

# Youth voice

**Action Plan 2028**

**Shaping the Beaches' Future**



northern  
beaches  
council

Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of these lands and shows its respect to the Elders past and present.



Artist credit  
Aleta Wassell, 19  
Over 18's People's Choice Recipient  
ArtDecko 2021

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Cover artist credit  
David Cragg  
Midnight Dream, 2020  
Photograph by Connor Neil



## Message from the Mayor

Building a better future together - A plan to empower young people.



Young people are active contributors and essential to a thriving and vibrant community. They are our current and future leaders, innovators, creatives, and environmental caretakers. The experience of young people on the Northern Beaches is constantly evolving.

When speaking with our young people they talk about their sense of social justice and the importance of diversity, environmental consciousness, and their aspirations for making a difference to the world they live in.

Our young people reflect their surroundings and broader social and cultural norms, but also give us a glimpse into the future. To allow us to remain thriving, vibrant and relevant we need to listen and act on their advice and ideas.

Better Together 2040 was adopted in 2021 by Council and provides clear strategic direction to guide and focus Council's work to ensure that the Northern Beaches is socially sustainable into the future.

**The purpose of the Youth Voice Action Plan 2028 - Shaping the Beaches' Future is to outline 5 years of actions for youth development that will support and engage young people to participate in community life and achieving the outcomes outlined in Better Together 2040.**

The Youth Voice Engagement and Insight Report explores the experiences of young people on the Northern Beaches and is the companion document to this plan.

**Michael Regan**  
Mayor



Mayor Michael Regan with 2022 Young Person of the Year, Molly Parker



### Message from the Youth Voice Steering Group

The Youth Voice Steering Group was formed to provide guidance and advice throughout this project.

It consisted of a group of young people living on the Northern Beaches that have diverse ages, genders, interests and experiences. The input from this group ensured that every aspect of the plan was co-designed with local young people.

We asked some of the Youth Voice Steering Group why they got involved in the project:

**The Youth Voice project was the perfect opportunity to take an active role in improving my local community. I wanted to leverage local voices and provide innovative solutions to situate my local council at the forefront of our state and our country.**

Jessica, 20 years old

**I believe it's extremely important young people all over the Beaches get involved in this project as it's our future, it's where we have grown up and want to grow old in. So if we aren't speaking up on our needs and options now I believe it'll be too late when our kids are experiencing the same issues we see today as young people.**

Vaughn, 20 years old

**I got involved with the Youth Voices project so I could really understand how our Council works and how it operates to help us. I realized there were a lot of projects where people could have their voices heard with the Your Say Northern Beaches website, which I didn't know even existed before I went to the Youth Voices meetings.**

Oliver, 15 years old

**The group was the perfect opportunity for me to share my thoughts, as well as connect with like-minded people from across the Northern Beaches, from all different age groups. It has been riveting to hear a variety of opinions and queries, and I can't wait to see where it goes in the future. It is an amazing way to make youth feel empowered as individuals, but also as drivers for change within their communities.**

Lily, 15 years old



*Young people have been at the centre of developing the draft Plan. The name Youth Voice Action Plan - Shaping the Beaches' Future was selected by local young people to represent their desire for a greater presence in community life.*

## Introduction

Overall, young people think the Northern Beaches is a great place to grow up.

*"... I was born here. It's the best place ever to grow up."*

### Why we need Youth Voice Action Plan 2028 - Shaping the Beaches' Future

Young people are active contributors and essential to a thriving and vibrant community. The experience of young people on the Northern Beaches is constantly evolving.

**All young people on the Northern Beaches are empowered to participate in community life in a way that matters to them**

This aspirational statement represents a collective vision for young people on the Northern Beaches.

We are fortunate on the Northern Beaches to be able to say that many young people already experience this, however we want this to be true for all young people.

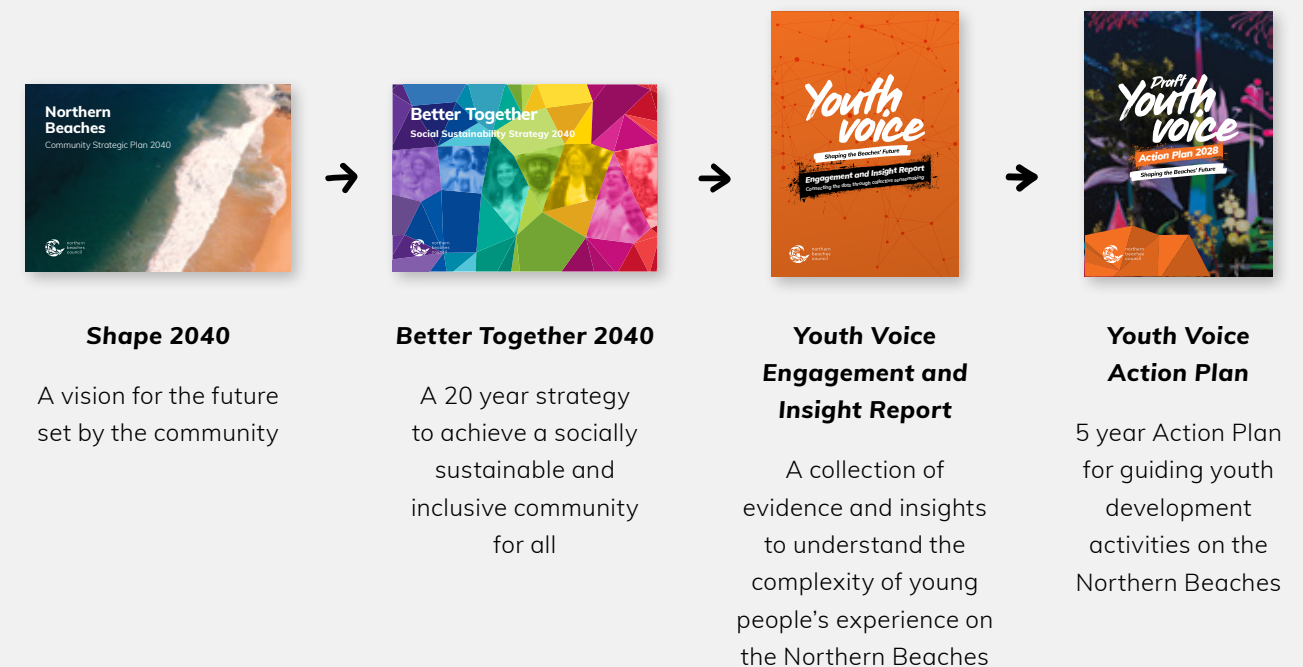
The statement provides the ongoing guidance for everyone contributing over the long term as we work towards enduring change.

### Part of the Better Together Strategy

Supporting social sustainability outcomes for young people.

Our Better Together Social Sustainability Strategy 2040 was adopted in August 2021. It outlined our commitment to identifying the unique challenges we face over the next 20 years and builds on the many strengths that exist on the Northern Beaches.

A key action outlined in the strategy was to develop a youth discussion paper. The Youth Voice Action Plan is a vital part of this process to capture the views and voices of local young people and inform the delivery of youth development. These programs will build capacity and resilience of a diverse cross section of young people and local youth services.





### Working with young people to create change

Young people have been at the centre of developing this Action Plan. The name Youth Voice Action Plan 2028 - Shaping the Beaches' Future was selected by local young people to represent their desire for a greater presence in community life.

Following an extensive consultation across a range of activities, over 1,000 young people participated, contributing over 1,100 comments and ideas. This feedback highlights young people's current experience across eight focus areas and provides the evidence base for how we can all work together to achieve positive change for young people. This engagement tells us what matters to young people and how we can make sure that they remain a critical part of community life as the decision makers, innovators, and caretakers of our world today and tomorrow.

Overall, young people love growing up on the Northern Beaches and express a deep desire to continue living here as they transition to adulthood. Throughout consultation the four main topics that they spoke about within this context included housing affordability, concern for the natural environment and climate change, cost of living and supporting mental health (wellness).

### Opportunities and challenges

Nine key insights emerged from the engagement that explain the current state of youth participation:

- 1 Role modelling**  
The role of adults in positively modelling the variety of life skills, behaviours and attitudes young people need.
- 2 Mental health**  
Where there are negative attitudes and stigma around mental health, young people are less likely to demonstrate help seeking behaviours.
- 3 Decisions for the future**  
High cost of living leaves young people feeling like they are not in control of their future, and while in many instances the trend to remain in the family home can be a positive one, others can feel trapped in unsafe environments.
- 4 Assumptions about young people**  
Assumptions about young people is one of the primary reasons for young people feeling excluded from community life.
- 5 Belonging**  
One of the most positive aspects young people talked about was their love of the Northern Beaches and the sense of belonging they have for the area.
- 6 Skills and education**  
Young people know that to achieve economic security and financial independence they need to have the skills and knowledge to support themselves.
- 7 Support systems**  
Young people spoke about the importance of both formal and informal support systems and highlighted a growing reliance on families and friends for mental health support.
- 8 Connection**  
The way that connections occur does not look the same for everyone, but young people talk about connection being when they feel they belong to a group and feel close with other people.
- 9 Financial literacy**  
Young people know that money matters. Often young people's approach and knowledge of financial literacy mirrors the spending habits and financial attitudes of those closest to them.

These insights together create an overall story that depicts how social and cultural drivers of behaviour impact on young people's ability to participate in a wide range of ways.



*“The waves whisper to me: choose the simple things and find joy in national treasures, then life and living won't be hard”*

Mackenzie Wolfe

Overall Winner, Youth Voice Photography Competition

### **A collective responsibility**

A role for everyone in empowering youth.

Council plays an important role in supporting young people, delivering youth development and capacity building activities, placing young people wherever possible at the heart of decision-making that impacts them, and advocating to improve outcomes for young people.

The Plan has identified that there is a role for everyone in the community in supporting young people to be part of the community.

### **Council**

Enable, advocate, and listen to young people in our work.

### **Young people**

Engage with Council and contribute ideas, be involved, and connect with the community.

### **Youth Services sector**

Work in partnership with young people to build capacity, especially for those from priority populations.

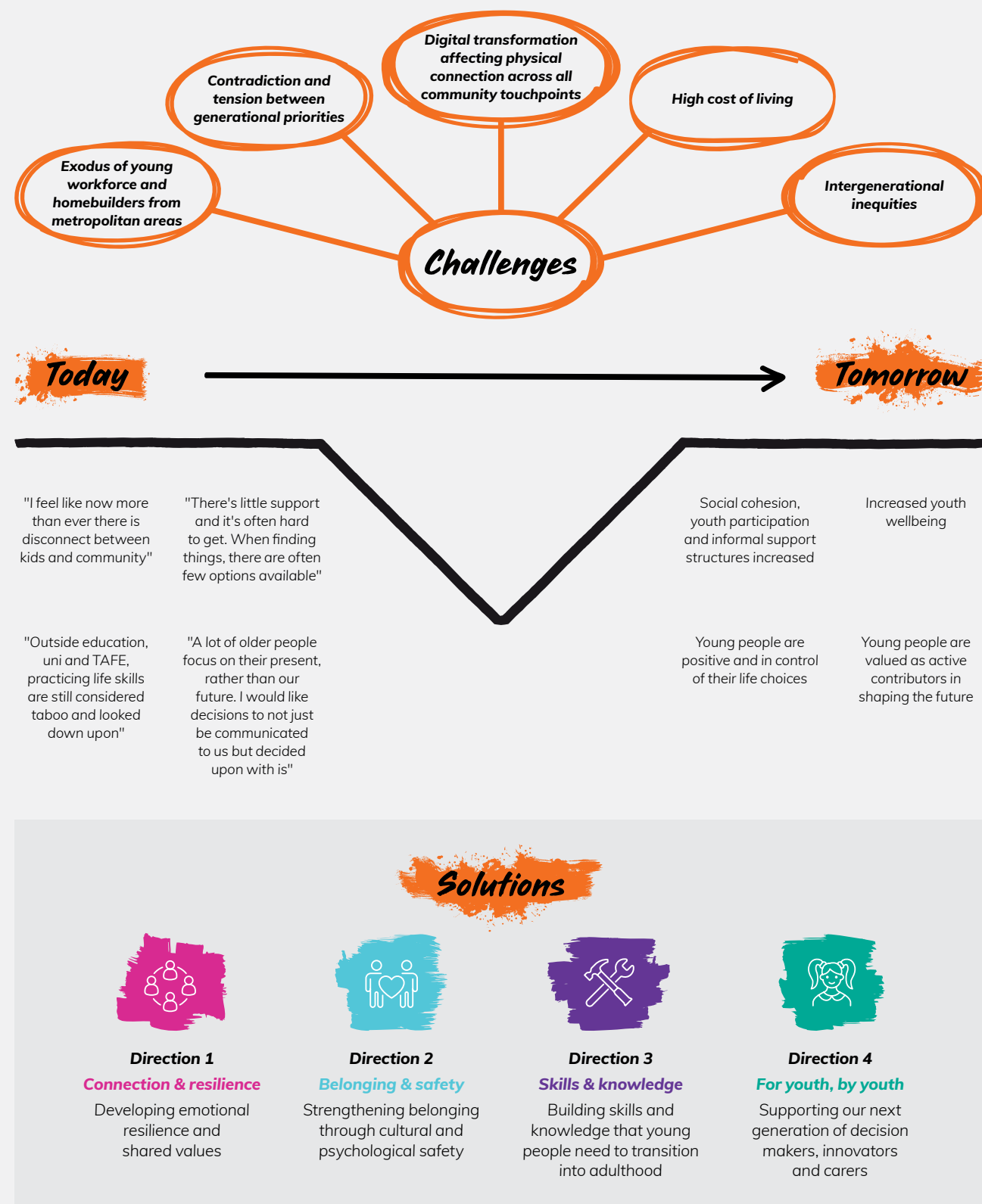
### **The community**

Embrace, respect and mentor young people in the community.



## Youth Voice - Creating a positive future

Using our collective strengths to overcome challenges and guide us from today into tomorrow.





### A new approach to supporting young people

The Youth Voice Action Plan provides a holistic plan to improve youth wellbeing, build social cohesion and increase participation of young people.

The experience of young people living on the Northern Beaches is shaped by many interconnected factors that impact on their ability to feel safe, included and connected to the community they live in.

*"I experience equity when I am listened to about what I need and what my community needs"*

Young Person, 12-17 years, Targeted workshop (LGBTQI+)

We know that young people face barriers to participation in community life, but often this has been viewed purely as an activity supply problem, where solutions are traditionally designed to create specific programs for young people. The persistence of youth withdrawal and declining participation in community life tells us that providing activities alone does not provide a solution to the problem.

This plan builds on the strengths in the community to overcome these challenges. It seeks to highlight places that Council, in collaboration with young people, community service providers, and the community can make the most difference to improve participation of young people and their experience of community life.

*Planning a future so all young people on the Northern Beaches are empowered to participate in community life in a way that matters to them.*



### Emerging into adulthood

Key transition periods for young people.

We know that between the ages of 12 and 24, young people experience multiple transitions, more so than any other time in their lives.

These transitional phases of life mark physical, cognitive and emotional changes as well as an eventual transition from child orientated support services (such as school and youth support) to the services offered to the general adult population.

To make these transitions successful we know that young people need to understand where they can get support during these periods of change.

We can help young people to nurture their resilience and set them up to be able to cope and adapt to change throughout their lives in healthy and sustainable ways if we get it right at these critical transition stages.

### Snapshot of feedback about key transition points



#### Primary to high school

- Informal support networks become increasingly important to those aged 12-17.
- Role modelling in childhood impacts the way young people will make decisions, and their understanding of foundational money matters when they transition to adulthood.
- Young adults reflected that it was not until they had transitioned from high school that they realised the importance of money management skills. Those who had been exposed to good financial habits as children found it easier to get on track as a young adult.

#### High school to university

- Having family support systems is an advantage that allows some young people to have support as they undertake further study or training.
- Juggling study and earning money can mean there is not much time left to engage in community life.
- Young adults tell us it is at this point that they realise they may not have the financial literacy required for ongoing good financial health.

#### Moving into employment

- Young people find it hard to locate genuine entry level roles on the Northern Beaches.
- Some of the life skills young people say they did not realise were important to know include tax knowledge, setting up bank accounts and how to register for support payments through portals like Centrelink.
- Young adults in apprenticeships told us that they found learning skills around running a business primarily came from their employer than through their study.

#### Living at home and moving out

- Many young people find that they cannot afford to move out of home and stay in a state of semi-independence for much longer than previous generations.
- Currently there is not a strong skill transfer pathway for information about housing and accommodation including where to find rentals, how to find flatmates, the process for applying for a property, bond requirements etc.
- For those wanting to obtain a mortgage they often do not understand how they go about this, and the types of financial habits banks look for.
- Overall young people told us that their capacity to save and have discretionary spending money is greatly reduced if they move from the family home.

#### Moving from child-orientated streams to adult services

- The transition to adult services could be supported better in a range of ways.
- For young adults needing mental health care facilities, they can be put with much older patients which leads to them feeling disconnected.
- For those transitioning from care of the state this is a particularly difficult time as there are limited support structures for them to fall back on as they traditionally have a lower earning capacity.
- The cost of health services and treatments, including medication often becomes unaffordable as young people take on these costs themselves, as well as new financial responsibilities.



*Who our young people are and what matters to them*

## Defining empowerment in the voice of young people

*Being able to represent people and ideas and create tangible change subjective depending on the environment an individual is in and what they consider to be 'empowering'*

*Ability to make tangible change*

*The ability to voice opinions and ideas with confidence*

*Being empowered to young people means they can use their voice to contribute to change.*

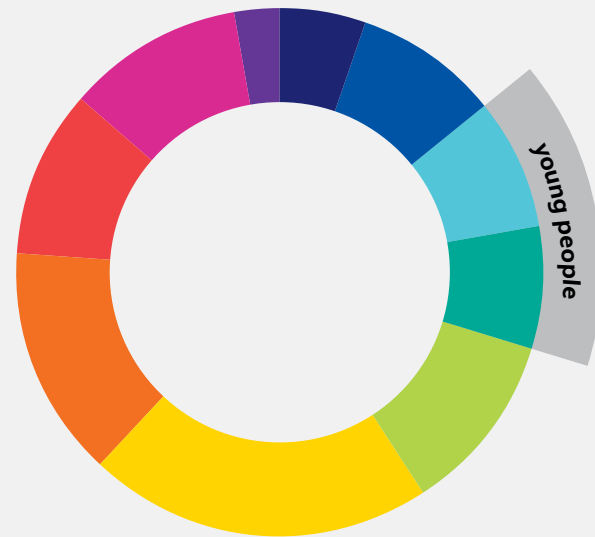
Defining Empowerment Activity  
Youth Advisory Group Action Planning workshop

*Using your voice to change something*

*Active listening empowerment means not just hearing but listening*

*Structures that allow for independence  
Inspiring young people to use initiative and be autonomous*

*Empowering means having a voice and sharing ideas*



#### Age segmentation on the Northern Beaches

Babies and pre-schoolers (0 - 4)	5.4%
Primary schoolers (5 - 11)	8.9%
<b>Secondary schoolers (12 - 17)</b>	<b>8.1%</b>
<b>Tertiary education and independence (18 - 24)</b>	<b>7.5%</b>
Young workforce (25 - 34)	11.0%
Parents and homebuilders (35 - 49)	21.3%
Older workers and pre-retirees (50 - 59)	14.0%
Empty nesters and retirees (60 - 69)	10.4%
Seniors (70 - 84)	10.7%
Elderly aged (85+)	2.7%

Total population: 263,561

#### Age of Young People



12 - 17 years	52%
18 - 24 years	48%

Total young people: 41,032

#### Where Young People were born (15-24 years)

##### Most common



**24,431**

Australia



**1,384**

England



**331**

England



**145**

China

##### Biggest five-year increase in overseas birthplace\*

#### Health



**12.7%**

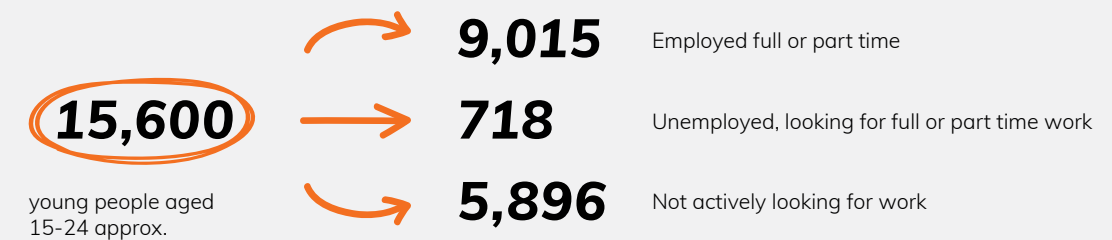
Young people that speak a language other than English at home\*



**6,914**

Have a long term health condition (15-24 years)

#### Young people in the workforce



**1,915**

Provide unpaid childcare



**1,280**

Provide unpaid care

#### Our young students

**38,459**

Students living on the Northern Beaches in 2021

**2**

Tertiary education campuses

**22**

High schools



**20,009**

7.6 %  
High school



**12,372**

4.7 %  
University



**6,078**

2.3 %  
Trades/TAFE

#### Where do our young people live?



**1.7%**

Live in lone person households\*



**-1,346**

Net migration

**72.4%**

were in households who were purchasing or fully owned their home\*

**21.4%**

were in households who were renting privately\*

**0.8%**

were in households who were in social housing\*

**5.4%**

Other or not stated\*

\* Indicates data from 2016 ABS census



Diversity within diversity

Recognising the rich diversity of young people living on the Northern Beaches, the burning issues were identified for different priority populations.



LGBTQIA+

"To experience equity, you are helped in the ways you need with supportive people "

Young person 12-17 years  
LGBTIQ+ targeted workshop

LGBTQIA+ Australians are far more likely to be psychologically distressed than non LGBTQIA+ Australians<sup>1</sup>.

Around 10% of young Australians experience same-sex attraction, most realising this around puberty<sup>2</sup>.

That means there are likely 4,103\* young people who relate to this priority population.



First Nations

"Equal opportunity is what equity looks like to me and providing all people the resources they need to thrive and succeed"

First Nations Young Person  
12-17 years

First Nations young people spoke about the need for connection between young people, culture, and community. This group identified the need for role models in the community who can provide mentoring to young people and help people access services when they need them. A key concept was around opportunities for connection through storytelling.

First Nations People make up 0.6% of the total Northern Beaches population.



Living with disability

"Events on the northern beaches are often planned for the able, and the disabled as taken as a second thought."

Young Person 12-17 years  
living with disability

Young people living with disability can experience barriers to access and inclusion. Research suggests that these barriers can increase the risk of poorer health and wellbeing outcomes.

There are 638 young people between the ages of 10 and 24 with need for assistance living on the Northern Beaches.



At risk of disengaging from school

"Kids also need adult role models, like coaches and nice teachers to help us grow."

Young person 12-17 years  
Targeted workshop

Disengaged students are at greater risk of adverse social and educational outcomes. We also know that 75% of mental health issues occur before the age of 25<sup>3</sup>.

3% of all students have persistent serious disengagement with additional challenges. E.g Mental health distress.<sup>4</sup>

This equates to an estimated 600\* young people on the Northern Beaches disengaging from school.



Multicultural and linguistically diverse

"Equity is getting someone an extra piece when they need it rather than everyone getting the same piece"

Young Person 12-18 years  
Targeted Workshop

Many young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have different experiences and face different challenges living and working on the Northern Beaches. Some young people may experience barriers accessing services, due to lack of information about services, language barriers and actual or perceived cost associated with services.

4,800 young people living on the Northern Beaches were born overseas.



Young people with lived mental illness experience

"Safety means being able to have a nourishing environment with care and overlook to enable fullbacks when times get tough "

Young Person 18-24 years  
Targeted Workshop

14% of children aged 12-17 met the clinical criteria for mental disorders<sup>5</sup>. 15% of 18-24 year olds experienced high or very high psychological distress<sup>6</sup>.

Unlike older age groups, young people have remained reporting higher rates of psychological distress than pre pandemic levels<sup>7</sup>.

\* calculated using 2021 ABS data

<sup>1</sup> Beyond Blue, Statistics, <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/media/statistics>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

<sup>3</sup> Kessler, RD et al. (2005). Lifetime prevalence and age-of-onset distributions of DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. Archives of General Psychiatry, 62: p. 593-602.

<sup>4</sup> Headspace, What is School Disengagement (2018) <https://headspace.org.au/assets/Uploads/Centres/Elsternwick/SDST-v2-Editable-FINAL.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> AIHW, Health of Young People, Table 1

<sup>6</sup> This percentage is derived from the ABS National Health Survey (NHS). The most recent data available is from 2017-18 as due to Covid19 pandemic, rates of psychological distress were not reported at the time of the NHS 2020-21 survey

<sup>7</sup> ANU Centre for Social Research and Methods Covid19 Impact Monitoring Survey Program



How we support young people now

Currently Council supports capacity building for young people in a variety of ways.

“I think the youth advisory council is a really good idea to let young people’s voices be heard”

Young person 12-17 years, School Engagement Session

69 Individual touchpoints with youth across 18 Council teams.

Supporting	Examples of programs/activities delivered
Skills development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leadership development through the Youth Advisory Group</li><li>• Partnering with schools to deliver gatekeeper training to those 16+</li><li>• Professional development programs across a range of topics</li><li>• Volunteer opportunities to work for event management</li><li>• Youth employment opportunities</li><li>• Work experience placements including high school, social work, research, engineering undergraduate, traineeships and student planner roles</li><li>• Road safety programs</li><li>• Youth opportunities grant</li><li>• Development of creative skills in programs that foster skills in music, film and other creative pursuits</li></ul>
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitate and include young people in strategic and place planning</li><li>• Attending high schools to speak with young people about waste reduction</li><li>• Express Yourself annual exhibition featuring artworks of HSC students</li></ul>
Interest activities and programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Glen Street Theatre Program</li><li>• HSC Lock-in in the Libraries</li><li>• Young writers' competition</li><li>• Youth art workshops</li></ul>
Community development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Young people are identified as a priority group for awarding community development grants</li><li>• Provision of community and cultural venue space at subsidised rates for organisations who deliver programs to youth</li><li>• Exhibitions of emerging artists in creative spaces across the area</li><li>• KALOF, Council's youth social media channels</li><li>• Supporting a range of events and youth programs in partnership with youth service providers</li></ul>





# How the Action Plan was developed













Understanding young people’s unique experience.

The Youth Voice Action Plan has been grounded in youth participation and engagement from origin. Using a co-design process **engagement created a shared language and understanding between stakeholders that represents the diverse experiences of the people involved in the process.**

This Plan includes a snapshot of the key insights and stories we heard from young people. We encourage you to explore these insights in more depth in the Youth Voice Engagement and Insight Report.

*“Each person provides a unique perspective on our local community given their different ages, schooling, cultural backgrounds, and upbringings. This project encourages diverse thought where despite our differences, we can be united in the similar purpose of wanting to create a better local community”*

Youth Voice Steering Group member

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate
Objective	Work with young people to plan the project and engagement	Determine the current challenges and opportunities for young people	Identify the key outcomes young people want and need delivered	Co-create an action plan for everyone
Activities	<div> Planning workshops</div>	<div> Workshops</div> <div> Youth voice consultations</div> <div> YourSay thought board</div>	<div> Social media</div> <div> School engagements and activations</div> <div> Community conversations</div>	<div> Action planning workshops to co-design actions for 5 years</div>
Results	4 planning workshops with young people	81,052 social media reach 12 Youth Workshops 1 co-design workshop 114 Youth Voice photo competition entries YAG workshops 1 sector workshop 17 School engagements and youth activations 7 Priority group workshops 42 Your Say comments 48 community conversations	4 co-design workshops	3 Action planning workshops with 39+ participants
Outcome from engagement	<div> 8 Focus areas</div>	<div> 9 Key insights 4 Directions</div>	<div> 10 Outcomes</div>	<div> Key actions</div>



**What we learnt from young people**

Understanding our big problems and where there is already positive change happening for young people.

We heard from young people that the adequacy of their life skills impacted on how they experienced the transition to independence, and ultimately to being an adult. The skills developed through adolescence and young adulthood correlate to how they experience their participation in community life. Over time the experience young people have in community life (either positive or negative) contributes to their sense of self, belonging and overall wellbeing.

When youth wellbeing suffers, how youth are perceived in the community is impacted and ultimately either reinforces or challenges subconscious bias of community attitudes and behaviour about young people. Not everyone experiences this cycle in the same way, however young people have overwhelmingly told us that the community incorrectly perceives the outcome of this cycle as young people not caring about or wanting to participate. When this happens, young people further isolate and withdraw from many facets of community life.

Young people (12-17)	1026
Young people (18-24)	90
Parents and carers	13
Community members	57
Local youth services	30+

**Top 10 themes: 12-17 years**

- 1 Informal support systems
- 2 Feeling of belonging
- 3 Service usage
- 4 Youth visibility in community life
- 5 Mechanisms for connection
- 6 High cost of living
- 7 Issues and activism
- 8 Skills
- 9 Individual value base
- 10 Positive role models

**Top 10 themes: 18-24 years**

- 1 Service usage
- 2 Skills
- 3 High cost of living
- 4 Youth visibility in community life
- 5 Getting around
- 6 Issues and activism
- 7 Informal support systems
- 8 Individual value base
- 9 Feeling of belonging
- 10 Assumptions about youth





## Direction 1 - Connection and resilience

Developing emotional resilience and shared values.

**Outcome measure - Increase in the number of young people agreeing that they feel connected with community life**



## Direction 1: Snapshot

**What young people advocated for**

**A whole of community approach to shifting attitudes and assumptions about young people, as well as more opportunities to connect across generations**

**In their words**

**I feel like now more than ever there is a disconnect between kids and community. There is a divide between kids, support, community and services.**

Young person  
12-17 years

First Nations Workshop

**I think it's essential for young people to connect with older people as they need the support and connection with other people.**

Young Person  
12-17 years

Culturally Diverse  
Workshop

**I would like to connect more at public spaces with other young people interested in drawing, writing and the environment.**

Young Person  
12-17 years

School engagement  
workshop

**Plan outcome**

Young people participate in community life and have access to services and networks to help

Young people connect across generations

Young people have access to and feel welcomed in community spaces

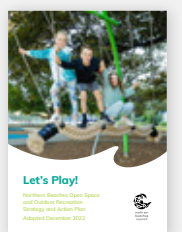
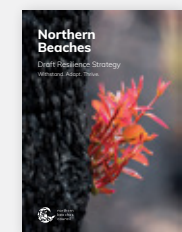
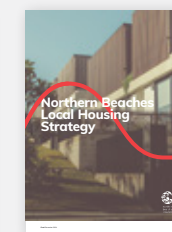
**Impact on Better Together 2040 outcomes**

Broad range of supportive community and social networks that reflect the diversity of the Northern Beaches

Value of all people is recognised, respected and embraced

Sense of belonging to life on the Northern Beaches

**Links to existing Plans and Strategies**



**Direction 1 - Actions**

## Connection and resilience

Action Plan outcome	Actions	Delivery Year
<b>Young people participate in community life and have access to services and networks to help</b>  <i>"People with disabilities, we often experience inequity as people cannot understand our needs, and believe they know what is best for us. Events on the Northern Beaches are often planned for the able, and the disabled as taken as a second thought."</i>  Young Person living with disability 12-17 years	<b>Actions for Council</b>	
	1.1 Trial the use of local social media influencers to support information and education delivery	Year 1
	1.2 Review current Youth Development activities so that they align with the strategic directions from Youth Voice	Year 1
	1.3 Work with internal stakeholders and young people to create a youth friendly guide to hiring and accessing Community Centres	Year 2-3
	1.4 Investigate and implement programs to strengthen support networks for young people	Year 2-3
	1.5 Develop and implement an approach to strengthening our work with 18-24 year olds	Year 2-3
	<b>Actions in partnership with the Youth Sector</b>	
	1.6 Coordinate advocacy to ensure the right services are available to meet the needs of young people living in the community	Ongoing
	<b>Actions for young people</b>	
	1.7 Encourage friends to participate in available opportunities	Ongoing
<b>Young people connect across generations</b>  <i>"Older generation have their minds set on their way and don't stop for consideration of youth voices."</i>  Young Person 12-17 years	<b>Actions for Council</b>	
	1.8 Coordinate a forum with Council, service providers and the community focused on building connections across generations	Year 1
	1.9 Explore ways to increase the amount of youth volunteering on the Northern Beaches	Year 1
	1.10 Increase opportunities for connection between Councillors and Council's Youth Advisory Group	Ongoing
	<b>Actions for the community</b>	
	1.11 When planning community activities, programs and events consider how to foster inter-generational collaboration	Ongoing
	<b>Actions for Youth Advisory Group</b>	
	1.12 Youth Advisory Group invite key stakeholders to meet and discuss initiatives to foster youth volunteering	Year 1
	<b>Actions for young people</b>	
	1.13 Register your interest with Council for volunteer opportunities	Ongoing

Action Plan outcome	Actions	Delivery Year
<b>Young people have access to and feel welcomed in community spaces</b>  <i>"I would like to see the Northern Beaches Council use more effective planning policies... The Northern Beaches' future success hinges on younger generations - we should thus have a voice in the future development of our community."</i>  Young Person 18-24 years	<b>Actions for Council</b>	
	1.14 Facilitate active youth representation in stakeholder engagement for the Community Connection Plan that will explore the importance of spaces and places for connection	Year 2-3
	1.15 Identify what makes a good communal gathering space for young people (Bumping Space), especially those aged 18-24 and investigate ways of activating them to increase young people's access and use of them	Year 2-3
	1.16 Advocate for and support young people to participate in the development of the Affordable Housing Action Plan	Year 4-5
	1.17 Engage with young people on the delivery of library programs, services, and spaces to encourage utilisation of libraries	Ongoing
	1.18 Strengthen meaningful participation of young people in land use planning including precinct, structure, and place planning	Ongoing
	<b>Actions for Youth Advisory Group</b>	
	1.19 Identify community spaces and places that can be better utilised by young people and facilitate intergenerational connection	Ongoing





## Direction 2 - Belonging and safety

Strengthening belonging by helping young people feel safe and included.



**Outcome measure - Increase in the number of young people agreeing they feel safe at home and in the community**

## Direction 2: Snapshot

**What young people advocated for**

**Council to have a leadership role within the community and take purposeful steps towards authentic and ongoing inclusion of diversity of all kinds within community life**

**In their words**

**"I feel valued when there is representation in public spaces."**

Young Person  
12-17 years  
School engagement

**There's little support, and it's often hard to get. When finding things, there are often few options available."**

Young person  
12-17 years  
School engagement

**Plan outcome**

A culturally safe and inclusive community for all young people

Reduced stigma and decreased systemic barriers for accessing services

**Impact on Better Together 2040 outcomes**

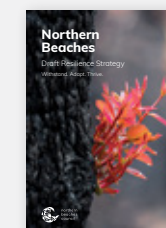
Celebrating First Nations people

Sense of belonging to life on the Northern Beaches

Safe places

Safe people

**Links to existing Plans and Strategies**



## Direction 2 - Actions

### Belonging and Safety

Action Plan outcome	Actions	Delivery Year
<b>A culturally safe and inclusive community for all young people</b> <i>"The biggest barrier for feeling safe in the Northern Beaches is the fears of discrimination and violence directly from difference of any type".</i> Young Person 12-17 years	<b>Actions for Council</b>	
	2.1 Build the capacity of local community and sporting groups to connect young people to services and supports	Year 1
	2.2 Develop a toolkit to improve youth participation and cultural safety in community life, especially for priority populations	Year 2-3
	2.3 Engage First Nations young people to contribute to developing programs to increase understanding of Aboriginal culture and heritage including local history and storytelling	Ongoing
	<b>Actions in partnership with the Youth Sector</b>	
	2.4 Develop a working group to explore safety issues relating to LGBTIQ+ community, with a focus on younger people	Year 1
	2.5 Collaboratively deliver workshops/seminars/forums to parents, caregivers, and community members on how to engage and understand the issues and challenges young people face	Year 2-3
	2.6 Find new ways to support young people from multi-cultural backgrounds and encourage participation in community wide activations	Ongoing
	<b>Actions for Youth Advisory Group</b>	
	2.7 Help Council identify and curate an internal image library of local young people to increase visibility of young people in council documents	Year 1

Action Plan outcome	Actions	Delivery Year
<b>Reduced stigma and decreased systemic barriers for accessing services</b> <i>"I don't hear about support within my communities, it's something that is much more taboo and difficult for young people to engage with. However, once people become open to ideas of social safety, it becomes much easier for younger people to engage."</i> Young Person 12-17 years	<b>Actions for Council</b>	
	2.8 Build the capacity of young people to support their peers through evidence based mental health training	Year 1
	2.9 Review and determine best channels of communication for young people to promote information, including sexual health and share with services	Year 2-3
	2.10 Map current support services available to young people who identify as LGBTIQ+ and identify gaps in support	Year 2-3
	2.11 Engage with the Youth Advisory Group to understand how to improve young people's connectedness and access to information during an emergency event to increase their resilience and safety in significant climate events	Ongoing
	<b>Actions in partnership with other government departments</b>	
	2.12 Promote No Wrong Door tool that captures current mental health education and support programs available to young people on the Northern Beaches	Year 1
	2.13 Co-design with young people and deliver an educational program focused on alcohol and substance abuse	Year 2-3
	<b>Actions in partnership with the Youth Sector</b>	
	2.14 Build stronger connections between Student Support Officers and local services to improve access to services for young people	Year 1
	2.15 Develop strategies for better connecting sport and community organisations and access to services for young people	Year 1
	<b>Actions for young people</b>	
	2.16 Proactively share experiences and impact of cost of living and other factors that affect ability to engage in community activities and support structures	Ongoing
	2.17 Participate in evidence based mental health training	Ongoing
	2.18 Plan and run awareness programs at school in the community e.g. "R U OK" day	Ongoing





### Direction 3 - Skills and knowledge

Building skills and knowledge that young people need to transition into adulthood.

**Outcome measure - Increase in the number of young people agreeing they have the life skills and knowledge they need for the future**



### Direction 3: Snapshot

**What young people advocated for**

More opportunities to learn and contribute to Council processes, more volunteering, mentoring and work experiences, and innovative ways of thinking about how to teach young people foundational life skills.

**In their words**

"Outside of education, uni and Tafe, practicing life skills are still considered majorly taboo and looked down upon."

Young Person  
12-17 years

Targeted workshop  
(LGBTQI+)

"The more they (children) understand, the better they can make decisions and be financially independent in their adulthood. We need to start teaching kids about money early on, so they grow up with a good understanding of how to manage their finances."

Young Person  
12-17 years

YourSay comment

"Judgment in the workplace where young people cannot progress and skill is not taken into account - just age."

Young person  
12-17 years

School engagement  
session

**Plan outcome**

Opportunities to  
access mentoring

Increase  
opportunities  
and improve  
infrastructure to  
facilitate skills  
and education

Workplaces that  
support and value  
young people

**Impact on Better  
Together 2040  
outcomes**

Strong  
volunteering  
culture

Safe  
people

Ensuring equity and  
inclusion

Value of all people  
is recognised,  
respected and  
embraced

**Links to  
existing Plans  
and Strategies**



## Direction 3 - Actions

### Skills and knowledge

Action Plan outcome	Actions	Delivery Year
<b>Opportunities to access mentoring</b> <i>"I think that there should be better community strategies implemented to help the youth learn how to make money and become financially independent"</i> Young Person 12-17 years	<b>Actions for Council</b>	
	3.1 Map current mentoring programs across the Northern Beaches open to young people	Year 1
	3.2 Create a Youth Mentoring Hub to promote existing and future youth mentoring programs	Year 4-5
	3.3 Encourage and support established business owners on the Northern Beaches to mentor young people wanting support to set up their own business	Ongoing
	<b>Actions in partnership with the Youth Sector</b>	
	3.4 Promote opportunities to young people and prospective mentors and provide resources to improve mentoring practice	Year 4-5
	<b>Actions for Youth Advisory Group</b>	
	3.5 Create "How do I" videos that enable participation through peer-to-peer mentoring	Year 4-5
	<b>Actions for Council</b>	
	3.6 Deliver the Youth Employment Action plan as part of the Workforce Management Plan	Year 2-3
<b>Workplaces that support and value young people</b> <i>"I think when we all have a shot at things, and people are given the support they need, some really good stuff can happen"</i> Young person 12-17 years	3.7 Develop a mentoring program that connects young Council employees with more senior staff	Year 2-3
	3.8 Trial a program to empower young people to participate in the recruitment of council roles, that have a key impact on young people	Year 4-5
	3.9 Broaden the types of roles represented by Council at the local Northern Beaches Careers Expo to allow for young people to engage with the many career options that exist within local government	Ongoing

Action Plan outcome	Actions	Delivery Year
<b>Increase opportunities and improve infrastructure to facilitate skills and education</b> <i>[equity to me is] "Fair opportunities to services and life choices regardless of circumstances"</i> Young Person 12-17 years	<b>Actions for Council</b>	
	3.10 Develop resources and tools educating adults about how to have conversations about money and financial literacy with young people	Year 2-3
	3.11 Work with business groups and training providers to promote pathways for young people to access work experience	Ongoing
	<b>Actions in partnership with the Youth Sector</b>	
	3.12 Map education, training and volunteer pathways on the Northern Beaches and develop a resource that can be used to increase opportunities and better promote what is available to young people	Year 2-3
	3.13 Partner with education providers to increase equity of access to education through the development of additional resources including online content	Year 4-5
	3.14 Promote and deliver capacity building workshops for young people that focus on saving and spending habits and developing positive future focused behaviours	Ongoing
	<b>Actions for Youth Advisory Group</b>	
	3.15 Young people identify relevant local internships, short skill courses, mentoring and volunteer opportunities and utilise youth led promotional opportunities to distribute information	Year 1





## Direction 4 - For youth, by youth

Supporting our next generation of decision makers, innovators, and caretakers.

**Outcome measure - Increase in the number of young people agreeing that they feel included in community life**



## Direction 4: Snapshot

**What young people advocated for**

**Better processes around engagement and decision making that build consensus with young people on decisions that impact them.**

**In their words**

**I believe that young people are overlooked and due to a stigma around us (young people being seen as immature, stupid etc) our views aren't taken seriously.**

Young adult  
18-24 years

Targeted workshop  
(Mental Health)

**"A lot of older people focus on their present, rather than our future. I would like decisions to not just be communicated to us but decided upon with us"**

Young Person  
12-17 years

School engagement session

**Plan outcome**

A platform for youth voice

Processes that build consensus with young people on decisions that impact them

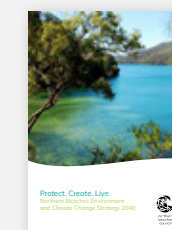
**Impact on Better Together 2040 outcomes**

Value of all people is recognised, respected and embraced

A resilient and adaptive social services sector

A sense of belonging to life on the Northern Beaches

**Links to existing Plans and Strategies**



## Direction 4 - Actions

For youth, by youth

Action Plan outcome	Actions	Delivery Year
<b>A platform for youth voice</b> <i>“Something that would make young people feel heard is being asked. I feel like sometimes young people are overlooked and viewed as if our opinions do not really matter and we are often not asked serious questions, therefore our voices aren't heard.”</i> Young person 18-24 years	<b>Actions for Council</b>	
	4.1 Seek to include youth voice in all Consultative Council Committees	Year 1
	4.2 Implement a Young Thinker in Residence (YTIR) program to enable young people to lead research and advocacy work with support of Council and other stakeholders	Year 2-3
	4.3 Promote and share examples of successful youth engagement techniques	Ongoing
	<b>Actions in partnership with the Youth Sector</b>	
	4.4 Develop a set of meaningful engagement indicators for young people and embed them in decision making processes for youth services	Year 1
	<b>Actions for Youth Advisory Group</b>	
	4.5 Create a Q & A session with Councillor's and council staff where young people can come and ask questions of decision makers	Year 2-3
	<b>Actions for Young People</b>	
	4.6 Provide feedback that can improve access for young people to Council engagement processes	Ongoing
	4.7 Register to speak to Council on a matter that is important to you	Ongoing

Action Plan outcome	Actions	Delivery Year
<b>Processes that build consensus with young people on decisions that impact them</b> <i>“I feel most heard when someone sits with me and listens without interrupting”</i> Young Person 12-17 years	<b>Actions for Council</b>	
	4.8 Review approaches to youth advisory groups and strengthen the ability of Council's Youth Advisory Group to allow for meaningful participation of young people	Year 1
	4.9 Develop a quarterly reporting mechanism from Youth Advisory Group to Council	Year 1
	4.10 Establish a Youth Panel subgroup from Youth Advisory Group to meet monthly with the community engagement team to review upcoming engagement projects and identify those of most interest to young people and provide feedback on activities and channels	Year 2-3
	4.11 Create an online toolkit that provides practical actions for young people and the community to increase youth participation in planning and decision making	Year 2-3
	4.12 Implement a youth participation tool to monitor and evaluate participation by young people in Council decision-making processes	Year 4-5
	4.13 Support Youth Advisory Group to review Council Agenda monthly, and build capacity, participation and knowledge of Council process	Ongoing
	4.14 Ensure young people are included when collecting local knowledge to support and enable decision making in preparing for and responding to natural hazards and climate change	Ongoing
	4.15 Include the Youth Advisory Group in the ongoing review of existing Council Strategies, as well as the development of future Council Strategies	Ongoing
	<b>Actions in partnership with the Youth Sector</b>	
	4.16 Establish a working group for practitioners who facilitate youth advisory, youth steering, and youth engagement activities to collaborate on possible integration and alignment of these programs	Year 1
	<b>Actions for Youth Advisory Group</b>	
	4.17 Provide feedback and contribute to the design of youth focused support services	Year 2-3
	4.18 Actively participate in the Youth Advisory Group subgroup focused on engagement to review upcoming Council engagement projects	Year 2-3



**Implementation, monitoring and evaluation**

The implementation of the Youth Voice Action Plan 2028 will be delivered in collaboration with teams across Council, the youth services sector, and young people.

Implementation of the Plan will be supported by detailed action planning and outcome measurement.

Progress against Youth Voice Action Plan 2028 - Shaping the Beaches' Future will be monitored by Council and the Youth Advisory Group.

The longer-term social impact of this Plan will be measured through the Better Together Social Sustainability Strategy 2040.

It is intended that this Plan remain responsive to changing needs and reviewed annually to accommodate any emerging issues. This review will include ongoing consultation with young people across the community to ensure that new and emerging trends are identified that are impacting on young people.

**Resourcing**

The implementation of the Plan will have financial implications in relation to actions identified over the next five years.

The actions and outcomes within the Plan will be allocated to the relevant business unit and delivered within operational budgets which are set annually by Council.



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