

**YOUTH
ACTION**

Strategic Plan 2021-2024



FOREWORD

Acknowledgement of Country

Youth Action acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and understands that sovereignty was never ceded. Our office is located upon the land of the Gadigal people and we recognise their traditional and ongoing Custodianship and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.



It gives me great pleasure to set out the Strategic Plan for Youth Action for 2021-2024 (the Plan). It is a privilege for the team and I to build upon the great work that Youth Action has done for decades. As has always been the case for Youth Action, it was important that defining how we hold ourselves accountable, how we will work, and how we will prioritise was done in partnership with the youth sector (the Sector) and young people.

We have had the honour of hearing from our Members and from those who work with young people every day. Listening to their lived experiences and acting on their input and advice ensures that we are on the path to realising the rights of young people in NSW. We gathered input from the Sector through our monthly Sector meetings, and we greatly appreciate the responses to our Plan survey from our diverse membership.

Youth Action consistently heard directly from young people through many avenues to inform our Plan. This included the COVID-19 Conversations, Outburst! and HLAC groups as well as the many consultations and surveys that the Sector assisted Youth Action to facilitate with young people.

Both young people and the Sector were clear that mental health, employment, and education should be amongst our priorities. They said they valued our work in strengthening young people and the Sector's understanding of civics

education, and government budgets and elections. Additionally, they spoke about the importance of advocating for issues impacting the Sector, as well as addressing social equity and intergenerational issues.

We have chosen Youth Justice Throughcare as our primary initiative over the lifetime of the Plan. This will allow us to focus advocacy activity on the importance of the supports and services provided by the Sector across the range of young people's interactions with the law and justice system.

Young people, youth workers, the board and staff wanted to ensure that in all our work we hold ourselves accountable. We will do this by using a rights-based lens to focus on programs, policy and advocacy that achieves meaningful outcomes, embed strengths-based approaches, and are informed by data and evidence. We will also be an ally to the self-determination of First Nations communities, be led by the expertise of young people and the



Sector, and be a trusted partner and collaborator. We have identified four key areas to achieve these outcomes: Member Services, Advocacy and Campaigns, Voice, and Sector Development.

Most importantly, in all our work and practices, we continue to strive to be inclusive of young people who are regional, First Nations, LGBTIQ+, with disability, from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including migrants and refugees, and doing it tough.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Munro".

Kate Munro
CEO - Youth Action

HOW WE HOLD OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE



Vision

Youth Action works towards a society where all NSW young people are supported, engaged, valued, and have their rights realised.

Purpose

Youth Action is the peak organisation representing young people and the services that support them in NSW.

Principles that underpin our work

We will give a particular focus to young people who are regional, First Nations, LGBTIQ+, with disability, from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, including migrants and refugees, and doing it tough.

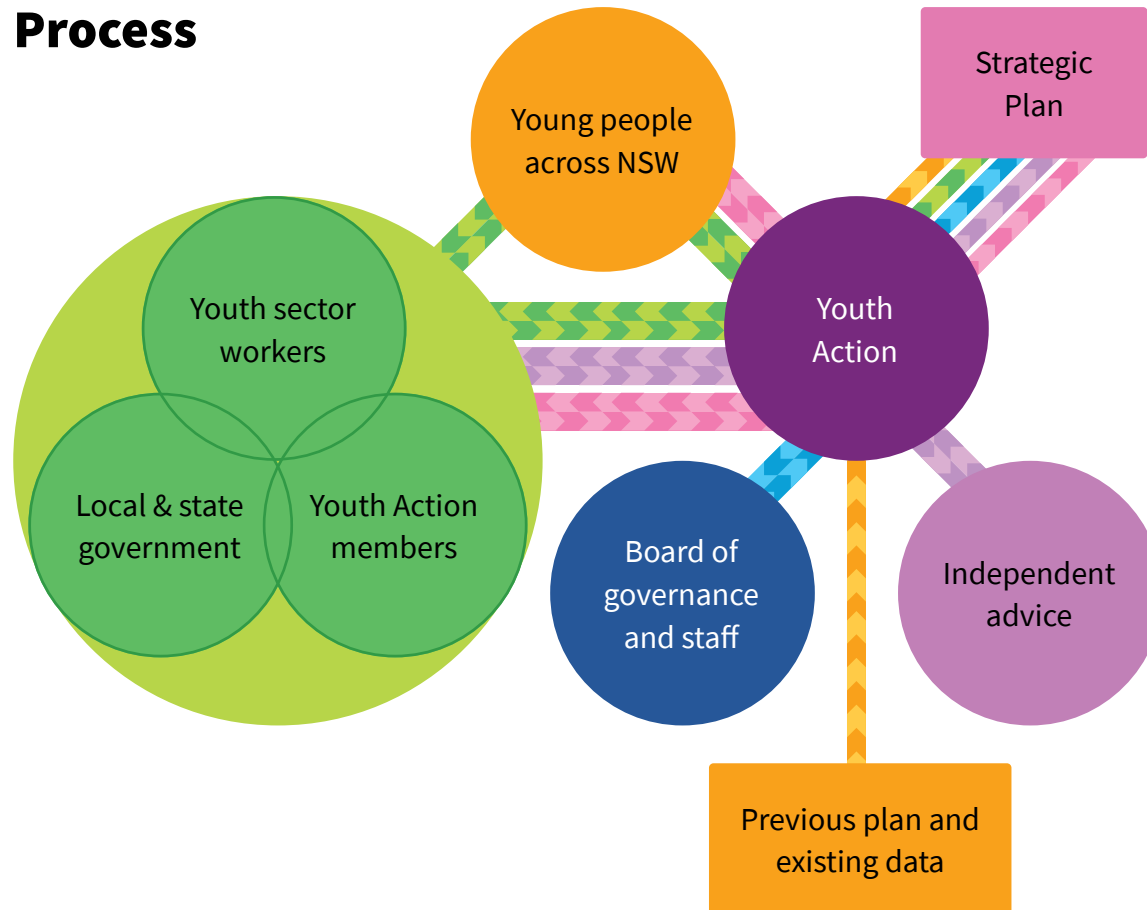
We will use a rights-based lens to focus on programs, policy and advocacy that achieve meaningful outcomes, embed strengths-based approaches, and are informed by data and evidence.

We will be an ally to the self-determination of First Nations communities, be led by the expertise of young people and the Sector, and be a trust-worthy partner and collaborator.

HOW WE GOT HERE



Process



- 1** Desk review of existing documents, materials and consultations from Youth Action, our NGO partners, NSW State and Local Governments
- 2** Ongoing consultations with young people and the Sector that framed the work as well as tested the decisions along the way
- 3** Involving staff and the Board, ensuring they had the information from young people and the Sector to steer the process
- 4** In-depth sessions, consultations, review of findings, and independent advice
- 5** Drafting of the plan, and testing with Youth Action Members and young people

WHAT WE ASPIRE TO BE



Expertise and lived experience of young people

Young people

The reliable partner that ensures young people's voices are heard and that their rights are realised.

Department of Communities & Justice

A valued partner, known for professionally completing contracts efficiently and to a high standard.

Individual NGOs

The benchmark for young people's rights and participation.

First Nations People

An organisation that embeds cultural safety in all areas of our work practice. Promote principles of self-determination through advocating for Aboriginal owned and controlled organisations. To be leaders in the provision of programs and services to First Nations young people.

Youth sector

An organisation advocates for a professional, well resourced, and sustainable youth sector that is focused on achieving lasting and meaningful outcomes for the young people with whom they work.

Unions

An ally to the rights of young workers and partner in determining outcomes for youth unemployment.

NSW State & Local Government

A trusted partner with technical expertise, innovation capacity and the ability to scale-up, who can assist and hold governments accountable to reach their goals.

Business & corporate sector

A professional partner with a social value perspective and an advisor for best practice youth engagement approaches.

Youth Action staff

A leading and innovative champion for young people and an organisation we are proud to work for.

Ally to self-determination

Regional young people & youth services

Expertise of the youth sector

HOW WE WILL WORK



Expertise and lived experience of young people

Member services

Engage and empower Members through provision of regular update and training opportunities.

Support the Sector with the establishment of Youth Work Professional Association, elevating the capacity of the Sector to determine benchmarks, accreditation and/or minimum competencies for youth work.

Embedding structure for stakeholder voice to inform the ongoing work of the organisation and feedback to the government.

Campaigns & advocacy

Advocate on behalf of young people and the Sector to provide advice on systemic issues. Campaign for systemic change that leads to better outcomes for young people from diverse cultures, backgrounds, and experiences. Give particular focus to young people who are doing it tough, including young people in contact with the child protection and justice systems, and those experiencing disadvantage.

Raise positive profile of young people in the media and their communities and promoting an understanding of young people's experiences.

Voice

Support and resource young people to be able to participate in systems that affect them.

Facilitate the increase of young people's participation in decision making and service design processes through provision of expert advice to government partners, other Peaks, NGOs, and the Sector.

Embed participatory framework within Youth Action that ensures the diversity of voices and expertise of the Sector and young people drives our advocacy work to inform government.

Sector development

Undertake research collaborations that support innovation and build evidence to build capacity within the Sector, influence commissioning activities, enhance service delivery, and improve outcomes for young people.

Build Sector capacity to deliver effective, evidence based, and outcomes-oriented services. Increase Sector capacity to achieve the TEI service system outcomes that are listed in the TEI Outcomes Framework.

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Regional young people & youth services

Expertise of the youth sector

HOW WE WILL PRIORITISE



Expertise and lived experience of young people

Key Initiative



Youth Justice Throughcare

Primary advocacy areas



Health & wellbeing

Education & learning

Jobs & income

Secondary advocacy areas



Civics education

Budgets

Elections

Youth sector issues

Equity

Intergenerational issues

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WHAT WE WILL DO



Expertise and lived experience of young people

Member services

- ▶ Representation of the Sector to government
- ▶ Increase membership
- ▶ Member benefits
- ▶ Member newsletter
- ▶ Member resources
- ▶ Re-branding
- ▶ Promote to young people to increase young membership, particularly those from diverse cultures, backgrounds, and experiences
- ▶ Promote to regional NSW to increase regional membership

Campaigns & advocacy

- ▶ Youth Justice Throughcare initiative
- ▶ Advocacy priorities
 - ▶ Health & wellbeing
 - ▶ Education & learning
 - ▶ Jobs & income
- ▶ Strengths-based advocacy model
- ▶ Government relations – submissions and reports
- ▶ Provide ongoing feedback to government regarding policies and programs

Voice

- ▶ Provide opportunities for young people to give feedback to government and the wider community
- ▶ Young people's voice and engagement:
 - ▶ Outburst
 - ▶ Health Advisory Council
 - ▶ Youth network
 - ▶ Co-design model
 - ▶ Opinion pieces/creative content
- ▶ Calendar of young people training:
 - ▶ Advocacy and Participation
 - ▶ Rights based approaches
 - ▶ Young people on Boards
 - ▶ Youth-led co-design & evaluation project

Sector development

- ▶ Calendar of training
 - ▶ Youth Action led: advocacy, child rights, participation, youth led co design & evaluation, Youth Worker Survival & code of ethics training
 - ▶ Partner with training providers on: outcomes measurement, cultural safety, strengths-based, trauma-informed
- ▶ Monthly Sector development sessions
- ▶ RYDON support
- ▶ Information sharing networks
- ▶ Support for establishment of professional association
- ▶ Sector support platform

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Regional young people & youth services

Expertise of the youth sector