

Case STUDY

Engagement in Practice: WANGARATTA YOUTH SUMMIT

Introduction

This case study is the third instalment of the Rural City of Wangaratta Youth Engagement Guide; it outlines a practical example of meaningful youth engagement. This localised example steps out the various stages of youth engagement and identifies key considerations and challenges.

Overview

The Wangaratta Youth Summit was a great success; more than 130 exceptional young people from across the Rural City of Wangaratta came together to discuss and address a range of issues affecting their community.

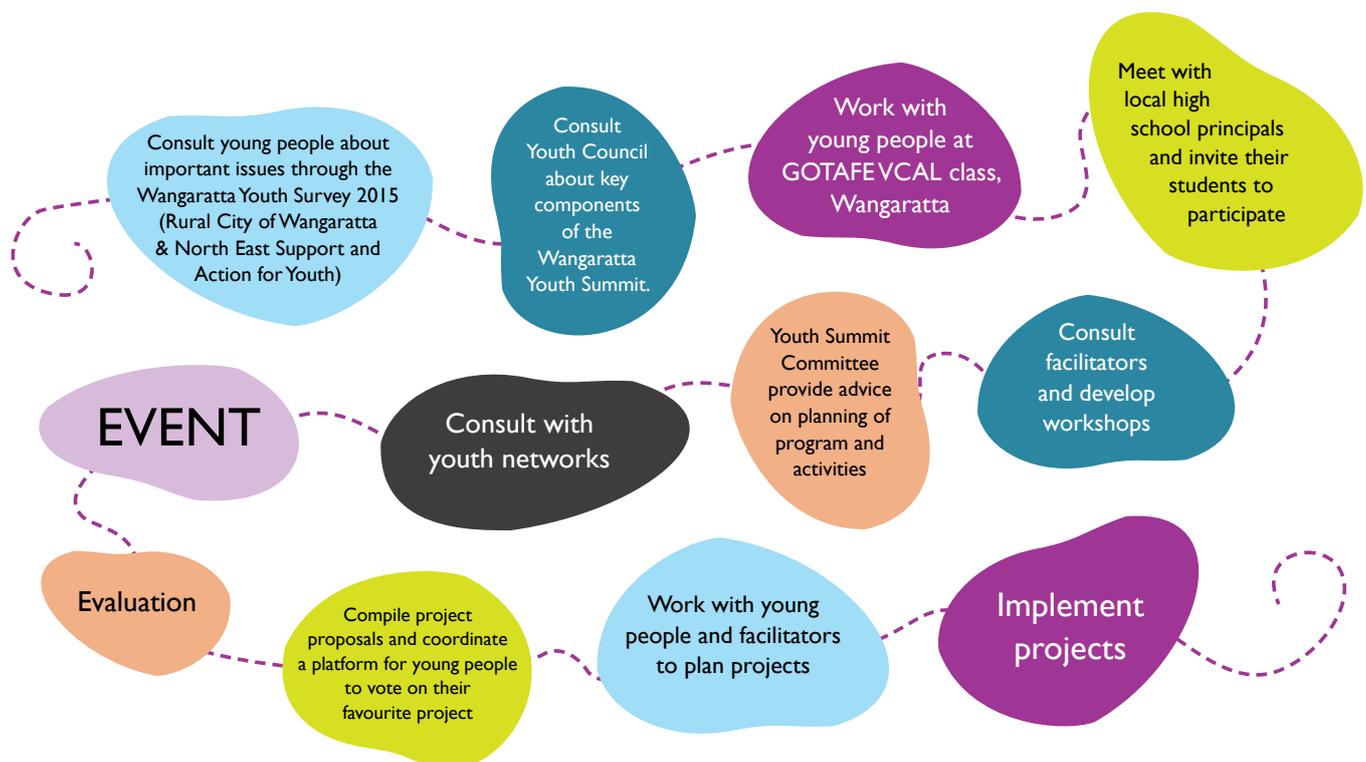
The inaugural summit was held at Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre on 14 April 2015. Guest speakers Abdi Aden and Luke Ablett delivered powerful presentations about their life experiences and addressed topics such as racial discrimination, displacement and gender stereotypes.

The afternoon included ten workshops facilitated by local service providers, community members and Rural City of Wangaratta employees. The workshops were informed by the recent results of the Youth Survey 2015, and generated important discussion about key issues facing young people in the municipality.

Following the Summit, young people were invited to vote online for their favourite project.

The voting informed three projects that were awarded \$2000 seed funding.

Key stages in the planning process:



Plan- NING

“The Wangaratta Youth Summit was made possible due to Council obtaining funding from the Department of Health and Human Services’ Youth Inclusion Grant program.”

Planning

The Wangaratta Youth Summit was an all day event that aimed to engage with young people aged 15-25 years old, connected to the Rural City of Wangaratta. The event aimed to provide participants with the opportunity to hear from guest speakers and to address some of the key issues facing young people in the municipality.

This information collected would ultimately inform Council’s Youth Development activities and Youth Strategy. In addition, the consultation will inform best practice youth engagement resources. The Wangaratta Youth Summit was evaluated through discussion with facilitators, Youth Council, VCAL GOTAFE class, feedback from teachers.

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Which young people?

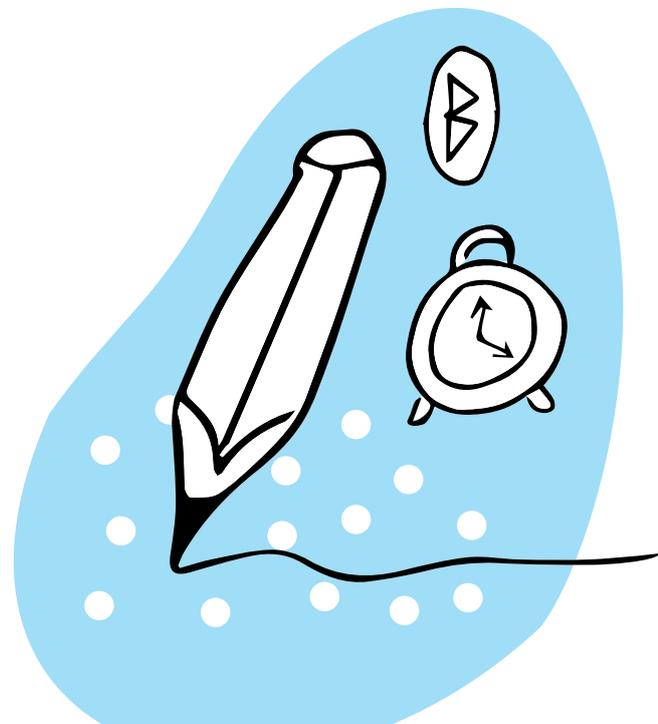
It was important to have a representative group of young people planning and participating at the Wangaratta Youth Summit. The event was open to young people aged 15-25 years old, who were connected to the Rural City of Wangaratta (e.g. study, work, play sport in the municipality).

It was assumed that local young people would be able to understand, relate and respond to the key issues discussed in workshops.

To achieve a representative sample, students from all of the local high schools and TAFE were invited to the Wangaratta Youth Summit to ensure there were a diverse group of young people and that the event was accessible to all. Young people who were not studying were also invited to attend, this was promoted through local youth networks and advertising.

Some of the ways young people participated

- Designed the Wangaratta Youth Summit logo
- Designed menu and prepared catering for event
- Developed a risk assessment
- Planned
- Created the sound track for background music
- Staffed the registration desk
- Coordinated buses
- Event support
- Acknowledgement to Country
- Facilitated workshops
- Stage crew
- Participated in workshops



Key challenges and considerations:

Transport

After speaking with schools and young people, it was apparent that transport options needed to be considered if young people were to attend. Many of the young people who attended the Summit depended on buses to transport them to and from school, this was particularly important for students living in rural locations. For this reason, buses were organised to pick up and drop off students to schools so as connecting buses could be met. Whilst this had a significant impact on the timetable and resources, it was critical to ensuring young people could access the and have equal opportunity in participating at the Summit.

Networks

Critical to the success of the Wangaratta Youth Summit, was connecting with key networks and schools. Working closely alongside local high schools and the Wangaratta Youth Service Providers Network meant that the event was well supported and key issues were highlighted throughout the planning stages.

Timing of event

The Wangaratta Youth Summit was held during the Victorian school term so that schools could participate. It was assumed that more young people would participate as part of school, rather than individual registrations. The event was held on the second day of Term 2 to fit within National Youth Week 2015. However, the timing of the event made school registrations difficult due to lack of lead in time to coordinate and recruit late participants.

Cost, provision of food

There was no charge incurred by participants attending the Wangaratta Youth Summit to ensure that the event was accessible and inclusive of all young people. Lunch and afternoon tea were provided free of charge for all participants in attendance. This was used as an incentive and Council's acknowledgement of the participants' time, knowledge and experiences as valuable.

The VCAL class at GOTAFE developed a menu, prepared and served the food for afternoon tea at the Summit.

Venue

The Wangaratta Performing Arts Centre was the venue chosen for the Summit for a number of reasons. Youth Council identified that the Performing Arts Centre was the most appropriate local venue. In addition, the venue could meet professional sound and lighting requirements, as well as capacity for the potential amount of participants. Every effort was made to create 'youth friendly' spaces where the workshops were held.

The GOTAFE VCAL students and Youth Council provided advice on furnishing the Performing Arts Centre. The GOTAFE VCAL students attended the venue prior to the event to provide advice on workshop set up and risk assessment.

Youth MAYOR MESSAGE

Ashlee Fitzpatrick

**- Rural City of Wangaratta
Youth Mayor (2015-16)**



“Wangaratta’s Youth Summit held in April 2015, was a huge success with a wide range of Wangaratta’s youth. At the time I was currently doing my year 12 VCE and being a school prefect I heard this wonderful opportunity from my Principal and teachers in a school assembly and again in our mentor class in the daily bulletin. The way the Youth Summit was presented to us caught my attention through the workshops, with the intention on building young leaders skills and knowledge of youth and life which was the reason I initially signed up.

The day consisted of a wide range of interesting workshops in different categories that are constantly on our minds such as bullying, social media and the stresses of school and life. The event included constant mentors and speakers from everyday leaders such as teachers, council members to passed AFL players and lecturers, with each mentor having encouraged and connected with each youth member in some captivating way through personal experience, or dreams and goals they would love to pursue in the future; they really got to a youth’s level of interpretation of life.

All in all, the Youth Summit was such an fantastic day, and being a young leader I highly recommend holding another event like this, it was very beneficial and motivating for Wangaratta’s youth of today.”

Special thanks to GOTAFE VCAL class, Wangaratta High School, Galen Catholic College, Cathedral College Wangaratta, Borinya Wangaratta Community Partnership, Youth Council Rural City of Wangaratta, Wangaratta Youth Service Provider’s Network, Wangaratta Youth Summit Committee, Department of Health and Human Services.