



Hawkesbury City Council

attachment 1
to
item 175

Hawkesbury Youth
Summit 2012

date of meeting: 9 October 2012
location: council chambers
time: 6:30 p.m.



Hawkesbury
YOUTH WEEK



Hawkesbury Youth
SUMMIT
2012
Outcomes

IMAGINE CREATE INSPIRE


Executive Summary, Key Findings and Recommendations

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In response to the recommendations presented to a Council meeting by young people on the 23 February 2010, another Youth Summit was held to continue the dialogue between Council and Young People.
- 1.2 On Thursday 29th March, sixty five young people from across the Hawkesbury met together for the 2012 Hawkesbury City Council Youth Summit. Participants represented five Hawkesbury High Schools, including Richmond, Hawkesbury, Colo and Windsor High Schools and Bede Polding College.
- 1.3 The Summit was designed to be an opportunity for young people to raise with Councillors and Council staff issues of importance to them and to begin to offer ideas and solutions to these issues.
- 1.4 There were both opportunities for young people to raise varied concerns and workshops focusing on key themes. These themes were selected from recommendations from the 2009 Summit and agreed upon by the 2012 Hawkesbury Youth Summit Planning Group.
- 1.5 Council engaged a group of interested young people to form the Hawkesbury Youth Summit 2012 planning group. The Summit was a success in large part due to the commitment and interest from this group. Their involvement and insight in the lead up to the day and involvement in delivering the program was crucial to the meaningful engagement of young people in this process.
- 1.6 The addition of access to a Youth Participation Officer facebook page assisted greatly in the planning of the 2012 Summit.
- 1.7 Over half of the participants of the Summit were aware of youth friendly ways to contact Council, including the YPO facebook page. Those that were not currently contacting Council were not doing so due to accessibility. This included: limited time due to study and work commitments and these young people were interested in online mediums as an option.

2. Youth Summit Key Findings

- 2.1 Participants indicated that the primary issue young people are facing in the Hawkesbury is bullying, both in its traditional forms and in online mediums. This was followed by transport issues and lack of age appropriate activities as the main issues faced by young people in the Hawkesbury.
- 2.2 Young people are struggling to access relevant information on employment or career opportunities. Participants requested greater focus from Council in regards to youth employment opportunities and improved engagement in education, suggesting career expos as an option.
- 2.3 Young people indicated that their preferred communication method for communicating with council is facebook. This was followed by the internet, through an enhanced website, and youth events. Participants indicated that they were unable to access relevant information from the Council website and requested a more comprehensive youth section.
- 2.4 A significant portion of young people at the summit were already in contact with council or were aware of methods available to communicate with Council. Those not already in contact with council stated that this was due to accessibility. Issues with accessibility were stated as being due to a lack of time to make the contact, the lack of knowledge of relevant ways to communicate directly with council and to a lesser extent fear of not making a difference or not being taken seriously.

- 
- 2.5 Young people continue to be unaware of the role of local government and consequently hold Council responsible for the perceived lack of resources and services for young people – even where these were the responsibility of other levels of government.
 - 2.6 The young people indicated overwhelmingly that they are interested in consulting with Council, in civic leadership and in being involved in Council process.

3. Youth Summit Key Recommendations

- 3.1 Hawkesbury City Council work with Hawkesbury Youth Interagency to investigate a suitable anti bullying program and make available to all Hawkesbury High Schools.
- 3.2 The Youth Safe program 'are we there yet' continue to be delivered to schools and widened to include youth projects accessing young people not engaged in education.
- 3.3 Hawkesbury City Council continue to work with Peppercorn Services Inc to promote and enhance existing youth transport initiatives.
- 3.4 A Council education strategy be developed to provide youth friendly information to young people about the role of local government and how to contact various departments within Hawkesbury City Council.
- 3.5 Contact to be maintained with young people to provide opportunities for young people to be involved in civic leadership and Council process
- 3.6 Hawkesbury City Council to determine measures to support young people in accessing employment services or events.

Introduction

4. Background to Summit

The inaugural Hawkesbury Youth Summit was held on Tuesday 24th November, 2009. An Executive Summary of the Youth Summit findings was prepared by the Working to Strengthen Youth Services in the Hawkesbury (WYSH) Coalition. In response to the recommendations in the 2009 report presented to a Council meeting by young people on the 23 February 2010, a Youth Summit was held to continue the dialogue between Council and Young People.

5. The Hawkesbury Youth Summit 2012

The 2012 Hawkesbury Youth Summit was held on Thursday 29th March at North Richmond Community Centre. The Summit was attended by 72 young people representing five schools. The Summit was also attended and delivered by a planning group of ten young people who met prior to the event to advise Council on the implementation of the day.

6. Planning Group

As part of the Youth Summit Project, Hawkesbury Council brought together a group of young people from across the Hawkesbury to work with Council's Youth Participation Officer. This group met for five months prior to the event and acted as a steering committee for all decisions that were made pertaining to the planning and content of the Summit program.

This group was made up a combination of young people who had contacted Council interested in being involved in youth activities, extending invitations to schools and youth services and from contacts made at the previous Youth Summit.

7. Participants

The planning group determined to focus the day on a particular age group, to assist with planning and to ensure the workshops that were delivered were presented to meet a certain need. Invitations were extended to young people from Year nine upwards and participants were selected by the attending schools. The young people who were invited and attended ranged from 14-17 years of age, with a close to equal balance in gender.

8. Aims and Objectives

- The main aim of the Hawkesbury Youth Summit was developed by the planning group in the early stages of planning the Summit. Their hope was for young people to leave with the message that: **'Council do care about what we think and are here to listen to what we have to say.'** This message shaped the Summit program.
- A concern raised in consultations was that Council often consults young people but it is hard to see action from these consultations. This message also shaped the planning of the day. Parts of the program, including the workshops were in response to concerns raised already by young people to Council.

Other objectives included:

- To provide a safe, youth friendly environment for young people to raise issues of concern to them and to have an opportunity to provide possible solutions to these issues
- For young people to connect with youth workers and to find out more information about service provision available to them

Youth Summit Methodology and Section Findings

9. Round Table Discussions

Round table discussions were held as part of the Summit program. The purpose of this session was for young people to develop together questions they would like to ask of Hawkesbury Council and to have the opportunity to have their most pressing question answered. Due to a limited number of Councillors available to be involved in answering young people's question the focus of this was broadened to allow each table of young people to highlight two concerns or suggestions they would like Council to be aware of.

The key themes from this process and ideas highlighted included:

1. Online mediums as most popular communication tool for young people in communicating with Council

- Facebook to be used as a communication tool
- Council meetings and information be available on YouTube
- Improved youth section of Council website



2. Education

- Young people continue to hold many concerns outside of Council responsibility
- Security on trains is of concern
- Police targeting young people is of concern
- School start times and young people not engaged in school is of concern

3. Need for improved local employment opportunities

- Council to provide access to homework or study help programs
- Council to provide expo or career days
- Council to support transition from school programs

4. Need for improved access to activities

- Investigate providing transport to out of area activities e.g. the beach
- Council to provide a safe place for young people to spend time
- Council to communicate with schools to provide information to young people about activities

5. Participation

- Young people who were involved in the Summit have a high level of engagement in their communities and a wish for Council to provide further opportunities for them to be involved in civic and community activities.
- Young people would like Council to provide promotion on the positive news stories of young people in the Hawkesbury.

6. Access to services

- Participants indicated they would like Council to assist them in having access to Family Planning services.
- Young people would like further information about services in the Hawkesbury and how to access them.

7. Young people would like to see enhancement of the Hawkesbury

- Participants indicated a wish to be involved in community safety processes such as community safety audits.
- Participants were concerned about hygiene and would like Council to improve the cleanliness of public amenities in the Hawkesbury
- Council to provide improved lighting and security in dark areas

10. Workshops

Workshop topics were planned from reviewing the recommendations from the 2009 Youth Summit and from consultations undertaken with the planning group in the lead up to the Summit. Transport has been highlighted as a main area of concern for young people in the Hawkesbury. Young people also indicated that safety, specifically road safety is of significant concern to them.

Whilst many issues that young people have raised with Council are not within the decision making processes of Council, it was determined the 2012 Summit would be a good opportunity to highlight what Council can assist with, while also engaging services to provide in depth information that young people are seeking. The planning group decided to build on the previous recommendations and focus the workshops on the issues of transport and road safety.

- **Workshop One – Transport**

This workshop was presented as a partnership between Western Sydney Community Forum and Peppercorn Services Inc. Western Sydney Community Forum focused on: Reducing Transport Disadvantage, Improving Public Transport, Social Inclusion, Sustainability and Liveability. Young people were informed about the ticket options available to them and the 131500 resource to assist them in their travel planning.

Peppercorn Services Inc provided a local example of assistance young people can obtain in the Hawkesbury Youth Options Project. Youth Transport Options is a youth transport initiative that focuses on addressing transport needs of young people living in the Hawkesbury LGA by offering a range of services that increase young people's opportunity to participate independently in community programs, social activities and education where public transport is limited or unavailable. Services available include free cab vouchers and group bus hire.

Outcomes:

- Young people were not aware of the services available to them, particularly subsidised car charge and were interested to find out more
- Young people indicated safety was an issue with transport in the Hawkesbury with many not feeling safe on trains and on many roads where they ride their bike
- Young people indicated finding the current systems of obtaining information about transport insufficient.

Workshop Two – Young Driver safety

The Summit planning group engaged Youthsafe to deliver a Novice Driver and Passenger Safety Workshop Session. Youthsafe is a not for profit organisation and peak body for preventing serious injury in young people aged 15 to 25 years in NSW.

Are we there yet? is a novice driver and passenger safety session facilitated with class-sized groups by Youthsafe presenters. The 50-minute session contains a guided simulation and group discussion that reinforces the need for young drivers to:

- recognise their novice status
- manage distractions
- limit passengers
- continue gaining experience, even after obtaining their P-plates

Outcomes:

- Young people continue to be concerned about their peer's safety on the roads and attribute anti social driving to a lack of activities available in the area.
- Young people would like to see Council increase driver education in schools. All young people who participated in this workshop indicated the wish for this program to be widened by Council so that their peers could have the opportunity to be involved.

11. Questionnaire


Participants in the Summit were asked to complete a Questionnaire with a number of questions about the main issues they are facing and preferred communication methods. The following key themes were identified in order of preference:

Main issue young people in the Hawkesbury are facing:

- Bullying and peer pressure
- Lack of transport
- Lack of age appropriate activities
- Not feeling safe
- D & A
- Limited communication about opportunities
- Young people not engaged in education
- Not being heard
- Limited communication from Council
- Limited employment opportunities
- Stress of HSC
- Lack of facilities
- Difficulty achieving learner driver hours

Preferred Communication Method

- Facebook
- Internet website
- Youth Events
- School Assembly
- Young people's meetings
- Local Paper

- 
- Online newsletter
 - School Newsletter
 - Youth worker in council
 - SMS
 - Advertising Banners
 - Phone
 - Posters
 - Twitter
 - My Space
 - Bulk emails
 - Youth space within council
 - Connect through schools

Measures which prevent communication with Council

- Nothing is currently preventing
- Unsure of how to contact Council
- Accessibility
- Fear
- Transport
- School not communicating opportunities
- Not relevant