tamworth or elsewhere.

Mobile deployment of services can be used to still provide physical access for young people at places where they are, such as through outreach (eg. to the new youth hub) and involvement of services at events (such as the Aboriginal Showcase).

Initiatives such as the band nights run by Youthies already demonstrate this strategy of engagement with youth across various youth 'spaces' through Tamworth and district in addition to the new Tamworth Youth Hub.

For the new Youth Hub in Coledale specifically a strategy is required to ensure the service mix and relationship with the Coledale Community Centre is complementary.

Quality, Performance & Accountability

Quality, performance and accountability systems need to be tailored to be fit-for-purpose in terms of the unique model of service integration which is used.

This aspect of the service system is particularly important in view of the finding from the Youth Services Survey that current levels of internal service accountability are quite limited and uncoordinated. Nearly half of all respondents did not keep numbers on inquiries to their service, and none of the services were able to provide current figures on capacity, inquiries or referrals.

Perhaps unsurprisingly the Business Round Table identified the importance of a central and common data set of youth metrics, like ABARE for youth, to underpin strategic decision-making, quality and performance management.

Every Child Matters, UK applies a top-down requirement to maintain accountability with a process of Joint Area Review (JAR) review. Reviews are conducted by local authorities and act as the trigger for the commencement of an annual improvement cycle.

McDonald notes that there are relatively few practical tools to measure community-wide outcomes and universal tools for these types of outcomes are often viewed as inappropriate as the concepts are highly context specific. McDonald further notes that "...measuring the impact of an initiative on an entire community can be challenging. It may take a significant period of time before the impact of an initiative is felt at the community level. It can be difficult to attribute changes in the community directly to a specific initiative..."

Eckersley flags a warning too, noting that the dominant models of progress and development emphasise what can easily be measured ~ mainly material, structural and institutional factors ~ whereas the psychosocial dynamics model includes multiple measures of health and well-being and broader, cultural, moral and spiritual causes and correlates. The orthodox models, while useful in evaluating early development, seem less relevant to so-called highly developed societies. At worst, the benefits of Western culture are being counted, but not its costs, which are formidable and growing (and include social, economic and environmental impacts.)

Methods that can be used to collect data for the purpose of demonstrating the impact of a community-wide initiative include: surveying a representative sample of the community; key informant interviews and focus groups; using secondary source data; and mixed methods research.

At the same time however Tony Vinson's work provides a set of indicators from the post-code study and the turnaround of circumstances for Windale:

SOCIAL DISTRESS: low family income, rental stress, home purchase stress, lone person households.

HEALTH: low birth-weight, childhood injuries, immunisation, disability / sickness support, life expectancy, psychiatric patients: hospital / community, suicide.

COMMUNITY SAFETY: child maltreatment, criminal convictions, imprisonment, domestic violence.

ECONOMIC: unskilled workers, unemployment, long-term unemployment, dependency ratio, low mean taxable income, limited computer use / internet access.

EDUCATION: non-attendance at preschool, incomplete education, early school leaving, post-schooling qualifications.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: a range of Victorian community indicators.

SOCIAL COHESION: (Given that in every instance the degree of association between the adverse conditions and unwanted outcomes was lower in the high cohesion localities than in the low cohesion ones) with the following defining characteristics ~ volunteerism; membership of local groups; group action to improve community; neighbours help in difficult times; feel safe walking in neighbourhood; agree people can be trusted; attendance at local community events; feel valued by society ~ and the warning that building cohesion needs to be accompanied by creation of tangible opportunities in areas such as: education and training/re-training; work and income generation; improving health; parenting skills; problem solving law enforcement; and developing local leadership capacities.

With regards to the performance and accountability of services, the ACT's Turnaround Program Good Practice Framework has drawn on successful programs elsewhere as well as from the experience of ACT service providers, with an emphasis on:

- early identification of young people with intensive support needs and those at risk;
- timeliness of response to their needs;
- community based service delivery;
- strengthening collaboration to support flexible service delivery;
- developing case plans that are flexible, individualised and strengths-based;
- ensuring interactions with young people and families are "culturally competent";
- ensuring young people and families are full and active partners in the support process;
- developing a team approach that includes "natural" as well as professional supports; and,
- a 'no reject, no eject' approach that ensures long term commitment and continuity.

Service Mapping & Analysis

The survey identified a diverse yet fragmented cohort of Tamworth youth services, with notable gaps in areas of health, education, youth agency and service centralisation. A desire for more integration and collaboration within Tamworth youth services was a recurring theme throughout the survey analysis. The large majority of service providers expressed the necessity of enhanced inter-service communication and partnerships in maximising the capacity of Tamworth youth services and the outcomes for Tamworth youth.

Within the large diversity of health and community services covering the entire Tamworth population, the mapping process focused on identifying services that specifically targeted youth and youth issues.

As a collective, the range of defined youth services and programs in Tamworth covers a diversity of needs. From an extensive list of 68 types of service or program only 6 were unrepresented by survey respondents, with many being offered by multiple services (refer listing in the Appendix).

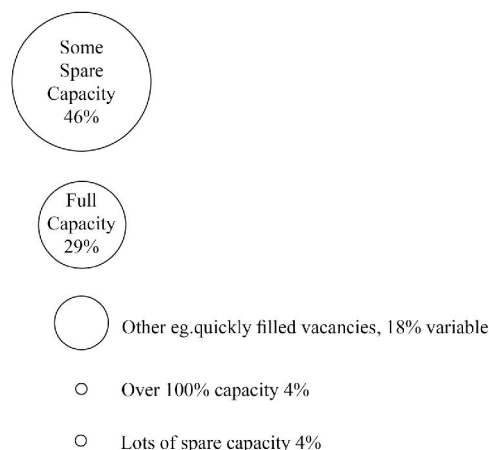
Mentoring youth in the areas of education, employment and health is a dominant service area, followed by services acting as referring agencies. In some areas such as mental health, several services exist yet all concentrating on clients' aged 12 and over. The age of target clients across all services tends to concentrate in the ranges of 0-5 years and 12-18 years, creating an obvious gap for middle childhood, which has been identified by several service providers in discussions as well. Family-focused services largely targeted early childhood and parenting issues.

The majority of services identified themselves as operating in the domain of health and wellness promotion, targeting largely functional youth and families. In contrast only one service offered trauma and crisis-level intervention for youth and families requiring intensive protective services. Early intervention initiatives for youth at risk in the over 8 age group was an area notable for the scarcity of services.

Service Capacity

Respondents to the Youth Services Survey either had some spare capacity (46%), were operating at full capacity (29%) or quickly filled any vacancies they may have from time to time.

Describe the Capacity at Which Your Service is Currently Working?



Gaps

Gaps and barriers to youth services identified from the Youth Services Survey are depicted on the following page.

- The most pervasive identified gap from both respondents and the survey process was the knowledge and communication gap between all providers of youth services. Awareness of other services and programs was complicated by services operating in limited time frames and the slow dissemination of information regarding new initiatives. Similarly, the absence of a core youth committee or network inhibits current and on-going knowledge of available services, as individual services tended to concentrate on their own immediate and established connections.
- The referral process between services is a widely identified gap in maximising service provision and outcomes. Nearly 100% of survey respondents identified the level of information shared between services in the referral process as either basic or left to the client. Though referrals coming to and from all services are from a diverse range of sources, on-going collaboration between referring agencies is largely absent. Twenty-nine percent of service respondents have no follow-up procedures for referrals. Of the seventy-one percent of services that do have follow-up procedures, none chose to outline their actual procedure. Several respondents identified their own intra-service gap in terms of lacking the capacity for involved support of young people, through the referral process.
- In the area of youth health, multiple programs focus on mental health in contrast to sexual and personal health issues, which receive limited attention. A comprehensive sexual health service for youth was identified as being absent, largely due to issues of consent and confidentiality for young people, under 18 years old. Females under 18 were cited as particularly affected by the absence of access to abortion services in Tamworth. Though Tamworth has a large range of health services, survey respondents cited difficulties in identifying 'youth friendly' services.
- Several service providers identified a need for alternative education programs to better cater for school leavers

Illustration 3: Tamworth Youth Services Survey Mapping & Analysis

and truants. Many of the services involved in issues of youth education engage exclusively through schools with the potential to miss connecting with the most vulnerable students. Existing programs that divert young people into vocational training offer specific job skills and accreditation, with few initiatives inhabiting a medium between formal school and work.

- Though drug and alcohol education was provided by services over a variety of youth age groups, rehabilitation services for under 18's were absent. Two youth health service providers cited the difficulties in establishing on-going therapeutic relationships involving youth with personal drug and alcohol issues. This was attributed to the absence of a focused program for this group. Instead providers were forced to engage these youth with existing generalised health initiatives.
- Mental health services for under 12 years of age. We understand this will continue to be a gap even with the *headspace* service in place. There is emerging a strong need to particularly examine service delivery for the 8-12 year old demographic.
- Prevention and early intervention strategies and service provision were acknowledged as a weak point generally, with many services struggling to meet demand and needing to prioritise the most acute needs only.
- Housing, both in terms of affordability and in terms of access - particularly the need for more support services which are especially key to youth addressing barriers such as irregular income, short or no tenancy history.
- The need for greater pro-active crime prevention was identified variously throughout other stakeholder meetings and forums during this project.

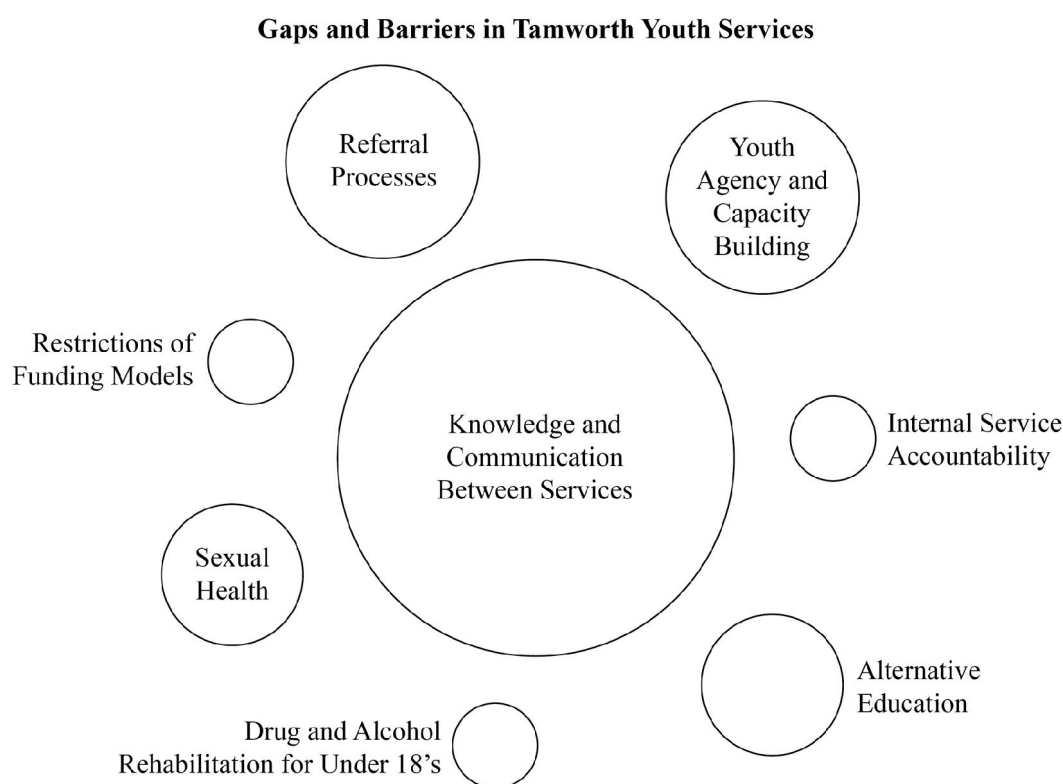


Illustration 4: Tamworth Youth Services Survey Mapping & Analysis

Barriers

- At the commencement of this project there was a concern regarding the low level of engagement and participation from youth services, and/or involvement of these services at an insufficiently senior and strategic level. While this matter improved during the course of the project, particularly in direct response to the YOWG's communication and engagement initiatives, it continues to be a significant issue and barrier, particularly in respect of the objective for service integration. Key organisations identified as needing greater engagement, particularly from senior policy and strategy staff, include Education, Health and Juvenile Justice.
- Similarly, broader stakeholder involvement is also required, with key community organisations and networks largely not yet engaged directly such as Parents and Friends/Citizens, faith-based organisations, sporting and recreation.
- Responses to the survey indicated that the participation of youth in the development and application of youth initiatives at any level is quite minimal. This view was echoed by the youth participants at the Youth Sector Workshop. Many services reported a lack of engagement with youth as a limiting factor in the development and implementation of successful programs. Though youth are the focus of these programs and organisations, there is an absence of investment into the development of youth agency and capacity. With many services reporting individual mentoring of youth, there was an expressed lack of interaction with young people as a collective. The majority of survey respondents indicated that increased youth-led and developed initiatives would positively effect the provision and outcome of services.
- The limited availability of services, supports and activities outside of working hours was identified as a barrier, particularly by the Aboriginal community and services.
- They further identified the need to recruit more Aboriginal workers, and the current low number of Aboriginal workers as a barrier.
- The need for more specialist youth workers was recognised at the Youth Sector Workshop.
- Insufficient direct engagement and involvement of parents. This was especially emphasised by Aboriginal community leaders and services as a major barrier to more effective service delivery and improved outcomes for youth.
- The restrictions of particular funding models are identified as a common barrier to comprehensive service provision. Services identified difficulties when funding was provided for limited periods or for a restricted cohort of participants. Individual service funding provisions often precluded intensive and on-going collaboration with other services, as targets and uses of funding were restricted to the outcomes of individual programs and services.
- The Survey identified that internal service accountability is generally limited and uncoordinated. Nearly half of respondents did not keep numbers on inquiries to their service, and none of the services were able to provide current figures on capacity, inquiries or referrals.

Service Information Systems

A range of different service and contact databases (Family Referral Service, Youth Inter-agency, Tamworth Council Community Service Directory, HS Net and the DEEWR Partnership Brokers New England North West Youth Service Directory) were identified. While each directory endeavours to be current and complete the effect is instead one of competing for resources, and each lacks a clear profile with the wider community or well recognised usability for the sector at large.

A Wiggio online co-working space was established as an action-learning tool for the project. This identified a range of technical barriers, such as blocked web browsers, firewalls, and internal ITC protocols, highlighting the work still required to develop this most fundamental building block for integration ~ that is a common communication and information platform.

Current inter-agency practice across the services in terms of communications and collaboration is focused on the use of email networks, which does not lend itself readily to effective engagement of all players or to a co-ordinated approach to more complex tasking. The internal systems of most organisations are not yet prepared for sector-wide collaboration and integration and lag behind current best practice.

The Wiggio system proved to be a challenge to the participants – firstly on the level of information sharing and confidentiality, and secondly on the level of proficiency of its users with any other online platform - other than email.

For all its limitations, a simple platform like Wiggio provides an opportunity to improve the skills base of the project participants, providing a variety of collaborative tools – such technologies are a valuable supplement to the in-person meetings, particularly as they permit the work flow to continue between meetings.

Business Interests

In addition to the findings already described above the business stakeholders stressed that Tamworth needed a strategic and long-term approach (10-20 years) to youth development to truly set a sustainable new direction and embed a platform for improved outcomes. This required an approach more focussed on investment than the prevailing thinking on welfare and charity.

A mapping of the key points of discussion at the Business Round Table is included in the Appendix.

There was keen interest in the development of a real world social enterprise as something which the business community could especially contribute towards (such as the Coledale Cafe & General Store) with broad scope for transfer of technical assistance and mentoring and it being something practical and tangible which they could make happen, as they have done for Ronald McDonald House and TREK. A similar example was noted from the USA where a partnership with a Subway franchise incorporated a youth enterprise.

The next steps agreed from the Round Table were to further test and refine the Juniors Employment Model being developed by 360 Fitness Club; further develop the Coledale Cafe & General Store enterprise model; and to form a Business Consortium with the right and key players to lead and coordinate these endeavours and interface with the YOWG.

Aboriginal Stakeholder Perspectives

Around two dozen Aboriginal community members, Elders and service providers attended a specific session on the Discussion Paper. Most of the findings from this session are incorporated throughout this Report, such as the need for enhanced coordination of services and supports and reiterating the gaps such as mental health services, the need for more Aboriginal workers, and greater support for community organisers.

However some points of difference also arose which were:

- The situation with disengaged children and youth is serious and worsening.
- A priority identified which didn't come through strongly elsewhere in the stakeholder processes was the critical need for targeted parent engagement and capacity building.
- The importance of building on what is working well (like Midnight Basketball, Friday Night Football, and the various groups with Elders, Men and Women).
- The potential of sport as an engagement and development process, such as a Sports Academy (like a mini-Knockout) which could even incorporate parents vs children/youth games to bring families together.
- Mentoring and learning from country are areas where much more can be done to re-connect kids with culture and country and build strong adult relationships with mentors.

Youth Perspectives

Youth involved with the Sector Workshop identified the following actions to specifically advance the strategies for youth engagement and involvement with, as well as utilisation of, available services and supports.

Bringing youth on board

- Establish a Youth Committee with delegates from all schools and guidance from Council
- Youth speaking with youth
- Promotion (Door knocking; Surveys; TV advertising, celebrity, sport stars; Clear information about the purpose and availability of services; Events calendar Use of online technology such as Facebook and Twitter)
- Consult with parents and kids
- Focus on both the 48% of youth with targeted needs as well as the needs of the 52%
 - Find common ground (demonstrate the everyday life of different households to build understanding)
 - Encourage collaboration together
 - Identify talking heads who can speak from each perspective

Building ownership and leadership from youth

- Youth Committee with an open invitation to parents and adults to attend a forum run and hosted by youth and give them the opportunity to ask questions
- 24 hour access/on-call service
- Youth involved in rule-making for the new Centre
- Ensure youth opinions and ideas are heard
- Give youth more primary responsibilities in the running of the Centre
- Opportunities to be mentors
- Youth Citizenship Awards
- Ongoing funding and promotion to invite, support and enable youth involvement
- Develop leadership in the process of developing the Centre through a natural social environment
- Foster friendships at The Hub with kids from different schools to eliminate the stereotypes

Eliminating stereotypes and discrimination between youth and the wider community

- Face to Face engagement with the community (door knocking, community events, school parents, BBQ's at sporting events, break down stigmas, information stalls in town, develop a rapport with parents from poor socio-economic circumstances)
- Place responsibility back on the community as past workshops and programs have failed because of responsibility on youth (yet youth don't do much to the strategies or be in control of the strategies)
- Understanding the needs and wants of youth
- Feed the media positive stories from Coledale

Promotion, Communications & Engagement

The need for a targeted and strategic use of the range of media, digital and sector communication channels has been widely recognised throughout the literature and stakeholder research.

A case in point that illustrates this is the recent resident and media discourse on crime rates in Tamworth and the ensuing public forum. Without a counter strategy to the negative media coverage, the Tamworth Youth Spaces and Services Integration initiative will find difficulty making progress with the headwind of prevailing perceptions that Coledale, youth and Aboriginality are always connected to crime and social disorder in the minds of the public – locally and regionally.

This issue was especially flagged at the Business Round Table, who observed that the negative media discourse in fact points to a desire for solutions and that often there are negative stories in the front of the media which positive stories don't appear until the back (such as sport).

Social marketing and communication needs to be considered in the broadest sense, more than merely providing information about youth services, programs and activities. Tamworth is not unique in facing challenges with prevailing associations of youth, particularly Aboriginal youth, with negative issues such as crime, delinquency, substance abuse and general social disorder.

Windale used community pride initiatives (including creation of a Windale Festival, a Windale 'welcome' landmark, sponsorship of school and sporting needs by local businesses, creation of a community flag and development of an Aboriginal assets register across the 15 tribal groups) and more traditional communication tools (including a community newsletter, strengthened Crime Watch to provide police information on drug houses in the suburb and several were closed down, and a local Men Against DV poster campaign).

Windale's communications reflect both community involvement and appropriateness of communications for the specific community and context. Hume took this further by employing bi-lingual community facilitators, using bi-lingual multi-cultural aides to develop relationships with families, and staff learning a few key words in other community languages and by asking parents to sell the message in their language, by word of mouth.

The YOWG are leading the development of a youth services sector internal and public communications and engagement strategy to enhance the visibility of the growing, cohesive coalition of youth services.

Virtual Access to Services

A high profile and easy-to-use web presence is particularly key for 24 hour access to information, user-driven access to information, access to services provided by phone or the web (such as Beyond Blue, Reach Out and Kids Help Line) and for services available to Tamworth youth though not physically located in the region (such as Youth Insearch).

The local on-line youth service directory would ideally be linked to the same database used by the services (that is, HS Net) to ensure consistent and current access to information.

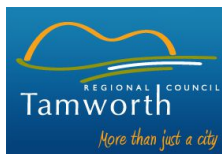
This requires a very user friendly interface as distinct to the more technical and password-only access for services.

[Youth Online Bendigo](#) is a good example of this kind of integrated online and non-physical access point for youth services.

Appendices

Acknowledgements

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With significant involvement and support by the various services, agencies, organisations and members of the:

- Tamworth Place Team;
- Youth Opportunities Working Group; and,
- Tamworth Youth Inter-Agency.

Starfish Project Team

- Adam Blakester
- Laszlo Szabo | Social Ventures Media
- Rebekah Watson
- Prashanth van Houten
- Sewa Emojong

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Available Youth Services

Accredited vocational training
Formal accredited education
Informal learning
Informal training
Mentoring
Employment services
Job skills training
Work placement/secondments
Careers counselling
Counselling & support
Life skills training & support
Medical consultation
Clinical assessment
Referral service
Physical education
Social club activity
Cultural heritage education
Special interest/hobby activity
Dietary & nutrition advice
Relationship counselling

Family support
Fitness programs
Health education programs
Personal development programs
Festivals & public showcases
Drug & alcohol education
Domestic violence
Mental health counselling
Housing
Homelessness
Structured recreational activities
Informal recreational activities
Sports training
Sports club membership
Local level competition
Financial assistance
Financial advice
Employment
Business skills training
Leadership training
Volunteering
Committee representation
Drop-in facility

Social networking
Youth advisory panels
Legal rights education
Community service programs
Visual arts
Music education
School holiday programs
Arts & media based activity
Arts & media skills training
Traineeships
Dance & movement

Other Youth Initiatives

The below listing reflects the range of other youth focussed initiatives, mostly one-off in nature, which were available or took place in Tamworth during the six month duration of this project.

110% Project, ABC Open, March-April

Achieving Wellbeing and Happiness Workshop, Centacare New England North West, 12 March

Art Workshops, Central Northern Regional Library and JOBLINKplus, 17 & 18 April

Certificate IV in Youth Work (free), YAPA, June onwards

Child Safe Child Friendly Workshop (Newcastle), NSW Commission for Children and Young People, 14 August

Close the Gap Day, Coledale Community Centre, 22 March

Come Try a Sport a Month, NSW Sport and Recreation, February-May

Country Music Festival 2012 Youth Initiative, PCYC, January

Domestic Violence Response Training, Lifeline, 18 & 19 June

Essential mental health training for community workers, Mental Health Connect, 21&22 August

Get Your L's Course, JOBLINKplus, 10-13 April

Giant Cow Competition, Hope Hill, July

Healthy Schools Healthy Futures Project, Hunter New England Population Health | The University of Newcastle ~ McCarthy Catholic College, 7 May; Tamworth High School,

23 May; Peel High School, 5 June

Helping learner drivers become safer drivers workshop, Enterprise & Training Company, 15 May

Helping Young People Plan2 Travel Safely Workshop, Youthsafe, 23 April

It's About Me (for young women), Tamworth Family Support Service, 7 May

Keep Them Safe Facilitated Sessions, Tamworth Family Support Service and NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, 7 & 8 June

Keeping Kids In Mind Program, Family Relationship Centre, March-April

Parent & Community Night with Sam Cawthorn, JOBLINKplus, 8 May

Recent Developments in Family Law: Children's Matters Seminar, Tamworth Family Law Pathways Network, 23 May

Rent It Keep It Course, Tamworth Family Support Service, February-March

School Holiday Programs, The Youthie, Ongoing

School Holiday Program, Tamworth Sports Dome, January

Supporting Children Supporting Families Program, NSW Department of Family and Community Services, Ongoing

Supporting Young Carers- Regional Information Session, NSW Family and Community Services (Ageing, Disability and Home Care) and Carers NSW, 17 February

Survey on School Suspension, YAPA, July

Surviving Your Adolescent Workshop, Centacare New England North West, 21&28 March

Transport Forum (19 April) and Survey (March-April), YAPA

Young Carers Fun Day, W.I.N.G.S., 5 July

Youth Connections, JOBLINK plus, ongoing

Youth Engagement Forum/Workshop, The Youthie, 25 July

Youth Mental Health First Aid Course, Mental Health First Aid Program, 28 & 29 June

Youth Survey, Mission Australia, June

Tamworth Youth Strategy

Below is a high-level outline of the key sections and content for the recommended Tamworth Youth Strategy.

VISION & PURPOSE

positive youth development through easily accessible and timely youth services and supports

|

GOVERNANCE

~ YOWG: Youth Opportunities Working Group ~

Directorate (TRC)

Policies & Procedures (Role, Membership)

Sub Committees: Business Consortium, Youth Committee, Youth Inter-Agency

|

STRATEGIES & PRIORITY INITIATIVES

Purpose Built Youth Hub

~ Collaborative Service Delivery, Common Referral System

~ Coledale Cafe & Corner Store (CCCC)

Youth Sector Collaboration & Integration

~ Common Referral System, Shared Information System

~ Alternative Education Centre

~ Innovative Law Enforcement

~ Co-Case Management

Positive Youth Development Model

~ Cultural Development

~ Common Professional Development

|

STRATEGIC FIT, ALIGNMENT & POSITION

Relevant Existing Strategies: Tamworth Keychange CSP; NSW 2021; NSW Department of Premier & Cabinet New England North West Regional Plan; Coledale Revitalisation Strategy; Coledale Action Plan; NSW Ministerial Taskforce on Aboriginal Affairs' Plan (under development); Youth Accommodation Action Plan; Housing NSW Plan 2010-2014; Northern Inland Regional Development Plan; NSW Aboriginal Land Council Regional Partnership Agreement; NSW Department of Education & Communities Priority Schools Strategy; Regional Development Australia Northern Inland Regional Development Plan

Evidence Base: Tamworth Youth Service Mapping & Analysis; Youth in Action Survey; Coledale Youth Space Report and International Evidence Base (Discussion Paper)

|

PARTNERSHIPS

Memorandums of Understanding (Youth Services, Key Stakeholders)

Sister City Partnership with City of Greater Bendigo

|

MEASUREMENT, EVALUATION & QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

~ Key Performance & Progress Indicators ~

|

RISK MANAGEMENT

Addressing Service Fragmentation, Competition & Duplication

Achieving Sector-Wide & Community-Wide Engagement

Re-Mapping Perceptions of Coledale

Over-Reliance on Tamworth Regional Council

|

PLANNING, REPORTING & COMMUNICATION

FRS Reporting System

Community Champions & Community-Wide Engagement

|

RESOURCES

YOWG Directorate

Bibliography ~ Literature

A psychosocial dynamics model of progress and development, Richard Eckersley, Encyclopedia of Quality of Life Research, Springer Netherlands

City of Greater Bendigo Better Youth Services Pilot Final Report, John Geary, January 2009

Coledale Youth Space, Ngay Dhinawan Pty Ltd, September 2010

Conceptualisation of social and emotional wellbeing for children and young people, and policy implications, Myra Hamilton and Gerry Redmond, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales Research Team Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales for the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth and the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, July 2010

How Young People are Faring, Lyn Robinson, Mike Long and Stephen Lamb, researchers in the Centre for Research on Education Systems at the University of Melbourne for the Foundation for Young Australians, 2011

Listening to the Stars: the constellation model of collaboration and social change, Tonya Surman and Mark Surman, Centre for Social Innovation, 2008

Demonstrating community-wide outcomes, Myfanwy McDonald, Community and Family Clearinghouse, Australian Institute of Family Studies

Dropping off the Edge: the distribution of disadvantage in Australia, Professor Tony Vinson, Jesuit Social Services and Catholic Social Services Australia, 2007

40 Developmental Assets® for Adolescents (ages 12-18), Search Institute, 1990

Headspace Evaluation Report ~ Independent Evaluation of headspace: the National Youth Mental Health Foundation, Social Policy Research Centre, University of New South Wales, November 2009

Integrated service delivery for young people: A literature review, Sharon Bond, Brotherhood of St Laurence, 2010

Positivity in Practice: approaches to improving perceptions of Young People and their involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour, Martin, K., Hart, R., MacLeod, S., & Kinder, K., National Foundation for Educational Research, United Kingdom, 2010

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Preventing Youth Disengagement and Promoting Engagement, Dr Jane Burns, Philippa Collin, Michelle Blanchard, Natasha De-Freitas & Sian Lloyd, Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, 2008

Promising Practice Profile: Breaking Cycles by Building Neighbourhood Hubs, Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2008

Promising Practice Profile: The SDN Family Resource Centre, Communities and Families Clearinghouse Australia, Australian Institute of Family Studies, 2008

Literature review: Local-global good practice in youth facility planning, Community Praxis Co-op, Brisbane City Council, 19 November 2001

Midnight Basketball Save Youth Space Survey

Murdi Paaki Regional Assembly Charter of Governance, April 2006

National Evaluation Report, Full Service Schools Program 1999 & 2000, Strategic Partners in association with the Centre for Youth Affairs and Development, Prepared for the Commonwealth Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs, February 2001

Practical child abuse and neglect prevention ~ a community responsibility and professional partnership, Adam Blakester, National Child Protection Clearinghouse Newsletter, Volume 14, Number 2, Australian Institute of Family Studies, Winter 2006

Review of international and national integrated service models for young people in the pre-adolescent and adolescent years: Benefits, barriers and enablers, Dr Margaret Brechman-Tousaint and Emma Kogler for The Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth, January 2010

The Greater Bendigo Youth Trust, Research Report for Bendigo Better Youth Services Pilot Stage 2, Mez Woodward, The Futures Factory, August 2010

The Power of Youth and Adult Partnerships and Change Pathways for Youth Work, prepared by the Search Institute for the WK Kellogg Foundation, 31 May 2005

Youth Work Survey 2011, Dr Elizabeth Reimer and Sam Kendal, Elizabeth Reimer Consulting for the Youth Action Policy Association Incorporated, July 2001

Bibliography ~ Youth Centres & Spaces

Australia

Auburn Youth Centre

Bellingen EYE (Environmental Youth Experience)

Billy Dower Youth Centre, WA

Byron Youth Service

Cabarita Youth Service

Chatswood Youth Centre

Dandenong Centre

Denmark Youth Centre, WA

Frontyard

Glebe Youth Service

headspace

Noffs Foundation

Redcliffe Area Youth Space

Reynella Enterprise and Youth Centre

Sydney City

Y Central, Gosford

Youth Insearch

Youth Junction (Visy Cares Hub)

International

Beacons Program, New York City USA

Hopeworks, USA

MyPlace, UK

Somewhere To, UK

The Door, New York City USA

The Riekes Center for Human Enhancement, USA

Thessaly Community Project, UK

Vancouver Park Board Community Centres, Canada

Wandsworth Youth Enterprise Centre, UK

Youth One Stop Shop, NZ

ySpace, UK

Other

Alcazar Centre, Windale

Cherbourg State School, Queensland

Early Years Hub, Hume

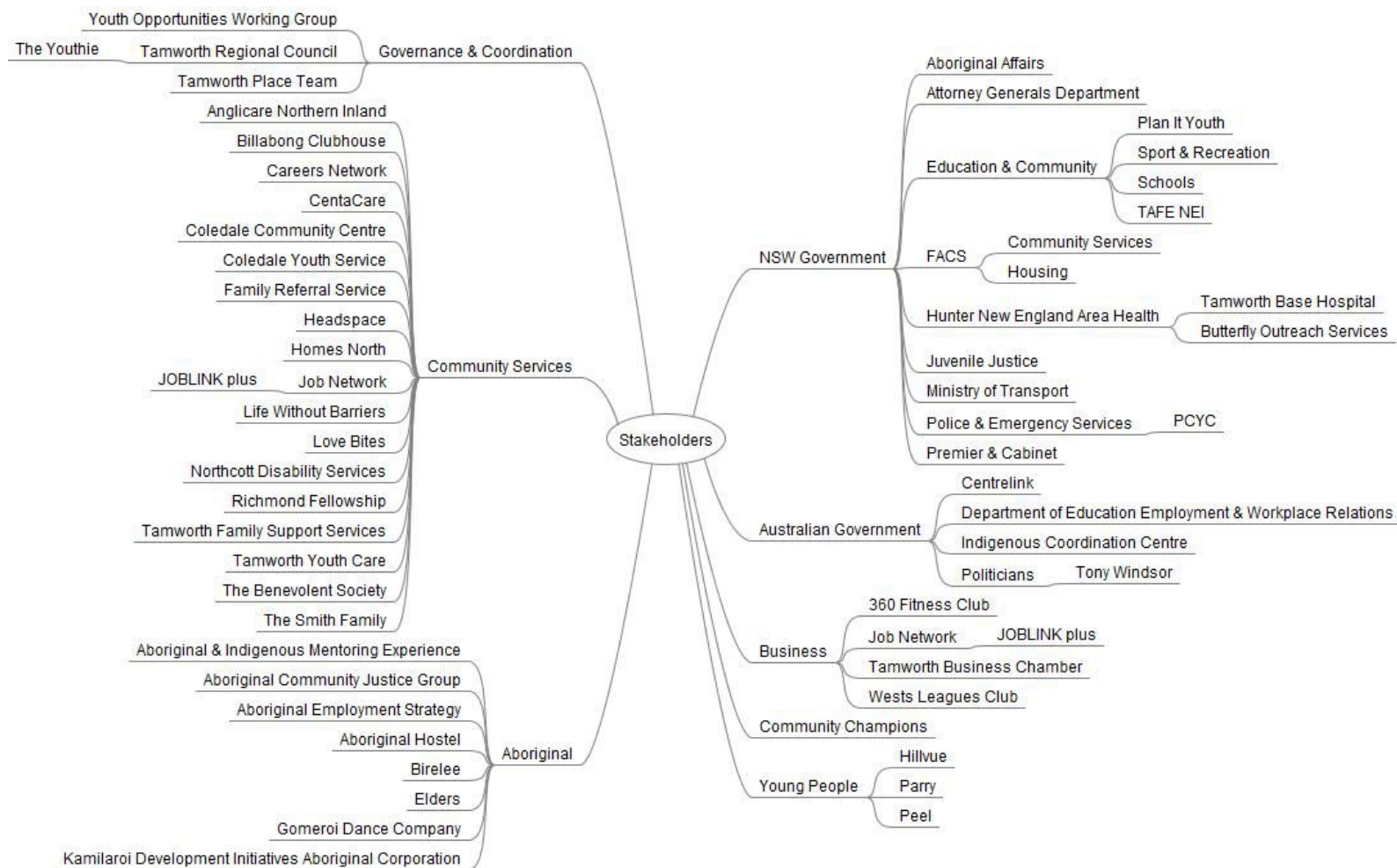
SDN Family Resource Centre

Interviewees

Name	Position	Organisation
Andrew Cummings	Executive Director	Australian Youth Affairs Coalition
Dean Williamson	Policy Officer	Youth Affairs Policy Association
Hannah Donnelly	Co-Chair	National Centre of Indigenous Excellence's National Youth Advisory Council
Dr. Jioji Ravulo	Lecturer - Social Work, Welfare and Therapy Studies	School of Social Sciences and Psychology, University of Western Sydney
Kristian Goodacre	Communications & Operations Manager	Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience
Lorel Mayberry	Lecturer in Sexology & Sexology Undergraduate Units Coordinator	Curtin University of Technology
Mez Woodward	Director	The Futures Factory
Dr Richard Eckersley	Fellow, National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health	Australian National University
Dr Robin Grille	Psychologist & Author	Parenting for a Peaceful World
Dr Sue Roffey	Senior Lecturer	University of Western Sydney, School of Psychology
Zoe Miller	Regional Project Co-ordinator	NSW Family Services Inc (FamS)

Key Stakeholder Involvement

More than 240 stakeholders directly participated in the Tamworth Youth Spaces & Service Integration initiative, including the following organisations, agencies and parts of the community:



Report on Business Round Table



Business Round Table Tamworth Youth Spaces & Service Integration Initiative

10 April 2012

Interest & Involvement with Youth

- ★ Junior Business Chamber
- ★ Youthie
- ★ School-base traineeships (2)
- ★ Training & Employment (3)
- ★ Sport
- ★ Health services & welfare reform

General Observations

- ★ Negative media discourse reflects desire for solutions
- ★ Negative stories in front, positive in back (eg. Sport)
- ★ Need to build mutual respect (youth with elderly)
- ★ Need a promotions & engagement strategy
- ★ Good Models ~ Youthie, Youth Off the Streets, AES, Youth Insearch
- ★ Disengagement from school is of concern

Youth Services Integration & Development

- ★ Strategic & Long-term Approach (10-20 years)
- ★ Investment more than welfare & charity
- ★ Not leave social connectedness to charity & chance
- ★ Build bridges & support (economic too)
- ★ More coordination & cohesive approach (bring together the jigsaw puzzle)
- ★ One building block at a time
- ★ Solutions rather than prisons & detention
- ★ Change patterns & mindsets
- ★ Address inter-organisation competition & tensions
- ★ Need to be holistic (eg. working with families & home situation when 10yo is on the street)
- ★ Outcomes focussed
 - ★ Develop a Tamworth Outcomes Framework
 - ★ Need a central/common data set (like ABARE)
 - ★ Tie to funding
- ★ Question whether dozens of separate organisations results in over administration
- ★ Similar issues with aged care sector

New Youth Centre

- ★ Get facilities/services in the right places
- ★ Use a fleet of small cars for transport
- ★ Employment is key too (15-24yo)
- ★ Year 7/8 is a key time for engagement
- ★ Link with new Headspace facility & service
- ★ Employ local community (adult & youth) through identified positions
- ★ Young People involved in decision making to build respect & ownership
 - ★ Range of methods (informal to formal)
 - ★ Two-way, we sit with them

Business & Governance Model

- ★ TRC Lead with NSW Government \$
- ★ s.355 Committee with Board
- ★ Paid role/s for youth

Fit & Role for Business Community

- ★ Leadership ~ more than political, act on social conscience
- ★ Can be visible or behind the scenes
- ★ Employment & Training (eg. TAFE Certs, real paths to employment)
- ★ Juniors Employment Model (360 Fitness)
 - ★ Flexibility is key, designed for business (compared with overheads with formal apprenticeships)
 - ★ Linked to school completion. Mentors and broader focus that just on-job.
 - ★ Pool of juniors rather than just a few.
 - ★ There are financial returns from social conscious (though that's not the primary driver)
- ★ Real World Community Enterprise (eg. General Store & Cafe)
 - ★ Like pulling together for Ronald McDonald House, TREK
 - ★ Similar example in USA with a Subway franchise
 - ★ Cater for whole community (elderly, families, etc)
 - ★ Partnership with time, \$, technical assistance

Next Steps

- ★ Test & refine Juniors Employment Model
- ★ Meet again to exchange information and develop Cafe/General Store Enterprise Model
- ★ Form a Business Consortium (right & key players)

Participants ~ Dwone Jones, Tim Coates, Jye Segboer, Marcia Allan, Steve Blanch, Larry Apthorpe, Jim Booth, Adam Blakester
Apologies ~ Bruce Mercer, Earle Clever & Jason Smith

Hosted by:



Facilitated by:



Contributions & Commitments

Following are details of the specific contributions and commitments made at the Youth Sector Workshop in regards to what organisations and individuals could in-principle make towards each of the three priority strategies: new youth hub; youth sector service integration; and positive youth development. Participants were asked to consider core as well as discretionary resources, cash and in-kind.

Youth Hub

Hunter New England Health

Commitment of One day per week Youth Mental Health Service

Joblink Plus

Provide JSA (Job Services Australia) & YC (Youth Connections) from the centre

TFSS

TFSS to run programs out of the new centre

Kay Delahunty

Possibilities:

- Library branded wireless internet
- Library catalogue- dedicated PC
- Phone link to City Library
- Information requests delivered electronically
- Library Printer for school project info
- Selected library resources, books & other aimed at Youth (Library Kiosk)
- Visiting author talk (occasional)
- Bay Book time/Preschool storytime – regular outreach presentations
- Support /coordinate youthbook group discussion (young adult)
- Ask Youth what they would like the Library to do

Tamworth Youth Care

Commit two half days per week to raise awareness of homelessness issues and services

Provide EIP Programs, housing skills etc

Centacare

Provide on-site mental health services

Ongoing tailored early intervention programs for youth

NSW Police

Delivery of programs/crime prevention workshops/ cautions within the youth centre

Fran

Continued awareness and involvement of Coledale based staff in youth initiatives

Kyren Wall

1 hour of personal time

Homes North (Lynne)

Look into possibility of youth accommodation attached to Youth Centre

Shauna Steele

As a student studying Youth Work (Cert IV) and also as a young person, I think that I could volunteer and help support young mothers, as I was a young mother and was unaware of the services available.

Hunter New England Health

Youth Mental Health Project

Will be a part of youth committee and willing to support in all possible ways.

Support Tamworth Youth Centre

John from Tony Windsor's Office

To get the money

TRC

Petria – Seek/obtain State/Federal government funding for cultural programs (Dance, Music, Art) for youth development.

Leisa Walters

Utilise staff to support & engage in education centre (where possible) (own Youth)

Utilise youth staff to support centre in "some way" (own youth)

Use meeting rooms where possible.

Promote & work 'with' service.

Emma Peters - CCC Youth Worker

Join forces with the Hub.

Work for both the CCC and the Hub

TFSS

Looking at relocating Family Services to Coledale.

TRC/Youthie

Drop in Youth Service delivering a range of Social & Recreational activities.

Commitment to "on-going" youth development and research, service integration.

Sue Davis – Youth Programs Coledale

Assist with funded youth programs.

Richmond Fellowship of NSW

Provide support & transport services to young people & their families to youth & other appropriate programs.

DEC

Education to offer learning pathways at hub.

Anita Allerton

I would volunteer time, 1 or 2 days to help in any way able – gardening, transport etc.

Community Services P&P

Ensure our crisis, early intervention and transition funded services are engaged in new Tamworth Youth centre model.

Unattributed

Both centres must co-exist

Be in two locations operating as 1 service

Bring our year 9 -12 yrs on excursions to Youth Centres

Unattributed

No matter where it is to be we need transport (to & from)

Youth Sector Integration**Joblink**

To consult with TRC & other stakeholders about the SAY program – submit tender 2013

Investigate Opportunities for shared professional development

Create a system that strengthens referral channels, In – Out.

Create better awareness for formalised networking

John Wallace – Homeless Men

We would assist in outreach support to youth who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless, no matter where a youth hub existed.

Richmond Fellowship

Continue to remain involved in youth, mental health, aboriginal, PLACE Team Interagency and attend regular meetings.

Dept of FACS

Currently working on coordinating & improving integrated case management systems

Community Services P&P

I will raise CS P&P taking a lead in development of Common referral.

DEC

Participation in case management & committees.

Tamworth Year Round Care

Participate in more interagency meetings to implement strategies with families earlier.

Attend relevant meetings & groups, YAG, Youth inter-agencies etc

Lynne – Homes North

Provide services & referrals support to youth centre for youth at risk of homelessness.

Geoff Shanley - Wests Entertainment Group

Raise awareness of youth issues in the Tamworth Community with our board, management & 20,000 members

TRC

TRC Cultural development officer to build and maintain partnership of delivery of cultural programs for young people – art, dance, music.

Community Services – P&P

Will be actively involved in ensuring our youth funded projects are integrated in holistic youth services sector.

PCYC/Police

Integrate Youth At Risk programs & Hotspots.

Continued support and participation in case management of families/youth.

Anne Woods – ADHC

Promote Coledale positively – work & community

Tanya Hyde

1 day per week visits to help deliver Human Services Programs/ Information breaking down barriers

Seek correct channels for approval

Communicate with Hub/Community – what they are seeking assistance with

Source other programs/staff to help deliver the services.

Philip Thomas – UNE

Develop engaged research with partners and expertise available thorough UNE & I2A centre – Youth secotr integration and other 2 areas (Youth development & Youth Centre)

DEC

Utilise SRTC & Junior AECG's to support the skills of a Youth Committee in development & operation.

TYC

Tamworth Youth Information Phone Service – recorded info, free phone services, website, Facebook page

Positive Youth Development

Helen Oxley – TAFE Teacher

What I would do if TAFE Tamworth agreed:

- Deliver Education & Training Programmes at the HUB
- Would also support, advocate, lobby for this to happen (with Tamworth TAFE)
- (Provides contact details for Melinda Hennessey – Campus Operations Manager)
- Melinda asked me to provide her contact details as she can speak on behalf of TAFE Tamworth and is interested in participating/discussing the possible role of the organisation.

Joblink Plus

Ensure service is as good as it can be

– YC (case management & referral)

– Fiona Ware (Youthie/Joblink Plus Training)

I would like to contribute by implementing a mentor program & possible training of life skills
Investigate opportunity to establish a social enterprise – café etc

TYC (Tamworth Youth Care)

Commit two half days per week to raise awareness of homelessness issues and services

Provide EIP Programs, housing skills etc

Youth – Inter/Hub/POS

Inform/train youth workers/volunteers in how to assess clients & access services.

Promote positive outcomes of TYC/Young people

The Youthie

Support establishment of a youth committee for the Youth Hub

The Smith Family – Fiona

Service interest/Integration

Additional services & programs above those currently running

Develop further relationships for delivery/extra

- Learning Clubs – primary & secondary
- Mentoring programs
- Leadership programs

DEC

Provide professional development for families/community

-learning/organisation

Youth Mental Health Project

Quarterly youth empowerment seminars in collaboration with other agencies

PCYC

Ensure PCYC services & activities are readily available.

TRC

Petria – Take part in/ plan youth mentoring program facilitated by education. Encourage wider TRC participation

Tamworth Council Year Round Care

Year Round care help break down stereotypes earlier in families

Community Services – P&P

Ensure our current Coledale centre works with new youth centre on broader community development ie. Engaging whole of family/whole of community.

Sport & Rec

Gaylene - Assist sporting organisations to identify ways of including young people as part of their executives and train young people to assist in running sport

DA (Disability Australia)

Shaun – Continue to provide advocacy support for Disabled Persons.

Educate & inform public of challenges faced by the disabled.

Healthy Schools

Healthy Futures (Uni Newcastle)

Resilience programs – linkages and facilitation

School (High) linkages/programs

Tom Skaines

Training – to assist youth to gain a qualification. This will allow them to have more participation in the community, increase self esteem & confidence.

Emma Peters – CCC Youth Worker

Breaking stereotypes.

Unattributed

Research Alternative Education in conjunction with Youth

Unattributed

Alternate learning pathways - education to cater for disengaged youth

Funding – community of schools

Targeted outcomes of learning – certification

Catering Yr5 – Yr10

Provision of Expertise to develop programs

Participation in case management – identify committee

Education to provide targeted programs into the Centre

Unattributed

Virtual classrooms and project development /access.

Utilising wiki pages/blogs/podcasts

Skills identification – employment opportunities

Tuition funding

Practical Actions & Initiatives

The following practical actions and initiatives were identified and developed at the Youth Sector Workshop as the immediate priorities to progress and implement the three priority strategies: new youth hub; youth sector service integration; and positive youth development.

Cultural Development								
					Milestones			
Action	Implementation Steps	Lead	Partners	Resources Required	31 Dec 2012	30 June 2013	30 June 2014	Measures
AIA/SIH to make recommendation	Dialogue over email	TRC/AIA/SIH						
Valuing Culture Committee	Formation - Target youth champions - Invite representatives Establish link with YOWG & Youth Committee	TRC Shaunna/Judy						
Regular communication and contact	Weekly, monthly and annual events	Committee						
Workshop	Define goal (cultural knowledge and awareness within the team)							
Networking	Links with TRC, UNE, TAFE, Business, Arts, Elders, Youthie							

Social Enterprise (Cafe, Shop)								
					Milestones			
Action	Implementation Steps	Lead	Partners	Resources Required	31 Dec 2012	30 June 2013	30 June 2014	Measures
Set up Working Committee	Decide organisational structure Decide primary function (cafe, store, fruit, veg, bread, training) Ensure no conflict with commercial operators							
Scope Viability	Source Seed Funding Research current working models (Nambucca "Fresh" van)	Joblink Plus	TRC (negotiate fit-for-purpose design eg kitchen)	Dedicated researcher				
Training Component			TAFE Joblink Plus					
Coledale Community Garden	Synergies of produce sales							
Investigate links with Alternate Pathways (ALC)								
Link with business expertise			Business Round Table					

Innovative Law Enforcement Services								
					Milestones			
Action	Implementation Steps	Lead	Partners	Resources Required	31 Dec 2012	30 June 2013	30 June 2014	Measures
Cautions	Already in place, can be extended to new youth hub for delivery	NSW Police YLO	Aboriginal Elders	YLO Elder cautioning				Re-offending rates
Crime Prevention Programs	Domestic violence workshops, education on crimes/consequences etc DVLO, CPO, YLA, SLP, PCYC in place	Specialist Officers within NSWP		NSW Police Officers				
Collaborative Youth Programs	Find out appropriate services to deliver this program eg Joblink Plus, Police, Centacare, etc.	Multi-agency	Youth Services	Crime prevention working groups, Police, other youth services				
Education Management Plan	Discussions with Attorney General's Department, Police, Juvenile Justice, Education	Multi-agency	Department of Education & Communities, Police, Juvenile Justice, Aboriginal Community Justice Group					Numbers referred
PCYC Programs – Case Management	Already in place. Locations can vary. Programs can be developed to suit need.	PCYC, Police Officers, NSWP	Youth Services	PCYC Case Managers				Re-offending rates

Mechanics of Youth Services Collaboration								
					Milestones			
Action	Implementation Steps	Lead	Partners	Resources Required	31 Dec 2012	30 June 2013	30 June 2014	Measures
Background work on “collaboration” (unpack the meaning)		FACS & UNE						
Centralised meeting/booking system to minimise duplication				TRC website?				
Actively support the YOWG Service Integration Strategy	Commitment of support from various services and organisations Integrating our resources and services to work together							
Develop longitudinal action-research in youth services delivery		UNE	National & Local Partners					
Common Referral System								

Youth Committee

- Membership Structure
 - Diverse groups
 - Rotating membership (allows all to have a chance)
 - School delegates (primary and high)
 - Two-levels: formal and informal (sub-committee)
 - Specific roles (eg. advertising)
- Open door policy
- Regular meetings
- Communicate, use social media, posters, media, etc
- Consult with Local Government, national links
- Mentor for individuals and for whole group (eg facilitate)
- Leadership Program for Mentors
- Seek venue from TRC

Actions Committee – Lachlan, Akeisha

Facebook Page – Fee

Chamber – Steve

Links – Dan (Youth Connections), Fee (Joblink Plus)

Alternative Education

					Milestones			
Action	Implementation Steps	Lead	Partners	Resources Required	31 Dec 2012	30 June 2013	30 June 2014	Measures
Consult with Youth ~ what do they want the 'Hub' to provide	<p>Develop a survey for youth</p> <p>Tap into local Principal Groups re what youth have indicated as desired opportunities</p>	Youth Group Representatives	<p>Inter-agency Groups eg. Youth Connect, Librarian, Youthie</p> <p>Schools (Education, Independent, Catholic)</p>		<p>Mapped out what the program can look like</p> <p>BOS, Lead Agency</p>			<p>Engagement activities (Youthie newsletter, Coledale community, library)</p> <p>Develop competencies in learning (Cert2-4 outcomes)</p>
Research of success programs and operations which may be able to be tapped into (don't reinvent wheel)	Research strategies for successful re-engagement of youth & families		<p>Joblink Plus</p> <p>Catalyst Schools</p> <p>Careers Network</p> <p>Schools (Education, Independent, Catholic)</p> <p>Community Services</p> <p>TAFE</p>	Attendance, participation, structures, accountability				

Other

- Create a time line for the new Youth Hub
- Transition Support throughout schooling
 - Primary to High
 - School to Suspension back to School
 - School to Alternative Education
 - School to Work
 - School to Further Education
- Referral training for young people (first contact), including at schools

Glossary of Acronyms

ABARE	Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics
AES	Aboriginal Employment Services
AOD	Alcohol and Other Drugs
ARACY	Australian Research Alliance for Children & Youth
CAT	Coledale Action Team
CPOCHE	Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment
DEC	NSW Department of Education and Communities
DHCS	Disability Housing and Community Services
DPC	NSW Department of Premier & Cabinet
OSR	NSW Office of Sport & Recreation
FACS	NSW Family and Community Services
FaHCSIA	Australian Government Department of Families Housing Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
FRS	Family Referral Service
HSNet	Human Services Network
i2A	Innovation to Action, University of New England
NSWALC	New South Wales Aboriginal Lands Councils
NSWCCYP	New South Wales Commission for Children & Young People
OAA	NSW Office of Aboriginal Affairs
RDANI	Regional Development Australia – Northern Inland
SDN FRC	SDN Family Resource Centre (formerly Sydney Day Nursery) operates Brighter Futures Program
TPT	Tamworth Place Team
TRC	Tamworth Regional Council
UNCROc	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNE	University of New England
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
YAPA	NSW Youth Affairs Policy Association
YIA	Youth Inter-Agency
YOWG	Youth Opportunities Working Group