

10.13.Draft Youth Strategic Plan 2023-2027

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ENDORSED BY	Marcelo Occhiuzzi, Director Community, Planning and Environment
ATTACHMENTS	1. Youth Strategic Plan Draft [10.13.1 - 24 pages]
CSP LINK	1. Our Living Environment 1.4 Well utilised open space and recreational facilities 2. Our Built Infrastructure 2.1 Infrastructure and assets meet diverse community needs 4. Our Social Vitality 4.1 North Sydney is connected, inclusive, healthy and safe 5. Our Civic Leadership 5.1 Lead North Sydney's strategic direction 5.3 Community is engaged in what Council does

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement for the draft Youth Strategic Plan 2023-2027 to be placed on public exhibition in accordance with Council's Community Engagement Protocol.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- The draft 2023-2027 Youth Strategic Plan has been finalised following community consultation and feedback.
- The Plan outlines how North Sydney Council will support, empower, and advocate for young people in its community. It seeks to guide the design and delivery of youth services provided by Council and informs youth services delivered by government and not-for-profit organisations.
- The development of the Plan was based on extensive research and community consultation, which has informed the Plan's themes, priority areas, key directions, and actions.
- The strategic outlook for Youth Services over the span of the Plan is structured around three core focus areas:
 1. Connection
 2. Wellbeing
 3. Opportunity

- The Plan reaffirms Council's commitment to young people as valued and participating community members through the clear directions set in the strategies.

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1. THAT** the draft Youth Strategic Plan 2023-2027 be endorsed for public exhibition for a minimum period of 42 days.
- 2. THAT** a further report be provided to Council following the conclusion of the public exhibition period for the purpose of considering any submissions received and potential amendments.

Background

Council provides youth support services and advocacy to other service providers including NSW Government agencies.

In preparing the Youth Strategic Plan, Council has drawn on stakeholder feedback to inform the plan and to identify key priority areas. The consultation process occurred from July to December 2022, engaged young people, families, and service providers, and involved online and in-person surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews.

A total of 486 surveys were completed, 34 people participated in focus groups, and six people participated in one-on-one interviews.

The results provided the basis for the development of the strategies set forth in the Plan and align with domains prioritised by both Federal and State Government.

The Plan's strategies and actions centre around providing connection to community, support for wellbeing and opportunity for success.

Report

The engagement, consultation and research process showed that the experiences of young people who live, study, work, and socialise in North Sydney are mainly positive. The young people expressed an appreciation of the youth services, infrastructure, and opportunities available to them. There is a high level of understanding of the issues affecting themselves and the world at large and expressed a desire to be heard and be part of the solutions.

Responses of note included:

- Young people are experiencing a range of mental health concerns with a significant proportion related to unrealistic pressures, demands, and expectations in the spheres of study, work, and relationships.
- A lack of, or difficulty in accessing, affordable and effective mental health services.
- While there was broad satisfaction with the infrastructure provided there was a demand for more study spaces and an additional skate park. Additional water stations/bubblers, rubbish/recycling bins and pedestrian crossings were also requested.
- Young people expressed a need to maintain and increase activities, programs and options that reflect their interests such as the arts, music, sports, and opportunities to socialise.

The consultation process also provided an opportunity for in-depth engagement with young people, families, and service providers around the issues of adversity and vulnerability. It showed that there are young people facing significant challenges and difficulties around mental health, trauma, conflict, and breakdown in relationships (family, friends, intimate), homelessness, substance use, and education.

Appreciation was expressed of the support, assistance and programs and activities provided to them by Planet X Youth Centre and Council as a whole. This was reflected by both families

and services providers who view the Council and the youth centre as key support options and essential partners in the local region.

A common complaint from families was the difficulty in finding appropriate and effective support services for their children and navigating a complex system. This was not specific to the North Sydney LGA but more so for the local region as a whole.

In summary, the consultation process highlighted a range of important key insights, indicating that many of the young people in the North Sydney LGA are doing well and have hope for their future but with some still facing significant difficulties and challenges.

With the direction and strategies of the Youth Strategic Plan, Council can continue to provide much-needed services to its young people and their families and affording them the opportunities to achieve their hopes and aspirations.

Consultation requirements

Community engagement has occurred in accordance with Council's *Community Engagement Protocol* in preparing the draft Strategy. The detail of this report provides the outcomes from the engagement for Council to consider prior to adoption.

The public exhibition and engagement period will be promoted via the following methods:

- Your Say web page/Council website (including news item)
- Direct notification to youth service providers, local schools
- Utilising Council's formal and informal youth networks to broaden the reach
- Social media
- Council eNewsletters
- Signage
- Community Noticeboards
- Precinct System.

Financial/Resource Implications

The Youth Strategic Plan strategies will be implemented within current budget allocations.



YOUTH STRATEGIC PLAN

2023-2027





RECOGNITION OF THE CAMMERAYGAL PEOPLES

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters of North Sydney local government area, the Cammeraygal People.

We are committed to showing respect for Cammeraygal and all First Nations Peoples through the acknowledgement of country at ceremonies, meetings, functions and events.



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MAYOR'S MESSAGE

*** This page will not be in the exhibition Plan. Mayor's message to be included in final Plan, post exhibition period.

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PURPOSE

The Youth Strategic Plan 2023-2027 sets out Council's key commitments to the young people who live, work, visit and study in the North Sydney local government area.

It provides a framework and a clear direction for Council and partners to achieve improved outcomes for young people and to better meet their needs, interests, and aspirations.

The Plan has been informed by a consultation process with young people and the youth services sector and it aligns with State and Federal initiatives ensuring that young

people are considered in a consistent manner across all government priorities.

The Strategic Plan reaffirms Council's commitment to young people that they are valued and are an integral part of the North Sydney community with their needs afforded the same attention as the rest of the community.

While Council is not able to resource the provision of all services to young people it does play a crucial role in planning and collaborating with relevant partners to provide a comprehensive range of services and programs to the local region.

ROLE OF COUNCIL



FACILITATE the strategic planning, development and management of services for young people to cater for identified current and future community needs. Development of strategies and policies to support and address the gaps including identification of funding support.



PROVIDE direct delivery of Youth Services, including programs and events through direct funding, shared funding, and facilitated funding arrangements. Provide a range of youth focused infrastructure to be utilised by the community.



SUPPORT young people and their families, service providers, and other stakeholders with the development and enhancement of services and educational opportunities for young people.




WORK with the community, service providers, young people, community services and government sectors, to ensure that, programs and services for young people meet the needs of the community.



ADVOCATE provide leadership to the community when advocating to potential service providers, State and Federal government departments and funding bodies. Council also plays a role in recognising the outstanding achievements of young people in the LGA.



NETWORKS facilitate networks and partnerships with government and non-government agencies, to build capacity and to deliver programs and services to young people in an integrated and coordinated manner.



“ Thanks so much for all the support that has been provided to my daughter and me.

The commitment to ensuring a positive outcome for not just my daughter but for all her peers and the many other youths that come to Planet X for a safe haven is exemplary. ”

- Mother of 15 year old girl



POLICY CONTEXT

COUNCIL PERSPECTIVES

- Community Strategic Plan
- Delivery Program
- Arts and Culture Strategic Plan
- Disability Inclusion Action Plan
- Library & Historical Services Strategy
- Family & Children's Services Strategy

STATE PERSPECTIVES

- NSW Strategic Plan for Children and Young People
- NSW Youth Health Framework
- Living Well - A Strategic Plan for Mental Health
- Office of the Children's Guardian - Child Safe Scheme
- NSW Premier's Priorities
- Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) - Better Systems, Better Chances: A Review of Research and Practice for Prevention and Early Intervention

FEDERAL PERSPECTIVES

- Australian Youth Development Index
- Australia's Youth Policy Framework
- Safe and Supported - The National Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2021 - 2031

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES

- UN Convention of the Rights of the Child
- UN Declaration of Human Rights

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

POPULATION



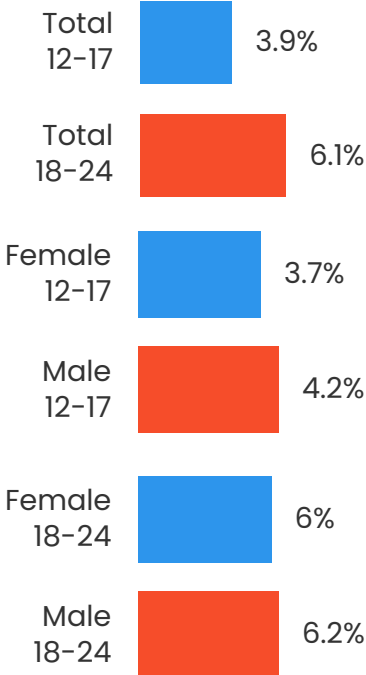
Total 69 460
Aged 12-24: 6924

NET MIGRATION 2012 to 2021

12 to 17 years **-227** →
18 to 24 years **+1,089** ←



YOUNG PEOPLE



3.7%

Secondary School



4.92%

Youth Allowance & Austudy



6.2%

Youth unemployment rate (15-24)



3.8%

Disengaged youth not employed or in education (15-24 years)



10 High Schools - 11 Primary Schools

Data compiled from profile.id.com.au/north-sydney. ABS Census 2021



WHAT COUNCIL OFFERS



Planet X Youth Centre




Netball & Basketball Courts




Tennis Courts




Indoor Sports Centre



Arts and Culture




Skate Plaza




Sport Fields




Sustainability Centre



Swimming Pools



Parks, Reserves, Walks & Trails



Library



Community Centres



PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships are crucial in providing youth services as they allow young people access to a comprehensive range of resources, experiences, and opportunities.

Collaborative and integrated partnerships also align with current Federal and State directives and strategies to work in a coordinated manner to better improve outcomes for young people.

Council plays a leading role in the coordination of service delivery in the North Shore region and will continue to build on the strong partnerships it has developed over time.





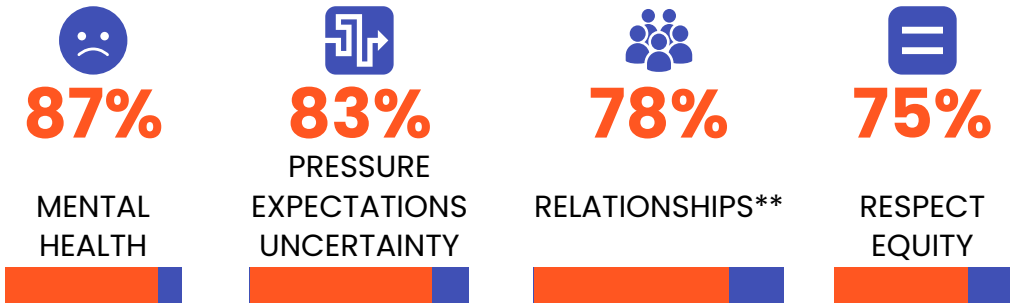
“ I think you should know the staff at Planet X Youth Centre don't realise the full extent of the impact they have on the youth that attend their service.

Not only as Youth Workers doing their job to the best of their ability, but as genuine, caring, compassionate people ”
- 17 year old girl



CONSULTATION - Services*

ISSUES AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE



Council's community friendliness and their openness to collaborations and partnerships is greatly appreciated.

The Youth Workers go above and beyond for the young people in the region.

Department of Community and Justice

Health recognises the strong relationships Planet X has with young people and this is has been an important component to the various partnerships that Health has had, and continues to have, with North Sydney Council.

Social Wellbeing Program - Health Department

* Youth services consultation in the region and Lower North Shore Youth Interagency, 2022/23

**Family, friends and intimate relationships

CONSULTATION - Services

WHAT WORKS WELL

Good range of youth facilities and options -
Dept of Community and Justice



Where young people don't have enough to eat at home, the free food that youth centres like Planet X provide is very important - **Mission Australia**

Council youth services are a key partner in the delivery of services - **Dept of Community and Justice.**

Council facilitating monthly Youth Interagency meetings - very useful and important.

Appreciate the lead taken to coordinate youth services in the region - **Health Dept.**



One of the real strengths of North Sydney Council has been to provide venue support to **Dept of Community & Justice** and to other community groups and services.

This is a real positive of Council and would love to see it continue.



Really value the relationship and partnerships with Planet X.

Ongoing for over two decades.

Strong support to each other and young people, particularly the vulnerable, high needs, and the disadvantaged - **Taldumande Youth Accommodation Services**

It has been beneficial engaging with Council and the Youth Workers.

Have experienced the benefit of Planet X and the work they do with students - **School Support Officer**

Services like Planet X talks to vulnerable young people earlier than Health which is vital to engaging them and getting the message out and providing referrals - **Health Dept.**



Youth services consultation, Lower North Shore Youth Interagency, 2022

CONSULTATION - Services

IMPROVEMENTS

Huge need for more study spaces -
School Support Officer



Allowing sports fields to operate at night offers more community options - **Health Dept.**

Council could consider increasing the size of their Youth Services - **Dept of Community and Justice.**

Could always do with more parks, sport and recreational facilities as it has such positive impacts on the community - **Health Dept.**



Support for an alternative education campus - **Phoenix House Youth Services**



Essential youth options like Basketball courts and Skate Parks need to be maintained and not lost. Incredibly good for mental health, connection, socialisation - **Health Dept.**

Creating plazas, closing off street to traffic, pedestrianising. Council has been good with this, let's have more - **Northern Sydney Primary Health Network**

There's a whole cohort of young people who still haven't re-engaged with school/society due to the effects of Covid.



Any Council assistance appreciated - **School Support Officer**

Homelessness is ongoing. The young people have multiple problems and needs not just one issue - **Taldumande Youth Services**



Schools don't have the capacity to assist LGBTQIA+ students. Councils are well placed to assist - **School Support Officer**



Youth services consultation, Lower North Shore Youth Interagency, 2022



“ North Sydney is a pleasant and safe area. It is well looked after which I am grateful for. ”
- 16 year old boy

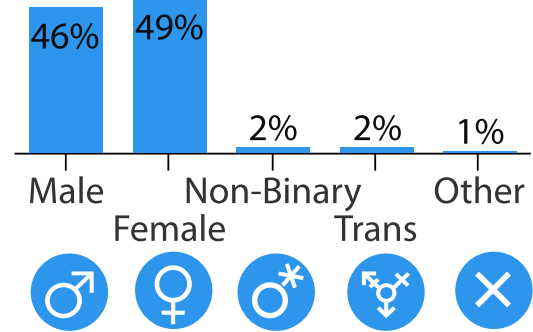
CONSULTATION - Young People

DATA

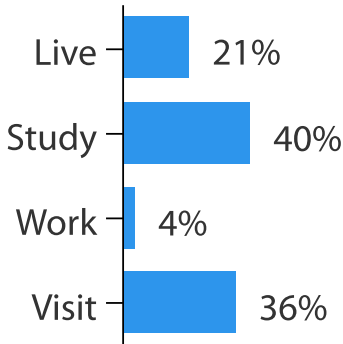
Surveys	486
Focus Group	
Participants	37
1-1 interviews	6
Total:	529

Youth engagement and consultations - 2022

GENDER



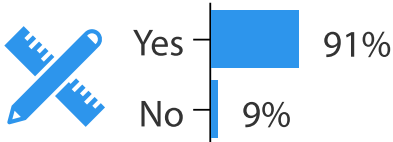
CONNECTION TO NORTH SYDNEY



TOP 3 PERSONAL CONCERNS



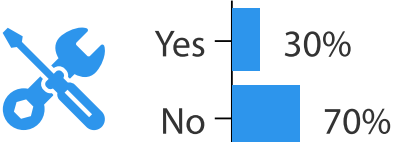
STUDYING



TOP 3 CONCERNS FOR FRIENDS/FAMILY



EMPLOYED

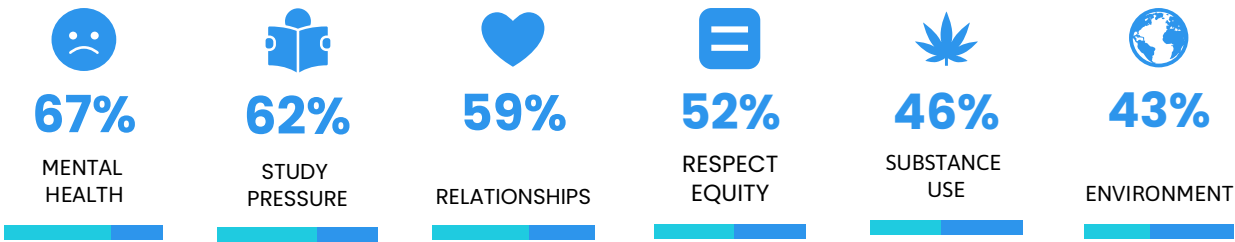


TOP 3 ISSUES AT PLANET X



*Family, friends and intimate relationships

TOP 6 ISSUES AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE LOCAL AREA



CONSULTATION - Young People

DO YOU FEEL VALUED IN YOUR COMMUNITY?



Yes 59.52%

No 40.48%

Valued



Connected - things are going well with:

- Friends
- Family
- School
- Work

Not Valued



Disengaged - things not going well with:

- Friends
- Family
- School
- Work

Being:

- Liked
- Accepted

Being:

- Not listened to
- Not taken seriously
- Ignored
- Judged

Knowing that there is:

- Hope
- Opportunity

Feeling that there is:

- No hope
- No opportunity

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE MORE OF IN NORTH SYDNEY?



Study spaces



Events



Skate parks



Sporting facilities



Combined youth spaces with drop-in/chill-out areas, sports, skating, art, music which are central and easily accessible



Mental health facilities/programs

CONSULTATION - Young People

A lot of the infrastructure is near to a train station which is good.


What I like about Planet X is that no one cares who you are. Everyone is accepted.

We are extremely privileged.

Amenities are well located such as Luna Park and North Sydney Oval.

The Youth Worker at Planet X saved my life.

I like being a young person in North Sydney.

Council Skate Park. 
More skate parks needed.

More help for homeless kids. We are doing it tough.

We are so privileged to live and spend time here.

Thank you for the facilities doing a good job, I have lived in plenty of areas, North Sydney is by far the best and most accessible to youth programs



We don't have enough to eat at home.

Free or cheap food.

More areas for water stations.

Sometimes the more young people are vocal the less they feel they aren't heard.

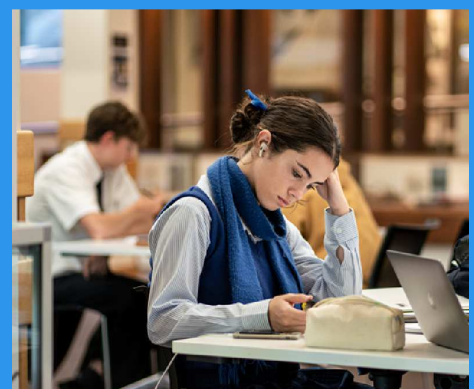
It would be great to have more rubbish and recycling bins – there is an increase in littering in crowded areas.

Increase pedestrian crossings.

A lot of people forget that we are still experiencing the lockdown effects and the extra workload.

There is a "everything is normal" mentality.

Mental health services keep rejecting young people as they're seen as too complex.



CONSULTATION - Young People

The amount of pressure put on students these days is pretty crazy – a lot of young people feel alone in that feeling.

It should be that it's not about your job status and the money that you earn that makes you worthwhile.



A parent education system about young people.



There are not enough adequate resources and funding to give the support we need.

Underlying foundation around mental illness – we are living in a society built and valued on efficiency.

Ironic paradox we are decreasing the quality of life – trying to change the mentality of young students – go into education to earn money – it's always about the finance and efficiency.

Make libraries open for longer on the weekend for students studying for HSC.

More study spaces



There is not enough support around neurodivergent students – this can be especially exhausting.

More support and validation that we are not the problem and giving solutions about how we can support ourselves including coping, managing stress and expectations that we are put under.

Young people being heard and (adults) actually doing something with it.

Important to consider the average young person who won't care about social justice or politics all the time.



The system is difficult – getting good clinicians is a gamble.

Mental health support should be free or cheap and accessible. Not adequate currently.

We want to participate with the rest of the world.



“ Thank you for the facilities. ”

- 15 year old boy



CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Our consultation and research tells us that young people in North Sydney are doing comparatively well and this is testament to the strong commitment by Council to ensure that North Sydney is an attractive and prosperous place to live, study, work, visit and play in.

The data reflects the findings of similar academic and Government research which show that issues like mental health, study pressure, relationships and youth friendly/fun options are concerns affecting young people across the board.

The consultation process reflects congruent results that young people are still experiencing adversities and vulnerabilities such as homelessness, substance use, trauma, and family breakdown/conflict which have a significant impact on their wellbeing.

We also know that "disadvantage is not only based on low socio-economic areas and that

high socio-economic areas can still be vulnerable against one or more domains" *The Australian Early Development Index, 2020 (p8).*

What is apparent, is that meaningful connection is a major protective factor which prevents or helps to overcome difficulties and challenges, improves wellbeing and allows for positive participation in society.

Conversely, a lack of connection results in disengagement, a loss of purpose and hope, resulting in risk factors and behaviours.

Council's Youth Strategic Plan will therefore provide a range of strategies and initiatives under three domains, Connection, Wellbeing and Opportunity and will work closely with partners to provide a combination of direct service, youth development and infrastructure options to meet the needs and aspiration of young people.

Research has shown that programs which build individual self regulation, resilience and capability have been successful in assisting children and young people, including the most disadvantaged, to overcome adverse circumstances by building social and emotional wellbeing, ultimately leading to successful life outcomes. *ARACY, Better Systems Better Chances Review, 2015 (p91).*

1. CONNECTION

OUTCOME 1

Young people from all backgrounds, cultures and abilities feel a sense of belonging.

Objectives

- *Increase the percentage of young people who feel a sense of belonging to North Sydney by 10% by 2027 from the 2024 baseline.
- *Increase the number of young people who participate in Council's events by 10% by 2027 from the 2024 baseline.
- *Increase awareness of Child Safety Standards across Council.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

1.1 Include two youth related articles every year in Council's community newsletter, North Sydney News.

1.2 Two Council Strategic Plans are reviewed each year to ensure youth needs are reflected.

1.3 Undertake an annual youth satisfaction survey during Youth Week.

1.4 Promote the biannual Liveability Census to increase youth participation by 5%.

1.5 Promote the Community Awards Next Generation Award to young people in the LGA via schools, youth networks, social media.

1.6 Implement the annual Victor Chang Science Students Awards to recognise young people's achievements in the Sciences.

1.7 Implement annually mental health programs such as Aunty Time, Lost Bird Found and Need a Lift? to provide opportunities for young people to participate creatively.

1.8 Develop a checklist for Council staff that can be used to increase attendance of young people at Council events.

1.9 Develop and promote events and programs in consultation with young people.

1.10 Involve young people in the planning, promotion, and implementation of Youth Week events.

1.11 Work with the Child Safe Committee to ensure all staff are trained in Child Safe practices and are aware of Council's legislative requirements of the Children's Guardian Act 2019.

1.12 The Youth Services Child Safe Management Plan to be updated by July 2023 to reflect the requirements of the Children's Guardian Act 2019 and reviewed annually.

2. WELLBEING

OUTCOME 2

Young people who are experiencing difficulties and challenges feel valued, engaged and supported.

Objectives

- * Continue to enhance the resilience and abilities of young people to deal with their challenges and personal circumstances.
- * Facilitate young people's access to services that support their physical, emotional, and mental well-being.
- * Determine young peoples' experiences on the services and assistance provided to them.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

2.1 Provision at Planet X Youth Centre of ongoing wellbeing and mental health support and activities.

2.2 The Youth Workers at Planet X to continue to build relationships with young people which foster trust, respect, and acceptance and provide mentoring, wellbeing support and appropriate referral pathways.

2.3 Planet X Youth Workers and young people to co-design activities that are meaningful to them such as art, craft, music, sport, as well as social and living skills programs to engage, support and improve their resilience and wellbeing.

2.4 Coordinate the Lower North Shore Family Support Network to offer support options such as seminars, workshops, referral pathways to build resilience in families experiencing difficulties.

2.5 Through the Lower North Shore Youth Interagency coordinate access to services and program provision that address identified youth issues.

2.6 Work with the Dept of Community and Justice, Northern Sydney Local Health, local youth accommodation services and the Police to provide support pathways and build resilience in young people to manage their challenges and difficulties.

2.7 Engage and consult annually with young people to inform strategies and service delivery.

3. OPPORTUNITY

OUTCOME 3

Young people are provided with the tools, resources and opportunities to support their diverse wellbeing, social, recreational, educational and employment needs.

Objectives

- * Increase young peoples' and families' awareness of the services and programs that are available to them by 10% by 2027 from the 2024 baseline.
- * Continue to provide educational and employment support services to young people.

STRATEGIC APPROACH

3.1 Update and print annually the Youth Card Guide to be distributed to schools, services, parents and young people.

3.2 In partnership with Lower North Shore Youth Interagency, map services and create an online, digital and print youth services directory for the community by 2025.

3.3 Council's website and Community Directory are updated in a timely manner and promoted widely to provide opportunities for physical and social activities and access of wellbeing services.

3.4 Obtain evaluation feedback following activities and events.

3.5 Provide HSC support programs for students and their families at Stanton Library.

3.6 Investigate options for a multi-purpose youth space which includes additional study spaces.

3.7 Planet X to continue to provide young people with educational and employment assistance when required for homework, enrolments, appropriate educational pathways, resumes, job applications, interview skills and family support.

3.8 Re-establish student's participation in industry experience programs at Planet X and explore additional opportunities within Council.

3.9 Coordinate a regional youth strategic planning day to enhance collaboration, build capacity for service delivery and produce a collaborative youth needs and issues paper.

3.10 Participate in the Lower North Shore Youth Educational and Employment Networks to identify educational and employment opportunities.