

## **Youth Sector Model Development Project Highlight report on project activities and recommendations**

This report should be read in conjunction with the formal Better Futures end of project activity report October 2011.

The aim of the Youth Sector Model Development Project (YSMD) has been to strengthen the youth service system in Macarthur and Wingecarribee. This final project stage has focused on developing more collaborative, co-ordinated and active youth service systems across Macarthur and in Wingecarribee.

### **Regional coordination and collaboration**

Macarthur Youth Services Network (MYSN) and Wingecarribee Youth Network (WYN) have been actively working with the project to develop coordination and collaboration in the planning and delivery of services to young people across Macarthur and Wingecarribee. Project activities include

#### **1. Support for MYSN and WYN**

The project team attended each MYSN and WYN meeting to support sector coordination and collaboration.

In addition the project facilitated MYSN planning sessions to

- Map the chair roster, the meeting structure and issues /topics for discussion and presentation at each meeting until June 2012.
- Determine immediate (2011-2012) regional priorities and develop issue based working groups to focus on those key issue areas. These working groups then developed work plans to guide MYSN action until June 2102. The issue groups were
  - Communication and Participation
  - Crime & Safety,
  - Transport.

All 4 Local Government Youth Development / Youth Liaison Officers job descriptions include participation in the Youth Networks as part of their duties and responsibilities Local government staff play a crucial role is supporting the viability of the networks.

**Sustainability** plans are place for MYSN activities up until June 2012.

#### **2. Support for regional youth participation**

##### **Regional Youth Advisory Group Forum (September 2011)**

The Communication and Participation Issues Group planned and organised a Regional Youth Advisory Group Forum with young people and youth advisory groups from across the region. The YSMD Project team assisted in the planning, implementation and facilitation of the event.

The Forum was an informal gathering that aimed to map existing YAG activities, projects and events, to consider the impact of YAG participation on the community and to explore opportunities for the Regional YAG to plan and coordinate regional events such as Youth Week 2012.

The 16 young people represented

- Wingecarribee Youth Advisory Council,
- Wollondilly Youth Advisory Committee (Dilly YAC),
- Camden Youth Council,
- Campbelltown Youth Advisory Committee,
- Youth Solutions Advisory Group (YAG) and
- MDSI Youth members.

**Sustainability** planning is well underway for the next Regional YAG event to take place during Youth Week 2012 will formulate a regional action plan for Macarthur and Wingecarribee.

### **Southern Highlands Youth Summit (August 2011)**

WYN planned and implemented a Youth Summit (August 2011) which brought together youth services, community service groups and young people. Youth participation was a key ingredient for the Summit. Young people (including YAC members) were very active in the planning and implementation of the day. 76 young people aged 14 – 24 years participated on the day. The Summit sought to hear the views of young people about the opportunities and the issues involved in living, working and studying in the regional

A further meeting of the group is planned for December 1<sup>st</sup> to examine progress made on identified issues and to consider future plans.

A youth specific report is being developed for the young people that participated detailing ongoing opportunities for them to be involved and explaining how their views are being put into actions.

**Sustainability** plans involve developing a commitment from the young people and services involved to engage in meeting outcomes identified in the Youth Summit strategies at the December meeting.

### **3. Supporting MYSN Issue Working Groups**

The YSDP project assisted the three MYSN working groups in the planning and implementation of their work plans.

**The Communication and Participation Group** actively promoted youth participation and the focus on positive images of young people in the region. The group instigated the Regional YAG as an opportunity for young people across the region to get together and share ideas and issues and break down some of the geographical barriers that exist. Promotion of youth events and activities has also been pushed with an increase in volume of the listings placed on the Sector Connect web as a result. MYSN meetings also have a

section where services can promote positive stories about young people in their service or local area and there has also been a push for these stories to get into the local media as a way of promoting positive images of young people in the community and acknowledge their success through different mediums.

**Crime and Safety Working group** engaged with a diverse youth focussed services including the Police Campbelltown Multicultural Community Liaison Officer , the Police Youth Liaison Officer , Aboriginal specific youth service providers and generalist youth services. The working group's priorities include

- exploring how to increase the delivery of out of hours and outreach services and activities for young people,
- developing a Macarthur Square Youth Strategy,
- improving relationships between police, young people and the community through MYSN and Macarthur Square strategy.

The Crime & Safety Working Party are also looking at producing a credit sized card to be distributed to young people listing the essential youth service contact details in the Macarthur area.

#### **The Transport Working Group initiatives include**

- developing and distributing a Community Bus and Coach Directory for Macarthur and Wingecarribee
- organising a speaker on regional youth transport issues to address MYSN
- one off funding being made available through the Ministry of Transport to assist in covering costs to transport young people to and from events in Wingecarribee

Discussions have been held to explore opportunities for a cab charge service to be established for young people in the area.

**Sustainability** Each of the Issues Working group has a nominated facilitator from within the networks who will focus on the work plans set out until June 2012.

## **4. Regional training and resource development**

### **Results Based Accountability**

The project organised youth focussed Results Based Accountability training in October 2011 aimed at the EIPP funded Youth Services. 11 services registered to attend. The training was generously and jointly funded by local government including

- Wingecarribee Shire Council
- Wollondilly Council
- Camden Council
- Campbelltown City Council

Further training is expected to be delivered in the future on data reporting systems for EIPP funded services by the funding body.

## **Social Media for Youth Services**

The project has organised for an information session on Social Media and Legal Issues for youth services will be presented at the MYSN November 2011 meeting.

A further “hands on” training session for youth services is being developed in partnership with Camden Library Nov 29<sup>th</sup> 2011. There is also a plan to hold a Social Media training session in Wingecarribee.

## **Resource sharing**

Templates were developed to enable the gathering and distribution of information on the resources that youth services had that they were available for other services to use either for a fee or free. This was widely distributed and promoted but not taken up by the sector as a whole so was discontinued.

## **5. Sector Connect role in facilitating communication across the regions and networks.**

Sector Connect (SC) utilises Facebook, You Tube and Twitter to communicate with services across the region. MYSN members were given a practical demonstration on how to access the SC website, load items on to the web and how to find items relevant to their work.

There is now a free weekly Youth email that goes out from SC mailroom to over 180 individual workers with all the upcoming youth events and activities listed.

## **YSDP Recommendations**

### **1.1. Youth Network Facilitation**

Sector Connect, WYN and MYSN source funds for a Youth Network Facilitator, one day per week, to support the youth networks, working groups and projects.

Responsibilities to include creating project partnerships, developing professional training opportunities, engaging & maintaining key stakeholders, advocacy, media liaison, planning and administration of the Networks.

Funds may be sought from existing revenues, memberships, donations from key agencies and external funding opportunities.

### **1.2. Network Planning and RBA**

MYSN hold a planning day in April/May 2012 and utilise the Results Based Accountability process (RBA) to develop the networks plan for the next 18 months.

The Wingecarribee Youth Network (WYN) hold planning day in early 2012 and utilise the Results Based Accountability process (RBA) to develop the networks plan for the next 18 months.

### **1.3. Furthering participation and engagement of young people**

That MYSN and WYN actively seek to develop partnerships with local YAGs and RYAG to hear and utilise the views of young people in both determining priorities and in action taken on their behalf.

That MYSN and WYN facilitate the involvement of young people in existing and new participation structures.

### **1.4. Communication**

Sector Connect strengthen their position in the Youth Sector as a regional peak body by improving their information management role including:

- The youth networks facilitator utilise Facebook and twitter to engage the sector and media in priority issues and good news stories for and about young people.
- Continue to promote and disseminate the weekly MYSN Youth email and develop a plan to transition this email communication to Facebook /twitter by end 2012.
- Consulting the youth networks about the Sector Connect website including accessibility, promotion, strengths and areas for improvement.