

City of Bunbury Youth Advisory Council and Youth Reference Group Facilitated Workshop Report

What We Did:

On 9 November 2016, Colette McEntee of Maker + Co facilitated a two hour session with YAC and YRG members to establish:

- What are the members of YAC and YRG achieving at the moment?
- What else they would like to be achieving?
- How will we achieve those things?

To arrive at answers to these questions, Colette led the group through a SWOT style process, focusing on YAC and YRG separately, as below:

How does YAC/YRG help youth to have a voice?	What do you love about being involved?
What is hardest about being involved in the group?	What do we need to change?
What are we going to do about it?	

As a follow up, the group were invited to meet with Colette again on 14 December 2016 to revisit the discussion from the previous workshop and confirm the future direction of the group.

What Was Said:

9 November

The SWOT style process above was a useful way to focus discussion. The group were passionate, open and engaged. They were able to think broadly and critically as a pathway to answering the three main questions above.

The group spoke at length about what they are passionate about as young people and as global citizens. Some particular areas of passion included:

- Access to Mental health care for all
- Equality
- Opportunities for self-help and career development
- Empowerment of young people
- Bullying
- Increasing attractions in Bunbury-for people who live here and to encourage others to visit
- Developing life skills that equip young people for the future

The group enjoy meeting new people through YAC and YRG and like to feel they are making a difference and doing something meaningful. They spoke eloquently and clearly about their wish to give young people a voice and practising freedom of speech.

MAKER+CO

The group expressed some frustration at challenges related to

- Being taken seriously
- A real appreciation by older people of what young people can offer
- Formal meetings for YAC which are public and make it hard to be open
- Frequency of meetings
- Low energy for formal meetings and some quieter voices find it hard to speak up
- The groups limited ability to deliver on agreed projects and goals

In discussing how they might address some of their challenges and what changes they could make, the group agreed that they would like to:

- Inform general planning and discussion of issues for Bunbury- not just youth focus
- Create more opportunities for open, informal discussion (unanimous agreement that the workshop format created better discussion than any previous meeting of the group)
- Get better at communicating our achievements

Outcomes:

- **What are the members of YAC and YRG achieving at the moment?**
 - Achievements are limited at the moment
- **What else they would like to be achieving?**
 - More engagement with other young people to attract more members
 - More commitment to projects from existing YAC members
 - More professional training, workshops and development especially related to public speaking
 - Increase focus on what we are achieving and what we COULD achieve by working more effectively
- **How will we achieve those things?**
 - Continue to meet monthly in an informal, workshop style to create open and relaxed discussion about things that are important to the group
 - Commit to and work towards a biannual (every 6 months) presentation to Council about what is being achieved and what is important to young people in the region– invite all Councillors to attend the presentation
 - Have a rotating Chairperson-the agenda and the minutes could be by the chairperson and another nominated member.
 - Support and develop members who would like to increase confidence in the Chairperson role
 - Increase focus on equity and equal responsibilities among the group

- Create opportunities for more senior members to mentor newer or younger members

14 November

The group were provided with the workshop report and asked to consider whether it accurately captured what had been discussed. Those in attendance (6 members) had attended the previous session and were happy that the report was an accurate summary.

However, some members had given further consideration to the future of YAC and felt strongly that perhaps the group was not ready to completely lose the formality that comes with operating as a formal committee of Council.

Over the course of a two-hour discussion, the members gave considerable thought to what is going to make YAC successful in 2017 and beyond. The decision arrived at, ready to be considered at the formal YAC meeting on 14 Dec 2016 is as follows:

- Reduce the number of formal YAC meetings from bi-monthly to quarterly
- Request a briefing session takes place prior to the formal meeting to ensure members fully understand the meeting content and decisions to be made
- Seek training from the CofB in relation to effective management and participation in formal meetings
- Provide new members with a formal induction to help them understand the YAC meeting structure
- Request from the CofB that the YAC are regularly briefed on important, strategic projects so they are able to input effectively
- Request assistance from the CofB in creating opportunities for other people (potential partners and supports) to come and brief YAC members on important things happening in Bunbury. This would be especially welcome in relation to the areas of interest and passion identified above
- Continue to meet monthly as an informal group in between formal meetings
- Chairperson role of informal meetings to rotate each meeting. Chairperson responsible for developing agenda, chairing meeting to ensure all voices are heard, capturing simple bullet point minutes (seek training from CofB as required)
- Hold a development day in January 2017 that sets out YAC's plan for the year, provides some interesting development/training, a briefing on the year ahead from the CofB and culminates in a fun activity for the group