



**Youth Engagement Summary Report
December 2007**

Report on Youth Engagement for the City of Joondalup

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2007 the City investigated the relationship between young people and the City and the best way to communicate and involve them in City processes.

This resulted from a Council decision in 2006 to investigate other avenues to engage with young people and the disbanding of the Youth Affairs Advisory Committee.

A forum was held with young people aged 12-17 and surveys were conducted with the 18-25 age group. Both age groups were asked the same questions.

The outcomes resulted in 8 recommendations:

1. Increase awareness amongst youth aged 12-17 years regarding the functions of Local Government and their impact on young people within the City of Joondalup.
2. Utilise technology to develop and maintain contemporary, youth appealing communications with young people.
3. Further develop Local Government representation and involvement in secondary schools.
4. Increase the level of information regarding policy reforms and legislation relevant to young people; provide a forum for comment on these matters and advocate on behalf of young people for improvement and/or change.
5. Ensure all community consultation undertaken by the City is available for comment by young people.
6. Advocate for young people to be invited to participate in external community organisations' committees and working groups.
7. Continue to deliver services that allow young people to engage in activities and programs.
8. Develop and implement a specific communication strategy for 18 – 25 year olds that will effectively reach this target group.

BACKGROUND

In 2006 the Council approved the implementation of a consultation process to evaluate alternative means of engaging with young people. The City (and the former City of Wanneroo) had engaged a Youth Advisory Council (YAC) in an advisory role since 1978 and a Youth Affairs Advisory Committee (YAAC) since 2001. The Council disbanded the YAC in favour of identifying new ways that young people could be involved in Council.

Liaison with youth to determine alternative methods for engaging with young people in the future has occurred as a result of Council report (COJ107 – 06/06), *that Council:*

- 1 *DISBANDS the Youth Advisory Council effective from July 2006;*
- 2 *DISBANDS the Youth Affairs Advisory Committee effective from July 2006;*
- 3 *ENDORSES the implementation of a working group comprised of six young people and two Elected Members;*

- 4 *NOTES that a report will be provided to Council after three months recommending an alternative method for engaging with young people in the future.*

LINKS TO STRATEGIC PLAN

Outcome:	The City of Joondalup provides social opportunities that meet community needs.
Objective 1.3	To continue to provide services that meet changing needs of a diverse and growing community
Strategy 1.3.1	Provide leisure and recreational activities aligned to community expectations, incorporating innovative opportunities for today's environment.
Strategy 1.3.2	Provide quality-of-life opportunities for all community members
Strategy 1.3.3	Provide support, information and resources
Outcome:	The City of Joondalup is recognised as a unique City.
Objective 4.3	To ensure the City responds to and communicates with the community
Strategy 4.3.1	Provide effective and clear community consultation
Strategy 4.3.2	Provide accessible community information
Strategy 4.3.3	Provide fair and transparent decision-making processes
Outcome:	The City of Joondalup is an interactive community.
Objective 4.4	To develop community pride and identity
Strategy 4.4.1	Build and develop marketing opportunities to promote the City.

DETAILS

The consultation was divided into two groups the 12-17 age group and the 18-25 age group.

12-17 age group

To identify key issues and strategies for the 12-17 age group a working group was established comprising six young people with Mayor Troy Pickard and Councillor Albert Jacobs. The working group met on six occasions and planned, implemented and reviewed a Youth Forum held on 7 March 2007.

Liaison with young people aged 12 – 25 years has occurred within the City to identify Local Government issues that are important to young people and how the City can communicate with young people regarding those issues.

Part one of the liaison process involved 110 young people aged 12 – 17 years from 13 secondary schools within the City of Joondalup participating in a Youth Forum held on Wednesday 7 March 2007.

The City posed questions, which were workshopped at the forum. These included:

- What do you think Local Government does?
- How do you think Local Government impacts on young people?
- If you lived in an ideal suburb, what would it be like?
- What would you like to have a say in?
- How can you communicate with the City of Joondalup?
- How can the City of Joondalup communicate with you?

The results from the Youth Forum were presented to Council in September 2007, in Council Report (CJ203-09/07).

MOVED Mayor Pickard SECONDED Cr John that Council:

- 1 *NOTES the Youth Forum Report shown as Attachment 1 to Report CJ203-09/07;*
- 2 *REQUESTS that the report is sent to all High Schools for information within the City of Joondalup indicating that additional forums will be held in the future.*

18-25 age group

To identify the issues and strategies for young people aged 18-25 years the approach used was by means of survey.

63 young people aged 18 – 25 years completed they survey stating that they lived within the City of Joondalup. The survey was administered through a number of channels including online, TAFE, email via Libraries database, Craigie Leisure Centre, and City libraries. Reaching this target group was a challenge as it is difficult to find accessible large groups of young people both within the target age group and City of Joondalup residents. A total of 63 survey responses have been collated and are presented in Attachment 1.

Whilst this number is not considered statistically valid it still provides an interesting insight into young people and this age group.

The detailed analysis resulting from the surveys is provided in Attachment 1.

OUTCOMES FROM CONSULTATION

The same questions were asked of both age groups to determine similarities and differences between age groups and the strategies that could be best utilised by the City.

These results will impact on the way Council engages with the two groups and what issues they are communicated about. The following provides a summary of the top three answers to each questions asked to both groups.

- What do you think Local Government (The City of Joondalup) does?

Rank	12 – 17s	18-25s
1	Organise Events	Parks/ Environment
2	Parks/ Environments	Wellbeing/ Community
3	Road Works	Rubbish Collection/ Recycling

- How do you think Local Government impacts upon people of your age?

Rank	12 – 17s	18-25s
1	Education	Don't know/ Does not impact
2	Recreation/ Leisure	Recreation/ Leisure
3	Safety	Answers regarding 'Community'

- Please describe what the ideal suburb would be like?

Rank	12 – 17s	18-25s
1	Activities	Clean
2	Transport	Safe
3	Clean/ Graffiti free	Environmentally friendly

- What would you want to have a say in? (Information on the roles and responsibilities of Local Government previously been provided)

Rank	12 – 17s	18-25s
1	Education	Provision of recreation facilities
2	Youth activities/ events (including music related aspects)	Community Services
3	Planning and Infrastructure decisions	Cultural Services

- What would be the best way for YOU to communicate with the City of Joondalup about these matters?

Rank	12 – 17s	18-25s
1	Media (newspaper, radio etc)	Email
2	Online (including email, my space etc)	Surveys
3	Letters	Letters

- What would be the best way for the CITY OF JOONDALUP to communicate with you?

Rank	12 – 17s	18-25s
1	Media (newspaper, radio etc)	Email
2	Through Schools	Mail
3	Online	Phone

RECOMMENDATIONS AND PROPOSED STRATEGIES

The Youth Forum engaging youth aged 12 – 17 years and youth survey engaging youth aged 18 – 25 years were implemented as a consultation strategy to evaluate means of engaging with young people as an alternative to the disbanded Youth Advisory Council. The following recommendations are based on the analysis of outcomes of the Forum and survey.

Recommendation 1:

Increase awareness amongst youth aged 12 – 25 years regarding the functions of Local Government and their impact on young people within the City of Joondalup

Rationale (12 – 17 years): Answers received at the Youth Forum to the questions: ‘what do you think Local Government (the City of Joondalup) does, and how do you think Local Government impacts on young people indicate that youth have a good understanding of the function of Local Government, particularly those functions that are ‘visible’ in the community; for example community events, rubbish collection, parks and leisure centres. There are however misperceptions about what role Local Government has concerning topics such as education, transport, and other state and federal matters. Evidence also suggests that young people are less aware of how Local Government functions impact upon them.

Increasing the awareness of the function of Local Government would enable young people to become informed citizens and encourage them to become active in the community and in the decision making processes of the City.

Rationale (18 – 25 years): Answers received from the survey indicate this age group has a good understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Local Government. However, responses were overwhelmingly negative when asked how the City of Joondalup impacts upon people their age. This negative view of local Government is a concern and could be improved with increasing awareness of the functions of Local Government and their impact on young people within the City of Joondalup

Recommended Strategies:

- Presentations in school classes and at assemblies
- Involvement in school Expos
- Annual Youth forums
- Information provision through media outlined in Recommendation 2
- Information provision in the Youth Notebook and other youth magazines/ material produced
- Youth attendance at a Council meetings
- Tours for students to Council Chambers
- Utilisation of surveys to gain feedback from the 18-25 age group
- Promotion of COJ activities through various online media including Myspace and Facebook.

Recommendation 2:

Utilise technology to develop and maintain contemporary, youth appealing communications with young people

Rationale (12 – 17 years): Young people at the Youth Forum indicated that they would be receptive to engaging in online communication including youth websites, online forums and 'Myspace' sites. They also indicated that further use of interactive and audiovisual devices would help improve the forum.

Using technology when communicating with young people will help the City communicate in a way youth will be interested and respond to, and in turn build interest levels and involvement in the City's processes.

Furthermore, given the increase in Internet use amongst young people and schools, communicating through the Internet would prove an effective means of reaching young people on a large scale.

Examples of effective Local Government youth websites include:

<http://www.generate.qld.gov.au/> and <http://www.visible-ink.org/>

Rationale (18 – 25 years): Over one third of the respondents answered they would rather communicate with the City of Joondalup via email. This method was also the preferred method for young people to communicate with the City. An online communication strategy will help facilitate communication with this age group.

Recommended Strategies:

- Develop a modern, non corporate style youth website that is updated regularly
- Provide online forums for young people to comment on issues
- Set up a Youth Services Myspace to promote services undertaken by the City and to develop an online network of young people
- Set up a youth friendly Mayor's Myspace
- Set up a designated youth email for all incoming queries e.g. Youth@joondalup.wa.gov.au
- Advertise youth events and activities through You Tube and other current popular websites

- Develop a youth register and distribute information through the network via SMS and email
- Deliver information to young people using interactive audio visual medium\

Recommendation 3:

Further develop Local Government representation and involvement in secondary schools

Rationale (12 – 17 years): The outcomes of the forum indicate young people consider that communication through schools would be an effective means of reaching young people.

Representation in schools will assist in promoting youth interest in Local Government, and as one young person attending the forum indicated, help promote Local Government as a career choice for the future. In addition, schools are an effective means of communicating to youth on a large scale to a captive audience.

Rationale (18 – 25 years): Not relevant to this age group

Recommended Strategies:

- Develop relationships with School Chaplains
- Attend and deliver talks at school assemblies
- Deliver talks in school classes
- Invite students to attend a council meeting in Local Government week
- Work collaboratively with the City's School Liaison Officer
- Hold annual Youth Forums involving school students
- Establish targeted contacts within schools to work with. E.g. The Scene: English Classes for articles, Battle of the Bands: Art class for poster competitions
- Attend the yearly regional Principals and pastoral care meetings
- Engage with school Principals by inviting them to the City of Joondalup every six months
- Involve the Mayor in leadership talks in schools
- Attend Interagency Truancy group meetings and maintain links with other school related groups

Recommendation 4:

Increase the level of information regarding policy reforms and legislation relevant to young people; provide a forum for comment on these matters; and advocate on behalf of young people for improvement and/ or change.

Rationale (12 – 17 years): There were many subjects raised at the Youth Forum that were outside the realm of Local Government function. Examples include topics relating to education, transport and the minimum wage. The minimum wage, and personalising and customising educational choices were the top two nominated subjects that young people most wanted to have a say in.

Keeping young people informed of these and other topics that affect them and providing the forum for young people to have a voice and opinion will bring many advantages to

youth and to the City. It will raise awareness of issues that affect young people and provide a channel of communication from local level, through to state and federal government for youth to be able to voice their opinion. The City of Joondalup will be able to better advocate on behalf of young people to state government and peak organisations when they are more informed and there is an established channel of communication.

Rationale (18 – 25 years): This was not seen as much of an issue for this age group, which indicated a higher awareness of the role of local government and what the City of Joondalup does in the community.

Recommended Strategies:

- Constantly monitor youth related matters in the external environment
- Inform young people of current issues in a youth friendly manner as outlined in Recommendation 2
- Provide ability for comment on matters through email and online forums
- Communicate youth feedback to involved parties
- Maintain active working relationship with the Office for Youth and the Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia

Recommendation 5:

Ensure all community consultation undertaken by the City is available for comment by young people.

Rationale (12 – 17 years): Outcomes from the forum indicate that young people want to be involved in Local Government processes and decisions. Their interests move beyond events, and youth activities to include environmental, planning and infrastructure, and budget issues. Young people at the forum indicated that given the opportunity, they would have a say through a range of communication media for example Internet forums, Website, forums, and questionnaires.

Rationale (18 – 25 years): 75% surveyed indicated that they would want to communicate with the City of Joondalup regarding local government issues. Top 3 ranked subjects include: provision of recreation facilities, community services and cultural services.

Recommended Strategies:

- Develop guidelines for City of Joondalup Business units to include young people in consultation
- Internal advocacy for the inclusion of young people in consultation and decision making processes
- Develop or insert youth inclusion strategies into policies relating to consultation
- Ensure internal planning is undertaken with young people in mind

Recommendations 6:

Advocate for young people to be invited to participate in external community organisations' committees and working groups

Rationale (12 – 17 years): In addition to recommendation 5, the City should also advocate on behalf of young people to be included in community organisations' committees and working groups external to the City's functions.

Rationale (18 – 25 years): The same applies for the 18-25 group as indicated in the 12-17 age group.

Recommended Strategies:

- Make connection with youth related working groups
- Advocate youth participation and assist in gaining youth participation in these working groups

Recommendation 7:

To continue to deliver services that allow young people to engage in activities and programs

Rationale (12 – 17 years): Young people attending the forum indicated that community activities and events are the most important factor in what defines an 'ideal suburb'. Continuing to deliver programs implemented by the City and increasing the ability for these services to meet demand will increase the young persons' sense of belonging and participation in their community.

Rationale (18 – 25 years): Responses to the question "what do you think local government (City of Joondalup) does?", organizing events was one of the lowest responses. Compared with 12-17 age group response who ranked organise events number 1. The highest ranked areas for the 18-25 age group was in the area of community wellbeing, parks and environment and maintaining suburbs. Given the low acknowledgement of events for this age group, this indicates a significant gap in awareness of targeted events and programs available for this age group.

Recommended Strategies:

- Address current needs of young people
- Address inability to promote services due to excess demand for some programs.
- Develop pre-existing youth projects and programs to meet current needs.

Recommendation 8:

Develop and implement a specific communication strategy for 18 – 25 year olds that will effectively reach this target group

Rationale (12 – 17 years): Not applicable to this age group.

Rationale (18 – 25 years): The liaison process with 18 – 25 year olds proved difficult in administering the youth surveys. A central database of email addresses from all sources within the City would assist in reaching this group. Email was the highest recorded method of preferred communication indicated by this group.

Recommended Strategies:

- Collate all City databases from various Joondalup sources (eg Library, Craigie Leisure Centre).
- Develop a communication strategy using the combined database as the source of contact for young people within the City of Joondalup.
- Investigate options for technology access including facebook.
- Consider variation of language for communication strategies with this age group compared to that for the 12-17 age group.