

LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL

Youth Strategy



CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Executive Summary	3
1.0 Introduction	6
2.0 Background Information	6
2.1 Demographic Overview	6
2.2 Council Goal and Principles that Underpin the Youth Strategy	7
2.3 Documents that Have Informed the Youth Strategy	8
3.0 The Role of Council in Providing for the Needs of Young People	8
4.0 Issues Facing Young People and Youth Services Providers in Loddon	9
5.0 Implementation and Review of the Youth Strategy	18
6.0 Action Plan	27
7.0 Appendices	29

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the following organisations for their contribution to the preparation of this document.

Inglewood District Health Service
North Central Local Learning and Education Network
Loddon Neighbourhood House
Northern District Health Service
Wedderburn P-12
Schools and students that participated in the survey
Young people who completed interviews

Executive Summary

The purpose of this strategy is to clearly define Council's role and key partnerships in providing for the needs of young people aged 13 to 25 for the next 5 years.

Council recognises the importance of young people to the future of the Shire and the importance of working with them to make the Shire a place where they feel important, supported and safe; and where they can have choices in relation to their recreation, social, health and education aspirations.

Council particularly wants to work closely with young people, community groups and other government agencies to maximise opportunities and benefits for young people who live, and/or work in the Shire and who visit the Shire.

The strategy recognises actions that Council can play a role in achieving. This role will be clearly determine in view of Council's responsibilities to other service areas and population groups.

Council recognises the need for a 'whole of community' approach to the implementation of the Youth Strategy and acknowledges the commitment that this will involve from community groups, service groups and service providers.

Timeframes have been established for each action. These timeframes will be dependent on a number of factors including:

- Other Council budget and staffing demands,
- The capacity of the community to support relevant activities
- The level of state and federal government (including agency) funding and resources available
- The capacity of other relevant sectors e.g. business, employment, service sectors to support initiatives

The following outlines the initiatives identified in the strategy to address key issues facing young people in the Shire:

Short term initiatives:

Action No.	SHORT TERM ACTIONS
1	Maximise the sustainability of existing sports across the Shire with a particular focus on clubs that have strong programs for young people.
3	Work with local communities to investigate opportunities to establish sustainable gymnasium facilities at appropriate locations. (Consideration should be given to industry innovations such as outdoor gyms).
6	Implement the recommendations of the 2003 (Youth) Recreation/Skate Strategy (M,S,L)
9	Work with 3 organisations/clubs and relevant young people to establish a model for 'youth friendly' clubs/organisations and then make this available to other organisations
11	Work with relevant community groups and agencies to more effectively manage events for young people.
12	Review funding availability for community events that target young people. The review may consider guidelines for funding, formalising of funding/grant application process, advertising of funding opportunities and opportunities to maximise funding outcomes.
13	Ensure that open space and urban/township planning considers opportunities to incorporate environments for young people and embraces them as an important part of the community. (ongoing)

Action No.	SHORT TERM ACTIONS
14	Liaise with co-ordinators of the 'Building Resilience in Young People in Rural Communities' project team to identify opportunities for local initiatives in Loddon. (ongoing)
15	Work with the local media to develop strategies for promoting positive messages about young people. (ongoing)
16	Identify opportunities to expand/establish mentor programs for young people that consider opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for 'at risk' young people - that respond to the aspirations of young people e.g. business development, 'community giving' that address wider community engagement needs and priorities e.g. intergenerational programs such as mobile phone instruction to older adults by young people.
17	Work with relevant community groups and government agencies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plan for the long term viability of the 'Men's Sheds' being considered/ established in Boort, Inglewood and Wedderburn, and - encourage strategies that increase participation by young people.
20	Ensure the Healthy Minds project considers issues relating to young people and strategies that specifically target this group. (Ongoing)
21	Work with relevant agencies, networks and the media to breakdown negative attitudes and perceptions relating to mental illness, and to create environments in which young people feel supported in dealing with mental health issues.
26	That Council work with the project Steering Committee to maximise opportunities associated with the 'Gateways For Sustainable Communities' project. (ongoing)
28	That Council identifies opportunities for work experience placements for young people within Council operations and sets up a trial program.
35	Evaluate the Youth Leadership Program and identify opportunities to maximise participation.

Medium term initiatives:

Action No.	MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS
2	Support the development of alternative (indoor and outdoor) sporting opportunities e.g. soccer, badminton.
4	Facilitate discussions between local and regional agencies /organisations to expand and promote a range of Holiday Programs.
5	Identify and encourage opportunities to increase the profile of community and professional arts and expand participation opportunities.
7	Co-ordinate a 'How To' workshop/presentation for organisations that operate or are looking to develop youth based program that respond to the needs and aspirations of young people.
8	Encourage initiatives that engage young people in volunteering. (M-L)
23	Identify opportunities for increasing input by young people into civic decision-making process. (M-L)
24	Work with the Service Providers Network to identify opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - better provide for the health and wellbeing needs of young people - overcome barriers that young people have in accessing services, and - advocate for the health and wellbeing needs of young people.
25	Advocate to the State Government for funding to the Gateways for Sustainable Communities project so as to maximise benefits for the young people of Loddon.
29	Support schools, community groups and service networks to create seamless pathways to community engagement e.g. to services, to recreation opportunities, to support networks.
30	Increase community awareness of young people's recreation choices.

Action No.	MEDIUM TERM ACTIONS
31	Investigate opportunities for establishing a 'Loddon Young Peoples' website (linked to Council's website) that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - includes information about to recreation opportunities - includes information about health and wellbeing support services - considers the requirements of different age groups e.g. young teens, young adults.
32	<u>Identify barriers</u> that prevent young people from accessing health and wellbeing support and develop 'whole of community' strategies to minimise these barriers.
33	Work with health service providers (including doctors) to <u>identify opportunities</u> to minimise barriers that prevent young people accessing services in a timely and appropriate manner.

Longer term initiatives:

Action No.	LONGER TERM ACTIONS
8	Encourage initiatives that engage young people in volunteering. (M-L)
10	Work with schools to maximise the benefits of school-based volunteering programs to students and the community (e.g. by encouraging community involvement, identification of community projects that may be attractive to young people.
18	Actively encourage the establishment and promotion of exercise programs/classes for a range of age groups e.g. youth fitness programs.
19	Work with schools and local clubs/organisations to identify opportunities for increasing the number of schools involved in the 'Active After Schools' program.
22	Identify the scope of issues relating to the economic wellbeing of young people in Loddon, particularly as it may relate to unemployment and homelessness and develop strategies to address these.
23	Identify opportunities for increasing input by young people into civic decision-making process. (M-L)
27	As part of a wider strategy to foster a partnership with a metropolitan Local Government Authority, investigate work experience placements for young people.
34	Identify the type and extent of issues that related to the 18-25 age group in Loddon and develop strategies that respond to these issues.

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this strategy is to clearly define Council's role and key partnerships in providing for the needs of young people in the Shire of Loddon for the next 5 years.

The strategy addresses a range of needs and issues across the 13 to 25 year age groups and clearly identifies the agencies that have committed to play a role in addressing these.

Council recognises the importance of young people to the future of the Shire and the importance of working with them to make the Shire a place where they feel important, supported and safe; and where they can have choices in relation to their recreation, social, health and education aspirations.

Council particularly wants to work closely with young people, community groups and other government agencies to maximise opportunities and benefits for young people who live, and/or work in the Shire and who visit the Shire.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Demographic Overview

There are 1,470 young people aged 10-24 in Loddon and they represent 17.4% of the Shire's population. By 2031 it is estimated that this age group will have declined to 964 people or only 12.5% of the Shire's population.

This section provides an overview of some of the demographic trends for young people in the 10 to 24 year old age groups. This age range does not coincide exactly with the target age groups for the strategy (13 to 25 year olds) however it provides valuable trend information.

The information is drawn from the Department of Industry website⁽¹⁾ and from data collected by the North Central Local Learning and Employment Network (NCLLEN)⁽²⁾.

It is estimated that the population of young people in the 10 to 24 age group in Loddon will decline by 506 people or 34.4% between 2006 and 2031. This compares with a decrease of 10.5% in the same age groups across regional Victoria.

The most significant decline is estimated for the 20-24 age group (42.5%, compared to 6.2% for regional Victoria) followed by the 15-19 age group (37.2%, compared to 10.9% for regional Victoria) and the 10-15 age group (26.9%, compared to 13.2% for regional Victoria).

The 34.4% decline in the 10 to 24 age groups compares dramatically with the decline of 8.3% across the Loddon population as a whole for the same period.

Contrary to Victoria as a whole early school leavers and year 12 completers have very low rates of unemployment or underemployment at 6-8% (compares to Victoria at 14-30%). However the relative percentage of young people 15-19^(NCLLEN target group) in the NCLLEN region that are identified as 'at risk' is around 36%, approximately 25% higher than for Victoria as a whole.

⁽¹⁾ doi.vic.gov.au/knownyourarea/homepage

⁽²⁾ Environmental Scan and Data Analysis (RMCG Consultants for the North Central-Local Learning Employment Network 2007)

2.2 Council Goal and Principles that Underpin the Youth Strategy

“Loddon will be a proud community leading rural Australia as a great place to live, work and visit.”
(Council’s Goal, page xx Council Plan 2007-2011)

Further to Council’s Goal the plan states *“The Shire will ensure a safe, enjoyable, diverse and comfortable experience through the provision of good quality facilities and services. Whether you are living, working or just visiting, Loddon Shire will provide opportunity for growth, education, job security and adventure.”* (page 3)

Council has defined the following principles that will underpin Council’s role and decision-making in relation to the planning and provision of services for young people. These principles define how the Youth Strategy responds to the Council goal.

Principle 1 - Proven Need and Maximising Outcomes

Service, programs and infrastructure will be based on substantiated need and opportunities to maximise wider community benefits.

Principle 2 - Access and Equity

Council will work with community stakeholders to minimise social, physical, economic, and geographic barriers to opportunities.

Principle 3 - Inclusiveness

Strategies to ensure that young people are supported and embraced as an important part of the Loddon community will be a priority.

Principle 4 - Sustainability

Planning and provision for services, programs and infrastructure for young people must be sustainable into the future.

Principle 5 - Partnerships

Council will be one of a number of providers of services, programs and infrastructure for young people and will require the involvement of a range of diverse stakeholders to address the needs of young people.

Principle 5 – Council’s Role

Council’s primary role will be in relation to:

- the provision of recreation, sport and social infrastructure
- advocacy and advocacy support for projects initiated by other stakeholders
- liaison and facilitation of networks and information.

2.3 Documents that Have Informed the Youth Strategy

The following are the key documents that have informed this strategy and will continue to inform the way in which Council and the community work together to address the issues identified in the Youth Strategy:

- Council Plan (Shire of Loddon)
- Municipal Public Health Plan - 2007-2010 (Shire of Loddon)
- Recreation Strategy- 2007-2017 (Shire of Loddon)
- Leading the Way: The Victorian Government's Strategic Framework on Mentoring Young People 2005-2008 (Department for Victorian Communities, 2006)
- Future Directions - An Action Agenda for Young Victorians (Victorian Government)
- Who's Carrying the Can (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2006)
- Environmental Scan and Data Analysis (North Central-Local Learning Employment Network 2007)
- VicHealth Strategic Framework 2006-2009

3.0 The Role of Council in Providing for the Needs of Young People

The needs of young people are diverse and can only effectively be addressed if there is a well co-ordinated and integrated approach.

Council defines its generic roles and responsibilities across all service areas in relation to:

- Service Planning
- Service Provision and Management
- Advocacy
- Leadership and Innovation and
- Facilitation and Communication.

In terms of services, programs and infrastructure for young people Council will have a priority on the following for the term of the Youth Strategy:

- Service Provision and Management as it relates to the provision of recreation, sport and social infrastructure. Council will not generally be involved in direct service delivery outside of this role. Council will consider partnerships with other agencies in relation to infrastructure provision.
- Advocacy particularly as it relates to projects or services that are well substantiated and have a defined and sustainable benefit. Council will consider advocating for innovative projects and services instigated by other agencies if they satisfy these criteria.
- Facilitation and Communication as it relates to strengthening networks that support and provide for young people and improving communication and information channels.

Council does not have the capacity to address all the youth needs in the community without significant assistance from a range of key partners. The Implementation Plan will clearly define Council's role for each action and the anticipated lead agency/group and partner agencies/groups.

Council's role for each action will vary and will be determined by:

- the sustainability of its role over the life of the Strategy
- the way in which Council can maximise the impact of its resources
- the extent of external funding

- opportunities for a proactive response to issues and needs and
- the role played by other recreation provision partners.

4.0 Issues Facing Young People and Youth Services Providers in Loddon

The following is a summary of needs and issues that have been identified by the Project Steering Committee, through surveys and interviews conducted as part of the project and from industry research findings.

Issues have been considered under the following 4 headings:

- Community Engagement and Connectedness
- Health and Wellbeing
- Education, Training and Employment
- Services, Support and Information

The following provides a summary of findings under each of the 4 headings.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONNECTEDNESS

The following provides a brief overview of the needs and issues relating to Young people and Community Connectedness

Sport

Sporting Clubs are an important engagement and support structure for young people in Loddon. Given the lack of other formal support structures in the region it is important that these organisations are supported so as to maximise their sustainability and better accommodate opportunities for young people, including those not already engaged.

Opportunities to strengthen the relationship with sporting clubs with other institutions e.g. schools, referral agencies should be investigated.

Clubs need to work more closely with young people to identify strategies to engage them more effectively in volunteer roles.

Opportunities to improve access to alternative recreation activities (e.g. indoor and outdoor activities including soccer, badminton that are in addition to the traditional sports of football, tennis, netball and cricket. This will provide a diversity of opportunity for young people that prefer 'small team' sports and another strategy for increasing the rate of physical activity among young people. Currently there is poor access to indoor sport and recreation. Opportunities may exist through schools in the region.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues - 1, 2

Recreation

Young people are looking for informal recreation engagement opportunities that don't require the structures of competitive sport. A number of studies conducted by Council (Recreation Strategy, Youth Skate and Recreation Strategy) identify this as a priority and recommend options relating to bike and walking trails, and skate facilities.

Council is working with township groups to identify opportunities to provide access to small gym facilities. This would not only respond to broader community needs but the needs of young people over 65% of whom indicated that they would like to access a gym more in the future.

In the 2003 survey conducted with young people access to a range recreation opportunities was rated higher than access to counseling services. This does not diminish the need for appropriate support services for young people but highlighted priorities relative to each other.

Young people are looking for alternative recreation options including those associated with the creative and dramatic arts. The challenge in a community that has a number of small

population centres is the viability of opportunities. Providing these activities relies on having the people with the expertise and time or it depends on the young person having access to transport.

The Recreation Strategy recommends the establishment of an 'arts hub' in Wedderburn that can act as a catalyst for other arts related opportunities and networking throughout the Shire. This would support arts related opportunities and initiatives for young people.

Anecdotal feedback and feedback from the 2003 survey indicates a need for holiday programs in the region. These programs may be run in conjunction with existing providers including Neighbourhoods Houses and the YMCA, with community based arts groups or with sporting clubs and sports associations.

Consideration will have to be given to integrated advertising and programming to ensure that programs are well promoted and do not compete with each other.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues – 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Volunteering

Young people are not taking up volunteering roles as in the past and yet over 60% of survey respondents indicated that they would consider helping at their sports club, something that would get more for young people in the community or something that raised funds for a cause that was meaningful for them. A lack of motivation (59%) and confidence (64%) and the need to feel valued (64%) are likely to be the key and intrinsic barriers to involvement.

Survey results indicate that the number of young people currently involved with service organisations such as the CFA or the St. Johns Ambulance is small, and as with other community groups young people are not volunteering with these organisations. It is interesting to note however that around 20% of young people stated that they would be interested in these types of activities in the future.

There is an opportunity for a co-operative and shirewide approach to young people and volunteering with consideration given to creating 'youth friendly' organisations, creating volunteering and 'marketing' of volunteering so that it is more relevant to young people.

Some schools in Loddon have developed community volunteering or engagement programs. These programs usually involve years 9 through to 10 and entail students undertaking volunteer work within their local communities.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues – 8, 9, 10

Special Events and Grants

Special events are an opportunity for young people to celebrate and 'be' in their community. Anecdotal feedback indicates that some of these events are attracting an element of young people that exhibit inappropriate and anti-social behaviours.

Unfortunately this is deterring other young people from attending and is creating a negative perception of some events in the wider community which could in turn result in their demise.

A review of the management and supervision of events should be considered and a greater engagement of young people in their organisation encouraged.

Special event funding for Freeza Music events, holiday programs, skill development programs and sponsored trips to Melbourne to access sporting events and training clinics

are well received. They also provide a range of community and personal development benefits.

Anecdotal feedback received as part of the Recreation Strategy indicates that this funding even though relatively small, provides significant incentives (e.g. recognition, fund-raising) and invaluable opportunities for young people to experience activities, programs and events otherwise unavailable to them.

Further feedback indicates an interest from community arts organisations to create a partnership with Council and other groups to stage community events for young people and involve young people in the planning and management of community events.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues – 11, 12

Young People and Urban and Open Space Environments

Anecdotal feedback received through a number of Council planning forums identifies that young people want to have a legitimate place in the public landscape without fear of being judged or their intentions misunderstood.

The design of parks and township precincts should include provision for young people and communities need to consider a more tolerant and embracing approach to their young people.

Council's survey of 11-18 year olds clearly indicated a desire for undercover areas in parks, trails (sealed so they are suitable for skate activities) and recreation infrastructure (e.g. half court basketball courts) in local parks for casual recreation/social activities.

Interviews conducted with 18-25 year olds as part of the Youth Strategy also identifies a desire for access to casual recreation activities such as skate/BMX activities.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues - 13

Community Awareness and Acceptance

Anecdotal feedback indicates that many young people feel misunderstood by their communities. Breakdown in communication and understanding frequently occurs when there is a sense that judgement is being passed, whether this is the case or not. Working on a community level to recognise and overcome these perceptions and reactions will significantly reduce the isolation felt by young people.

Young people report feeling unwelcome in public places such as parks and shopping centres, particularly when they 'hang around' in groups or don't conform e.g. dress codes, 'posturing'.

The survey conducted as part of the strategy indicates that as young people get older in Loddon they are feeling less positive about themselves, their community and their role in it and the level of support they have around them. They are also looking for more adults that they can respect and turn to.

Research from other projects undertaken by the consultancy team indicates that young people feel disappointed that they are judged by the anti-social behaviour of an isolated few. They are also feeling despondent about negative image portrayed of young people in the media.

To address the above issues will require a whole of community approach and will often require community members to put aside long held beliefs and attitudes about young

people. This will provide an opening for isolated young people to re-engage and develop trusting relationships with their community.

There are a number of community based programs (e.g. Adventists Health – Building Resilience in Young People in Rural Communities) that are truly community based and do not rely on additional resourcing or funding. These programs focus on local actions that can be taken by the local community to strengthen relationships with young people and strengthen their sense of worth.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues – 14, 15

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Mentoring Programs

The benefit of effective mentoring programs for young people is reflected in the number of organisations and initiatives that have been developed over the last 3 to 5 years.

Traditionally many of these programs focused on ‘at risk’ young people. Now however there is a recognition of the need for programs that also focus on ‘mainstream’ young people and are part of preventative health and wellbeing strategies.

There is a growing network of government, not-for-profit, commercial and community based organisations that provide a range of different mentoring program options. Many of these are generic while others consider the needs of the region in which they operate and the aspirations of the young people that choose to access the program.

These programs build on the knowledge and skill base of the local community. Organisations that auspice programs generally provide the specific mentor training required by prospective mentors. These programs can be of particular benefit for small communities because they do not require significant operational or built infrastructure and they assist to strengthen community and interpersonal relationships within communities.

The emergence of ‘Men’s Sheds’ is providing a unique opportunity to connect with young men and in particular disengaged young men. It is one of the few environments in which males can come together with a purpose other than for sport. ‘Men’s Sheds’ in other areas are forging relationships with schools, service groups and Council’s to strengthen opportunities relating to ‘these facilities and associated programs.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues – 16, 17

The following information is sourced from ‘Issues In Rural Adolescent Mental Health In Australia’⁽¹⁾ and ‘The State of Victoria’s Young People. A report on how Victorian young people aged 12-24 are faring’. The information provides an overview of some of the key health and wellbeing issues likely to face young people in Loddon.

Physical and Emotional Health

- An increasing proportion of 12-year-old Victorians are experiencing dental decay. Young people in rural areas are less likely (than urban dwellers) to report visiting a dentist in the past 12 months.
- Nearly one-third of young Victorians are overweight or obese and only low proportions meet recommended levels of fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Levels of physical activity among young people are also lower than recommended.
- 10 per cent of young women (who did not have a diagnosed eating disorder) reported that they experienced at least two symptoms associated with anorexia or bulimia at some point between adolescence and young adulthood.

- Nearly a quarter of 18–24 year olds are current smokers and trend data suggest there have been increases in the proportion of young people who drink at levels that risk short-term harm.
- 30 per cent of males (aged 22–24) admit to driving while under the influence of alcohol.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues 18, 19

Mental Health

- Australia has one of the highest suicide rates in the world, particularly among rural adolescent males. The death rate due to suicide for males aged 15-24 years tends to rise with increasing remoteness, such that the suicide rate for remote areas (43 per 100 000) is twice as high as in capital cities (24 per 100 000). It is probable that rates of psychiatric disorder are higher in rural populations.
- While the proportion of young people (aged 18–24) experiencing high levels of psychological distress has declined, rates are double in young women (22.5 per cent in 2005).
- Factors thought to contribute to mental health problems among young people in rural Australia included higher unemployment, lack of opportunities for social interaction, and ostracism by the community for rebelling against social norms. Factors contributing to better mental health in rural settings were also identified in the report, and these included: community connectedness, belonging, and connection to the physical environment.

In 2008 Council established the 'Healthy Minds' project to gain a better understanding about depression and mental illnesses and the impacts of associated conditions have on the health and wellbeing of the community including young people. The program will involve development of policy, identification of service gaps, awareness programs and identification of service requirements.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues 20, 21, (16, 17, 30, 31)

Economic Wellbeing, Housing and Homelessness

- In 2006, 11.1 per cent of young Victorians (aged 20–24) were not in education or employment and around 8 per cent of 18–24 year olds reported running out of food and being unable to buy more.
- Less than half of young people (aged 18–24) feel they definitely have a say on issues that are important to them, and young people are significantly less represented (than people aged 25 and over) on decision-making boards and committees.
- Young people are far less likely (than people aged 25 and over) to rate their area as having characteristics of an active community.
- According to Community Indicators Victoria (CIV) data, around one-third of young Victorians (aged 18–24) report having no public transport in their area and around a quarter report restrictions on their travel. In rural Victoria this figure increases to nearly one half of young people aged 18–24.

(1) 'Rural and Remote Health' www.rrh.org.au/articles

(2) Department of Education and Early Childhood Development & the Department of Planning and Community Development, March 2008.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues 22, 23, (16,17)

Loddon Service Providers Network

The formation of the Loddon Service Providers Network has created a forum through which to identify priority issues relating to young people, to develop strategies to address these issues and identify funding and resourcing opportunities.

The network will also provide an opportunity for service providers to work together to develop integrated and effective service delivery models, with the potential to create service efficiencies and streamline information and referral processes for young people.

The network also has the potential to represent the needs of the young people of Loddon in a co-ordinated and cohesive manner.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues - 24

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

The following provides a brief overview of the needs and issues relating to Young people and Schools, Education and Training:

Gateways For Sustainable Communities Project

The goal of the project is to ensure sustainable futures for young people and their communities by developing tailored local strategies that link relevant training pathways local skills and health and wellbeing opportunities and support. The project has four primary areas of focus, these are community connectedness and sustainability, mental health and wellbeing and training pathways.

This project aims to engage a range of community and government sectors, in particular the education, local industry and business, regional development, agricultural, IT and community health such as mental health and wellbeing. Identify emerging opportunities and innovations in the region and the requisite skills, knowledge and experience required to support them are also a key component of the project.

Three of the four secondary schools in the Shire are involved in the project.

This project is particularly important for the Shire given the limited range of opportunities for young people to train and take up employment in their local/regional community. The project is also important because it proposes a whole of government approach that the Shire could not in any way facilitate on its own. The Shire wants to increase education and training opportunities for its young people but does not have the capacity to achieve this without sponsored program such as the Gateways 4 Sustainable Communities programs.

In support of this type of initiative the survey conducted for the Youth Strategy identifies that 30% of the Shire's young people worry about having to leave home to study or to find work. This issue is likely to worry young males (32%) slightly more than young females (28%).

Action/s that Respond to the Issues 25, 26

Work Experience, Career Pathways and Local Employment Initiatives

Opportunities for young people to gain exposure to a diverse range of career and work options are very limited in rural and remote communities. This is particularly relevant for the young people of Loddon because of the lack of medium and large business which have a greater capacity to offer work experience opportunities than do smaller/one person businesses.

There simply are not the number of business and industries to support the number of students requiring work experience placements. The lack of business diversity means that

young people in Loddon are not exposed to the same diversity of career options as are their regional and metropolitan counterparts.

Through the strategy the Shire has committed to identifying opportunities to provide work experience placements for young people at the Council.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues -27, 28, (25, 26)

School to Community Engagement Pathways

Schools are a critical link with the community for young people in Loddon. It is often through schools that young people source community contacts, services and support and through which they are introduced to community engagement opportunities. Ensuring that schools have the necessary information so as to effectively and confidently refer young people to is very therefore important.

Anecdotal information also indicates that a number of young people who have left school use their former school for support and direction.

Some schools have well developed community volunteer and engagement programs in place and others have strong relationships with sport, service and/or youth clubs.

Opportunities to develop and strengthen these networks and pathways should be investigated to ensure that they are sustainable into the future and are working effectively.

The importance of these programs relates to the additional engagement and support opportunities provided for young people and the integrated but informal 'community care' networks established.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues - 29

SERVICES, SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

The following provides a brief overview of the needs and issues relating to Young people and Services, Support and Information

Information

Survey findings and anecdotal information sourced for the project indicates that approximately 76% of young people stated that more or better information on engagement opportunities would incline them to get more involved in their community. A survey conducted by Council in 2003 identified that 65% of young people stated that it was important/very important to have information about what was going on in other towns or areas.

Feedback received through the project indicates an opportunity to improve information sharing between service providers. There is not a centralised and easily accessible database of services nor a formal process by which service providers can communicate changes in service provision, alterations to programs changes, project initiatives and opportunities for collaboration between agencies, service providers and community based organisations.

Young people who have participated in a similar project in Ballarat suggest that mainstream methods of communication are not likely to be effective with young people. Opportunities to take information to young people e.g. through schools, clubs is one of the most effective way of communicating with them, 'they will not go looking for the information'.

Using other methods of communication such as 'texting' and youth specific websites are also more relevant than mainstream information channels.

The need for more information and more effective information was a common theme in the interviews conducted with 18-25 year olds.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues – 30, 31

Access to Services

Reasons understood to create a reluctance in young people in rural areas to acknowledge health problems, particularly mental health problems, include fear of social stigma, a culture of self-reliance, and in relation to mental illness a view that equates mental illness with 'insanity'.

Research indicates that many girls and young women feel uncomfortable visiting a male doctor and put off getting assistance because they cannot access a female doctor in their local area. This situation is further compounded in rural areas by a lack of doctors both male and female.

Transport is also a key impact on young people being able to access services and at a time and place that affords them the privacy they are often looking for.

The survey conducted by Council in 2003 (Skate/recreation Strategy) identified that the 54% of the young people of Loddon said access to counselling and support services for young people was important/very important.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues – 32, 33

18-25 year olds

This is a group of young people that face very different challenges. Many of these young people are not associated with any formal education or social networks, which is particularly the case if they are unemployed, homeless or not involved in ongoing education.

Many of these young people leave the Shire to seek employment elsewhere or to pursue higher education opportunities. There are however a number of these young people who remain in Loddon because they have employment in the area, because they have not yet gained employment and/or they want to stay close to existing support networks

The extent of the issue in Loddon is not fully understood and it is one that needs further exploration before any specific strategies are developed.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues - 34

Leadership Programs

Council co-ordinates a annual Youth Leadership Program. Feedback from participants who complete the program is extremely positive however the program is undersubscribed or struggles to achieve full participation most years.

Strategies to create a greater awareness of the program and increase participation should involve groups that have a primary contact with young people e.g. youth clubs, churches, sporting clubs.

A review of the program should involve past participants (and possibly guardians) to gain an understanding of pre-program perceptions and why these prevailed, post program perceptions and an evaluation of what was of value to the participant.

Action/s that Respond to the Issues - 35

5.0 Implementation and Review of the Youth Strategy

A review process is important to ensure that the Implementation Plan continues to respond to current issues and opportunities. The Youth Strategy has been prepared as a working document and provides a basis for community and Council partnerships.

It is therefore essential that the 'Key Direction Statements' on which the Youth Strategy is based, continue to reflect the changing needs and priorities of Council, the community and other stakeholders.

A committee will be established to oversee the implementation of the Youth Strategy. The committee will consist of Council staff, and representatives from relevant community sectors including the education, the health and wellbeing, the community and the employment and business sectors.

Annually On an annual basis the Implementation Plan will be reviewed to identify changing needs and priorities, and to ensure the Strategy is being implemented in accordance with key measures.

Year 4 Commencement of the full review of the Youth Strategy

6.0 The Action Plan

The Action Plan identifies the timeline for addressing the action, stakeholders required to implement the action and resourcing requirements.

Actions have been identified as

- 'Short term' (S) Actions that is, for addressing in years 1-2
- 'Medium term' (M), Actions that is, for addressing in years 3-4
- 'Longer term' (L) Actions that is, for addressing as of year 5.

Timeframes have been established for each action. These timeframes will be dependent on a number of factors including:

- Other Council budget and staffing demands,
- The capacity of the community to support relevant activities
- The level of state and federal government (including agency) funding and resources available
- The capacity of other relevant sectors e.g. business, employment, service sectors to support initiatives

SECTION 1 – ACTIONS THAT ADDRESS NEEDS AND ISSUES RELATING TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONNECTEDNESS

	clubs that have strong programs for young people.								ty
	Notes Key process and outcome indicators have been identified in the Recreation Strategy.	Peak sporting associations, PAG Clubs, Sports Focus, YMCA	Within operational budget	Youth Strategy 2008-2013					S
		COUNCIL ROLE/S							
	Other Strategies that Support Action Recreation Strategy – Action No. 2	Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy	Innov/Lead	Fac./Comm			
		■		■	■	■			
2.	Support the development of alternative (indoor and outdoor) sporting opportunities e.g. soccer, badminton.	Stakeholders			Resourcing		Priory		
	Notes Key process and outcome indicators have been identified in the Recreation Strategy.	Peak Associations, Clubs, Sports Focus, DPCD, YMCA, PAG	Within operational budget						M
		COUNCIL ROLE/S							
	Other Strategies that Support Action Recreation Strategy – Action No. 3	Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy	Innov/Lead	Fac./Comm			
		■		■	■	■			
3.	Work with local communities to investigate opportunities to establish sustainable gymnasium facilities at appropriate locations. (Consideration should be given to industry innovations such as outdoor gyms).	Stakeholders			Resourcing		Priory		
	Notes Key process and outcome indicators have been identified in the Recreation Strategy.	Sports Focus, Health Services, township groups, Doctors, PAG YMCA, DVC. YacVic N'hood Houses, Bendigo-Loddon PCP,	Within operational budget						S
		COUNCIL ROLE/S							
	Other Strategies that Support Action Recreation Strategy – Action No. 5	Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy	Innov/Lead	Fac./Comm			
		■		■	■	■			
4.	Facilitate discussions between local and regional agencies /organisations to expand and promote a range of Holiday Programs.	Stakeholders			Resourcing		Priory		
	Notes Key process and outcome indicators have been identified in the Recreation Strategy.	Schools, Clubs, YMCA, PAG, YacVic, Neighbourhood Houses	Within operational budget						M
		COUNCIL ROLE/S							
	Other Strategies that Support Action Recreation Strategy – Action No. 20	Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy	Innov/Lead	Fac./Comm			
				■		■			
5.	Identify and encourage opportunities to increase the profile of community and professional arts and expand participation opportunities.	Stakeholders			Resourcing		Priory		
	Notes	General community, arts	Within operational budget						M

SECTION 2 – ACTIONS THAT ADDRESS NEEDS AND ISSUES RELATING TO *HEALTH AND WELLBEING*

	opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for 'at risk' young people - that respond to the aspirations of young people e.g. business development, 'community giving' - that address wider community engagement needs and priorities e.g. intergenerational programs such as mobile phone instruction to older adults by young people. 				ty	
	Notes	Health and wellbeing agencies, youth groups, schools, sports clubs churches, YacVic,	Within operational budget Seek external specific project funding		S	
	Other Strategies that Support Action	COUNCIL ROLE/S				
		Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy	Innov/Lead	Fac./Comm
				■	■	■
17.	Work with relevant community groups and government agencies to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plan for the long term viability of the 'Men's Sheds' being considered/established in Boort, Inglewood and Wedderburn and - encourage strategies that increase participation by young people. 		Resourcing		Priory	
	Notes	Health and wellbeing agencies, township committees, youth groups, schools,	Within operational budget		S	
	Other Strategies that Support Action	COUNCIL ROLE/S				
		Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy	Innov/Lead	Fac./Comm
					■	■
18.	Actively encourage the establishment and promotion of exercise programs/classes for a range of age groups e.g. youth fitness programs.	Stakeholders	Resourcing		Priory	
	Notes	General community, Sports Focus, District Health, Services, township groups, schools, Doctors, YMCA, VCOTA, DVC, YacVic	Within operational budget		L	
	Other Strategies that Support Action	COUNCIL ROLE/S				
	Recreation Strategy – Action No.6	Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy	Innov/Lead	Fac./Comm
				■	■	■
19.	Work with schools and local clubs/organisations to identify opportunities for increasing the number of schools involved in the 'Active After Schools' program.	Stakeholders	Resourcing		Priory	
	Notes	YMCA, schools, DVC, YacVic	Within operational budget		S	
		COUNCIL ROLE/S				

SECTION 3 – ACTIONS THAT ADDRESS NEEDS AND ISSUES RELATING TO *EDUCATION TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT*

25.	Advocate to the State Government for funding to the Gateways for Sustainable Communities project so as to maximise benefits for the young people of Loddon.	Stakeholders	Resourcing	Pri ori ty
	Notes	Schools, business networks, YacVic, township groups	Within operational budget	S
	Other Strategies that Support Action	COUNCIL ROLE/S		
		Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy
				▪
26.	That Council work with the project Steering Committee to maximise opportunities associated with the 'Gateways For Sustainable Communities' project.	Stakeholders	Resourcing	Pri ori ty
	Notes	Schools, business networks, YacVic, township groups	Within operational budget	ongoing
	Other Strategies that Support Action	COUNCIL ROLE/S		
		Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy
				▪
27.	As part of a wider strategy to foster a partnership with a metropolitan Local Government Authority, investigate work experience placements for young people.	Stakeholders	Resourcing	Pri ori ty
	Notes	Schools, employment agencies, NCLLEN	Within operational budget	L
	Other Strategies that Support Action	COUNCIL ROLE/S		
		Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy
		▪	▪	▪
28.	That Council identifies opportunities for work experience placements for young people within Council operations and sets up a trial program.	Stakeholders	Resourcing	Pri ori ty
	Notes	Schools, employment agencies, NCLLEN	Within operational budget	S
	Other Strategies that Support Action	COUNCIL ROLE/S		
		Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy
		▪	▪	▪
29.	Support schools, community groups and service networks to create seamless pathways to community engagement e.g. to services, to recreation opportunities, to support networks.	Stakeholders	Resourcing	Pri ori ty
	Notes	Community groups, service providers, youth groups, schools, sports clubs churches	Within operational budget	M
	Other Strategies that Support Action	COUNCIL ROLE/S		
		Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy

SECTION 4 – ACTIONS THAT ADDRESS NEEDS AND ISSUES RELATING TO *SERVICE, SUPPORT AND INFORMATION*

							ty
	Notes	Young people, schools, DVC, yth groups, YacVic, DIIRD	Seek matching funding (Office for Youth)	Youth Strategy 2008-2013			S
		COUNCIL ROLE/S					
	Other Strategies that Support Action Recreation Strategy – Action No.18	Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy	Innov/Lead	Fac./Comm	▪
31.	Investigate opportunities for establishing a ‘Loddon Young Peoples’ website (linked to Council’s website) that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - includes information about to recreation opportunities - includes information about health and wellbeing support services - considers the requirements of different age groups e.g. young teens, young adults. 	Stakeholders			Resourcing	Priority	
	Notes	Community groups, schools, OY, DVC, DIIRD, Church groups, District Health Services	Within operational budget				M
		COUNCIL ROLE/S					
	Other Strategies that Support Action Recreation Strategy – Action No.23	Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy	Innov/Lead	Fac./Comm	▪
32.	<u>Identify barriers</u> that prevent young people from accessing health and wellbeing support and develop ‘whole of community’ strategies to minimise these barriers.	Stakeholders			Resourcing	Priority	
	Notes	Service providers	Within operational budget				S
		COUNCIL ROLE/S					
	Other Strategies that Support Action	Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy	Innov/Lead	Fac./Comm	▪
33.	Work with health service providers (including doctors) to <u>identify opportunities</u> to minimise barriers that prevent young people accessing services in a timely and appropriate manner.	Stakeholders			Resourcing	Priority	
	Notes	Service providers	Within operational budget				M
		COUNCIL ROLE/S					
	Other Strategies that Support Action	Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy	Innov/Lead	Fac./Comm	▪
34.	Identify the type and extent of issues that related to the 18-25 age group in Loddon and develop strategies that respond to these issues.	Stakeholders			Resourcing	Priority	
	Notes	Service providers, youth groups, schools, church groups	Within operational budget				L
		COUNCIL ROLE/S					
	Other Strategies that Support Action	Pol/Plan	Prov/Manag	Advocacy	Innov/Lead	Fac./Comm	-

Appendix 1 – Research and Consultation

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND RESEARCH

SECTION 1 – School Surveys

Surveys were conducted with secondary and primary school students. This section provides a summary of survey findings.

SECTION 1.1 – PRIMARY SCHOOL AGED YOUNG PEOPLE

This section provides findings from a survey conducted with 41 11 and 12 year olds from East Loddon P-12, Pyramid Hill College and Boort Primary School.

Table 1 – Breakdown of Survey Respondents by Age

AGE	% of Respondents
11	44% (18)
12	56% (23)

Table 2 – Breakdown of Respondents by School

SCHOOL	% of Respondents
East Loddon P-12	27% (11)
Pyramid Hill College	20% (8)
Boort Primary School	53% (22)
Total	100% (41)

Table 3 – Number of Students that have Visited a

Secondary College

SCHOOL	% Visited a Secondary College	
	YES	NO
East Loddon P-12	100% (11)	
Pyramid Hill College	100% (8)	
Boort Primary School	41% (9)	59% (13)

Table 4 – MOST like About Secondary College

	MOST LIKE	NO.
1	Establishing new friendships	6
2	New challenges	10

3	Choosing electives	7
4	Broader options	18
5	Variety of teachers and responsibilities	1
6	More organised	1

Table 5 - LEAST like About Secondary College

	LEAST LIKE	NO.
1	Homework	21
2	Nothing in particular	6
3	Workload	6
4	Specific subjects – Maths, Science English	4
5	Detention/discipline	3
6	Being the Youngest/Older students	2
7	Not getting a job	2
8	Bullying	1
9	New teachers	1
10	Establishing new friendships	1
11	Not achieving good marks	1

Table 6 – The Type of Activities that Young People do NOW in their Spare Time

	TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	% of Respondents		
		Most Days	Once a week or more	Rarely/Never or not answered
1	Watching TV, DVDs or playing on the computer.	56% (23)	86% (36)	0
2	Activities like bike riding or skateboarding or horseriding.	49% (20)	73% (30)	7%(3)
3	Playing sport with my friends that doesn't involve competition like shooting hoops.	41% (17)	61% (25)	15%(6)
4	Play a competitive sport like football, netball or hockey.	39% (16)	90% (37)	2%(1)
5	Going to the gym or doing exercises to keep fit.	29% (12)	51% (21)	22%(9)
6	Hanging out at home or a friends place doing things like talking or listening to music.	24% (10)	46% (19)	4%(2)
7	Activities like drama, painting or making things.	22% (9)	46% (19)	14%(6)
8	Hang about town, in parks or the streets with my friends.	15% (6)	42% (17)	22%(9)
9	Going to watch a sport or recreation activity.	5% (2)	46% (19)	22%(9)
10	Going to a music concert or music event.	2% (1)	12% (5)	68%(28)
11	Going to an activity like youth club, guides or scouts.	2% (1)	24% (10)	48%(20)
12	Doing something like volunteering with the CFA or the SES.	0	2% (1)	73%(30)

Table 7 – The Type of Activities that Young People Would Like to do More of in the FUTURE.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES		% of Respondents 'interested'		
		Interested	Not Interested	Not Sure/Not answered
1	Play a competitive sport like football, netball or hockey.	90% (37)	2% (1)	7% (3)
2	Hanging out at home or a friends place doing things like talking or listening to music.	80% (33)	10% (4)	10% (4)
3	Going to the gym or doing exercises to keep fit.	78% (32)	7% (3)	14% (6)
4	Playing sport with my friends that doesn't involve competition like shooting hoops.	78% (32)	7% (3)	15% (6)
5	Activities like bike riding or skateboarding or horseriding.	73% (30)	15% (6)	12% (5)
6	Hang about town, in parks or the streets with my friends.	73% (30)	15% (6)	12% (5)
7	Activities like drama, painting or making things.	66% (27)	20% (8)	14% (6)
8	Going to watch a sport or recreation activity.	61% (25)	22% (9)	17% (7)
9	Going to a music concert or music event.	59% (24)	20% (8)	22% (9)
10	Watching TV, DVDs or playing on the computer.	51% (21)	24% (10)	24% (10)
11	Going to an activity like youth club, guides or scouts.	46% (19)	22% (9)	31% (13)
12	Doing something like volunteering with the CFA or the SES.	20% (8)	37% (15)	44% (18)

Observations from Table 6 and 7

- Activities that respondents are CURRENTLY more likely to engage in on a daily basis are those that do not require any organised participation structure. They include activities such as bike riding, skateboarding, 'shooting hoops'. However sport is likely to be played on a weekly basis by 90% of respondents.
- Generally speaking these age groups are likely to have a FUTURE interest in active or sport related activities more so than more passive or less active past-times.
- In the FUTURE these age groups are likely to be attracted to sport but also to activities that they can do on a casual basis e.g. the gym, 'shooting hoops' and bikeriding and/or skateboarding.
- The activities that are least likely to attract these age groups in the FUTURE are related to youth clubs and volunteer based organisations such as the CFA. However there is a significant number that indicated they 'are not sure' about these activities. This suggests there may be some opportunity for related groups to attract young people with appropriate programs and information.
- Making provision for young people in public spaces is likely to be a priority for the FUTURE as are opportunities relating to the arts and creative expression e.g. drama, painting, music events.

Table 8 – How Young People Feel

	STATEMENTS	% of Respondents Stating as 'Extremely True' + 'True'		
		Extremely True	Extremely True + True	Not True (Total)

			(Total)	
1	I feel respected and cared for by my family or someone in my family.	73%(30)	95%(39)	4%(2)
2	I like the place or places where I live.	71%(29)	95%(39)	4%(2)
3	I can talk openly with at least 1 adult that I live with.	66%(27)	90%(37)	9%(4)
4	I like myself and who I am.	56%(23)	90%(37)	9%(4)
5	I want to do better at school or improve my education levels.	56%(23)	93%(38)	7%(3)
6	I think that I am a capable and good person.	54%(22)	93%(38)	7%(3)
7	I feel very supported by people in my community, like people from my sporting club or church.	49%(20)	88%(36)	11%(5)
8	I want to have more courage to speak out about things that I believe in.	46%(19)	70%(29)	29%(12)
9	I have an adult <u>outside my family</u> that I respect and can talk to easily about things like relationships and things that bother me.	39%(16)	63%(26)	36%(15)
10	I would like to have more adults in my life that I respect and can turn to.	34%(14)	71%(29)	29%(12)
11	I want to make more of a difference in my community.	27%(11)	68%(28)	31%(13)
12	I wish that there were more people and places that I could go to for support when I need it.	24%(10)	46%(19)	54%(22)
13	I enjoy school.	20%(8)	76%(31)	24%(10)

Observations from Table 8

- Generally speaking these respondents have a positive outlook on life, that is they feel good about themselves, like where they live and feel respected and supported.
- Even though most respondents say that they have an adult in their family (90%) and another outside their family (63%) that they can talk to 71% said that they would like to have more adults in their life that they respect and can turn to.
- 70% of respondents stated they want to have more courage to speak out about things that they believe in and 68% stated they want to make more of a difference in their community.

Table 9 – Things that Worry Young People

	STATEMENTS	% of Respondents Stating as 'Extremely True' + 'True'		
		Extremel y True	Extremely True + True (Total)	Not True (Total)
1	Lacking confidence or feeling too embarrassed to talk about personal things.	15%(6)	44%(18)	56%(23)
2	Feeling that I wont do well enough at school.	10%(4)	42%(17)	58%(24)
3	Not feeling supported by my family.	12%(5)	24%(10)	75%(31)
4	Not having the confidence to stand up to the things that I	10%(4)	32%(13)	68%(28)

	STATEMENTS	% of Respondents Stating as 'Extremely True' + 'True'		
		Extremely True	Extremely True + True (Total)	Not True (Total)
	believe in.			
5	Some of the things my friends do that I feel uncomfortable about.	10%(4)	30%(12)	71%(29)
6	Worried about having to leave home to go to school or work.	10%(4)	30%(12)	71%(29)
7	About not being able to say 'no' to things I don't really want to do.	10%(4)	25%(10)	75%(31)
8	Doing things that I know aren't really right or good to be doing.	10%(4)	24%(10)	75%(31)
9	Not knowing where to go to get help with private and personal things.	10%(4)	22%(9)	79%(32)
10	Not having anyone to talk to about things that bother me.	7%(3)	19%(8)	80%(33)

Observations from Table 9

- The most worrying thing for respondents relate to feeling embarrassed or not having the confidence to talk about personal things (44%) and fear of not doing well at school (42%).
- Approximately 1/3rd of respondents are worried about things their friends get up to, not having the confidence to stand up for what they believe in, and about having to leave home for school or work.

SECTION 1.2 – SECONDARY SCHOOL AGED YOUNG PEOPLE

A survey was conducted with 359 young people. Surveys were conducted through local schools therefore the majority of respondents are of school age. The majority of young people attended school fulltime (327) at the time of the survey, the remainder worked fulltime or part time or were unemployed (29).

Table 1 – Breakdown of Survey Respondents by Age

AGE	% of Respondents
Under 14	29% (104)
14	18% (64)
15	19% (68)
16	14% (49)
17	10% (37)
18	4% (13)
19	1% (3)
20 and over	5% (20)

Table 2 – Breakdown of Survey Respondents by Gender

GENDER	% of
--------	------

	Respondents
Females	53% (192)
Males	46% (165)
Total	100% (359)

Table 3 – Breakdown of respondents by Ward

WARD	%/ No. of Respondents
Terrick	18% (64)
Kooyoora	5% (19)
Boort	24% (85)
Wedderburn	29% (103)
Not answered	24% (87)

Table 4 – Breakdown of Survey Respondents by Work/School Status

WORK/SCHOOL STATUS	% of Respondents
I am currently at school full-time.	91% (327)
I work full-time.	3% (11)
I work part-time but I am not at school.	1% (5)
I am at school part-time and work part-time.	3% (9)
I am not working or at school at the moment.	1% (4)

Table 5A – The Type of Activities that Young People do Now in their Spare Time by GENDER.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES		% of Respondents			
		Most Days (Total)	At least Once a Fortnight		
			Total	Females	Males
1	Watching TV, DVDs or playing on the computer.	61	89	91	88
2	Hanging out at home or a friends place doing things like talking or listening to music.	40	77	79	74
3	Activities like bike riding or skateboarding or horseriding.	33	65	62	68
4	Playing sport with my friends that doesn't involve competition like shooting hoops.	23	64	57	73
5	Hang about town, in parks or the streets with my friends.	19	46	49	41
6	Play a competitive sport like football, netball or hockey.	19	72	68	78
7	Going to the gym or doing exercises to keep fit.	19	50	52	49
8	Going to watch a sport or recreation activity.	6	44	39	50
9	Activities like drama, painting or making things.	6	39	44	33
10	Going to a music concert or music event.	4	13	8	17
11	Doing something like volunteering with the CFA or the	2	14	14	14

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES		% of Respondents			
		Most Days (Total)	At least Once a Fortnight		
			Total	Females	Males
1	SES.				
1 2	Going to an activity like youth club, guides or scouts.	1	18	17	18

Observations from Table 5A (including cross tabulations):

- The most popular recreation activities are those that do not involve physical activity e.g. watching TV and hanging out at a friend's place. On a fortnightly basis these activities are likely to be more popular for females (91%, 79% respectively), than males (88%, 74%).
- Activities that are likely to be more popular for FEMALES than MALES are:
 - Watching TV, DVDs etc. (females 91%, males 88%);
 - Hanging out at home or at a friend's (females 79%, males 74%);
 - Hang about town, in parks or the streets with my friends (females 49%, males 41%);
 - Going to the gym or doing exercises to keep fit (females 52%, males 49%);
 - Activities like drama, painting or making things (females 44%, males 33%).
- Activities that are likely to be more popular for MALES than FEMALES are:
 - Activities like bike riding or skateboarding or horseriding (males 68%, females 62%);
 - Playing sport with friends that doesn't involve competition e.g. shooting hoops (males 73%, females 57%);
 - Play a competitive sport like football, netball or hockey (males 78%, females 68%);
 - Going to watch a sport or recreation activity (males 50%, females 39%);
 - Going to a music concert or music event (males 17%, females 8%).
- Young people are likely to engage in sedentary or social activities more frequently than active past-times including sport.
- On a fortnightly basis young people are likely to engage in structured sporting activities more frequently than unstructured physical activities. However on a daily basis there is a higher level of participation in unstructured physical activities like skateboarding or bikeriding. This suggests that if young people are to be encouraged into a more active lifestyle then provision for informal or unstructured activities has to be enhanced.
- Even though activities like volunteering with the CFA or SES and attending youth clubs do not attract as high a level of participation as other activities they are still very important. These activities provide alternative recreation opportunities for young people and provide learning, social and community service environments from which young people learn different skills and values.

Table 5B – The Type of Activities that Young People do Now in their Spare Time by GENDER.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES		% of Respondents				
		At least Once a Fortnight				
		Total	Terrick	Kooyoora	Boort	Wedderb
1	Watching TV, DVDs or playing on the computer.	89	91	89	85	89
2	Hanging out at home or at a friend's place doing	77	63	89	80	80

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES		% of Respondents				
		At least Once a Fortnight				
		Total	Terrick	Kooyoora	Boort	Wedderb
	things like talking or listening to music.					
3	Activities like bike riding or skateboarding or horseriding.	65	63	74	72	55
4	Playing sport with my friends that doesn't involve competition like shooting hoops.	64	61	53	75	58
5	Hang about town, in parks or the streets with my friends.	46	31	58	62	49
6	Play a competitive sport like football, netball or hockey.	72	77	63	78	57
7	Going to the gym or doing exercises to keep fit.	50	58	47	53	40
8	Going to watch a sport or recreation activity.	44	55	37	51	28
9	Activities like drama, painting or making things.	39	38	26	45	34
10	Going to a music concert or music event.	13	11	Nos. too small	13	12
11	Doing something like volunteering with the CFA or the SES.	14	23	Nos. too small	8	12
12	Going to an activity like youth club, guides or scouts.	18	14	11	28	9

Observations from Table 5B (including cross tabulations):

- Young people from Boort Ward are likely to be more engaged with their community (across a number of activities/groups) than young people from other wards.
- Young people in TERRICK WARD are likely to have a higher than Shire average level of participation in the following type of activities:
 - Watching TV, DVDs or playing on the computer of activities (91%);
 - Formal sport (78%);
 - Going to the gym (53%);
 - Watching sport (51%);
 - Volunteering with groups like the CFA or SES (23%).
- Young people in KOOYOORA WARD are likely to have a higher than Shire average level of participation in the following type of activities:
 - Hanging around at home or at friends places (89%);
 - Activities like skateboarding and bikeriding (74%);
 - Hanging about in town or in parks with friends (58%).
- Young people in BOORT WARD are likely to have a higher than Shire average level of participation in the following type of activities:
 - Hanging around at home or at friends places (80%);
 - Formal sport (78%);
 - Unstructured recreation activities like shooting hoops (75%);
 - Activities like skateboarding and bikeriding (72%);
 - Hanging about in town or in parks with friends (62%);
 - Going to the gym (53%);
 - Watching sport (51%);
 - Arts related activities like drama (45%);
 - Youth groups (28%).
- Young people in WEDDERBURN WARD are likely to have a higher than Shire average level of participation in the following type of activities:
 - Hanging around at home or at friends places (80%);

- Hanging about in town or in parks with friends (49%).

Table 6 – The Type of Activities that Young People Would Like to do More of in the FUTURE.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES		% of Respondents 'interested'		
		Total	Females	Males
1	Play a competitive sport like football, netball or hockey.	76	76	76
2	Playing sport with my friends that doesn't involve competition like shooting hoops.	74	74	75
3	Hanging out at home or a friends place doing things like talking or listening to music.	73	78	67
4	Activities like bike riding or skateboarding or horseriding.	65	65	65
4	Going to the gym or doing exercises to keep fit.	65	71	67
4	Going to a music concert or music event.	65	73	57
4	Going to watch a sport or recreation activity.	65	64	66
4	Watching TV, DVDs or playing on the computer.	65	64	67
9	Hang about town, in parks or the streets with my friends.	60	61	59
10	Activities like drama, painting or making things.	40	53	24
11	Doing something like volunteering with the CFA or the SES.	23	22	24
12	Going to an activity like youth club, guides or scouts.	22	18	27

Observations from Table 6 (including cross tabulations):

- Overall young people are indicating a desire to get more involved in 'active' past-times that relate to structured sport (76%), unstructured sport (74%) and casual recreation opportunities like skateboarding and bikeriding (65%) and gymnasium/fitness activities (65).
- There is likely to be a significant increase in demand for:
 - Opportunities to go and watch sport as indicated by a current participation of 44% and potential future demand of 65%;
 - Activities associated with gymnasium/fitness activities/facilities as indicated by a current participation of 50% and potential future demand of 65% (higher demand by girls at 71%);
 - Opportunities to 'hang about' in the streets/parks as indicated by a current participation of 46% and potential future demand of 60%;
 - Opportunities to engage in sport on a casual basis e.g. shooting hoops as indicated by a current participation of 64% and potential future demand of 74%;
 - Access to groups such as the SES or CFA as indicated by a current participation of 14% and potential future demand of 23%;
- Future demand for the following is likely to remain similar to or slightly increase from current levels:
 - Access to sporting opportunities indicated by a current participation of 72% and potential future demand by 76%;

- Activities like drama, painting or making things indicated by a current participation of 39% and potential future demand by 40%;
- Activities like youth club, guides or scouts indicated by a current participation of 18% and potential future demand by 24%;
- 'Active' past-times that are likely to be more popular for FEMALES than MALES in the future are:
 - Going to the gym or doing exercises to keep fit (females 71%, males 67%);
 - Going to a music concert or music event (females 73%, males 57%);
 - Activities like drama, painting or making things (females 53%, males 24%).
- 'Active' past-times that are likely to be more popular for MALES than FEMALES in the future are:
 - Going to watch a sport or recreation activity (males 66%, females 64%);
 - Doing something like volunteering with the CFA or the SES (males 24%, females 22%);
 - Going to an activity like youth club, guides or scouts (males 27%, females 18%).

Table 7 – The Type of Community Activities that Young People Would Consider Getting More Involved In.

THINGS THAT YOUNG PEOPLE WOULD CONSIDER GETTING MORE INVOLVED IN		% of All Respondents 'extremely true'	% of Respondents 'extremely true' + 'true'		
			Total	Female	Male
	Helping at my sports club.	21	67	66	69
	Something that helped us get more for young people to do in our community.	21	62	67	57
	Something that raised funds for a cause that was meaningful to me.	20	64	72	56
	Something to support other young people who need support.	17	60	70	49
	Something that helped make adults more understanding of the young people in the community.	16	58	63	53
	Helping people in the community that are less fortunate than me.	13	53	63	43
	Something that helped make my community more united.	12	49	49	48
	A project with adults so that I could learn how to run events and organise things.	11	48	52	44
	Organising a community event or activity for <u>young people/ young adults</u> .	9	46	55	36
	Organising an event for the <u>whole community</u> .	9	36	44	27

Observations from Table 7 (including cross tabulations):

- Generally speaking females are far more likely to express an interest in getting involved across various community activities/sectors than males.
- It is not necessarily that young people do not want to work with adults on community projects and activities. The survey does indicate that there is a desire for activities/programs that increase adults understanding of young people (58%

overall, for females this is higher at 68%) and a desire to work with adults that they could learn from (48%, for females this is higher at 52%).

- Top 4 activities/things that are likely to influence MALES to get more involved in their community:
 - Opportunities to help at their sports club;
 - Something that helps them get more for young people to do in their community;

WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO GET MORE INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY	% of Respondents Stating as 'extremely true' + 'true'		
	Total	Females	Males
If my friends got involved.	82	86	78
If I had more time.	76	78	75
If I knew more about what was going on.	76	79	73
If the adults involved are ones that I respect and who respect me.	75	78	72
If it was run mainly by young people.	66	69	62
If I had more confidence.	64	69	57
If I thought that I could really make a difference or add value.	64	67	62
If I could get more motivated.	59	61	58
If my family was supportive.	48	48	48
There is no way that I would get any more involved in my community.	23	21	25
If my friends didn't know.	20	17	25

- Something that raises funds for a cause that was meaningful to them;
- Something that helps make adults more understanding of the young people in their community.
- Top 4 activities/things that are likely to influence FEMALES to get more involved in their community:
 - Something that raises funds for a cause that was meaningful to them;
 - Something to assist other young people who need support;
 - Something that helps them get more for young people to do in our community;
 - Opportunities to help at their sports club.

Table 8 – Factors that Would Encourage Young People To Get More Involved in the Community.

Observations from Table 8 (including cross tabulations):

- Generally speaking females are far more likely to express an interest in getting more involved across various community activities/sectors than males.
- Over $\frac{3}{4}$ of young people state that they are more likely to get involved if they knew more about what was going on.
- Lack of motivation is likely to be an issue for over 60% of young people, while nearly half state that a more supportive family would likely increase their involvement.
- The factor most likely to influence whether a young person will get more involved in community based activities is likely to relate to whether their friends are involved

(82% of survey respondents). This is likely to be a more important factor for females (86%) than males (78%).

- A lack of time is likely to be a major barrier to involvement, with 75% identifying this as a major consideration.
- 66% of young people (69% for females and 62% for males) are more likely to get involved if it is run by young people. In addition, young people are likely to be strongly influenced by the respect that they have for the adults involved (75%).
- Approximately ¼ of young people are likely to have no interest at all in getting involved in their community. This attitude is likely to be more prevalent in Terrick and Kooyoora Wards.
- There is also likely to be a ¼ of young people who would only get involved if their friends didn't know. This is likely to be a more significant influence for males (25%) than females (17%).

Table 9 – Yong People's Rating of Existing Programs

	ACTIVITIES	% of Respondents Stating as 'Really Good'	% of Respondents Stating as 'Really Good' + 'Good'		
			Total	Females	Males
	Trips to see sporting events in places like Bendigo or Melbourne.	36	57	57	58
	Freeza music events or concerts.	30	53	53	52
	Sports clinics and skill development programs.	26	52	50	54
	Events organised for young people during the holidays.	22	45	46	42
	Young Leaders Program.	16	34	36	32
	Programs run by groups like the CFA and SES.	13	31	28	35
	Other	6	9	4	15

Observations from Table 9 (including cross tabulations):

- Over 50% of young people are likely to state that sports clinics/skill development programs, freeza events and trips to Melbourne or Bendigo to watch sporting events are 'good' or 'very good'.

Table 10A – How Young People Feel (True)

	STATEMENTS	% of Respondents Stating as 'Extremely True' + 'True'		
		Total	Females	Males
1	I think that I am a capable and good person.	82	82	82
2	I feel respected and cared for by my family or someone in my family.	82	82	82
3	I like myself and who I am.	78	76	81
4	I want to do better at school or improve my education levels.	77	80	75
5	I like the place or places where I live.	74	70	78
6	I can talk openly with at least 1 adult that I live with.	72	69	75

7	I have an adult <u>outside my family</u> that I respect and can talk to easily about things like relationships and things that bother me.	70	71	69
8	I want to have more courage to speak out about things that I believe in.	67	71	62
9	I feel very supported by people in my community, like people from my sporting club or church.	64	64	65
10	I enjoy school.	60	60	61
11	I want to make more of a difference in my community.	59	59	59
12	I would like to have more adults in my life that I respect and can turn to.	57	57	58
13	I wish that there were more people and places that I could go to for support when I need it.	53	53	53

Table 10B - How Young People Feel (Not True)

	STATEMENTS	% of Respondents Stating as 'Extremely NOT True' + 'NOT True'		
		Total	Females	Males
1	I wish that there were more people and places that I could go to for support when I need it.	38	38	38
2	I would like to have more adults in my life that I respect and can turn to.	36	35	36
3	I want to make more of a difference in my community.	35	35	33
4	I enjoy school.	32	31	32
5	I feel very supported by people in my community, like people from my sporting club or church.	30	29	29
6	I want to have more courage to speak out about things that I believe in.	26	22	30
7	I have an adult <u>outside my family</u> that I respect and can talk to easily about things like relationships and things that bother me.	25	23	25
8	I can talk openly with at least 1 adult that I live with.	22	24	19
9	I like the place or places where I live.	19	23	15
10	I like myself and who I am.	16	17	13
11	I want to do better at school or improve my education levels.	15	13	18
12	I think that I am a capable and good person.	12	11	12
13	I feel respected and cared for by my family or someone in my family.	9	8	10

Observations from Table 10A and 10B (including cross tabulations):

- More females than males:
 - Want to do better at school and improve their education levels (females 80%, males 75%);
 - Want to have more courage to speak out about things that they believe in (females 71%, males 62%).
- More males than females:
 - Like 'who they are' (males 81%, females 76%);
 - Like the place or places where they live (males 78%, females 70%);
 - Feel that they can talk openly with at least 1 adult that they live with (males 75%, females 69%)

- Over half of the young people surveyed want:
 - To make more of a difference in their community (59%);
 - Would like to have more adults in their life that they respect and can turn to (57%);
 - More people and places that they could turn to for support (53%);
- Nearly 25% of FEMALES stated:
 - That they cannot talk openly with any adult that they live with (19% for males);
 - That they do not like the place or places where they live (15% for males);
 - They do not have an adult outside their family that they respect and can talk to (25% for males).
- Nearly 1/3rd of young people stated that they do not enjoy school (32%) and do not feel supported by people in their community (30%).
- Generally speaking 16 year olds followed by 15 year olds are likely to feel less positive about themselves and their environment scoring lower on points relating to feeling positive about themselves, wanting to 'engage', enjoying school, liking the place where they live and feeling supported.
- Generally speaking, young people still at school are likely to:
 - Like where they live compared to those not at school (75%, 55%);
 - Want to do better at school/improve education levels compared to those not at school (79%, 59%);
 - Want to have more courage to speak out about things that they believe in compared to those not at school (68%, 52%);
 - Feel cared for by their family/someone in their family compared to those not at school (83%, 72%);
 - Want more people in their lives that they can talk to compared to those not at school (58%, 48%).

Table 11 – Things That Worry Young People

	STATEMENTS	% of Respondents Stating as 'Extremely True' + 'True'		
		Total	Females	Males
1	Feeling that I wont do well enough at school.	49	54	45
2	Lacking confidence or feeling too embarrassed to talk about personal things.	45	47	44
3	Not having the confidence to stand up to the things that I believe in.	43	44	41
4	Not feeling supported by my family.	38	39	38
5	Not knowing where to go to get help with private and personal things.	36	33	41
6	Some of the things my friends do that I feel uncomfortable about.	36	39	35
7	About not being able to say 'no' to things I don't really want to do.	35	34	35
8	Doing things that I know aren't really right or good to be doing.	34	35	33
9	Not having anyone to talk to about things that bother me.	34	31	37
10	Worried about having to leave home to go to school or work.	30	28	32

Observations from Table 11 (including cross tabulations):

- The most worrying thing for over half the young people of Loddon is the fear of not doing well enough at school. This is more of a concern for females (54%) than it is for males (45%).
- The 4 most concerning issues for young MALES in Loddon relate to:

- Feeling that they won't do well enough at school (45%);
 - Lacking confidence or feeling too embarrassed to talk about personal things (44%);
 - Not having the confidence to stand up to the things that they believe in (41%);
 - Not knowing where to go to get help with private and personal things (41%).
- The 4 most concerning issues for young FEMALES in Loddon relate to:
 - Feeling that they won't do well enough at school (45%);
 - Lacking confidence or feeling too embarrassed to talk about personal things (44%);
 - Not having the confidence to stand up to the things that they believe in (41%);
 - Not feeling supported by their family (39%);
 - Feeling uncomfortable about things that their friends are doing (39%)
 - Decision-making around 'moral dilemmas' are likely to be a significant issue for over 1/3rd of young people, for example:
 - Lacking confidence to speak out about things that they believe in (45%);
 - Feeling uncomfortable about things that their friends are doing (36%);
 - Doing things that they know are not right or should not be doing (34%).

SECTION 1.3 – COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW BETWEEN OLDER AND YOUNGER AGE GROUPS

Consistent with national participation trends (sport and recreation), younger age groups in Loddon are likely to be significantly more active than older age groups.

In particular younger age groups are likely to be significantly more active on a daily basis in relation to casual recreation activities like bikeriding, skateboard riding and horseriding (49% for 11/12 yr olds, 33% for 14-20 yr olds), playing social/casual sport (41% for 11/12 yr olds, 23% for 14-20 yr olds), competitive sport (39% for 11/12 yr olds, 19% for 14-20 yr olds) and going to the gym (29% for 11/12 yr olds, 19% for 14-20 yr olds).

Older age groups are also more likely to engage in social/passive activities such as talking and listening to music than younger age groups (24% for 11/12 yr olds, 41% for 14-20 yr olds).

Younger age groups appear more optimistic about their level of future involvement in recreation activities than older age groups. On a daily basis younger age groups see themselves as significantly more involved than do older groups in sport (90% 76%), going to the gym (78% 65%), active recreation activities like bikeriding (73% 65%), drama and creative arts (66% 46%), and youth community service groups (46% 22%).

Table 1 – How Young People Feel About Themselves and Their Community (Comparison between Younger and Older age groups)

	STATEMENTS	% of Respondents Stating as 'Extremely True' + 'True'	
		14+ year olds	11/12 year olds
1	I think that I am a capable and good person.	82	93
2	I feel respected and cared for by my family or someone in my family.	82	95
3	I like myself and who I am.	78	90
4	I want to do better at school or improve my education levels.	77	93

5	I like the place or places where I live.	74	95
6	I can talk openly with at least 1 adult that I live with.	72	90
7	I have an adult <u>outside my family</u> that I respect and can talk to easily about things like relationships and things that bother me.	70	63
8	I want to have more courage to speak out about things that I believe in.	67	70
9	I feel very supported by people in my community, like people from my sporting club or church.	64	88
10	I enjoy school.	60	76
11	I want to make more of a difference in my community.	59	68
12	I would like to have more adults in my life that I respect and can turn to.	57	71
13	I wish that there were more people and places that I could go to for support when I need it.	53	46

Observations from Table 1

- Indications are that the younger age groups are generally more optimistic than older age groups in relation to themselves, their community and their relationships
- In particular younger people feel more supported by their community (88 64) and family (95, 82), like where they live (95 74), want to make a difference to their community (68, 59), want to do better at school (93, 77) and enjoy school significantly more than older age groups (76, 60).
- Older age groups are likely to want more people and places they can go to for help (53%, 46%).

Table 2 – Things That Worry Young People (Comparison between Younger and Older age groups)

	STATEMENTS	% of Respondents Stating as 'Extremely True' + 'True'	
		14+ year olds	11/12 year olds
	Feeling that I won't do well enough at school.	49	42
	Lacking confidence or feeling too embarrassed to talk about personal things.	45	44
	Not having the confidence to stand up to the things that I believe in.	43	32
4	Not feeling supported by my family.	38	24
5	Not knowing where to go to get help with private and personal things.	36	22
	Some of the things my friends do that I feel uncomfortable about.	36	30
	About not being able to say 'no' to things I don't really want to do.	35	25
	Doing things that I know aren't really right or good to be doing.	34	24
9	Not having anyone to talk to about things that bother me.	34	19
10	Worried about having to leave home to go to school or work.	30	30

Observations from Table 2

- Indications are that older age groups are more anxious about a range of life matters. There is a significant difference between the two age groups in relation to not having someone to talk to about things that trouble them (14+ yr olds 34%, 11/12 yr olds 19%), not knowing where to go to get help with private matters (14+ yr olds 36%, 11/12 yr

olds 22%) and not feeling supported by their family (14+ yr olds 38%, 11/12 yr olds 24%).

- Both age groups are likely to feel similarly about having to leave home for schooling or work, lacking the confidence to talk about personal things, and being concerned about some of the things that their friends do.

SECTION 2 – ONSITE INTERVIEWS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE OVER 18

This section provides a summary of feedback from face-to-face interviews with aged 18-25. The interviews were conducted at a number of sites including sporting events and hotels.

Below are the questions asked of respondents and their responses.

Question 1 - What do you think are the good things about your community?

- Mostly the people are all good people
- Peaceful place to live in
- People more forgiving than big towns
- Volunteering
- Health and community services
- Sport and recreation facilities i.e. Cricket, Football, Tennis, and Bowls
- Neighbourhood and Community Houses
- Internet access – able to keep in contact with friends who re-locate
- Pub

Question 2 - What are some of the things that could be better in your community? (i.e. any issues or problems)

- Behaviour of some people
- People thinking they know everything about everyone
- Could have more social activities and things to do specifically aimed at the 18-25 year old age group – i.e. bus trips, camping etc
- Job training to achieve qualifications – easier for job placement
- Something like youth group for us and kids to go to, so can get out and they don't get bored
- Job placement
- Public transport
- Youth and council working together to provide better services

Question 3 - What would you like to see improved in your community?

- Roads – especially the Pyramid Hill to Bendigo road
- More social opportunities
- The advertising and promotion of the different services that already exist – many people may not know what is available and how to access particular services
- Community spirit between local towns and communities
- Training opportunities, different certificates offered to help with getting work
- Job opportunities
- Equipment improvements for football and netball

Question 4 - What type of additional services would you like to see?

- Driver's ed
- Health services such as health information services, and sexual health counsellors

- Gym
- Youth group
- Places like neighbourhood houses in more communities with access to computers
- More youth targeted services as at present there seems to be more individual aimed programs/services

Question 5 - What types of additional activities would you like to see created in the area?

- Horse riding events
- Basketball/volleyball competitions
- Computer access
- Organise youth group activities for older youth: wine tours, camping, movies, pub/club night, concerts and music festivals, attend footy and cricket matches in Melbourne, day trips and weekend camps
- Hold other group meetings: discuss local issues, involve a member of council and help improve services
- Workshops including song writing, story writing, art classes, sport camps etc
- Local dances, include one for older youth

Question 6 - What types of additional facilities would you like to see created or built in the area?

- Cinema
- Solar heated pool with diving board
- Youth activities
- Community centre
- Sports competition – indoor sports
- Skate park
- A centre or building for kids and young adults just to hang out and keep out of trouble
- “I think there are many facilities around the district; the problem is knowing where they exist! e.g. meeting rooms.”
- BMX and trail bike track
- Gym
- Training so don't have to travel to Bendigo

Question 7 - What opportunities already exist for youth in the area? (i.e. name any groups, services, activities or events existing in the local area)

- Courses/activities through neighbourhood house
- Unemployment services
- Health info services
- Some youth groups, pre-driver education, theatre group
- The main opportunities exist in sporting areas and pubs
- “Hardly anything”

Question 8 - How can local groups work better together?

- Listen to each other
- Open communication
- Meet regularly to discuss what needs to be done to improve the community. Organise days where the groups can both attend
- Ask people for suggestions on what they think
- Make more information available to the community
- Advertise meetings so that young people know what they can get involved in.

- I believe that if groups like the football/netball club have functions/nights out etc they should aim at targeting the whole community. More people may not know that you don't have to be an active participant to attend social gatherings.
- Local council should encourage the involvement of local youths

Question 9 - What types of youth do you feel are priorities?

- All ages, but in particular 18+ as this group of individuals are either unemployed/work or study and may lack the financial/knowledge to access services
- The younger primary school age so that they may stay more active in their community and want to stay around the area longer, also before some of the issues become ingrained
- All types of youth!
- Kids leaving school early

Question 10 - How important is it to provide youth services as opposed to other services i.e. seniors? Why?

- Really important to both get kids off the streets, and to help them socialise and be happy
- Equally important as seniors because we need to be able to experience stuff like all the other groups do
- Very important – Youth need all the encouragement they can get. Without encouragement youth aren't able to grow as people or gain life experience.
- You need to keep youth around or the towns will just die!
- Due to a decrease in employment opportunities and an increase in both living costs and more people seeking post-high school education there is an increase in youth leaving rural communities. Therefore it is critical to provide services to encourage young people and their families to remain in their communities.

Question 11 - What barriers exist to young people getting involved in your community with volunteering with existing groups i.e. cost/location?

- Age barriers – many groups consist of older individuals therefore may not appeal to younger people
- Location/transport – groups based outside individual's town
- Lack of information – individuals may not be aware of existing groups or what is available in their area
- The people in charge have trouble with new ideas, often have set ways of doing things and don't want to change
- Older generation often don't put much stock in abilities and responsible awareness of youths.
- Cost is also a struggle
- Don't feel can relate to the older members of committees – the social part really important
- Ask for too much help at times, can make you feel overloaded.
- See the same people volunteering in different groups all of the time
- Doesn't seem interesting
- Ideas not being valued

Question 12 - What should Council's role be in terms of working with youth in the area?

- Lead meetings with the community
- Support existing groups
- Funding
- Be the bosses, and a role model

- Try to get a youth worker that can be involved both with the younger and older youth
- Listen with an open and optimistic mind to all the ideas from youth. Actively seek to obtain grants for many different ideas. If one grant is denied then perhaps another is achievable. Elect a forum from the youth to hear plans and projects and assess their suitability.
- Encourage young people to have a voice in their communities by empowering them to provide feedback and to be involved in helping the council to make decisions about what services should be provided.

Question 13 - What do you think is Council's primary role in supporting youth in the area?

- To provide information on what services exist and how individuals can go about voicing concerns or raising issues concerning their local council/community
- Obtaining grants for 'approvable' ideas and projects
- Supporting youth with financial assistance so different activities can be had for all different ages.
- Supply youth workers to help in these areas
- Assisting the youth to make decisions and changes in the community so that the youth can have some control over the issues they face
- To allow young people's voices to be heard

Appendix 2 – Literature Summary

The following provides an overview of the literature that has been referred to in preparing the Youth Strategy and reference relevant information.

Document 1 – Council Plan

Notes:

- Council Vision – ‘Loddon will be a proud community leading rural Australia as a great place to live, work and visit.’
- Further to Council’s Goal the plan states
‘The Shire will ensure a safe, enjoyable, diverse and comfortable experience through the provision of good quality facilities and services. Whether you are living, working or just visiting, Loddon Shire will provide opportunity for growth, education, job security and adventure.’ (page 3)

Document 2 – Municipal Public Health Plan (2007-2010)

The Loddon Municipal Public Health Plan (MPHP) provides an overview of the health status and needs of the Shire and a series of strategies that respond to these needs.

Notes:

- the completion of a ‘service mapping’ project that documented services available for young people by the North Central Local Learning and Employment Network (NCLLEN)
- the completion of the Recreation Strategy
- the implementation of initiatives such as the Careers Expo in partnership with the NCLLEN.
- funding for two community buses which will assist with greater access to recreation activities as well as access to other services.
- The Good Sports Program which has been conducted with a number of sporting clubs and the PCP
- the Youth Arts Network which has facilitated a range of activities for young people.

Includes the following recommendations relating to young people:

- Reduce binge drinking and associated impacts and increase recreation and support opportunities for young people.

Document 3 – Recreation Strategy (2007-2017)

The Recreation Strategy made a number of recommendations relating to young people.

These are as follows:

12. Encourage initiatives that engage young people in volunteering.
15. Work with schools and local clubs/organisations to identify opportunities for increasing the number of schools involved in the ‘Active After Schools’ program.
17. Implement the recommendations of the 2003 (Youth) Recreation/Skate Strategy.
18. Increase community awareness of young people’s recreation choices.
19. Recognise and support initiatives that encourage participation by people that are ‘isolated in the community’ (e.g. financially, physically).
20. Facilitate discussions between local and regional agencies/organizations to expand the range of Holiday Program opportunities and promote activities.
21. Examine opportunities for Council’s website to:
 - more effectively promote recreation opportunities and provide information to clubs and organisations
 - expand and upgrade information relating to visitor opportunities, and develop brochures that can be downloaded.

23. Investigate community interest in establishing a 'Loddon Young Peoples' website.

Note: These recommendations have been incorporated into the Youth Strategy Action Plan. The timeline for implementing these recommendations (as part of the Youth Strategy) have been considered in view of other issues that have emerged during the preparation of the strategy. Therefore the priority given to the recommendation in the Youth Strategy may differ slightly from that proposed in the Recreation Strategy.

Document 4 – Environmental Scan and Data Analysis (RMCG Consultants for the North Central-Local Learning Employment Network 2007)

Notes that:

- The population of young people in the 15-19 age group in Loddon is estimated to decrease from 564 to 354, or 37.2%, between 2006 and 2031. This compares to a decrease of 2864 (19,086 in 2006 to 16,222 in 2031) or 15% across the NCLLEN region. This compares to a total population decline in Loddon of 8.3%. The most significant decline of young people 15-19 is anticipated in Loddon North.
- Inglewood (+2) is the only town that has experienced an increase in the population of young people 15-19 between 1981 and 2001. Wedderburn and Boort experienced a 24% and 12% decline respectively.
- The number of students across the NCLLEN region studying for their Victorian Certificate in Applied Learning (VCAL) increased from 23% in 2003 to 29% in 2006.
- The four top industry sectors in terms of employment across the NCLLEN region are agriculture/forestry/ fishing, retail trade, health and community services followed by manufacturing.
- For Loddon the four top employment sectors are retail trade, agriculture/forestry/fishing, manufacturing followed by health and community services.
- As at March 2006 Loddon had a lower employment rate (6.1%) than the NCLLEN region as a whole.
- Regional Skills Shortage Survey - Results at the Bendigo/Swan Hill regional level (region that includes the NCLLEN region) show:
 - that the manufacturing, accommodation/café, retail trade, construction and agriculture industries had more than 20% unfilled vacancies.
 - occupations experiencing the most recruitment difficulties include labouring, intermediate production and transport and professionals/tradespeople
- Contrary to Victoria as a whole early school leavers and year 12 completers have very low rates of unemployment or underemployment (6-8%) compared to Victoria at 14-30%.
- Early School Leavers - Compared to Victoria as a whole students in the NCLLEN region:
 - had a higher proportion of early school leavers taking up apprenticeships/traineeships - over 70% compared to Victoria at 40%.
 - no early school leavers taking up fulltime employment (and therefore bypassing any 'further training/ education' opportunities) compared to 15% across Victoria.
- Year 12 Completers
 - participation rates in University (50%) and TAFE (17%) have remained stable 2003-2006
 - uptake of apprenticeships and traineeships has increased.
 - participation in higher education decreased by nearly 30% between 2002 and 2004. 'On-Track' data indicates that participation in University has remained stable at 48% between 2004 and 2006.
- VET (Vocation Education Training) expanded 2000 to 2006 and is higher in regional areas than in metropolitan Melbourne (20%) and in Victoria as a whole (22%).
- Apprenticeships – The most popular apprenticeships are in the automotive (20% of apprenticeships), building/construction (50% of apprenticeships), and food

- sectors (20% of apprenticeships).
- Most traineeships are in wholesale and retail and personal services (35%), primary production (19%), followed by tourism/hospitality (19%).
 - 'Youth at Risk' – relevant data indicates that the relative percentage of young people 15-19 'at risk' in the NCLLEN region is around 36%, approximately 25% higher than for Victoria as a whole.

Document 5 - VicHealth Strategic Framework (State Government)

The VicHealth Strategic Framework sets a context for community health. The focus for the framework relates to building the capabilities of organisations, communities and individuals and for the period 2006-2009 priorities relate to:

- Reducing Harm from Tobacco and Alcohol i.e. reduce smoking, reduce exposure to tobacco smoke, reduce alcohol misuse
- Creating Active Communities and Promoting Healthy Eating i.e. increase participation in sport and active recreation, improve access to nutritious food, encourage more walking
- and cycling, promote inclusive and accessible environments
- Promoting Mental Health and Wellbeing i.e. promote social inclusion, reduce discrimination, prevent violence, increase access to education and employment

Document 5 – Who's Carrying the Can (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2006)

The document discusses the needs of young people and the support available in Victoria. The key recommendations from the document are as follows:

- An integrated and comprehensive youth services system that is structured along a 'prevention-early intervention-secondary services-tertiary service' continuum.
- Identifying service gaps and identifying best models of service delivery, flexibility of funding models.
- Local planning processes and structures resourced at the local government level across with the strengthening of services through:
 - Early intervention in mental health, improving collaboration across government departments regarding youth support services.
 - Investing in sustainability of young people in areas of workforce development, training and ensuring adequate resources.

Document 6 – Future Directions - An Action Agenda for Young Victorians (Victorian Government)

Outlines State Government directions for young Victorians over the next 4 years. 40 key actions are listed, the top 10 are listed below

1. Youth Foundations Victoria - \$4.5m over four years
A partnership between the Victorian Government and Bendigo Bank that will see the Youth Foundations Victoria initiative established in 15 disadvantaged areas. Youth Foundations Victoria will provide young people with the opportunity to assess their local communities' needs and make small grants toward youth-led activities.
2. Hearing the voice of young people
. Young People Direct is a new advisory mechanism that will engage young people from networks across Victoria to build on existing consultation processes and provide advice directly to the Minister for Sport, Recreation and Youth Affairs.
3. Neighbourhood Renewal Youth Engagement Program
Neighbourhood Renewal is developing a strategy that will better integrate and involve young people within the governance structures of Neighbourhood Renewal

projects, giving young people direct input into local planning and decision-making processes.

4. Engagement of young people in local government

Many councils across Victoria are focused on creating stronger engagement between young people and their community. State and local government will work in partnership to support the implementation of the local government Youth Charter to help councils engage young people.

5. Boosting leadership skills _ \$2m over five years

Young people will benefit from opportunities to build effective leadership skills in a new Provincial Leaders Program that will provide funds for leadership projects. These projects will build on regional specialisation and activities that promote leadership training, networks and skills, and resource and knowledge sharing.

6. Youth Transition Support _ \$10m over four years

The Youth Transition Support initiative will provide 22 transition workers focused on areas of disadvantage to assist young people aged 15-19 who have disengaged from education, training or employment to navigate the existing government services and education and training opportunities available to them.

7. Preventative Youth Early School Leaver and Youth Employment Program _ \$1.8m over four years

This new initiative is a component of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement (phase two) and will be delivered to Koori young people known to be at risk of disengaging from the educational system. It will provide intensive outreach support to Koori youth so they remain in school or connect to alternative education and training programs.

8. Youth Training Guarantee _ \$28m over four years

The Youth Training Guarantee will guarantee a place at a TAFE institution or other public training provider to the end of Year 12 or its equivalent for students aged under 20 on 1 January in the year of study.

9. Support for Students with Disabilities _ \$216m over five years

Students with disabilities will benefit from additional funding provided to schools to cater for the special needs of students. This increase will be supported by reforms in how the program is delivered.

10. Technical Education Centres _ \$32m over three years (total estimated investment)

Four Technical Education Centres will be established in Ballarat, Wangaratta, Heidelberg and Berwick to provide a range of vocational programs, including VCAL, VCE, pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships and traineeships for senior secondary students and other industry specific VET courses.

Document 7 - Leading the Way: The Victorian Government's Strategic Framework on Mentoring Young People 2005-2008 (Department for Victorian Communities, 2006)

Notes:

- The Victorian Government's vision for mentoring young people. That is, young people (aged 12-25 years) will have access to quality mentoring programs that enable them to achieve their full potential and contribute to building a caring and connected Victorian community.
- Five guiding principles underpin the document. These relate to:
 - A holistic approach
 - Knowing what works
 - Partnerships
 - Accountability and flexibility
 - Good governance

TITLE

