

Hindmarsh Shire Council Youth Strategy

2021-
2025

PREPARED BY

Hindmarsh Shire Council *in collaboration with Youth and Community Partners*



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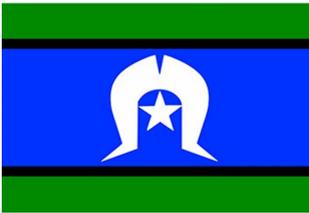


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Acknowledgment of Country.



Hindmarsh Shire Council recognises the five Traditional Owner groups of Wimmera land: the Wotjobaluk, Wergaia, Jupagulk, Jaadwa and Jadawadjali people. We acknowledge the Shire's Indigenous community as the first owners of this country. We recognise the important ongoing role that First Nations people have in our community and pay our respects to their elders and people, past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the power and importance of First Nations People's leadership and culture in our community. We seek to amplify, listen and act on First Nations voices and to always meet each other from a place of openness and mutual respect.

Accessibility.



A version of the document can be made available in large print. If you have any issues accessing the content of this document, please call our helpful customer service team on (03) 5391 4444





Clockwise:
 Hollywood FReeZA Nhill (2019)
 Landcare Tree Planting (2016)
 Halloween FReeZA Jeparit (2019)
 Jeparit Movie Night (2021)
 Youth Council Meeting (2018)
 Jeparit Movie Night (2021)



Message from the Mayor.



Councillor Ron Ismay
Mayor

The 2021-2025 Hindmarsh Shire Council Youth Strategy acknowledges the important role young people play in strengthening and sustaining our local community and economy. It emphasizes the importance of their involvement and contributions in all aspects of community life as leaders, change makers and advocates. This Strategy seeks to develop and affirm existing opportunities for young people, and work innovatively and collaboratively on issues that they continue to face.

Wherever possible, we have used the voices of young people to identify problems and to develop and put in place solutions, which we will continue to do over the coming years. We are excited for the future of our young people, and look forward to using this document to drive and advocate for improvements in the delivery of services, creation of practical and recreational opportunities, and the building of networks and connections for the benefit of all young people.

Council continues to commit to ensuring that Hindmarsh Shire is an exciting, safe and opportunity-filled region where young people can achieve their potential.

Leaders.

Change Makers.

Advocates.

The Team.

Hindmarsh Shire Youth Council 2021

Alexis Farmers
Alissa Trenery
Alexis Bone
Tarah Bond
Jandamurra Lauricella
Charlee Harberger-Smith
Jack Kalms
Tessa Leach
Natalie Jenns
Amaya Woodward
Heidi Smith
Celie Fuller
Leilani Elliot

Schools within Hindmarsh

Nhill College P-12
Saint Patricks Primary School Nhill
Nhill Lutheran School
Saint Peters Lutheran School Dimboola
Dimboola Memorial Secondary College
Rainbow P-12
Jeparit Primary School
Dimboola Primary School

As well as...

Parents
Local Organisations
Community Groups
Town Committees



Photo: Pippa Fisher



Important Documents.

The United Nation Convention on the Rights of a Child

Hindmarsh Shire Council acknowledges the internationally accepted standards of young people's right to participation in decision making processes and support inclusive activities that support their social and relational rights.

Article 12- Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them and to have their opinions taken into account.

Article 15- Children have the right to meet with other children and young people and to join groups and organisations, as long as this does not stop other people from enjoying their rights

Article 31- Children have the right to relax, play and to join in a wide range of leisure activities.

The Victorian State Government Youth Strategy

The Victorian State Government has developed a new state-wide Youth Strategy. Consultation started in October 2020 and the final strategy will be released in mid-to-late 2021. When it is released, Hindmarsh Shire Council will ensure that current procedures and strategies are updated to reflect the overarching goals identified by the State Government.

Hindmarsh Shire Council Child Safe Policy

Hindmarsh Shire Council (HSC) has adopted a Child Safe Policy (2019) which commits us to the safety, wellbeing, participation, empowerment, cultural safety and awareness of children, including those with a disability, Indigenous children and/or communities, and children from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds. This policy applies to all staff and volunteers and requires that they adhere to the Child Safe Code of Conduct. This policy also highlights Council's legal responsibilities including risk management, duty of care and mandatory reporting.

Hindmarsh Shire Council Plan 2021-2025 and Community Vision 2040

In 2021, Hindmarsh Shire Council developed its Council Plan 2021-2025 and Community Vision 2040. Hindmarsh Shire Council have identified Youth as being one of the key areas of focus and many of the strategies and goals outlined in this document will work alongside the broad strategies and goals of the Council Plan.

Inclusivity Checklist

Our inclusivity checklist incorporates our internal Council processes for organising events, as well as State Government gender equity requirements.

It requires consideration of the following:

- Ramp access to venue and safe even flooring for wheelchairs or balance aids
- Closed Captions/Audio Descriptions where possible
- Accessible Seating
- Quiet/Sensory Space at events
- Transportation issues (e.g. are attendees able to safely enter venue from car/street?)
- Additional needs that there may be for people with disabilities, or from different cultural identities, ages, gender identities, sexual orientations or religions
- Whether the event, program or service meets the needs of persons of different genders
- The actions that will be taken to address any inequities in how different genders access this policy, program or service

Who we are.

Hindmarsh Shire Council is located in the Wimmera region in Western Victoria, covering an area of 7,527 km². In 2016* there were 566 young people aged between 15-24 years old residing in Hindmarsh Shire. Many of them are at one of our 7 schools, some are studying tertiary or TAFE qualifications and some are already in the workforce. Our young people live in Rainbow, Jeparit Dimboola, Nhill, Gerang Gerung, Antwerp, Woorak, Lorquon, Netherby, Glenlee and Yanac, and others live on family farms all around the district.

Our young people are represented in Hindmarsh Shire by the Hindmarsh Shire Youth Council. The Youth Council is made up of up to 13 young people, being four representatives from across each of our three wards and the Youth of the Year award recipient. These Youth Councillors then work with Council on youth issues and concerns, as well as plan and put on cultural, social, educational and music events for their peers.

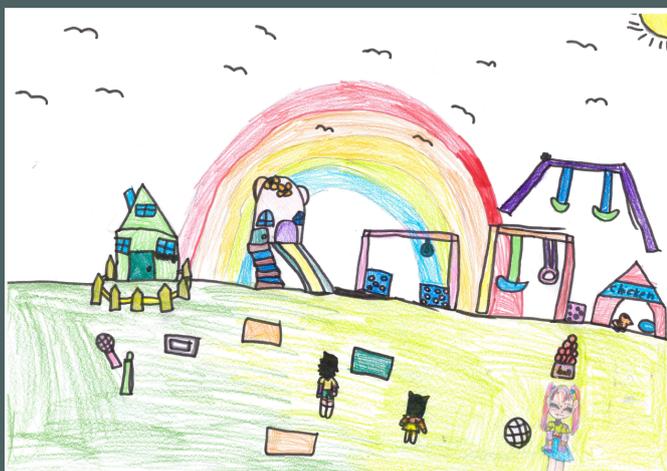
*This data will be updated upon the release of the 2021 CENSUS results.



Our Diversity.

Hindmarsh Shire is proud of the diversity of its community members. We celebrate and aim to support our First Nations, CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse), LGBTQI+ individuals and groups as well as people living with disabilities to live, learn, earn and flourish in our Shire, promoting equal opportunity, participation and representation in all of Council's activities and decision making.

We commit to continuing to find ways to listen to the diverse needs of our community and to build relationships with stakeholder organisations to ensure every young person in our community has every opportunity for success.



How we got here.



01 Youth Strategy 2016-2020

We reviewed our 2016-2020 Youth Strategy. In this strategy young people identified four priority areas:

- education and employment
- wellbeing, health and safety and engagement
- recreation and community and
- opportunity, leadership and connectedness

We reviewed the work we've done in these areas, celebrated areas where we've met our goals and identified projects we will continue to work on.

02 Youth Strategy Questionnaire

In late 2020 we conducted a Youth Strategy questionnaire where we asked young people, aged 12-25, about their experiences living, learning and working in Hindmarsh Shire. We asked them what they like most about living in Hindmarsh, what they think are the most important issues for them in the community and what the barriers are to inclusion and participation. We asked them about what they want to see in Hindmarsh now and in the future. The results are on page 9.

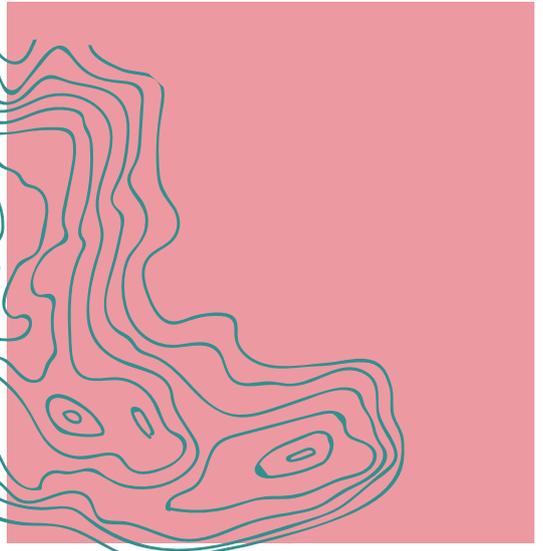
03 Consultation Forums

Council staff met with Youth Council and student leaders from our three secondary schools: Nhill College P-12, Rainbow P-12 and Dimboola Memorial Secondary College, to talk about the key issues identified in the questionnaires. We worked with Youth to co-design strategies to respond to young people's concerns and discussed plans for continued youth consultation and participation. We reviewed data from external consultations with our local young people to ensure our strategy was inclusive, representative and holistic.

04 Ongoing Conversation

We're forming a plan with our Youth Councillors to ensure that our young people continue to be empowered participants in the implementation of the Youth Strategy. We will continue to build communication pathways to ensure we are always open to feedback and new ideas in the coming four years and beyond. We know that the most effective youth strategy is one that is collaborative, inclusive and adaptive to the emerging needs and concerns of our young people.





What our youth said.

Health and Wellbeing

- **41.6%** of youth are concerned about **drugs, alcohol and smoking**
- **Body image, identity and mental health** are in the top 10 most important issues identified by youth
- Young people are concerned about **depression, anxiety and a lack of mental health support**

SOLUTIONS

Young people suggested that more needs to be done to support those with mental health concerns. We need to work with schools to create safe outlets for young people to talk about their experiences, emotions and struggles. Young people want more mentoring and better access to professional support services. We need to work with young people to change the stigma around mental illness. Providing informative and engaging education around drug use and abuse, including alcohol, as well as to find ways to support young people who are directly or indirectly impacted by drug use.

Diversity and Inclusion

- The three most common **barriers** to participation are **location, publicity and peer pressure**
- **7%** of respondents are from **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)** backgrounds
- **11%** are of **Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander** descent

Activities and Events

- **59%** of youth identified **lack of activities** as one of the **biggest issues** in their town
- Youth are **most interested in** workshops, gaming, sports and music events
- Youth **mostly** find out about events from **social media, school newsletters and from friends**

SOLUTIONS

Young people suggested that we provide transport to help get our participating youth to events. They said that we need to utilise social media and find ways to get young people engaging with our platforms so that they hear about things before and when they happen. We need to minimise any costs involved so that young people from low socio-economic backgrounds are not excluded. Continue listening to young people, as they have ideas around what kinds of events they would like to see happen. We need to make sure our events are welcoming and inclusive for those from CALD backgrounds and ensure that they are culturally respectful.

Jobs and Opportunities

- **Only 17%** of respondents said there were 'good' or 'excellent' job opportunities in our Shire
- **48%** said they were **unlikely** to stay in Hindmarsh
- Youth identified **25 different career fields** they would like to work in

SOLUTIONS

Young people want support in achieving their educational and professional goals within Hindmarsh Shire. They suggested we could provide study spaces and free printing in our public libraries for those who study tertiary education remotely. We need to work with schools to make sure school-leavers know their options and can make informed decisions about their futures. Young people said that we need to support those who are moving into the agriculture industry by encouraging networks of young farmers and incorporating agriculture related training opportunities into our youth program.

The Youth Strategy.



THEMES

The broad theme or goal of a number of issues or suggestions that emerged during consultation.

OBJECTIVES

The desired results and impacts of our actions.

ACTIONS

The specific projects, policies and systems we will implement to support the objectives.

COUNCIL'S ROLE

Whether Council will be advocating for, partnering in or delivering the action.

Themes. We will:

1

Ensure that Hindmarsh Shire Council's processes and spaces welcome, involve and empower young people.

2

Build partnerships with community groups and organisations to expand the potential of youth services.

3

Create a community that is future-safe, ensuring young people have opportunities to live, learn, earn and contribute to their community.

4

Understand and address the systemic and structural barriers to inclusion, participation and representation.

5

Facilitate spaces and events that create opportunities for connection, expression and community.

6

Advocate for young people to be able to access the health, wellbeing and support services that they need.

Theme 1

Ensure that Hindmarsh Shire Council's processes and spaces welcome, involve and empower young people.

Objective

1.1 Youth Participation Model used to provide young people with opportunities for consultation, feedback and collaboration.

Actions	Council's Role
1. Continue to provide Council with plans, ideas and outcomes developed by the Hindmarsh Shire Youth Council (HSYC), for example providing minutes of Youth Council meetings to Councillors and contributing to community planning.	Deliver
2. Develop processes for feedback and consultation with young people, such as an online feedback form, that is regularly advertised and adapted.	Deliver
3. Work with HSYC and community networks to inform young people about issues that impact them, how they can have their say and how they can get involved.	Partner
4. Strengthen profile of Youth Councillors in schools and the community to increase communication, leadership and collaborative opportunities.	Deliver

Objective

1.2 Increase youth engagement by ensuring Council communications are innovative, engaging and youth friendly.

1. Council produces communications on platforms young people regularly engage with, using language youth understand and imagery that is reflective of youth culture.	Deliver
2. Council staff will seek feedback from Youth Council regarding creative direction for Youth social media, events marketing, and youth-related content.	Deliver

Theme 2

Build partnerships with community groups and organisations to expand the potential of youth services.

Objective

2.1 Establish and sustain processes for resource sharing, collaboration and supportive relationships with youth-related organisations in the local and wider community.

Actions	Council's Role
1. Create an internal resource containing contacts, services and key methods or means of communicating and collaborating with external networks and organisations.	Deliver
2. Meet regularly with network representatives to share ideas, problem solve shared concerns and to collaborate on youth-related projects.	Partner
3. Seek to remain informed of developmental, welfare, professional, creative and educational opportunities available throughout the region and share these through relevant communication networks.	Deliver
4. Share Council initiated events and opportunities through youth networks to encourage participation from wider community.	Deliver
5. Work with organisations who support our recently migrated families and young people, including those who provide language and culture bridging resources. Find ways to contribute to this process by including culturally relevant activities and training in Council's youth-related programs.	Partner

Objective

2.2 Improve outcomes for youth through diverse and innovative channels, supporting and acknowledging the valuable work and expertise of external youth-related organisations.

1. Advertise internal and external grant and funding opportunities to relevant youth-related organisations.	Deliver
2. Where appropriate, utilise Council's resources and networks to support and amplify the actions of external youth-related organisations.	Deliver

Theme 3

Create a community that is future-safe, ensuring young people have the opportunities and spaces to live, learn, earn and contribute to their community.

Objective	3.1 Support education and employment pathways for young people through working with education and training institutions, local businesses and schools.	
Actions		Council's Role
1. Seek advice from young people, schools and parents regarding education, training, employment and opportunity gaps. Work with education providers, employment agencies and employers to advertise, support and deliver requested education, training and employment opportunities.		Deliver / Partner
Objective	3.2 Support youth retention by adapting Council facilities to support young people who are studying tertiary qualifications online and locally.	
1. Private study spaces installed in Libraries.		Deliver
2. Libraries to offer subsidised/free printing for young people who hold valid student cards.		Deliver
3. Regional University Centres explored, and if not possible then similar options considered, that support higher education in the Hindmarsh Shire.		Partner
Objective	3.3 Develop opportunities for youth to be paid for their contributions- providing opportunities for young people to develop work-related skills.	
1. Explore the potential of a Grants Program which encourages and supports youth innovation, business, creativity and expression.		Deliver
2. Where Youth contribution is requested for the development of resources or plans, explore ways to remunerate or recognise youth for their input.		Deliver

Theme 4

Understand and address the systemic and structural barriers to inclusion, participation and representation.

Objective

4.1 Young people of all gender identities, LGBTQI+ young people, First Nations and CALD young people and young people with disabilities see that they are acknowledged, respected and that their interests, needs and futures are a priority of their local community.

Actions	Council's Role
1. Ensure that talent hired/acquired for events represents all young people, including those with diverse abilities, our First Nations young people, newly arrived residents and other young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and members of the LGBTQI+ community.	Deliver
2. Advocate for diverse youth representatives on Youth Council.	Deliver
3. Seek opportunities to celebrate, support and give platforms to all young people, such as grants and leadership or training opportunities (see 3.3).	Deliver

Objective

4.2 All young people have equitable, free and safe access to youth related events, programs and resources, including those from First Nations and CALD backgrounds, young people with disabilities and young people from the LGBTQI+ community.

1. Inclusivity checklist is completed and adhered to before every event (Page 6).	Deliver
2. Contact information is provided on all marketing, social media posts and consent forms for people to communicate if they have specific needs relating to any event.	Deliver
3. Keep up to date with emerging ideas around inclusivity and accessibility (FReeZA/The Push training events, cultural awareness training etc).	Deliver
4. Zero tolerance for bullying and discrimination at any Council event or on any of Council's social media platforms.	Deliver
5. Advocate for Regional Transport Grants through DFFH (for FreeZA events).	Deliver
6. Bus run to/from all major Council youth events and external youth events where possible; where not possible, consider alternate transport arrangements.	Deliver
7. Support local youth organisations with transporting local young people to events in other areas.	Deliver

Objective

4.3 Support connection to culture, land and place, providing opportunities for young people to learn the First Nations history and cultural significance of our landscape and people.

1. Provide young people opportunities for First Nations cultural education and cultural safety training which support reconciliation, mutual respect and understanding and acknowledgment of Australia's First Nations history.	Deliver
2. Ensure events are culturally respectful and appropriate, and that an acknowledgement of Country is performed when appropriate.	Deliver
3. Share and highlight resources that acknowledge our First Nations history and celebrate First Nations contributions to our local and national community.	Deliver

Theme 5

Facilitate spaces and events that create opportunities for connection, expression and community.

Objective 5.1 Continue to deliver the FReeZA program, using this funding to deliver youth designed and centered training, events, resources and public projects.

Actions	Council's Role
1. The Youth Officer and Youth Council work together to meet FreeZA event and attendance requirements by developing and implementing ideas for live music social events, other youth-related events and trainings, and by acquiring resources and technology that supports the interests and needs of young people.	Deliver
2. Using feedback and communication channels, Council staff and Youth Council ensure that training and events are reflective of the needs and interests of young people in the area.	Deliver
3. Youth Council liaise with other young people, community organisations, local artists, business owners, the Community Development team and Council to identify locations, source materials, contribute to/ deliver community projects.	Partner

Objective 5.2 Branding, marketing and event design is informed, improved and delivered by young people, increasing opportunities for young people to express themselves creatively and gain experience in design and marketing processes.

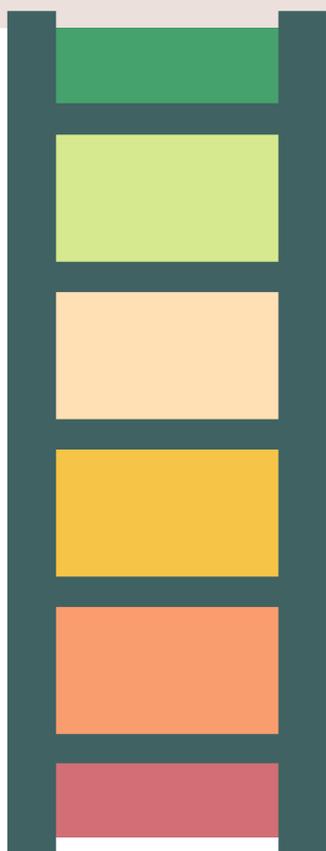
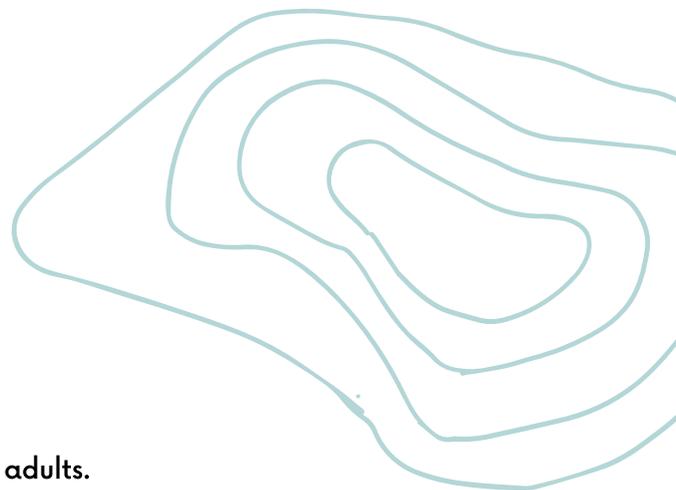
1. Work with Youth Council to design consistent branding and aesthetic around events.	Deliver
2. Work with Youth Council to improve reputation of events through marketing, social media and social connections.	Deliver

Objective 5.3 Create public Youth Spaces in all towns so that young people have a safe and accessible space to spend time together and hold events, improving social connection and access to resources and recreational activities.

1. Work with Youth Council to develop multi-purpose youth spaces in our public libraries; inclusive of entertainment facilities, practical resources and planned activities and events.	Deliver
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Glossary.

The Youth Participation Model.



Youth-initiated, shared decision with adults.

Young people design and manage activities, and share their ideas and decisions with adults.

Youth-initiated and directed.

Activities are youth-led with only a small amount of input from adults.

Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people.

Adults run the activities but share some of the decisions with young people.

Youth consulted and informed.

Adults run the activities with consultation from young people. Adults inform young people how they will be involved and what the outcomes will be.

Youth informed and assigned.

Adults design and manage the activities, and young people know the purpose and have a role.

Non-participation

UNHCR, 1979

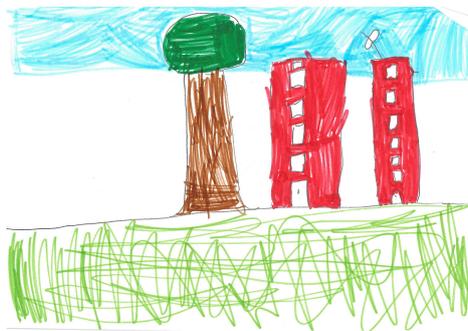
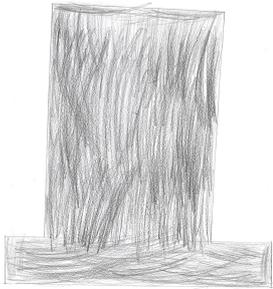
Terms.

Empowerment - young people have greater control of their lives through participation, feedback and generating ideas.

Purposeful Engagement - young people are taking on valued roles, addressing issues that are relevant to them, and influencing real outcomes.

Inclusiveness - all young people are able to participate regardless of abilities, background, culture, where they live, their gender or their sexuality.

Systemic and Structural Barriers to Inclusion - this means things like attitudes, physical barriers (like ramps for people who use wheelchairs), language and the way we communicate, where funding goes and how decisions are made - things that affect whether people are included or excluded from activities and opportunities.



Entries to the Hindmarsh Shire Youth Strategy Creative Competition (2021)



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