

YOUTH ACTION PLAN

PENRITH



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MAYORAL MESSAGE

I am pleased to present Penrith's Youth Action Plan. The development of this Plan is a positive step towards strengthening Council's support for young people in Penrith and builds on the excellent youth development work that has occurred over the past few years.

The Youth Action Plan is a strategic document which informs the direction and focus of Council's youth initiatives, services and programs over the next five years. It also identifies community groups and other government partners to work together with us delivering the things that matter to young people in Penrith.

Penrith is currently home to more than 34,000 people aged between 12-24 years old. This figure represents just over one-third of our local population and is set to increase by 2036. These figures highlight that young people are a significant and valuable part of our community.

Our youth contribute to our City in many ways as active members of schools, community groups, cultural and creative groups, sporting groups and as volunteers and workers. As they get older, their roles within our City and our community will become even more important.

Young people today are our leaders, changemakers, problem solvers and innovators of tomorrow and they are the key to our City's bright and successful future. It is our responsibility to ensure they have the support, tools, and opportunities they need to realise their full potential.

The Youth Action Plan centres around four key themes which reflect the needs, priorities and ambitions raised by young people and the community in Council's youth survey conducted in 2020.

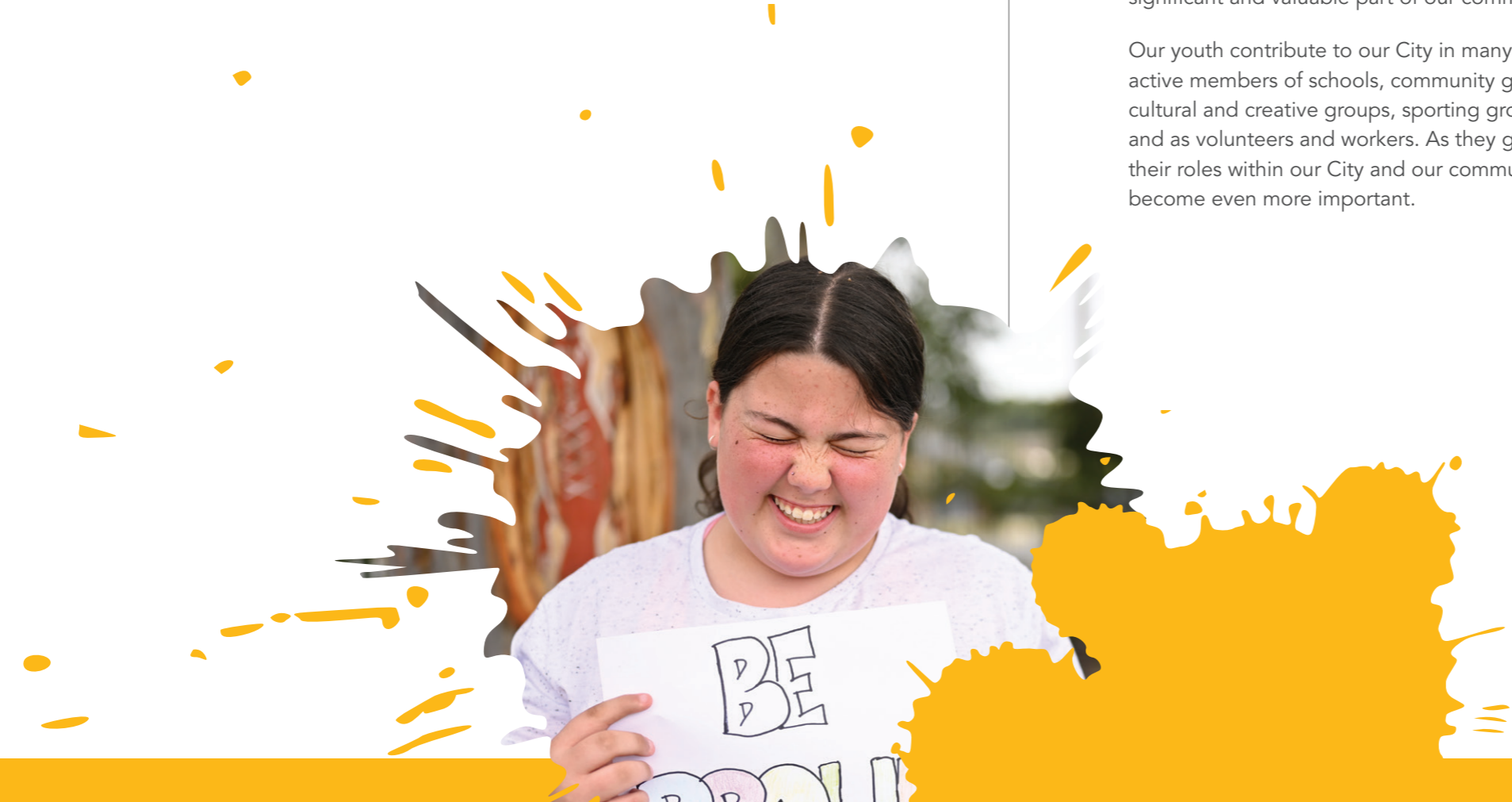
Connection, Wellbeing, Access, and Pathways were all identified as being important in young people's lives and these four themes underpin the actions for Council to work towards achieving the best outcomes for young people.

As well as identifying recommendations, objectives, and actions under each of the themes, the Youth Action Plan outlines timeframes, lead and supporting organisations, how implementation will be measured and the status of each action.

It's a strong plan for action that formalises Council's desire to support young people living in Penrith, and ensures we are well placed to recognise and respond to their changing needs now.

I'd like to thank everyone involved in the development of this Plan, and we look forward to working together with our partners and our community to ensure young people in Penrith become happy, healthy and productive citizens of tomorrow.

CR KAREN MCKEOWN OAM
PENRITH MAYOR



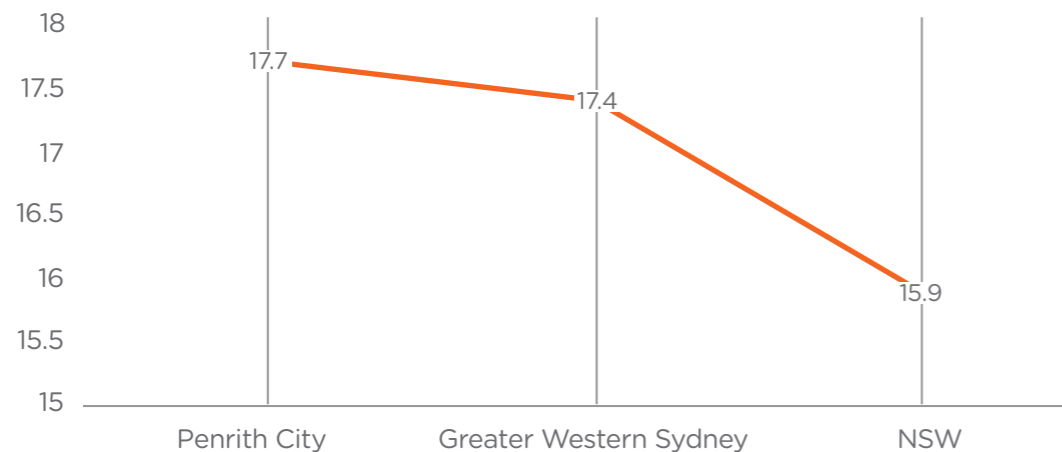
DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

Key facts

Young people are those aged between 12 and 24 years old.

In 2016, there were 34,659 young people living in Penrith City within a total population of 196,066. In 2016, young people made up 17.7% of Penrith's population. This is a higher proportion than in Greater Western Sydney (GWS) (17.4%) and NSW (15.9%).

Young People as a Proportion of Total Population, 2016 ABS Census



In Penrith there are 15,203 people aged 12-17 years and 19,456 people aged 18-24 years.

The population of young people living in Penrith in 2036 is forecast to increase to 44,178 within a total population of 258,195. The proportion of young people will then be 17.1% - only a 0.6% decrease from the proportion in 2016 (17.7%).

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Young People in Penrith City

In 2016, there were 2,152 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. This is an increase of 617 people (348%) since 2011.

Of the total population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Penrith in 2016, 27.8% were young people, representing a significantly younger age profile compared to the overall community.

In 2016, 6.2% of all young people in Penrith were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This is a higher proportion of all young people in both GWS (2.8%) and NSW (4.6%).

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Communities

In 2016, 5,278 young people in Penrith were born overseas. The top ten countries of birth for this age range were New Zealand, Philippines, India, England, Pakistan, Samoa, China, Fiji, Sudan, South Africa.

The top 10 languages other than English spoken by 12-24 year old people in Penrith are Arabic, Samoan, Hindi, Tagalog, Punjabi, Spanish, Urdu, Mandarin, Greek and Croatian.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Headspace National Youth Mental Survey 2020 showed that across Australia rates of psychological distress were high, with 34% of young people reporting high or very high levels of distress, which is similar to the rate reported in 2018 (32%). The same survey showed that in 2020, 12-14 year olds were not managing life stress as well as they were in 2018.

In NSW, the Youth Health Framework 2017-2024 shows that the issues with the highest rates of concern for young people are:

Issue of Personal Concern	Extremely Concerned or Very Concerned (%)
Coping with Stress	44.5%
School or Study Problems	39.9%
Body Image	30.6%
Depression	23.6%
Family Conflict	23.5%
Personal Safety	19.9%
Bullying/Emotional Abuse	16.1%
Discrimination	14.3%
Suicide	13.4%
Drugs	8.9%
Alcohol	6.8%
Gambling	4.4%

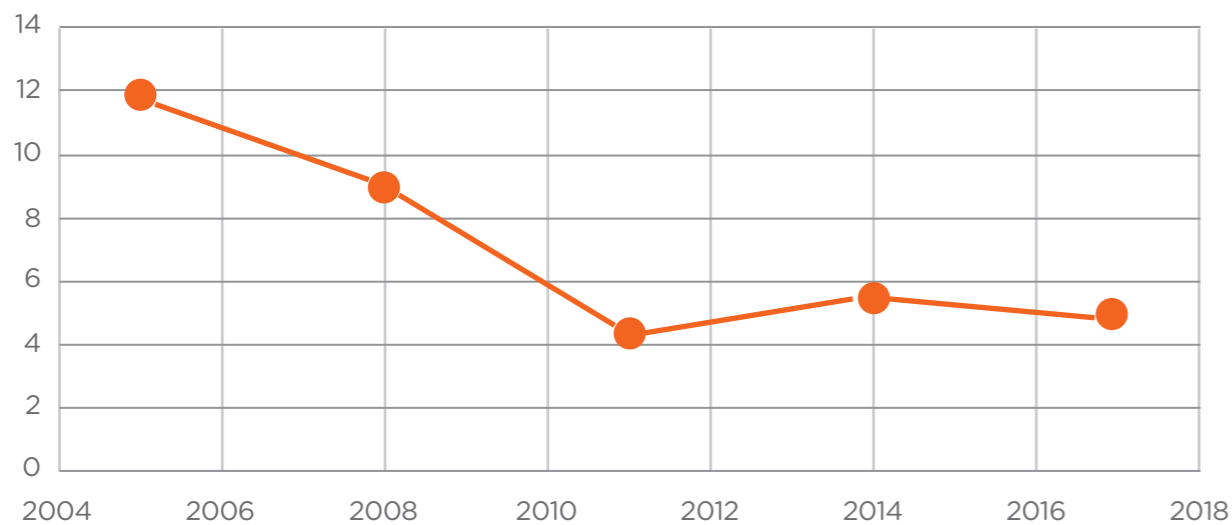


Current smoking in secondary school students aged 12-17 years

Rates of smoking among secondary school students are smaller in Western Sydney and Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health Districts (5.0%) compared to the state-wide average (6.4%). The rate of smoking in this age cohort has also decreased in the recent past.

There is no data for the Penrith or Nepean Blue Mountains region available on e-cigarettes (vaping), but NSW data shows that use has also reduced. In 2014 the NSW School Students Health Behaviours Survey (SAPHaRI) 14.6% of respondents had used e-cigarettes compared to 12.9% in 2017.

Rates of Young People in the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District Who Smoked 2004 - 2018

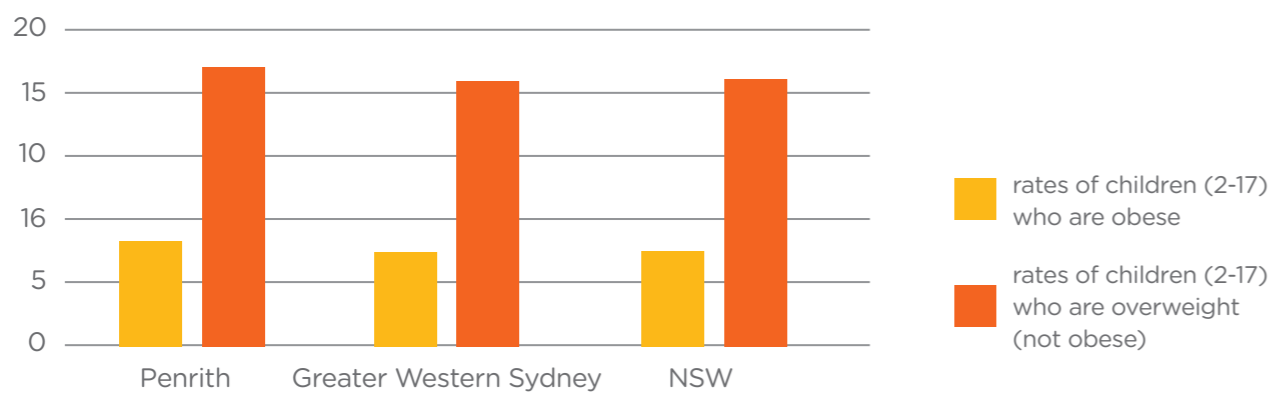


Physical Health and Wellbeing

Overweight and Obesity in children and young people aged 2-17 years

The most recent data on rates of overweight and obesity for children and young people in Penrith was collected by the ABS 2017-18 National Health Survey, reported by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW). That data shows rates of overweight and obesity in Penrith for children and young people was higher than GWS and NSW.

Rates of Children 2-17 who are Overweight or Obese in 2017-18



Engagement with the Workforce and Education

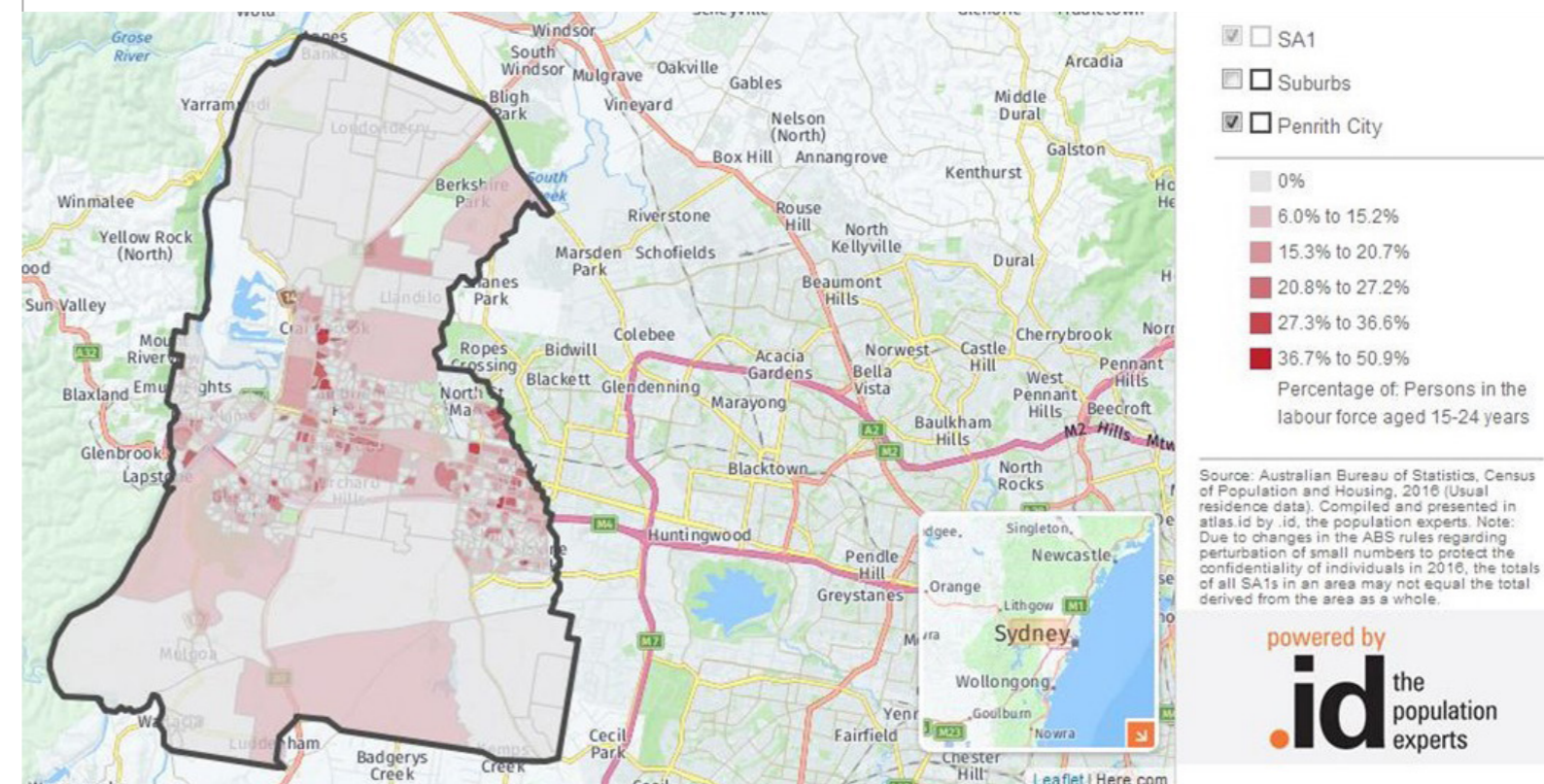
In 2016, 10.2% of 15 to 24 year old people in Penrith were disengaged with employment and education, compared to 9% in NSW. This rate is similar to 2011 (10.3%)

Employment

In 2016, there were 15,955 young people living in Penrith that were employed. They made up 16.8% of all employed people living in Penrith in comparison to 14.7% for the same age group living in GWS.

43.8% of employed young people were employed part time and 50.8% were employed full time. In the 2016 ABS Census 5.4% of employed young people noted that they were away from work or did not state their hours.

Penrith, Youth Unemployment Rate (persons aged 15-24)



Unemployment rate for people 15-24 years old, 2020-2021 (ABS Labour Force Survey)



When looking at how unemployment for young people may have changed over 2020 and 2021, we can see that across Australia the unemployment rate has decreased. However, this does not take into account the rates of full time, part time and casual employment and does not show rates of underemployment.

Industry of employment, five most common, Penrith youth (15 to 24 years) 2016

Industry	Number of young people in Penrith employed in this industry	Percentage of young people in Penrith employed in this industry
1. Accommodation and Food Services	3,014	18.9%
2. Retail Trade	2,793	17.5%
3. Construction	2,274	14.3%
4. Healthcare and Social Assistance	1,173	7.4%
5. Manufacturing	700	4.4%

Housing and Homelessness

The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) surveyed young people across Australia accessing Homelessness Specialist Services in 2018 –2019 and identified the main reasons for seeking assistance. It can be inferred that these issues are also experienced in Penrith.

Main reasons for seeking assistance	%
Housing crisis	19.0
Family and domestic violence	15.9
Inadequate or inappropriate dwelling conditions	11.7
Relationship/family breakdown	11.6
Financial difficulties	8.0
Housing affordability stress	6.6
Other	5.3
Previous accommodation ended	5.3
Time out from family/other situation	3.0
Lack of family and/or community support	2.6

Youth Services

According to research undertaken by the Youth Action NSW Youth Services peak body in 2020, the 10 issues/concerns for which young people most frequently seek assistance are:

Issue/Concern	Percentage of young people presenting at youth services with listed issues/concern
Mental health	55%
Education	45%
Family relationships	43%
Behaviour	34%
Housing and Homelessness	34%
Recreational activities	32%
Domestic and/or family violence	31%
Drugs	30%
Income support/social security	29%
Emergency assistance	21%

The sources of data used for this snapshot include:

- ABS Census Data
- The NSW Youth Health Framework 2017 – 2024 for the Top Issues of Personal Concern (The original source was derived from The Mission Australia Youth Research Report)
- Headspace National Youth Mental Health Survey 2020
- Specialist Homelessness Services annual report 2018–19
- HealthStats NSW 2018



COUNCIL'S SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Council has a long history of supporting young people across the City and provides a range of services and facilities to meet the diverse needs of young people. These include the provision of recreation facilities such as skate parks, neighbourhood centres for youth services to operate from and subsidies for school holiday programs. Council also delivers a range of events, grants and programs specifically for young people, including Youth Week and programs such the annual Penrith Mayoral Challenge which invites young people to co-design a new park for their community.

As the future leaders of our City, Council is dedicated to empowering young people to thrive. Council works closely with a range of stakeholders such as youth services, industry groups, sports clubs and education and training providers to address the emerging needs of young people.

Youth Action Plan engagement

The Youth Action Plan was developed in 2020 in consultation with young people aged 12-25 years who either lived, worked, studied or spent time in Penrith.

To ensure young people's voices were heard, Council reached out and engaged with a diverse range of young people, representing different ages, subcultures, interests, and priorities. This engagement was undertaken via an online survey on Council's Your Say Penrith website. The survey was distributed widely on social media, community and youth networks, local radio and other mechanisms as identified.

Over 280 young people had their say and provided feedback about their priorities, challenges and aspirations which included the importance of:

- 1. Social connections** - fulfilling connections and strong relationships with family and peers.
- 2. Education, training and employment** - meaningful connections to education skill development and work.
- 3. Recreation and events** - access to recreational opportunities and low-cost free events and activities.
- 4. Health and wellbeing** - being healthy and having access to appropriate services.
- 5. Personal beliefs and values** - being happy, living in a safe community, faith, being valued, having a secure future, happy relationships, meaningful social connections and a hopeful future.
- 6. Environment and sustainability** - environmental sustainability into the future and to have clean and well-maintained outdoor areas to enjoy.
- 7. Safety** - to feel safe in the community, in public spaces and at home.
- 8. Access to services** - to know what services are available and how to access them.
- 9. Accommodation and housing** - access to affordable, secure and safe places to live.
- 10. Arts and culture** - music, playing in bands, hobbies and artistic pursuits.

The Youth Action Plan was developed in response to this feedback shared by young people, outlining a series of actions for Council and local stakeholders to deliver over the next 5 years to support young people across the City to thrive.

In Penrith young people can access a wide range of services for support, as listed on the [Youth Services Card](#). This can be accessed via penrith.city.

THEME 1 - CONNECTION

Young people have opportunities to feel connected to each other and the broader community through participation in social, cultural and environmental projects and activities.

This includes opportunities for young people to participate in youth focused activities and events, formal and informal sporting groups, engagement with arts and culture groups/activities and involvement in environmental and sustainability projects.

Research will be undertaken with young people to identify what barriers young people are experiencing that challenge participation and what further actions need to be undertaken to improve involvement.



OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY	SUPPORTING PARTIES	MEASURES	STATUS
1.1 Opportunities for young people to connect with each other.	Run a small grant program to support a range of activities for Youth Week where young people can meet and connect with others.	Annual	Council	Penrith Youth Interagency (PYI) Funding body	Variety of activities held across the City. Numbers of young people attending activities	Underway
	Work with local youth services on the development of a coordinated school holiday program with current funding program.	Ongoing	Council	Fusion Community Junction Nepean Community and Neighbourhood Services PYI	Activities are held at local youth services during holiday periods Numbers of young people attending activities	Underway
1.2 Young people have access to creative expression.	Work with cultural groups to provide training on engaging with young people.	Ongoing	Council	PP&VA	Numbers of cultural programs actively engaging with young people Numbers of young people attending programs	Starting soon
	Promote the Magnetic Places Program to youth services	Annual	Council	PYI	Numbers of youth services applying for Magnetic Places grants Numbers of young people attending programs	Ongoing
1.3 Young people are actively engaged in Council's sustainability programs	Work with the Sustainability and Resilience Team to develop youth engagement strategies including development of the Resilience Action Plan	2020 – 22	Council	Schools PYI	Numbers of young people that participate in sustainability programs	Starting soon

THEME 2 - WELLBEING

Young people have opportunities to be active, safe and make lifestyle choices that support physical and mental well-being.

Key to this theme is for young people to be able to engage with services and activities that support well-being including sport and mental health services and to seek assistance as required.

Delivery of programs that encourage early intervention and prevention to reduce harm to young people will be the framework for this theme.



OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY	SUPPORTING PARTIES	MEASURES	STATUS
2.1 Young people have opportunities for formal and informal health and wellbeing activities	Work with local sporting organisations to build interest in organised sport for young people	Annual	Council	Sporting organisations Youth Services	Increase in the number of young people engaging in organised sport	Starting soon
	Work with local mental health services to promote awareness and engagement of young people	2021-22	Council	Headspace PYI	Delivery of two campaigns to promote local mental health resources for young people	Starting soon
2.2 Increase engagement of marginalised young people by local youth services	Undertake research with local services regarding their current engagement with young people and develop strategies to increase numbers of at-risk or other identified young people engaging with services	Ongoing	Council	PYI	Targets developed for increasing engagement with identified groups Annual review is undertaken	Starting soon
2.3 Young people have access to information about healthy relationships	Support the local youth sector to identify and deliver programs on healthy relationships for delivery through a range of services and agencies	Ongoing	Council	PYI Local schools	Delivery of training program for youth workers and teachers Number of young people who attend sessions	Starting soon

THEME 3 - PATHWAYS

Young people have meaningful pathways to what they need now and for their future.

Access to education, training and employment can have profound impacts on the long-term well-being of our community. This theme will seek to identify barriers that young people face regarding school retention and seeking employment and put into place appropriate resources to support positive outcomes.

Access to stable, safe and affordable housing now and into the future and improved pathways for young people to secure accommodation will also be explored.



OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY	SUPPORTING PARTIES	MEASURES	STATUS
3.1 Increase opportunity for young people to study, train and work locally	Research is undertaken to assess what other strategies are being progressed	2021-2022	Council	PYI Department of Education, Skills and Employment: Programs and Initiatives Schools Industry Partnership	Engagement with other services to identify current projects	Starting soon
3.2 Young people are supported to stay in education longer	Research to understand the barriers to school retention and develop a city-wide program in consultation with young people to address these barriers	2021-2022	Council	Local secondary schools WSU	Engagement with a range of young Research paper developed to identify issues regarding school retention	Starting soon
3.3 Young people are supported in finding safe and appropriate housing	Host a youth housing forum to identify issues	2021-2022	Council	Homelessness Interagency PYI Youth Action	A research paper is developed to identify youth housing issues	Starting soon
3.4 Young people are aware of local services and how to access them	Develop a resource card to be distributed to young people across the City	2021-2022	Council	PYI	A resource is developed that assists young people in knowing more about local services Services report new referrals as a result of the card	Ongoing
	Develop an online resource for young people and their families seeking information about local services	2022-2023	Council	PYI	An online resource is developed Services report new referrals as a result of the resource hub	Starting soon

THEME 4 - ACCESS

Young people have access to services that are appropriate, affordable and available with well trained staff and the local service sector is well coordinated.

This theme will explore opportunities for services to work together to increase awareness of services and programs that are locally available and promote the good work of local services.



OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIMEFRAME	LEAD AGENCY	SUPPORTING PARTIES	MEASURES	STATUS
4.1 The local youth sector is strong and well-coordinated	Support PYI to undertake an annual review of their work and establish priorities for the following year based on trends and evidence of young people's needs	Annual	Council	PYI	An annual plan for activities is developed The annual plan is based on evidence	Ongoing
4.2 Council and the Youth Sector has up to date information on the profile of local young people	Develop a Youth Snapshot to profile the demographic makeup of local young people	2021-2022	Council	PYI	Snapshot is developed and launched	Starting soon
4.3 Council and the Youth Sector identify service gaps and look for funding opportunities	Research undertaken to identify service gaps Research undertaken to identify funding opportunities	2021-2022	Council	PYI	Research undertaken and documented Projects Identified and funding applied for	Starting soon





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**PENRITH
CITY COUNCIL**

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