

for the
**RURAL CITY
OF WANGARATTA**

Prepared by
Laura McKenna

February 2016



The engagement guide is a document that has been developed to support meaningful engagement with young people.

The guide includes an overview of youth participation and worksheets to engage with young people.

What is youth participation?

Essentially, youth participation is an approach to working with young people, whereby young people are actively involved in making decisions about issues that affect them. This approach requires adults valuing young people's opinions and their experiences as capable members of the community.

“The process of sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives. It is the means by which a democracy is built and it is a standard against which democracies should be measured. Participation is the fundamental right of citizenship.”

- Hart (1992: 5, cited in Farthing 2012: 73)

Why do we care about participation?

There are a number of benefits associated with youth participation and reasons why it should be promoted. These benefits include the heightened self-esteem, social connectedness and advantage for a young person's well being that can be attributed to such meaningful involvement.

Typically, there four main justifications for youth participation:

- **Participation is a human right**

Irrespective of someone's age, young people have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them.

- **Radical empowerment**

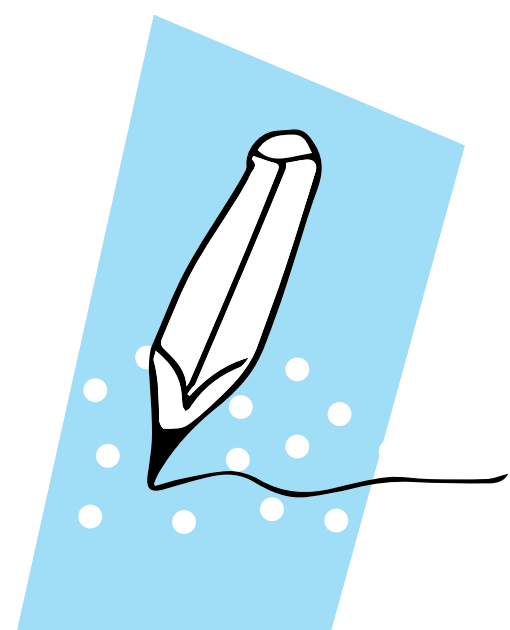
A key benefit to involving young people in decision-making is the philosophy of agency and a young person's capability to play leading roles in their lives and in their communities

- **Efficiency in policy, practice and services**

Youth participation can create 'insider' knowledge whereby the young person's view of the world and experiences are valued highly and produce more genuine knowledge and insight

- **Key to youth development**

Young people develop social connections and gain knowledge and skills through participatory practice, preparing the young person for adulthood.



Hart's Ladder of Participation

Hart's Ladder of Participation is a useful tool to measure a project/event or program against.

This model was conceptualised by Roger Hart (1992) and is a useful tool to demonstrate the varying degrees that young people can be involved in a project, program or organisation. The bottom three 'rungs' are non-participatory practice.

THE LADDER

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- 8 Young person initiated, shared decisions with adults
 - 7 Young person initiated and directed
 - 6 Adult-initiated, shared decisions with young people
 - 5 Consulted and informed
 - 4 Assigned but informed
 - 3 Tokenism
 - 2 Decoration
 - 1 Manipulation

Work SHEETS

The next four worksheets are designed to support adults to implement programs and projects that engage young people in meaningful ways.

The worksheets have been adapted from Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (2004) *Taking Young People Seriously: Consulting Young People about their Ideas and Opinions*, Office of Youth, Melbourne.

Worksheet 1: Planning

Title and brief description of what you are trying to achieve:

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What are the goals of your project/program?

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What are the objectives?

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How much involvement will young people have in your project?

(Use Hart's Ladder of Participation for guidance)

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How will your project be evaluated?

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The young people in the Rural City of Wangaratta are a diverse group with varied interests, needs and motivations.

It is important to reflect upon the goals and objectives of your project to ensure effective engagement and success of the project.

Worksheet 2: Which young people?

Which young people should be included to achieve the goals and objectives of your project?

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How does this issue affect young people?

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How will the young people benefit from being involved?

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How will the involvement of these young people benefit your project?

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How are these young people a representative sample?

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Work SHEETS

There are a number of ways that Council can connect and engage with young people in the municipality. This could be to consult with young people, promote an event or program. In 2015, the Rural City of Wangaratta and North East Action and Support for Youth (NESAY) conducted a survey exploring the needs of youth living in the Wangaratta Municipality.

Outlined below are the most effective tools to engage with young people according to the 558 respondents in the Youth Survey 2015.

Worksheet 3: Methods

Methods for engaging young people in the Rural City of Wangaratta

NEWSPAPER



SOCIAL MEDIA

POSTERS

EMAIL



PRINT MEDIA

TEXT MESSAGE



SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

BROCHURES

Outline why you have chosen to use these engagement methods. Consider time, resources, target group, location, accessibility, inclusivity, representation.

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Worksheet 4: Supporting young people

What will you do to make young people involved feel safe and comfortable?

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How will you build trust between participants and adults?

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What space might be most comfortable for participants and why?

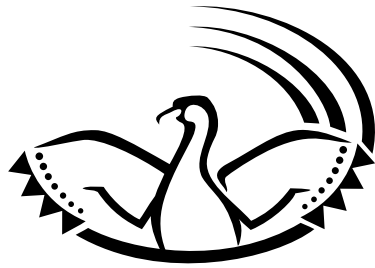
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What issues relating to physical access, location, distance may affect young people being involved?

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What time suits the young people participating and why?

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RURAL CITY OF
WANGARATTA

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
PLEASE CONTACT:**

Rural City of Wangaratta
Youth Department on (03) 5722 0888
or council@wangaratta.vic.gov.au