

## **8.1. MM01: Young Mayors Programme – Foundation for Young Australians**

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) National General Assembly was held in Canberra between 13 and 16 June 2023. Almost all North Sydney Councillors attended and participated in this important peak body conference.

Attendees heard from the Governor-General, the Prime Minister, many senior Federal Government Ministers as well as speakers addressing housing affordability, climate change and issues affecting all of the 537 councils represented at the conference.

One of the many ideas put forward to delegates was a programme that is underway in a number of local government areas across Australia – the Young Mayors programme.

The Foundation for Young Australians is working with McKay Regional Council (Qld), Horsham Rural City Council (Vic), Wollongong City Council (NSW) and Cairns Regional Council (Qld) and young people aged 17 and under on democratically elected youth councils at local government level.

McKay Regional Council recently undertook elections conducted by the Queensland Electoral Commission, through participating schools in the region, to elect youth councillors to represent their peers and to determine priority action areas for their community.

The Foundation for Young Australians has developed a model that provides for guidance from community leaders and advocacy experts, workshops to develop priority platforms and well-being support for participants. They facilitate opportunities for candidates (and the elected youth councillors) to meet with constituents in order to give young people the confidence to cast an informed vote on election day.

Following the election, the elected youth councillors will determine priority action areas. A cash fund and mentoring by councillors and industry experts will support them to collectively deliver projects and events in their region.

These youth councils seek to encourage young people to engage with local democracy and civic participation – this model transforms young people from “advisors” to decision-makers.

The North Sydney local government area is one of the densest education precincts in the country with 16 primary and secondary schools (public and private) within 10km<sup>2</sup>. In addition, as an inner urban council with a large population, the North Sydney local government areas provides a contrast to the councils already in the pilot programme – with different priorities, opportunities and problems to those in large regional council areas.

North Sydney is an ideal place to include in the Young Mayors programme.

The Foundation for Young Australians has called for expressions of interest from councils around Australia.

As Mayor, exercising my delegation between Council meetings, I lodged an expression of interest on behalf of Council with the Foundation for Young Australians and, therefore, take

this first Council meeting to report to you and seek in principle support for Council to be involved with the programme if the opportunity arises.

**I therefore recommend:**

- 1. THAT** Council note that an expression of interest be included in future pilot projects of the Young Mayors programme has been made on Council's behalf.
- 2. THAT** Council supports participation in the Foundation for Young Australians' Young Mayors programme.
- 3. THAT** Council write to the Foundation for Young Australians expressing interest in participating in the Young Mayors programme.

**COUNCILLOR ZOË BAKER  
MAYOR**