



WESTERN  
**METROPOLITAN  
PARTNERSHIP**

**Western Region Youth Services Integration  
Strategy and Action Plan Project**

Final Report



# WESTERN METROPOLITAN PARTNERSHIP



**VICTORIA**  
State  
Government

Jobs,  
Precincts  
and Regions

## 1. Executive summary

This report presents a number of recommendations to support the further development and delivery of a regional strategy for integration of youth services, youth participation, inclusion and engagement across the Western metropolitan region of Melbourne.

The Western Region Youth Services Integration Strategy and Action Plan (WRYSIP) project was designed to build upon extensive earlier work undertaken by the six local government areas of the West – Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton, Moonee Valley, and Wyndham – much of which was developed in partnership with the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic).

Funded through the Metropolitan Partnerships Development Fund of the Western Metropolitan Partnership, the WRYSIP project also sought to strengthen connection and alignment between the preceding work of participating councils as above, with that of relevant state government departments.

This report is underpinned by other key WRYSIP project outputs developed through the consultation process involving the six local government areas, community partners, and state government departments conducted between May and August 2019.

These include a comprehensive mapping of current local government strategies against an agreed framework that defines youth participation, inclusion and engagement, and a high-level strategy to support integrated regional planning. The strategy is contained at Appendix 1.

The WRYSIP project, its related strategy and other project outputs make an important contribution to the further development of an innovative model for regional integrated planning between local councils, state government departments and other relevant stakeholders across the Western Region of Melbourne.

The WRYSIP project harnesses and builds upon strong support for an integrated regional planning approach among partners linked to significant work undertaken over more than two years. It builds on this success and seeks to develop further learnings that can be adapted and shared with others across the State.

In this way, the WRYSIP project also presents an opportunity for demonstrated leadership from within the Western Region. It proposes and supports the development of an approach that many other regions are interested to implement but that few have succeeded in achieving.

The proposed approach can be scaled to local and regional contexts and adapted to other regions across Victoria, and it offers significant value add to state government departments for its potential in supporting the integrated delivery of a range of policy and program priorities related to young people's participation, inclusion and engagement.

In order to capitalize on this potential, the strategy and related action plans require further support in order to develop, sustain and potentially replicate the approach. This much needed support forms the basis of the report's recommendations.

Delivery of the strategy is subject to the establishment of an appropriate governance structure, development of an evaluation framework and defined expectations about the relationship between the shared regional strategy and individual council youth planning mechanisms.

Resourcing to an appropriate independent organisation is also proposed to support the delivery of the strategy, as well as continued connection to and support from relevant state government departments and strong leadership from local Government.

The central role of young people in defining, designing and supporting the delivery of the regional strategy through well-developed co-design processes linked to the governance structure are regarded as an additional pre-condition for success.

The delivery of the WRYSIP project recommendations and strategy are a timely contribution to the continued evolution of a proposed western region integrated planning approach, particularly as individual councils enter into a new phase of strategy development within their youth and related services.

They represent an important step forward as participating councils and other partners continue to work to ensure stakeholder engagement with an integrated regional planning approach and seek to further harness the authorizing support of council Executive leaders and State Government departments in its implementation.

## 2. Project background and rationale

### 2.1 The Western Metropolitan Partnership

The Western Metropolitan Partnership is one of six Metropolitan Partnerships established by the Victorian Government. The Western Metropolitan Partnership is a way for local communities to engage directly with state and local governments to identify issues and opportunities and advise State Government on the priorities for the region.

The Partnership is accountable to the Minister for Suburban Development for the performance of its functions. To support the Partnerships to develop their advice, the Metropolitan Partnerships Development Fund was announced as a part of the 2018-19 State Budget. The Metropolitan Partnership Development Fund provides \$2 million over two financial years – equating to approximately \$330,000 per Partnership.

The Western Metropolitan Partnerships funded a project to support the development of a Western Region Youth Services Integration Strategy and Action Plan (WRYSIP), aligned with the Partnership's "Connected Communities" priority.

The WRYSIP project was a collaboration between state and local government and was led by Wyndham City Council. It included representation from the five other western region councils - Brimbank, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melton and Moonee Valley. State Government departments participating included the Office for Youth, Office for Suburban Development, the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Health and Human Services.

### 2.2 Project Rationale

The project was developed in response to a need for a more coordinated and integrated systems approach across the Western Region which considers:

- existing State and Local Government youth engagement and inclusion strategies
- opportunities for additional responses
- the vast array of community and other organisations with extensive local knowledge and connection, and a strong demonstrated commitment to partnership and collaboration that exist in the West.
- strong engagement mechanisms that will ensure that young people are connected with critical intervention and prevention services that support improved long-term health and wellbeing outcomes.

The following Western region demographic features were also identified which demonstrated a need for the work:

- Residents of the Western region are clustered at the 'least advantaged' end of the SEIFA scale, indicating higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage;
- High rates of disadvantage correlate with higher service demand, particularly in younger age cohorts;
- The Western region experiences lower literacy and numeracy rates and a lower proportion of students completing year 12;
- VCAMS data suggests that children in the Western region report feeling less connected to their schools than the Melbourne average, and a lower percentage of the population completes higher education.

Melbourne's western suburbs include some of the fastest growing communities in Victoria. At the time of the 2016 census, the six LGA's were home to almost 148,000 young people aged 12-25 and the figure continues to grow. (ABS Data - Community Profiles 2016):

- The City of Wyndham, which recently experienced some of the greatest population growth anywhere in Australia, is expected to grow its population by 75% by 2036.
- The City of Melton estimates its population of 12-25 year old will increase by 150% by 2041.
- Growth also continues in more established areas. Hobson's Bay Council projected in 2014 that its population of children and young people would increase by 13% by 2021.
- Young People in Melbourne's west are growing up in highly culturally diverse communities. These communities have many strengths, energy, innovation, diversity and collaboration. However, they also struggle with various forms of disadvantage, including high unemployment, community safety and community connection. (ABS Data - Community Profiles 2016)

Consultation and a review of existing local government youth plans and strategies identified a need for a greater number of services, facilities and functions to better support young people across the Western metropolitan region.

Consultation with young people as part of the Western Region Youth Integration Forum (June 2018) revealed that young people find it difficult to navigate service systems across municipal boundaries and that a greater number of after-hours services and facilities were required.

It was observed that whilst activity centres in the inner west such as Footscray have higher levels of service access, a major concern for many communities across the region was the lack of public transport to major service centres, a lack of provision of locally based key services, long waiting lists for some services, and the diverse cultural needs of many young people.

As the population of greenfield communities in the West grows, increasing pressure and competition for service resources were identified as likely outcomes. It was proposed that a shared regional vision and priorities for youth inclusion would:

- support reduced duplication of effort and resources by government and service providers across the region;
- enhance local government capacity to improve youth inclusion outcomes in communities across the region using a consistent, coordinated approach to achieving shared outcomes, while recognising the differing operating contexts and delivery methods in each council;
- guide program design and delivery of youth focused support in the Western region;
- support more tailored and targeted investments in youth funding and programs by commonwealth, state and local government; and
- guide more effective service delivery by community sector providers and agencies.

## 3. Project objectives and methodology

## 3.1 Project Objectives and Deliverables

As outlined in the project proposal to the Western Metropolitan Partnership, the primary purpose of the WRYSIP project was to build on a range of existing youth engagement platforms and cross-local government initiatives, to develop a Western Region Youth Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan.

In particular, the WRYSIP project was designed to work with project partners to:

- Review and consolidate youth engagement and inclusion strategies;
- Develop a consolidated regional youth inclusion strategy; and
- Develop an action plan aimed at keeping young people engaged in education and training, work and the community.

It was intended that the Plan would:

- Include a shared strategic vision and intent;
- Be underpinned by shared principles for youth engagement and inclusion;
- Build on existing initiatives and identify service delivery gaps and duplication across the region; and
- Identify short-, medium- and long-term priorities for action and investment by commonwealth, state and local government, and other community sector providers and agencies.

## 3.2 Methodology

### 3.2.1 Project Governance

The WRYSIP was overseen by two governance structures, each with discreet functions. The Project Control Group (PCG) was primarily comprised of senior local government representatives, as well as representatives from key state government departments including the Departments of Jobs, Precincts and Regions; Premier and Cabinet; Health and Human Services; Environment, Land, Water and Planning; and Education and Training. The PCG was responsible for higher level project oversight.

A Project Working Group (PWG) was also established, comprised primarily of local government youth service Coordinators. The PWG was primarily responsible for advising on operational aspects of the project, including in relation to consultation methodologies, framework development, and the draft strategy and plan.

A significant engagement and mapping process was undertaken to support the development of the WRYSIP strategy and recommendations contained within this report. The project was supported by independent consultant Jason Rostant Consulting.

Key activities are summarized below.

### 3.2.2 Phase 1: Framing youth participation, inclusion and engagement

The original project proposal made several references to youth participation, inclusion and engagement. Noting reference to keeping young people “engaged in education and training, work and the community”, the PWG agreed the scope of youth participation, inclusion and engagement needed definition and framing.

A range of existing engagement and inclusion frameworks, most of which are specific to young people, were reviewed. The purpose of the review was to propose key domains to support subsequent project phases – particularly the mapping of existing local government youth strategies. Among the frameworks reviewed were:

- [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#): sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children.
- [Child Friendly Cities Initiative](#): a UNICEF governance framework for building child-friendly cities and communities.
- [ARACY Nest framework](#): developed in 2013 following consultations with approximately 4000 children and young people in Australia, the ARACY Nest specifies six key dimensions a child needs to live a

good life and is used by a growing number of youth-focused organisations to mobilise collective effort, including YACVic, Brimbank, Maribyrnong, Moonee Valley and other WRYSIP project stakeholders.

- [How Australia is faring](#): developed by the former Australian Social Inclusion Board, a framework for monitoring and tracking progress with respect to social inclusion in Australia.
- [Mission Australia annual youth survey](#): an annual youth survey of nearly 30, 000 young people providing insight into their hopes, aspirations and concerns across 8 outcome areas.
- [Code of Ethical Practice for the Victorian Youth Sector](#): developed in 2007 by YACVic in consultation with the youth sector, the Code includes a set of youth work principles and ethical practice responsibilities based on international human rights standards, including the UNCRC described above.

Through this review, five participation, inclusion and engagement domains were proposed to support the mapping of council plans and strategies. These included:

1. Safe and inclusive relationships (peer, family, community)
2. Material basics, work and economic wellbeing
3. Physical and mental health
4. Learning, education and training
5. Participation, engagement and having a say

### 3.2.3 Phase 2: Local government strategy mapping

A detailed review of existing council strategies was undertaken using a number of approaches including desktop review of publicly available strategies on council websites, and direct engagement with PWG members. Coordinators and other council staff sourced additional strategies and plans, and advised on the mapping undertaken.

In addition to council youth strategies, a wider range of strategies relevant to young people's participation, inclusion and engagement were also reviewed. Where these made explicit reference to young people, they too were mapped against the five domains outlined in the earlier section. Examples of wider strategies included:

- Council plans;
- Health and wellbeing;
- Economic development, enterprise and employment;
- Lifelong learning;
- Early years;
- Family strengthening;
- Social policy, diversity, equity and inclusion (Indigenous reconciliation, multicultural, LGBTIQ, disability, gender)
- Arts and culture;
- Road safety; and
- Digital engagement.

Detailed and summary snapshots of council strategies mapped against the participation, inclusion and engagement domains supported workshop delivery discussed below.

### 3.2.4 Phase 3: Consultation workshops

Two workshops were held with project partners – a full day workshop on June 19 and a half-day follow-up workshop on August 13, each attended by approximately thirty people.

Partners included representatives of the six local government areas, participating departments and Victoria Police, and select non-government partners familiar with local government activities and youth needs within each municipality.

Non-government partners included representatives from Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs), mental health, CALD, youth services, YACVic, higher education, and sport and recreation.

Supported by the local government strategy mapping discussed in the previous section, the purpose of the first workshop was to:

- Develop a shared vision, mission and principles for the shared regional strategy;
- Identify desired outcomes for young people, families, community and the service system to be delivered through a shared regional strategy;

- Start to identify short-, medium-, and long-term opportunities within each participation, inclusion and engagement domain outlined in section 3.2.2; and
- Start to identify system capacity and resource needs required to deliver on these opportunities.

A draft strategy and emergent action plan were developed as an outcome of the first workshop, which was subsequently presented to and tested with the PWG, PCG, and partners at the second workshop held in August. The current version of the draft strategy is contained at Appendix 1.

- The purpose of the second workshop was to:
- Present and test the draft strategy produced as an output of workshop one;
- Further refine actions developed in workshop one, particularly with a view to identifying priority recommendations for action for this report; and
- Further explore governance opportunities / requirements.

Recommendations emerging from workshop two for immediate action are contained in section 5 of this report.

## 3.3 Projects strengths and challenges

### 3.3.1 Strengths

The WRYSIP project has enabled the further develop of a shared approach to integrated regional planning between the six local councils in the West. Most notably this has been achieved through the development of the draft strategy and emergent priorities recommended for further immediate action in this report. Importantly the WRYSIP project has assisted to build upon the already significant work undertaken by the six participating councils as outlined in section 4.2 below.

These outcomes are significant given the complexity of the undertaking and this progress is testament to the continuing goodwill and engagement particularly of the local council youth teams, their leadership, and other supporting stakeholders.

They represent an important step forward as participating councils and other partners continue to work to ensure stakeholder engagement with an integrated regional planning approach, and seek to further harness the authorizing support of council Executive leaders and State Government departments in its implementation.

### 3.3.2 Challenges

The initial project proposal included provision for the direct engagement of young people through consultation workshops and other means. As extensive consultation had been undertaken through a variety of regional and municipal wide forums prior to creation of the project it was decided that it would be more efficient to draw on this data and learnings given the limited time and resources for the project. Examples of recent youth engagement at a regional level can be found at 4.2. Extensive consultations with young people also informed the local government strategies mapped within the WRYSIP project, and an understanding of youth perspectives informed participant contributions throughout the project. In addition, Wyndham City sought direct feedback on the draft WRYSIP strategy from one of its youth committees, eliciting positive feedback.

### 3.3.3 Early outcomes and achievements

In addition to the development of the strategy itself, the WRYSIP project has supported achievement of a number of other outcomes.

A number of local council partners have indicated the strategy is being used to support and inform their youth strategy planning processes at a municipal level. This will enable a consistent platform for municipal planning.

Wyndham Council for example is using the strategy, project data and learnings to inform a service stream plan which will enable the future development of the youth service system in Wyndham, in particular the need for an integrated approach across service types, levels of government and municipal boundaries.

Brimbank Council has commenced development of its new Youth Strategy 2020-24 and is including within its related Continuous Improvement Plan an explicit strategy to “commit to the continuation of the partnership with the Western LGA Youth Services to ensure coordinated service delivery across the west of Melbourne, including the Western Region Youth Inclusion Strategy and Action Plan”.

Plans are underway to develop a regional youth forum which will replace existing individual municipal forums and support the implementation of a whole of region approach. This is discussed in detail in 5.1.

These examples of individual council actions demonstrate high levels of buy-in from local government partners and Youth Service Coordinators in particular, for furthering the work undertaken to date and specifically engaging with WRYSIP project outcomes.

Work is also continuing collectively. Promising exploration of the partnership opportunities between councils and YACVic to support implementation of the strategy continue with YACVic's new executive and policy leadership, which has observed the work to date is sophisticated and leading compared with other work observed across Victoria.

Youth Service Coordinators have also continued their collective planning using the WRYSIP strategy as the basis for developing a Western Region LGA Youth Alliance Framework.

Further support for progressing this work through adoption of this report's recommendations will ensure this innovative and leading work is able to achieve its potential, set a benchmark for youth service regionally integrated planning and promotion of youth voice within that context.

## 4. Projects strengths and challenges

### 4.1 State Government and Western Metropolitan Partnership

As discussed above, the WRYSIP project was delivered as a funded project of the Metropolitan Partnerships Development Fund of the Western Metropolitan Partnership.

Activities undertaken throughout WRYSIP project as detailed in section 3.2 of this report demonstrate a high level of alignment between the emergent needs and opportunities identified by partners and the Western Metropolitan Partnership priority outcomes outlined in the Western Metro Region Five Year Plan for Jobs, Services and Infrastructure 2018–2022.

Specifically, the development of the high-level strategy and recommendation for a regional governance structure speaks directly to the priority action listed under Priority outcome 4: Connected communities:

*Establish a multi-channel Western Youth Engagement Platform to inform the development of a Youth Inclusion Plan aimed at keeping young people engaged in school and the community.*

A comprehensive review and mapping of emergent WRYSIP opportunities and priorities against State Government policy and funding priorities was not undertaken as part of the WRYSIP project and remains as a significant further piece of work to be undertaken.

A preliminary mapping against the domains outlined in section 3.2.2 of Western Metropolitan Region five-year plan priorities and those identified by young people at the 2018 Metropolitan Partnerships Youth Forum is contained in Appendix 2. This may be read alongside the detailed local government mapping described in section 3.2.3.

### 4.2 Regional Integrated Planning Context

As outlined in the initial project proposal described in section 3.1, one of the aims of the WRYSIP project was to build on existing initiatives in the West that were variously seeking to identify service delivery gaps and duplication across the region, or to develop more integrated approaches to young people's inclusion, participation and engagement.

**Described below, the WRYSIP project adds to these earlier pieces of work by providing a frame to draw the various conversations and activities together (section 3.2.2), defining a shared strategy through which they might be delivered (Appendix 1), and a vehicle through which the implementation can be supported (governance recommendations).**

Among the earlier initiatives involving the same or similar stakeholders were included:

- **Wyndham Advocacy Project (January – February 2018):** this project engaged a broad range of providers and young people across the Wyndham municipality to identify service gaps and prioritise resourcing needs. The project contributed to discussions at that time that led to the establishment of significant new projects – including for example the Community Support Group projects across Wyndham, Brimbank and Melton, and new community revitalization / youth entrepreneurship funding in Wyndham.



- **Western Region Youth Integration Forum (June 2018):** A collaboration to explore options for a coordinated and integrated systems approach across Brimbank, Melton and Wyndham designed to deliver improved and sustainable outcomes for at-risk young people in the region, and fosters their inclusion as actively engaged and participating citizens. The forum included a broad range of stakeholders, including other LGAs in the region and aimed to:
  - facilitate a cross-sectoral dialogue about the range of current programs, initiatives and other activities occurring across the West to support young people’s engagement and participation;
  - identify current planning and integration, service delivery, infrastructure and other resourcing gaps across the municipality;
  - identify opportunities for improved cross-sector and community responsiveness, including across local government boundaries between Brimbank, Melton and Wyndham; and
  - explore whether the proposal for a more integrated systems approach to governance and planning is supported and how it might be implemented.

This project included participation from young people.

- **Western LGA Youth Services Strategic Advocacy Alliance (July 2018 – present):** A partnership between Maribyrnong, Moonee Vallee, Melton, Wyndham, Brimbank, and Hobsons Bay, and supported by YACVic, the Alliance has been working to develop a pilot mechanism to ensure the policies and programs of the Victorian Government are guided by accurate, current information and expert strategic advice from local government youth services in Melbourne’s west. YACVic has been funded by the Office for Youth to support development of State Government linkages closely aligned in purpose and intent with this current project.
- **Brimbank Futures Consultation Project (October 2018 – April 2019):** developed as a prelude to the development of its next Youth Strategy, Brimbank Youth Services engaged the same six LGAs of the West, young people and a broad range of other providers in a futures visioning exercise designed to understand what a contemporary youth service approach could look like in the Western suburbs over the next 10 years. The project examined a range of possible political, economic, social, technological, legislative and policy, and environmental drivers likely to impact young people in the coming decade.
- **YACVic Stakeholders Forum (November 2018):** supporting the emergence of the Strategic Advocacy Alliance above, this YACVic-hosted forum sought to explore the following key questions:
  - What’s going to inform our work in 2019?
  - How do we bring young people’s insights and stories to the decision-makers in Council?
  - How can youth workers at a “grass roots” level understand and balance the needs and operating models of local Councils, Councilors and executive level management?
  - How can we advocate effectively within the parameters we have to work in?
- **VicPol Youth Forum, Pathways to community connection (February 2019):** this forum sought to explore critical issues, barriers and challenges for young people in connecting with the community and ways to work effectively across police, government, non-government organisations, community and industry to give more young Victorians access to opportunities. Young people, agencies, education providers and local Government were represented at this forum.

Reports for each of these earlier initiatives are separately available, with the exception of the VicPol Youth Forum which is still forthcoming.

The vast materials and recommendations associated with each of these projects, along with those further collated through the WRYSIP project itself form a significant data resource that will support continued progress towards both the design and structure of the governance model proposed in this report, as well as the actions that might be delivered through the strategy presented at Appendix 1.

## 5. Regional Integrated Planning Context

### 5.1 Project findings and recommendations

The WRYSIP project found a high degree of support among partners to continue the development of a shared regional planning approach to support young people’s participation, inclusion and engagement.

Partners valued the continued opportunity to collaborate across municipal and organisational boundaries, explore more coordinated and aligned practices at a systems level, and to identify opportunities and shared solutions to common problems.

The mapping of council strategies across each of the youth participation, inclusion and engagement domains that fed into the first workshop revealed a high degree of alignment in areas of thematic focus.

Many partners considered further exploration of a shared regional planning approach timely as each council commences development of their next youth strategy. Additionally, it was noted that several councils are looking to implement more integrated life stage planning approaches that consider youth services in the context of early and middle years services and family services. Exploring opportunities to develop, integrate and learn from one another's planning process was seen to be of value and a future planning strength.

The key output from this first phase of activity (mapping and workshop one) was the delivery of the draft strategy contained at Appendix 1.

In workshop two participants were invited to reflect on the extent to which the draft strategy reflected discussions to that time, and their expectations of a shared regional planning approach. They agreed that broadly, the draft strategy met expectations and had the capacity to support the delivery of collaborative and integrated action in support of young people's participation, inclusion and engagement:

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*The strategy succinctly captures the breadth and depth of discussions to date very well. It is workable and I like the collective impact theory behind it. (workshop participant)*

*The draft strategy was used to inform a further internal workshop with youth coordinators across the six local councils. We feel the strategy is transferrable and workable. The mission and key focus areas align with our work and we can drill down to what it means in practice. (workshop participant)*

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The proposal to endorse and integrate the WRYSIP strategy into a shared regional workplan, reviewed and endorsed by council Executive, and with full commitment was strongly welcomed by partners.

The establishment of a clear and robust governance model, supported with appropriate resourcing and partnership agreements, and clearly articulated roles and responsibilities across different levels of governance – strategic and operational, is crucial to the future success of the project.

A neutral facilitating organisation (collective impact backbone organisation – see section 5.1 below) to support oversight of the strategy and its associated action plans will ensure that the approach is inclusive of all tiers of government. Already engaged as a partner in this process, YACVic was identified as a potential continuing partner to fulfil this role particularly given its linkages with state government. Other (or additional) partners were also proposed for consideration for this facilitation role (for example the Primary Care Partnership) to draw on other partnership and collective impact capabilities, local knowledge and complementarity with other related initiatives in the West.

Early opportunities and / or areas of need were identified in workshop one and were subsequently mapped against the draft strategy to develop the beginnings of an action plan aligned to the strategy's key focus areas.

Further investigation is required to articulate the relationship between WRYSIP governance, strategy and action plan and the broader planning ecosystem. This planning environment involves a wider range of stakeholders and myriad other regional networks and structures, within which local councils (collectively and individually) have a range of specific roles.

A further key focus for discussion in workshop one and further endorsed at workshop two was the need for a shared evaluation framework to support the collaborative approach to regional planning.

Shared measures are a key dimension of a collective impact approach alongside shared objectives, facilitation (backbone) support, open communication, and mutually reinforcing activities as described below.

**Recommendation 1: That a public/private partnership be established which is led by a resourced independent agenc(ies) to strengthen the project in the Western Region to enable:**

- **the oversight and delivery of the strategy and associated action plans via the development of a strong governance model;**
- **links with the wider Western region planning and networking landscape;**
- **the shared delivery of the WRYSIP strategy from the perspective of state and local government partners' own policy, program and planning processes; and**

- **sourcing and acquisition of grants and funding to develop a shared measurement and evaluation tool for use by regional partners**

**Recommendation 2: That resourcing be provided to replicate the WRYSIP to enable the delivery of shared state and local government policy objectives beyond the western region.**

The central feature and purpose of the WRYSIP is young people's participation, inclusion and engagement.

Communities of practice and youth participation mechanisms are central features necessary for the successful delivery of the WRYSIP strategy, action plan and intended outcomes.

It is recommended that youth (and family) participation mechanisms that extend beyond simple consultation and that are underpinned by strong co-design principles should be an embedded feature at all levels of WRYSIP governance, planning and delivery.

Support for young people and their families' participation in the design, delivery and evaluation of integrated planning and service responses across the West are central to the strategy's underpinning principles, local government youth service approaches and good practice.

Empowering young people to participate in decision-making and to develop solutions to issues that affect them, will help to ensure the success of WRYSIP strategies and interventions and strategies. It will provide young people with the opportunity to influence government and community decisions and support the development of contemporary and innovative approaches to promote youth engagement.

**Recommendation 3: That young people's participation in the design, delivery and evaluation of WRYSIP activities be a central implementation feature, and that these be underpinned by strong principles of co-design.**

## 5.2 Furthering work undertaken to date: A governance model

Participant support for the development of a shared regional planning approach mirrors and build upon the findings of earlier work outlined in section 4.2 of this report.

In particular, the Western Region Youth Integration Forum held in June 2018 proposed that improved regional integration should occur through the establishment of a cross-sectoral governance planning structure.

Participants in that process (including councils participating in the WRYSIP project) proposed a governance structure responsible for the development and delivery of an integrated strategic plan that identifies short-, medium-, and long-term initiatives to meet identified gaps. WRYSIP project outputs represent successful delivery of this recommendation.

The governance structure proposed at the time was recommended to include representatives from key sectors tasked with considering existing and additional responses:

- In a range of **contexts**, including for example criminal and youth justice; education and employment; social and family supports; youth engagement; community safety; and social inclusion;
- Across an **intervention spectrum** that includes primary prevention, early intervention, harm minimisation and tertiary supports for high needs/disengaged groups;
- In a range of **settings** including place-based settings and across the whole local government area of Wyndham, regionally in partnership with Melton and Brimbank, and at statewide levels; and
- Targeted to a range of **audiences / stakeholders** including for example young people, families and leaders from affected communities; education and service providers; employers and businesses; the media; and the general community and resident's groups.
- Provide a strategic point of contact for Commonwealth or State Government to consult across western Melbourne on major initiatives affecting or supporting young people

It was also recommended that the proposed approach be underpinned by a collective impact approach:

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*Collective impact is a framework to tackle deeply entrenched and complex social problems. It is an innovative and structured approach to making collaboration work across government, business, philanthropy, non-profit organisations and citizens to achieve significant and lasting social change.*

*It is premised on the belief that no single policy, government department, organisation or program can tackle or solve the increasingly complex social problems we face as a society. The approach calls for multiple organisations or entities from different sectors to abandon their own agenda in favour of a common agenda, shared measurement and alignment of effort across five key elements.<sup>1</sup>*



**Figure: The 5 key elements of the collective impact approach**

This approach was and remains consistent with comments made at the time of the Western Region Youth Integration Forum by a visiting US professor in forensic mental health with expertise in violence risk assessment and cross-cultural mental health.

Speaking specifically in relation to youth justice issues and the Wyndham experience at that time, he stated:

*A discourse on improved regional planning, resources and sector coordination for refugee intake should be a priority. This should comprise the current need for hands-on family integration support, school preparation, more intensive English language instruction, counseling, mentoring, tutoring and avenues to work experience. Practicable law enforcement strategies should also be a key component of this discussion. Given that the offending behaviors appear to be restricted to a small group of youth, a firm and targeted response here seems sensible. This requires focused attention on the “hard cases” or key offenders whose behaviors are most at risk. Community BBQs and sports days organized by police to interact with Sudanese youth will not deter the violent recidivists.<sup>2</sup>*

In supporting development of a shared planning approach and governance structure, participants in the June 2018 forum identified a range of key features in such an approach,

These included that the approach should:

- be region-wide with senior representation and linked to municipality and place-based structures;
- contain specific issue / interest / specialty subcommittees and working groups, including those directly engaging young people;
- provide a coordination role and could be modelled on the Barwon Adolescent Taskforce;
- use existing networks to directly engage youth voice at every level and include young people and families as members throughout the structure;

<sup>1</sup> Collaboration for Impact <http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/collective-impact/> (Accessed 21/1/18)

<sup>2</sup> Shepherd, S. (2018). [Are African youth gangs in Australia a real threat? Prevention is the right solution to Australia's African youth gang activity.](#) Psychology Today, posted Feb 07, 2018. (Accessed 27/2/18)

- should promote inter-service partnership and collaboration including funding redesign and integration, view funding as a shared resource, and ensure resources are allocated to working groups;
- be underpinned by a strategic agenda with regular reports on growth, response, and collaboration issues across service areas; and
- include advocacy within its focus.

These recommendations remain consistent with the findings and recommendations made through the WRY SIP project.

## Appendix 1: Furthering work undertaken to date: A governance model

VISION				
Young people belong, are valued, and are supported to thrive.				
MISSION				
To create a connected and inclusive community for young people through evidence-based initiatives that strengthen youth voice and agency.				
PRINCIPLES				
<b>Empowerment:</b> We centre young people in our work through equitable and right-based co-design that promotes participation, belonging and self-determination.	<b>Innovation:</b> We are flexible and progressive with a shared commitment to learning that draws on and builds our shared capabilities.	<b>Collaboration:</b> We foster inclusive and transparent partnerships through a collective impact approach that supports regional efficiency and continuity.	<b>Evidence-based:</b> We deliver impact through high-quality, evidence-based practice supported by research and evaluation.	<b>Holistic:</b> We promote strengths and develop resilience through a systems approach that considers the whole person in context.
OUTCOMES				
<b>For young people</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Young people feel safe, heard and able to make informed choices</li> <li>Young people are connected to family, peers, community and the services they need</li> <li>Young people develop new skills and are supported to achieve their potential</li> <li>Young people experience fewer risk factors / more protective factors and live well in the community</li> </ul>	<b>For families</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Families provide safe environments where all members thrive</li> <li>Families feel empowered to make informed choices suited to their needs</li> <li>Families know about and can easily access support when they need it</li> <li>Families are equipped to support children and young people reach their potential</li> </ul>	<b>For community</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communities are safe and welcoming places for people from all backgrounds</li> <li>Communities have strong formal and informal networks and connections</li> <li>Communities value their children and young people and recognise their contributions</li> <li>Communities are able to access high quality services and facilities</li> </ul>		
KEY FOCUS AREAS				
<b>1. Service access, integration and quality</b>	<b>1.1 Planning, integration and coordination:</b> Support a collective impact approach to regional governance that aligns and reports on shared priorities, goals, objectives, and outcome measures. <b>1.2 Access and equity:</b> Strengthen the accessibility and cultural safety of programs and services, particularly for at-risk and hard to reach young people and families. <b>1.3 Shared service models:</b> Explore shared service models across the region and the response continuum that are seamless, integrated and timely.			
<b>2. Partnerships and collaboration</b>	<b>2.1 Participation and co-design:</b> Improve system responsiveness to young people and families by actively involving them in the planning, delivery and evaluation of programs, services and facilities. <b>2.2 Cross-sectoral collaboration:</b> Purposefully engage relevant partners and sectors to draw on individual and collective strengths, strengthen programmatic links and pathways, and minimise duplication by clearly articulating roles, responsibilities and accountabilities <b>2.3 Strategic engagement:</b> Strategically engage with decision-makers to understand, interpret and act upon policy and funding directions, and translate these into the local context			
<b>3. System strengthening and capacity building</b>	<b>3.1 Workforce, family and community capability:</b> Enhance capability by developing and drawing on expertise, resources and training to support best practice, increase confidence, and facilitate connection and collaboration. <b>3.2 Communications and technology:</b> Strengthen visibility, promotion and timely access to programs and services through improved linking and sharing of information, resources, expertise and technology. <b>3.3 Research and data:</b> Collect and use research and data to identify regional trends to better manage demand, reduce barriers, improve quality, and inform best practice			
<b>4. Advocacy and influence</b>	<b>4.1 Local government responsiveness:</b> Develop a regional service growth and diversification strategy responsive to emerging youth and family needs. <b>4.2 Broader systems advocacy:</b> Harness collective expertise and influence to advocate in response to current and emerging service needs and gaps. <b>4.3 Engaging with sector reforms:</b> Work with local, regional and state-wide partners to respond to the impacts of sector reforms on children, young people and their families.			

## Appendix 2: Mapping government and young people’s priorities against youth participation, inclusion and engagement domains

Participation, inclusion and engagement domain	Government priorities linkages as outlined in the Western Metro Partnership five-year plan	Youth priorities as outlined in the 2018 Metropolitan Partnerships Youth Forum Report (Capire, 2018)
<p>Safe and inclusive relationships (peer, family, community)</p>	<p>Election commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• young families package for new parents and early childhood supports</li> <li>• new early parenting centres</li> <li>• increased numbers of MCH nurses especially for vulnerable families</li> <li>• parent first aid training</li> </ul> <p>2018-19 budget outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• local crime prevention initiatives, including youth crime prevention projects</li> <li>• better support for children in OOHC with more home-based care placements and better support for carers.</li> <li>• statewide to support vulnerable children and their families in the statutory system, experiencing family violence and historical institutional abuse</li> <li>• improved secure, afterhours crisis accommodation for women and children seeking immediate support</li> </ul> <p>Western Metropolitan partnership priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a business case for a Centre of Excellence for Parenting building on the Tweddle model</li> </ul>	<p>Improve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• safety: more security in schools, make streets and public transport safer for young woman at night</li> <li>• stigma of the region</li> </ul> <p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Violence and bullying awareness and resources: Provide a wide range of diverse and culturally appropriate resources to minimise the widespread issue of violence and bullying amongst young people in the community.</li> <li>• Community ‘hotspots’: Create local hot spots throughout the West (Tarneit, Wyndham) where local community members and young people can gather. Hotspots need to be culturally diverse places of acceptance.</li> </ul>
<p>Material basics, work and economic wellbeing</p>	<p>2018-19 budget outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• dedicated services to connect young people from Aboriginal and migrant communities and women into jobs on Victoria’s major projects</li> <li>• a new specialised employment support program for long-term unemployed youth and young people facing significant barriers to employment</li> <li>• additional Empower Youth projects in areas experiencing social and economic disadvantage including in Brimbank and Wyndham to strengthen the health and wellbeing of young people at risk of disengagement, enable their participation in community, engage them in education and training, and enhance their pathways to employment</li> </ul> <p>Western Metropolitan partnership priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve intra-regional connections to jobs, services, train stations and the airport through better bus services</li> </ul> <p>Growing Suburbs Fund:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a range of youth, sport and recreation, early years and family learning centres proposed for Western Interface Councils, including Melton and Wyndham</li> </ul>	<p>Improve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employment opportunities for young people</li> <li>• homelessness</li> <li>• awareness about youth programs and services to youth</li> <li>• public transport: availability, reliability, buses, frequency</li> <li>• traffic: congestion, safety, traffic lights</li> <li>• parking</li> <li>• access to diverse shops and facilities in all parts of the region</li> <li>• over development: apply cap to new apartment numbers</li> </ul> <p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness: Create awareness in the broader community about homelessness and provide support to homeless people to aid them to move into more stable and permanent living situations.</li> <li>• Homelessness: Provide more funding for public housing.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement two Youth Foyers in the west to support youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with housing, training, health and other social services</li> </ul>	
Physical and mental health	<p>Election commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>free dental care to all primary and secondary students</li> <li>Royal Commission into Mental Health</li> <li>liveable and sustainable communities including support for new parks in the West</li> </ul> <p>2018-19 budget outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to mental health professionals in all state schools with funding to employ qualified mental health professionals</li> </ul> <p>Western Metropolitan partnership priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide regional, well planned, integrated bike paths and improved pedestrian access and walkways</li> <li>an improved model of community health services targeted specifically at the early years</li> </ul>	<p>Improve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>access to health care</li> <li>access to healthy food options</li> <li>number of green spaces, trees and parks</li> <li>environmental sustainability: renewable energy, recycling, pollution</li> <li>access to sporting opportunities: more tennis courts, improve affordability</li> </ul> <p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drugs and alcohol: Reduce the prevalence of drugs and alcohol inducing violence amongst youth.</li> <li>Health and nutrition: Promote nutritious foods to combat community health issues associated with unhealthy lifestyles and fast food.</li> <li>Health and nutrition: Create policies and programs to make healthy food more affordable.</li> </ul>
Learning, education and training	<p>Election commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Universal three-year old kinder</li> </ul> <p>2018-19 budget outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of land acquisitions, new schools, and school refurbishments across the six LGAs of the West</li> <li>A new Tech School in Wyndham to connect students to the skills and jobs of the future</li> <li>new early childhood development facilities co-located with primary schools in Wyndham</li> </ul> <p>Western Metropolitan partnership priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>three jobs and skills clusters and supporting services in the west at Werribee, Sunshine and Footscray</li> <li>regional Jobs and Skills Plan for the West</li> <li>Plan for the development of new Tech Schools at Melton and Brimbank</li> <li>Increase participation in early learning education for newly arrived migrants from refugee backgrounds and socially disadvantaged families</li> <li>Deliver an Education Support Program through local schools for newly arrived migrant children and youth from refugee backgrounds, via increased English language support and cultural awareness training</li> </ul>	<p>Improve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>access to education</li> </ul>
Participation, engagement and having a say	<p>Western Metropolitan partnership priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a multi-channel Western Youth Engagement Platform to inform the development of a Youth Inclusion Plan aimed at keeping young people engaged in school and the community</li> </ul>	<p>Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Media: Improve the portrayal of young people in the media to address the stigmatisation of young people from culturally diverse backgrounds.</li> <li>Media: Promote good news stories about young people.</li> </ul>