

A stylized graphic featuring a dark teal background. At the top, there are overlapping, semi-transparent clouds in shades of orange, pink, and white. Below the clouds, two thick, curved lines—one light blue and one light red—descend from the cloud area and curve to the left and right respectively. The text 'Fraser Coast Youth Strategy 2015-2019' is written in white, with the years '2015-2019' in a larger, bolder font. A thin red horizontal line is positioned below the text.

# Fraser Coast Youth Strategy **2015-2019**

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# Mayoral MESSAGE

I am proud to present The Fraser Coast Youth Strategy 2015-2019 which provides a framework for improving wellbeing outcomes for young people of the Fraser Coast.

This is our first Youth Strategy for the Fraser Coast and it is important to acknowledge the valuable contributions that young people make to our region and community life.

Young people are an integral part of our community. They make up approximately 17% of the Fraser Coast population. They add to the vibrancy and spirit of our community and are important to shaping our future as a region. At the same time they have diverse needs.

Council is committed to supporting, advocating and promoting our young people.

This strategy has been developed through consultation with youth, community groups and educators. It brings together those things that we are already doing to engage youth as well as what we will do to make the Fraser Coast an even better place for young people.

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to the development of this strategy including:

- Youth Advisory Council (YAC) members;
- Local schools;
- Youth Sector Network; and
- All the young people, community members, education providers and service providers who participated in the consultation.

**Gerard O'Connell**  
**Mayor**

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# Why a YOUTH Strategy?



We define 'Youth' or 'Young People' as an individual person or a group of people (male and/or female) between the ages of 12 and 25.

Youth make up a significant proportion of our community. It is important to recognise the specific needs and issues of young people in our community.

We also need to recognise the unique benefits and challenges of being a young person in a regional community.

**“We want to ensure the region’s youth are supported and can contribute to the future of the Fraser Coast.”**

The Fraser Coast community will benefit from having a strategic direction that is underpinned by the passion and creativity of youth. In the ageing population of the Fraser Coast region, there is significant need for young people to develop skills necessary to become leaders for the region in the future.

Supportive relationships with young people are required for young people to gain insight, ideas and assistance in the shaping of the region.

This strategy provides a framework for:

- Empowering young people to participate in community life, through Council consultation to build a healthier, safer and more productive Fraser Coast;
- Influencing youth development on the Fraser Coast; and
- Assisting young people to develop necessary skills for a productive adult life.

It provides a focus for Council, young people, community organisations and the wider community.

# Aims of the STRATEGY

- **Involve** young people in identifying their needs and desired community outcomes;
- **Provide** mechanisms for engaging with youth;
- **Engage** community members, organisations and youth in a shared vision for the future of the Fraser Coast community; and
- **Promote** and strengthen partnerships between Council, community organisations, young people and the wider community.



# Where does the STRATEGY fit in?

Council's policies and plans provide a foundation for the **Fraser Coast Youth Strategy 2015-2019**.

The values of the Fraser Coast Regional Council are outlined in our *Community Engagement Policy*, *Inclusive Communities Policy* and *Community Plan*.

Council's commitment to community development is to “**encourage and promote healthy lifestyle choices for the wellbeing of the community and foster connections and networks between people, communities, facilities and services.**”



These documents build the framework for the formulation of the **Fraser Coast Youth Strategy 2015-2019**.

The objective of the *Community Engagement Policy* is to reflect Council's commitment in providing direction for community engagement activities.

The methodology is founded on the philosophy that Council is committed to engaging with the community in order to make decisions that best meet community needs.

The Council's *Inclusive Communities Policy* philosophy is based on the commitment to social justice principals of fairness, equity and participation.

It acknowledges that community wellbeing is intrinsically linked to community participation which builds a sense of belonging and celebrates diversity.

The *Community Plan* outlines how the community and Council will work together to create a future that meets the aspirations of residents.



# Role of Council within YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Council's role is focused around capacity building of the community sector by developing supportive community networks.

Council is in a good position to identify the needs of young people in the region as it has local knowledge of the community, has influence over design, development and the future of existing facilities, services and resources.

Through collaboration with all levels of government, non-government agencies, the community and young people services, facilities and programs can be delivered to the community which enhances the wellbeing of young people in the region.

**“Being recognised by  
Fraser Coast Regional Council  
has really made his (and my) day  
and made him  
even more determined”**

Mother of young person who received a Youth Mayoral Congratulatory Letter



did you know?

The Mayor has sent over

**150**

letters of congratulations to young  
people since  
November 2013 for their  
personal achievements.

# Relevant SERVICES

The following table provides an overview of the Council provided services and opportunities, aimed at enhancing lives of young people in the community.

Who	Resources
Youth and Community Development Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth Advisory Council (YAC)</li> <li>• Annual Youth Leadership Forum</li> <li>• Youth Mayoral Congratulatory Letter</li> <li>• Promotion and support for community based events and programs</li> <li>• Advocacy and networking with youth agencies, community organisations and various government departments</li> </ul>
Sport and Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various halls and venues</li> <li>• Botanical Gardens</li> <li>• Hervey Bay Aquatic Centre</li> <li>• Maryborough Aquatic Centre</li> <li>• Community gardens</li> </ul>
Arts and Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Museums and historical sites</li> <li>• Brolga Theatre and Convention Centre</li> <li>• Burrum Heads Library, Hervey Bay Library, Howard Library, John Anderson Library, Maryborough Toy and Special Needs Library and Tom Gee Memorial Library and Community Centre</li> <li>• Fraser Coast Cultural Centre</li> <li>• Community Environment Program</li> <li>• Hervey Bay Gallery</li> <li>• Gatakers Artspace, Custom House and Bond Store Museum</li> </ul>
Support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immunisations</li> <li>• Safety Networks in Maryborough and Hervey Bay</li> <li>• Little Lime Book publication</li> </ul>
Funding and grants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth and Community Development Grants</li> <li>• Financial Assistance to Sportspeople's Grants Scheme</li> <li>• Regional Arts Development Fund</li> </ul>



# How does Council engage with YOUNG PEOPLE?



focus  
groups



surveys



school  
engagement



forums



Youth  
Advisory  
Council

“  
**The Youth  
Leadership Forum  
was well attended  
by a wide range of  
representatives from  
the Fraser Coast  
region...  
What an amazing  
day for  
our young people**”

Headspace Hervey Bay



# How this STRATEGY has been developed

Since November 2013, Council has been consulting with young people, the community, secondary schools, government agencies and youth focused organisations for the purpose of developing Council's future direction for its work with young people.

The main source of consultation took place through a survey. The majority of the surveys were completed online through the Council's website. The consultations have provided invaluable information, feedback and ideas that have formed a basis for the development of the Fraser Coast Youth Strategy.

## What young people said

From November 2013 to July 2014, many young people living in the Fraser Coast region completed Council's Youth Survey.

The survey captured young people views of their region and community as it currently is, as well as identified their hopes and aspirations for the future.

Young people who responded to the survey were from suburbs located within Hervey Bay and Maryborough cities as well as Howard, Tiaro and Bauple.

## Who responded?

Just over half of the respondents were female **(50.6%)** and just under half were male **(49.4%)**.

**12.7%** of respondents identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

**12.7%** of respondents identified as having a disability.

## What did the survey ask young people?

The survey consisted of the following open ended questions:

1. What do you like about your suburb/local area?
2. What would you like to see change in your suburb?
3. What are the biggest issues facing young people living in the Fraser Coast region?
4. What would you like the Fraser Coast region to be like in 10 year's time?

# How this STRATEGY has been developed

## What did young people tell us?

- **41.6%** indicated that they liked the natural environment (beach, parkland, nature, habitat) around their suburb;
- **37.7%** expressed boredom and lack of entertainment opportunities;
- **22.3%** stated that they were concerned about the level of crime or did not feel safe in their community;
- **13.6%** expressed negative perceptions (lazy, lack of respect, engage in high risk taking behaviours) of other young people in the community;
- **13.3%** were concerned about drug and alcohol use in the region;
- **10.2%** expressed hope for more job opportunities;
- **4.2%** raised concerns over lack of transportation options, and
- **3.6%** wanted more educational opportunities.

## Youth Advisory Council

Further consultation took place in July 2014 with through the Youth Advisory Council members.

It was identified that 100% of Youth Advisory Council members advised that they would relocate after schooling to obtain higher education or employment opportunities.

All Youth Advisory Council members reported feeling distrust from older members in the community due to their young age.

**An app for smartphones has been developed to give young people on the Fraser Coast access to vital information and contacts during times of need.**  
**To download, head to:**

**[frasercoastyouth.info](http://frasercoastyouth.info)**

# How this STRATEGY has been developed

## What Service Providers said

From January to July 2014, service providers were invited to complete a consultation survey. Respondents were from a number of organisations who work with youth in the areas of mental health and therapeutic assistance, child protection agencies, employment services, church youth groups and services aimed at meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Service providers identified that the positive areas of change in the region included:

- the expansion of the university and education opportunities and further development and expansion of community services available to youth; and
- development of further community services and organisations.

Service providers identified the following negative areas in relation to the region:

- reports of minimal youth specific events;
- lack of employment opportunities and high level of youth unemployment;
- large number of young people are experiencing mental health issues and substance use; and
- lack of participation in educational settings.

A common theme highlighted by the community sector is the need for greater Council leadership, coordination of more events and further funding/grants.

Further consultation took place in July 2014 through participation in the Youth Sector Network. The concerns for young people in the region were summed up into the following five (5) points:

1. Connecting resources and services that the youth sector has and identifying the gaps between services;
2. Need for leadership in the sector and further investment in community sector;
3. Breaking down the transport issues between Hervey Bay, Maryborough and the small communities within the region;
4. The need for a youth space where young people can meet in a safe place, receive information about services and where the sector can connect with young people; and
5. Concentrating on the vulnerable young people in the community.

# How this STRATEGY has been developed

## What Community Members said

From January to July 2014, residents of the Fraser Coast region had the opportunity to complete Council's Community Youth Survey. The survey sought to capture the opinions of community members regarding youth affairs within the region; as well as community expectations, ideas and aspirations leading into the future. Respondents of the survey identified as parents of young people, and members of sporting and community groups.

Respondents commented positively on the natural environment (climate, beach, scenery) and recreational and sporting activities. Areas identified for improvement included entertainment opportunities (53%) and job and work experience opportunities (37%).

## What Educational Providers said

From February to July 2014, representatives from schools were invited to complete the educational provider survey.

The survey provided an outlet to identify changes within the area, issues and improvements that educators would like to see implemented within the area, and this included their desired response from Council. Respondents to the survey were employed within private and state schools throughout the region.

They were concerned about:

- Young people's wellbeing due to low socio-economic status and intergenerational unemployment of families in the region (33%);
- Reports of high level mental health issues and self-harming behaviours in youth (27%); and
- Minimal job opportunities available to students in the region once school is completed (27%).





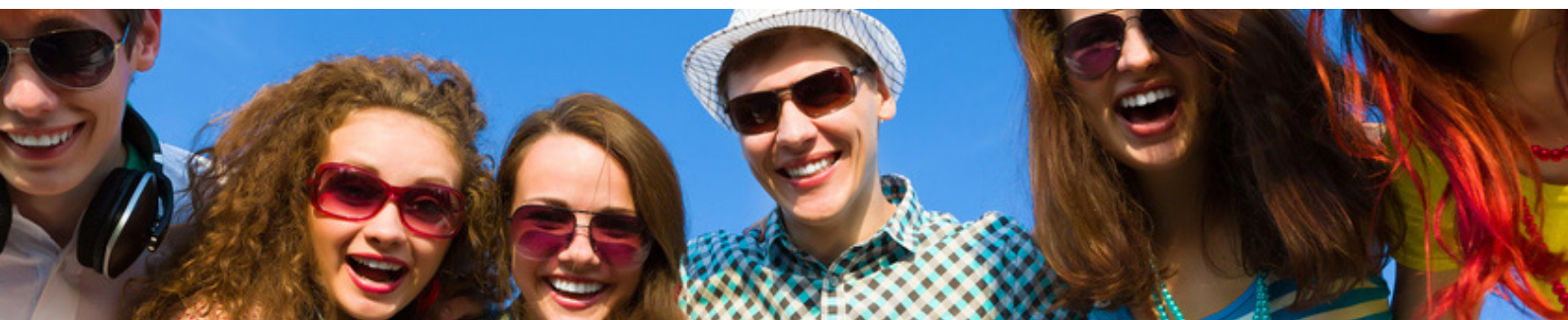
# Goals and ACTIONS

The following tables outline six goals and how we will implement them over the life of this strategy.

## GOAL 1

**Encourage young people to actively participate in community life and contribute to the future direction of the Fraser Coast region**

What we want to achieve	Together we will	Stakeholders
Young people will be involved and consulted in relation to decision making and plans for the future of the region	Provide ongoing opportunities for young people to be consulted planning for the future of the region	Young people Government agencies Council
	Continuation of collaborating with young people in various methods	Council
	Young people from outlying regions will be encouraged to participate in the Council run forums	Young people
	Council will form relationships with other community groups with the aim to work collaboratively	Community members
	Youth Leadership Forum will be held annually	Young people Council Community groups
	Individuals from more isolated communities will be included in the Youth Leadership Forum	Young people Council Community groups
	Involve young people in developing a social calendar for events and activities available to young people	Young people Community groups Community members





# Goals and ACTIONS

## GOAL 2

### Minimise the barriers to youth participation

What we want to achieve	Together we will	Stakeholders
Improve young people's accessibility to services, facilities and programs	Youth Sector Network will continue and be utilised to explore youth development in the region	Government agencies Community organisations Youth Sector Network
	Relationships will continue to be built between young people, community members and agencies to assist in bridging gaps between services while enhancing opportunities for social connection and inclusion	Young people Community members NGO's
	The possibility of improved public transportation throughout the region will be explored	All levels of government
	Young people will be encouraged to participate in and/or perform at community events	Young people Community groups
	Youth culture will be celebrated through ongoing community activities	Community groups Young people
	Youth week activities will be encouraged and supported	Community organisations Council Youth people
	Continue to provide services and activities available at libraries and galleries for young people	Young people
	Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people will be consulted in relation to the development and implementation of a Reconciliation Action Plan	Council Young people Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community members

# Goals and ACTIONS

## GOAL 3

Create a region that is youth friendly

What we want to achieve	Together we will	Stakeholders
Promote a positive perception of youth and embrace young people as vital members of the community	Celebrate the positive achievements of youth their through the Youth Mayoral Congratulatory Letter	Young people
	Support various initiatives that promote the positive image of young people in the community	Young people
	Provide opportunities for young people to have a positive and sustainable future by having opportunities to learn and work in the region and are enriched by maintaining family connections, engaging in community programs and activities	Young people DETE Community groups/ agencies Council
	Work with young people to develop and implement a campaign to encourage community members to adopt a more youth friendly attitude	Youth Sector Network Community members Young people
	Develop a pilot Youth Protocol between local business, young people and the community in Maryborough with the view to duplicate the protocol in Hervey Bay.	Community members Local business Young people

did you know?

Local Coen Ashton (16) is an ambassador for organ donation, after he himself underwent a lung transplant.

He jetskied the Murray River while trying to sign 1000 new names to the Australian Organ and Tissue Donor Register

# Goals and ACTIONS

## GOAL 4

Encourage more employment and work opportunities for young people

What we want to achieve	Together we will	Stakeholders
Encourage more work experience opportunities in the region	Continue the Council's Let's Get Fraser Coast Working program with the aim to increase the number of young people participating in the program	Young people Council
	Encourage young people to gain work experience through volunteering at Council's facilities (Galleries, Brolga Theatre, Libraries, Aquatic Centres)	Young people Council
	Liaise with Registered Training Organisations to investigate options to improve educational opportunities for young people	Young people DETE
	Liaise with Job Services Australia to encourage them to implement and grow new projects aimed at influencing employers to provide more opportunities for young people	Young people Local business

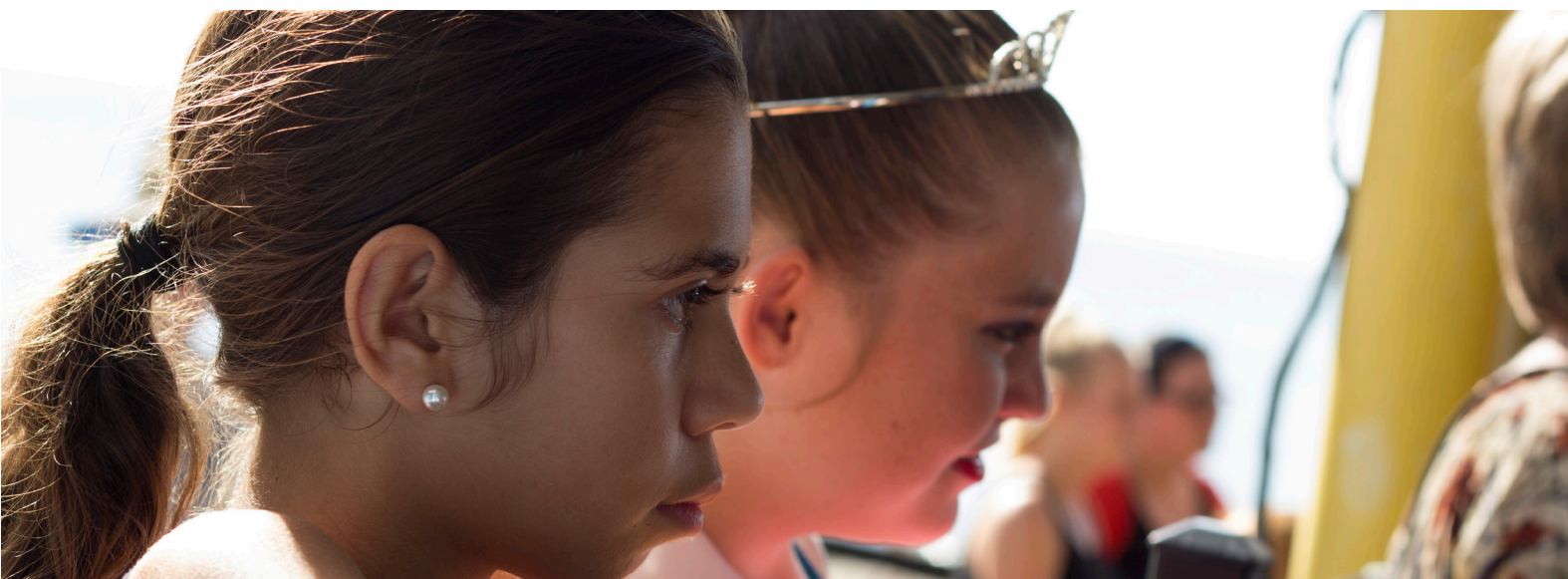


# Goals and ACTIONS

## GOAL 5

Advocate for improved services and facilities for young people

What we want to achieve	Together we will	Stakeholders
Improve services and facilities for young people	Investigate opportunities for the establishment of a youth centre in the region	Young people Department of Communities Community organisations
	Advocate for future state and federal policy, strategy and funding for the Youth Sector	Council Youth Sector Young people
	Identify and improve awareness of the diversity of the roles of local government and non-government organisations within the Youth Sector	Community organisations Council State Government
	Provide and encourage youth specific events in the region	Young people Community groups



# Goals and ACTIONS

## GOAL 6

Increase the safety and wellbeing of young people

What we want to achieve	Together we will	Stakeholders
Provide a safe and healthy community for young people	Review and enhance drug and alcohol education and abuse prevention for young people	Community organisations
	Advocate for increased Police presence and safety awareness for young people	Qld Police Service Council Community organisations
	Advocate for further medical practitioners, particularly specialists (psychiatrists and paediatricians) to the region	State Government Council Community agencies
	Continue to provide support to safety networks in Hervey Bay and Maryborough	Council
	Improve lighting and CCTV in the high profile areas	Council State Government
	Review the Fraser Coast Crime Action Plan 2013	Council

**Kids Helpline is Australia's only free, private and confidential, telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25.**

**Call 1800 55 1800**

# IMPLEMENTATION



The **Fraser Coast Youth Strategy Action Plan 2015-2019** provides a framework to guide Fraser Coast Regional Council and other stakeholders to work with the community and young people by outlining priority areas for youth.

This plan will be implemented over a four (4) year period. It is hoped that through implementation the plan will grow and develop partnerships with stakeholders to build capacity, support and respond to the identified goals and priority areas.

Community members are welcomed to be actively involved in the implementation.



# REFERENCES

## **Related Fraser Coast Regional Council policies:**

- Community Engagement Policy
- Inclusive Community Policy

## **Related Fraser Coast Regional Council Planning documents:**

- Corporate Plan 2014-2018
- Fraser Coast Community Plan
- Youth Safety 2010
- Fraser Coast Planning Scheme 2014
- Fraser Coast Crime Action Plan 2013
- Fraser Coast Regional Council Economic Development Strategy 2009-2013

