



BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL

POLICY NO. 10/007

YOUTH POLICY

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

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Document History

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#770818		Res 08-345 (Extraordinary Meeting 19 June 2008) Adoption of 2008-2011 Management Plan
#974921		Res 10-543 (Extraordinary Meeting 1 July 2010) Late Report Society and Culture – Draft Youth Policy
#1020284		Res 10-756 (Ordinary Meeting 7 October 2010)

Further Document Information and Relationships

Related Legislation	
Related Policies	
Related Procedures/ Protocols, Statements, documents	Integrated Community Strategic Plan, Social Plan (#486263), Cultural Plan (#790600), Community Safety Plan (#474344), Community Economic Development Policy (#974927), Disability Access and Inclusion Plan (#790622)

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POLICY TITLE YOUTH POLICY

FILE REFERENCE COR050505

1. POLICY CONTEXT

The Byron Shire Council recognises young people as community members aged between 12 and 24 and acknowledges that there are different issues impacting upon the age groups within this age span.

Council respects these differences and supports initiatives that respond to young people's interests and concerns appropriately. Council will continue to facilitate and provide opportunities for young people to contribute, be acknowledged, and participate in community life.

Council has a leadership role in recognising local youth needs and service gaps. However, it may not be Council's role to be a direct service provider but rather to provide leadership and support to other youth agencies with the vision to improve access and equity for young people within the community.

Byron Shire's Youth Policy should be a guide to be used in conjunction with other documents including the Integrated Community Strategic Plan, Social Plan, Cultural Plan and Community Safety Plan. An Action Plan will be developed to define specific actions to deliver on Youth Policy objectives and will include an Implementation Strategy.

Council acknowledges that:

1.1 Young people play an important role in the social, economic, political and cultural life of our community

1.2 Young people have diverse interests and cultural backgrounds and want opportunities to participate in a range of cultural and artistic forms of expression

1.3 Education, training, employment, transport and social support play a central role in enabling young people to participate effectively in community life

1.4 Council has a leadership role in understanding and responding to the needs of young people and representing their interests to other spheres of Government and the broader community

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 To clarify Council's role and responsibilities in relation to the youth of Byron Shire.

2.2 To recognise and respect the diversity and vitality of young members of the community.

2.3 To acknowledge and support youth as valuable community members and their future role as community leaders and decision-makers.

2.4 To support the needs of young people and facilitate a positive, safe, healthy and supportive environment for young people.

2.5 To engage and empower young people to ensure that their views and interests are heard and considered in Council's decision-making.

2.6 To ensure young people have access to information and resources to meet their needs.

2.7 To work co-operatively with other levels of government, agencies and community organisations to develop and strengthen the range of services and programs to support young people.

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 **Youth / young people** – community members between 12 and 24 years of age.

3.2 **Culture** – the expression of the history, tradition, heritage, customs, practices, activities, creativity, innovations and values of a community that define them as a distinctive group, past, present and future (*Byron Shire Cultural Policy 2008*).

4. VISION

Byron Shire's community vision for youth is one in which:

- Youth feel safe and supported in a caring and non-discriminatory manner
- Youth needs are recognised
- Youth are considered in decision-making that affects their current and future lives
- Youth contributions are respected and encouraged
- Opportunities for education, training, employment, health and housing are developed
- A diverse range of creative, sporting and recreational opportunities are encouraged.

5. PRINCIPLES

The Byron Shire Council Youth Policy will guide Council in its commitment to work with, and for, young people.

The following principles have been identified through a series of consultations with young people and the wider community, and will form the foundation for Byron Shire Council's work with youth.

5.1 Transparency and Accountability

Council's commitment will be clearly articulated and supported by processes that are transparent and accountable.

5.2 Increased Awareness

Council will display increased awareness of the value and importance of including young people in decisions that impact on their lives.

5.3 Local Partnerships and Solutions

Consultation processes will engage local young people to develop responses and also identify ways to improve collaboration and partnerships.

5.4 Identifying and Targeting Priorities

Council will ensure resources are more effectively targeted towards identified priority needs.

5.5 Engaging Young People

Council will engage young people by creating participatory processes to empower young people to make decisions and to foster a sense of worth and belonging in their community.

5.6 Coordinated Responses

Council will endeavour to ensure feedback and responses are used as a tool to improve Council functions and coordination with government and non-government agencies.

6. COUNCIL'S ROLES AND FUNCTIONS

Council will:

- 6.1 Provide access to safe youth leisure, recreation, learning space and social experiences including sporting facilities, libraries, community centres and youth specific events.
- 6.2 Consult with young people to stay informed of current issues and possible solutions, ensure that young people are included in planning and decision-making processes, and support methods of communication that are youth-friendly.
- 6.3 Support local and regional providers of youth services through information, advice on best practice models, provision of community space, grant application support and financial assistance where possible.
- 6.4 Continue to support parents through information, services provision and the promotion of services available to parents.
- 6.5 Lobby on behalf of Byron Shire's young people for improvement, change, or increased services that are important to them and improve their access and equity opportunities.
- 6.6 Disseminate up-to-date, credible information to young people and their families to assist with healthy living and safety for young people in the community.
- 6.7 Advocate for the provision of services and infrastructure to improve young people's wellbeing through increased access to social, educational, employment, transport, health and accommodation opportunities and support services.
- 6.8 Monitor social issues so as to foster collaborative responses and partnerships to enhance local young people's access to community services and support.

7. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY

- 7.1 Continue to support and facilitate the Byron Shire Youth Council
- 7.2 Develop a Youth Strategy and Action Plan
- 7.3 Establish a specific Youth section on BSC website with links to other relevant government websites and community based organisations
- 7.4 Recognise and celebrate Youth Week
- 7.5 Continue to acknowledge and promote the positive contribution that young people make to the Byron Shire community
- 7.6 Support opportunities for youth to design and organise events

- 7.7 Support the investigation of opportunities to provide student placements and employment for young people within Council
- 7.8 Work co-operatively with community-based organisations that support young people
- 7.9 Advocate for the needs of young people in relation to transport, health services, housing, education and training, employment and recreation programs.