



TWEED
SHIRE COUNCIL

Policy

Youth Version 1.0

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Community and Natural Resources
Community and Cultural Services
Council Policies/Protocols/Procedures
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Youth

Policy Objective

The purpose of this policy is to recognise young people's needs in existing consultative, planning and service functions and to ensure that young people's needs are catered for in accordance with the principles of access and equity identified in the existing Tweed Shire Council Social Plan and Local Government Association (LGA) guidelines.

To provide a framework for all Tweed Council employees and elected members to engage with and include Young people of the Tweed Shire in all Council activities. It should also provide a reference point for the recognition of and inclusion of Young people in the broader community context.

Definitions

Not applicable

Policy Background

In the 2004 Youth Survey undertaken by Council, the following benefits of developing a Youth Policy were identified.

- Increased awareness of Council and staff of the value and importance of including young people in Council decisions that impact on their lives
- A clearly articulated commitment by Council, agreed with and visible to young people, and an Action Plan to do things that respond to the issues they raise
- Consultation not only engaged local young people to help work out responses but also identified opportunities for enhanced collaboration and partnerships
- Resources are more effectively targeted to where there is the greatest priority need
- The participatory process and increased awareness empowered young people to make decisions about what they wanted, and fostered a sense of worth and belonging in their local community
- Information is being used as a lobbying tool, and to improve co-ordination between Council functions and with Government and non-government agencies externally (LGA of South Australia. September 2005)

Policy

The Tweed Shire Youth Needs Analysis 2006 states "Council can lead the way by including Young people in the planning and decision-making process. Given that Young people under 18 years cannot legally vote, Local Governments throughout Australia have developed alternative ways for including young people in decisions that impact on their lives." (p23) Recommendation 1.1 of the Needs Analysis was "That Council develops a clear policy position on Council's role in youth affairs in response to the issues and recommendations identified in this Youth Needs analysis. This could take the form of a Tweed Shire Council Youth Policy. The Youth Policy should address the

key action areas identified in the Youth Needs Analysis and include measures for monitoring its implementation”.

Principles:

Tweed Shire Council recognises young people as community members aged between 12 and 25 years, whilst acknowledging the differential age and developmental span needs between a 12 and 25 year old. It affirms its respect for all young people and supports their right to be engaged in matters which impact on their quality of life and aspirations for the future.

To demonstrate this Council acknowledges:

- the important role young people play in the social, economic, political and cultural life of the community;
- the diversity of young people’s interests and cultural backgrounds, and their need for cultural and artistic expression;
- the central role education, training, employment, and access to social support play in enabling young people to participate in community life and equip them for the future; and
- that Council has a leadership role in understanding and responding to the needs of young people, and representing their interests to other spheres of Government and the broader community.

Council supports:

- participatory structures and memberships that reflects the diverse interests and cultural backgrounds of young people;
- the participation of young people in healthy, enjoyable and rewarding activities that enable them to learn new skills and develop the capacity to participate in community life; and
- responsive and flexible approaches to address emerging youth issues in culturally appropriate ways by reviewing and monitoring trends and best practice in service provision.

Objectives:

- Foster a safe community where young people are respected, have opportunities to belong, and feel they are valued and understood by the community;
- Create access to appropriate and legitimate spaces for young people and foster affordable and safe activities;
- Enhance communication with young people by listening, responding and provide feedback about matters that impact on their quality of life;
- Develop appropriate, timely consultative mechanisms that provide real opportunities and encouragement for young people to actively participate in civic life and planning;
- Encourage active and equitable participation in creative and cultural development by young people;
- Promote a positive image about the role young people play in the community and celebrate their achievements;
- Represent the needs of young people to community agencies and other spheres of Government, and advocate for the provision of infrastructure to enable young people to access accommodation, social, educational, health and employment opportunities, and support services irrespective of their background or ability;

- Develop partnerships and shared responsibility between Council, other spheres of government and community agencies to foster collaborative responses and enhanced access to affordable community services and support for young people.

Related Legislation

Not applicable

Compliance

Not applicable

Forms

Not applicable

Review Period

This policy will be reviewed within 12 months of the election of each new Council or more frequently in the event of any legislative changes or change in circumstances.

Useful Links

[Tweed Shire Council website](#)

