



Yarra Youth Strategy 2009-2013

Working in partnership to build a strong local youth service system that values and supports young people in the City of Yarra.

DRAFT for Consultation



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Welcome

Welcome to the City of Yarra. Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri as the first owners of this country. Today they are still the custodians of the cultural heritage of this land. Further to this, Council acknowledges that there are other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have lived, worked and contributed to the cultural heritage of Yarra.

Mayors Foreword

1. Introduction

The City of Yarra is home to almost 14,000 young people aged between 10 and 25 years. These numbers swell each day as young people come to Yarra to work, attend school and university or take advantage of the entertainment opportunities.

The Yarra Youth Strategy is designed to map out a path for the future that will help to link young people with the services they need. It will also provide a basis for continually evaluating and redesigning services to ensure they meet the needs of young people in Yarra over time.

The City of Yarra has a wide range of services for young people. Service mapping undertaken in early 2009 showed over 100 services for young people. These include services such as health and wellbeing, arts, recreation and education.

The range and volume of services for young people in Yarra is a real strength for young people and their families. However this array of services can also lead to confusion for people trying to access the particular services they need. Without strong communication mechanisms it can also lead to duplication of services and competition for scarce funds.

2. Vision

All young people in the City of Yarra will be able to easily access a broad range of coordinated services to support their health, wellbeing and development. These services will be delivered in partnership with service partners and designed with the help of young people.

3. Strategic Approach – How we will work

The strategy is underpinned by a community development framework, with a focus on developing local area partnerships. This will support a coordinated youth service system throughout the City of Yarra.

The strategy is guided by a specific set of principles, which include:

Youth participation	Young people participating in active decision making processes and issues that affect them.
Developmentally focused	Programs will be age appropriate, focussing on transitional life stages impacting young people in Yarra.
Evidence informed	All programs, policies and services will follow a consistent planning process and be informed by

	evidence and include clear measures and outcomes.
Targeted support	Programs are provided in ways that recognise individual difference and will specifically focus on the needs of young people with a particular emphasis on supporting vulnerable young people.
Environment sustainability	Recognition of the need to ensure all projects and programs are environmentally responsible with a minimum impact on the planet.

Working in Partnership

Working in partnership provides an opportunity to deliver quality programs that support young people. It ensures a better use of resources and stronger, better coordinated services. Yarra City Council will work with existing partnerships and develop new ones with local service providers. To facilitate this Council's will do the following:

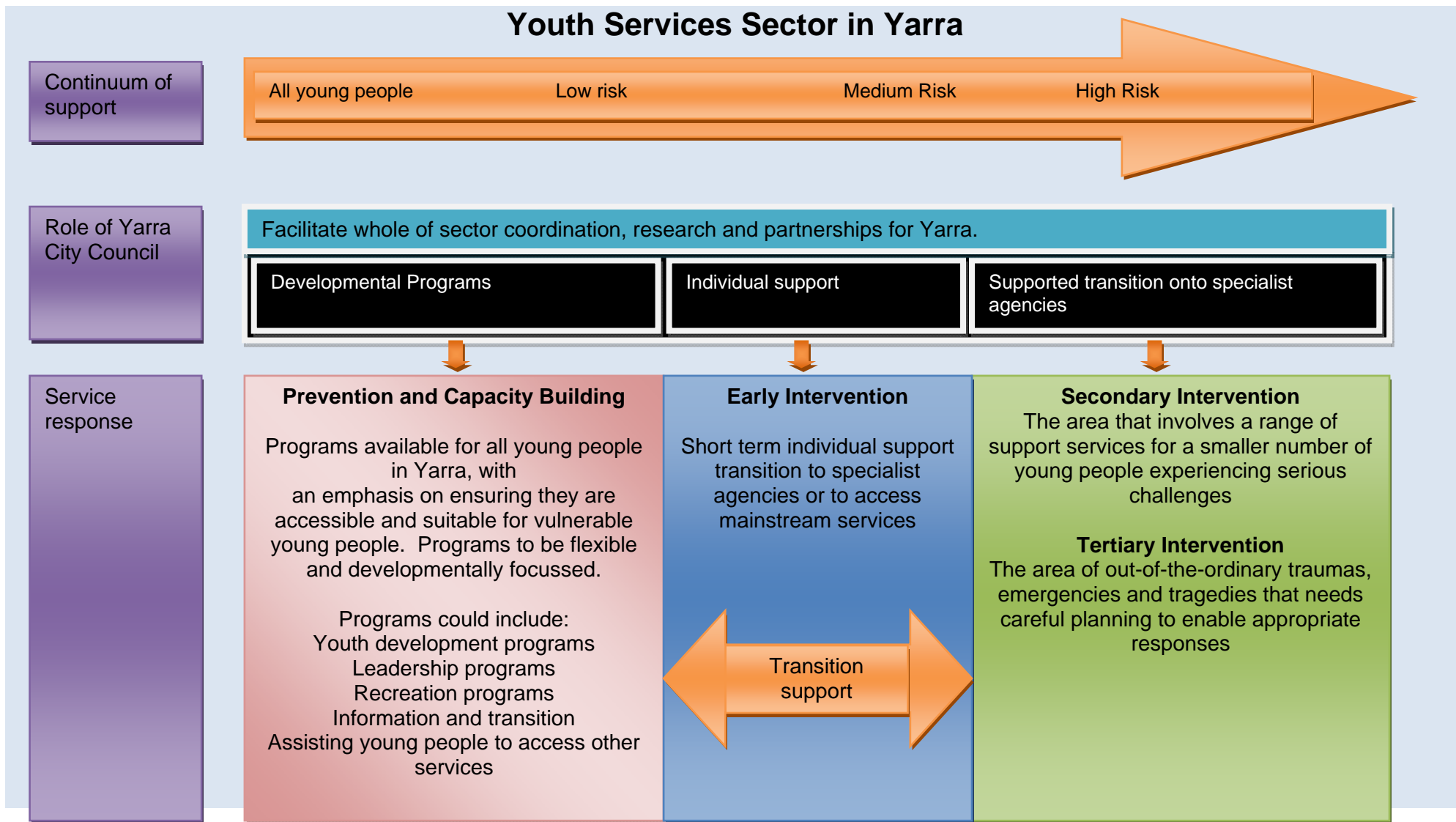
- Provide a planning framework for the Yarra youth services sector.
- Continue to support and develop existing partnerships with other agencies.
- Work closely with colleague organisations to identify opportunities for collaborative responses to identified youth issues.
- Develop working groups to respond to emerging issues.
- Work collaboratively with internal Council departments in the development, planning and delivery for services for young people.
- Work with local businesses to develop opportunities and pathways for young people.
- Work with young people in the design and deliver youth programs.

4. Service Profile – What we will do

Yarra City Council will work with other agencies to facilitate coordinated and comprehensive services for young people in Yarra. This will be achieved through direct service delivery and the provision of information and transitional support services to young people. Services will be developed to be responsive to the needs and expectations of our community.

The Youth Services model represented below indicates the efforts Council will undertake at each level of the local youth service system, in providing a comprehensive response to the needs and aspirations of young people in the City of Yarra.

Youth Services Sector in Yarra



Service Profile - What we will do

Sector Planning and Coordination

Yarra City Council is in a unique position to facilitate youth sector planning and coordination within the City of Yarra. This will be achieved through building local community capacity to effectively plan and respond to youth sector issues. Tasks to be undertaken at this sector service level include developing service strategies to meet needs, reviewing available community resources and mobilising as necessary, tracking trends and changes to the sector, monitoring issues and needs of community, minimising duplication of services and assisting partner agencies in seeking funding for youth services. This systematic approach will also ensure that the local youth sector is working toward shared goals to meet the needs of young people.

To achieve strong sector planning and coordination, young people will be supported to engage in planning and coordination efforts, via consultation and civic participation. A range of techniques to engage the Yarra community include:

- A **Youth Sector Leadership Reference Group** will provide an opportunity for planners, senior managers and service delivery staff, local businesses and young people to meet quarterly to discuss current and emerging issues and trends and coordinate suitable responses.
- A **Young People's Reference Group** will provide an opportunity for young people to provide an input into Council plans and policies.
- The **Yarra Young People's Forum** will provide an opportunity for Yarra City Council to engage with young people on an annual basis about a range of issues.

Partnerships and Service Development

The City of Yarra is home to a wide range of services for young people. Council will work with partner agencies to advocate on youth issues. This will assist in providing coordinated responses to issues and opportunities at the local level. A range of techniques to engage and strengthen partnerships and local area responses to youth issues include:

- The **Yarra Youth Provider's Network** gives an opportunity for people working in the youth sector to meet on a regular basis to discuss current issues and trends.
- **Issue Based Working Groups** to collaboratively respond to the emerging issues and needs of vulnerable young people as identified through sector leadership group, youth provider's network or local data.
- **Targeted engagement with young people** on issues that are of particular interest to them.

Local youth plans will be established to strengthen connections between youth services, identify priorities and outcomes and assist in establishing a locally based, navigable and integrated service system. Cooperation and collaboration between Council, community service organisations and young people will ensure an integrated youth service system promoting seamless transitions and pathways for all young people, parents, service providers and the broader community within the City of Yarra.

4.3 Direct Service Delivery

Yarra City Council plays a strong role in providing services and programs for young people in Yarra. These programs are designed to complement services provided by Yarra sector partner agencies. They will continue to be flexible and able to adapt to emerging issues and needs.

Council's role in service delivery will include:

Youth Development Programs

- Youth Leadership
- Self Development, including peer based and youth led programs
- Transitional Programs – primary to secondary, secondary to employment/further study
- Entrepreneurship and Mentoring programs
- Napier Studios Art Program
- Other programs as identified through partnerships, emerging needs and evidence

Recreation Programs

- Holiday programs
- Weekend recreation programs

Targeted Programs

- Youth Worker funded through North Richmond Community Health to provide a range of services and individual support/case management on the Richmond Housing Estate.
- Youth Worker funded through North Yarra Community Health Centre to provide a range of services and individual support/case management on the Collingwood Housing Estate.
- An African Youth Worker funded by the Neighbourhood Justice Centre to provide case work and community development, specific to the needs of local African young people.
- Generalist Youth Worker position to provide information, short term individual support for young people referred from partnership agencies and generalist programs.

Individual Support and Referral Pathways

A regularly updated website and an information hub will provide other opportunities for young people to access the support which they need. This systematic approach will facilitate a greater understanding and promotion about services, programs and activities including clear referral /transition pathways for young people to access services in Yarra.

Further to providing direct services to young people, Council will provide short term individual support to vulnerable young people who may require assistance to access other services. An information and transitional support service will be resourced by an experienced team of youth development officers who will provide information and transitional support to young people through engagement, program attendance and support programs.

5. Evidence

The Yarra Youth Strategy has been developed through utilising an evidence based approach. That is, it has looked at government policy directions, current research, what the community has told us and a demographic profile of Yarra to draw its conclusions.

Emerging research on adolescent brain development shows that this period is as significant as development in the early years (0 to 6 years). Furthermore there is a link between adolescent development and brain development and the existence of risk factors and protective factors.

Risk and protective factors are clustered in four key areas including community, family, school and peer-individual. Without adequate prevention and early intervention services available, these risk taking behaviours may become more serious.

This evidence indicates the importance of targeted, age appropriate services and programs. To develop an understanding of whether such programs were available in Yarra service mapping was undertaken leading to a gap analysis.

This proved to be a complex task given the large number of services available. What became clear from this was the lack of coordination and clear pathways for young people to access services in Yarra. Given that Yarra is a transient community with almost half of Yarra's resident moving every 5 years this complex and impenetrable service system provides a real obstacle for young people accessing services.

A full discussion on evidence can be found in the Yarra Youth Strategy Discussion Paper January 2009.

6. Outcomes – what we achieve – and how we measure it

It is essential to have a clear understanding of the outcomes that are expected from the implementation of this strategy. The key outcomes identified are:

- Clear pathways for young people to achieve optimal health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Strong partnerships with our community stakeholders to effectively mobilise community resources to address emerging issues.
- Services that positively influence risk and resilience factors in young people, and enhance community protective factors.
- Meaningful opportunities for young people to contribute and participate in a range of self development activities.
- A baseline of evidence to inform future service delivery and enhancement.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Yarra Youth Services and Action Plan 2009 – 2013 relies on an evidence based approach to the development of services, programs and partnerships. It is therefore essential that the implementation of the plan be monitored and reviewed regularly. The results from this monitoring and review will ensure that programs are producing the required outcomes. The table below shows the annual monitoring that will be undertaken.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS	MONITORING / EVALUATION
<p>Sector Planning and Coordination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mapping of emerging issues and services coverage and overlaps. ▪ Annual surveying of young people in the City of Yarra to ascertain levels of health and wellbeing/risk and resilience factors. ▪ Levels of youth participation in service coordination and development.
<p>Partnerships and Service Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Numbers and range of service providers engaged in local area partnerships. ▪ Number of services engaged in facilitated networks. ▪ Success of Yarra service partnerships in advocating and attracting external funding for youth services.
<p>Direct Service Delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Numbers of young people, parents, service providers accessing information, support and referral. ▪ Numbers of young people accessing services. ▪ Success of services in meeting the current issues outlined in the Yarra Youth Services Action Plan 2009 – 2013.