



SYNOPSIS OF TCC YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FORUM, 2023 as presented to Council

Climate Change and the Environment

Holly Trueman, Executive Director , Canberra Environment Centre

- main theme was students had been taught ideas around sustainability, climate change and the environment at Primary school but little at high school and college except for from *Mary Mackillop* where they had an extra curriculum program called “Sustainability Club”.
 - almost all the students said “I don’t really know or understand it”.
- It was noted that the students had much bigger issues with mental health and general wellbeing and they were overwhelmed or just have not given thought to the environment.
- students noted how awful the Tuggeranong lake “it stinks”.
 - When explaining the nutrient overload issues to them they seem engaged and this was completely new information. They mostly believed that the blue green algae outbreaks were due to the trolleys and rubbish that had been dumped in the lake.
- Some showed concern that the US had instigated the [Willow Project](#) - The project could produce up to 180,000 barrels of oil a day, according to the company — about 1.5% of total U.S. oil production. The project is the largest proposed oil drilling on U.S. public land and the biggest oil field in Alaska in decades. - made them feel helpless

Education

Tammy Goodwin, School Operations, ACT Education Directorate

- Concern about access to teaching and support staff. Students would like to see consistency in staff, less turnover in relief staff and additional support staff in the classroom. Staff shortages are having a notable impact on students.
- accessing wellbeing support, not knowing who to go to in the school, shortage of school psychologist appointments
- Students overall feel safe at school - attribute this to their friendship groups and key staff..
- Changes students would like to see in schools centered around staffing, one-on-one support for students who struggle understand or interpret curriculum, tutors in school, more cultural education with a stronger focus on Indigenous education.
- Students would also like to see more differentiated learning, self-directed learning and alternate pathways to careers and university.
 - Student opinion on career support stated the information was limited to the same mainstream careers.
 - Understanding job requirements, conditions and pay scales for selected careers was also a theme in conversation.
- Assistive technology - to support of students with learning difficulties.
- When asked if their home internet connection was fast and reliable enough to support study/work from home comments ‘it sometimes lags’ and ‘slow and drops out’.

Employment

Thomas Griffith, Youth Engagement sub-committee and Glenys Patulny, TCC

A common theme that came out from the Employment table from all the different groups was that they knew little about external Employment support/Agencies and they thought information/education about Employment should start in year 9 and 10. As it:

- Might help students gain part time employment
- Start them thinking about their future career in Year 10, so they can choose courses in college based on what they think they might want to do in the future for employment

In College students want more information on:

- Knowing what is available - more efficient advertising and promotion - ASBAS
- School contact with relevant groups eg. employee groups, local businesses, talks
- Want more work experience opportunities and Career teachers who are availability
- Benefit of volunteering - good for references

Career Education

- Resume writing & Mock interviews preparation -What to wear and say at interview
- Organisation and time management skills
- \$ management including Reality of saving

Part time work and full time education:

- Challenges - Work/Life Balance- work/school/social life, Time management, Mental health, Burnout
- Part time work helps get jobs after finishing school eg references/experience, Helps them find out you can/can't do or like or not like - Learn to prioritise

Knew little about what programs were available to help them find a job - they want better career advice through Social media

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Josephine Brogden, Office of Mental Health and Wellbeing, ACT Health

- Overall, young people were unaware of the existing services in the Tuggeranong region, other than that of headspace and Menslink - reiterated consistently that their knowledge of what services were available relied heavily on the information they received at school.
- The consensus was that school was the best place to be informed of existing services, and how to receive mental health support - spent majority of their time, received majority of their support when unable to access outside services.
- Felt the Tuggeranong region needs more mental health support in their education systems - school counsellors, more youth workers, more peer support groups
- saw a need for more youth community spaces and peer groups outside of a school setting.
- reported school counsellors were inaccessible due to long waiting times and limited counsellor availability - some unempathetic or dismissive at times, especially towards the neurodivergent youth.
- Significant barriers to a formal diagnosis & accessing support included financial barriers, long waiting periods, need for parental consent, lack of motivation, lack of time, stigma
- Young people reported a need for more personalised care particularly for those with complex mental health conditions, neurodivergence and addiction.
- Understood the link between physical and mental health, and its contribution to individual's overall wellbeing. BUT felt there was not enough education on how to be healthy and social media showed an abundance of misinformation, struggle to navigate their options.

Safety and Crime – Tracey Rollings
Community Engagement Team, ACT Policing.

- The YP's felt relatively **safe** around the Tuggeranong area - expressed concerns with anti-social behaviours in/around the town centre, bus interchange, skate-park and McDonalds - 'eshays' or intoxicated persons, were loitering the area.
- **Antisocial behaviours** the YP's experienced included intimidation, verbal abuse, 'cat-calling', and the targeting of LGBTQIA+ persons and other minority groups.
 - felt more security staff and CCTV cameras would assist in alleviating these issues.
- The YP's do not believe there is enough **lighting** at the bus interchange; want improved lighting around lake and local footpaths for better safety
- Many YP's held high concerns around the **local roads and pedestrian crossings** due to speeding cars, 'hooning' and a lack of giving-way.
 - Want a better Police presence to discourage dangerous and ant-social driving.
- do not believe Tuggeranong has a major crime problem; but know of thefts within the South.Point shopping centre/other local shops.
- Verbal harassment and physical assaults were of highest concern to the YP's. The YP's also recognised graffiti as a problem but acknowledged the benefits of permissible graffiti
- Showed a high regard for Police; but believed Police being more friendly and just saying 'hi' to them in the streets would help this. Would like to see Police visit their local schools more regularly, not just turning up for an incident, but to 'hang-out', provide presentations, and/or offer advice and interactions.
- Would like to see an ACT Policing social media page directed at YPs. They would like to have the page include youth issues, advice (e.g. around cybercrime), fun facts/information,

Transport

Jeff Bollard, Vice President, Tuggeranong Community Council

Besides the general call for increased frequency of buses, better bus routes, the need for more buses after dark etc., comments were made about a number of methods of transport, including: walking, bus, car transport by parents, carers, or parents of friends. There was little use of bikes and E-scooters were considered as a recreation experience and not a chosen method of daily commuting.

Bus timetables and routes were discussed as significant issues including:

- Improved routes and frequency of buses to improve Accessibility and convenience
- Not delivering students to school before the commencement of the school day.
- strong preference for dedicated school bus services rather than students having to share.
- Standard routes also involved indirect travel through interconnecting services and extended end-to-end transit times.

Ticketing and MyWay cards problems were discussed. The proposed move to incorporate credit, debit and phone-based tap and go was seen as a positive initiative.

- Free bus travel for students during school terms was a common suggestion.
- Security continues to be an issue with most not wanting to travel by bus after dark
- It was suggested that use of public transport be incorporated into school programs
- Uber was used by some and was preferred to taxis as it gave them advanced cost of service, car tracking, driver profile and rating.
- There was good support for light rail coming to Tuggeranong however disappointment that services were unlikely prior to 2040 plus.

Youth Spaces - Beth Jones, Headspace Tuggeranong

- Young people frequently stated that safety, accessibility, comfort and cleanliness were key to ensuring a youth space was appealing.
- had little awareness of youth spaces in their community. To spread awareness about these spaces, suggested social media - Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat **and**
- school - educators could raise awareness of youth spaces and support
- **spaces they felt were needed** or were missing from Tuggeranong, - more accessible youth drop-ins, like YWCA Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centre and more outdoor spaces (e.g., the Tuggeranong Park stage) and more accessible sexual health services.
- Regarding **sporting facilities**, young people reported that they would rather see upgrades to existing facilities over the construction of new facilities.
- Of the topics discussed, the number one requested priority for the Tuggeranong Community Council was the creation of another Southside drop-in service.
- To summarise the major recommendations, young people have requested the TCC:
 - Push for a new accessible drop-in service within the Tuggeranong Region,
 - Push to upgrade existing youth spaces to be safer, more accessible, more comfortable, and regularly cleaned,
 - Upgrade existing sporting facilities, and
 - Promote stronger awareness of youth spaces and support services in the local area.

Future opportunities

Catherine Jones, Communities at Work

- Students suggested a range of ideas for how to reduce the cost-of-living pressures currently facing households. Ideas included: downsizing to reduce costs; only shopping once a week; more focus on assessing individual circumstances; supporting local business to increase jobs; and diverting excess renewable energy to increase funds.
- There was a specific focus on what Government could be doing to boost the economy by shifting the budget focus or levers to increase wages. Including: increased taxes for high income earners; increased monetary support to low income families; building more houses, subsidising the cost of housing, food, and hygiene products.
- Feeling the effects of rising cost of living and increases to the cost of housing mostly through the experience of their parents. Eg. some families are unable to afford to buy a house or afford a rental property. They acknowledged the importance of being able to access Public Housing. Feel they will have to stay living at home with their parents or they will be forced to live in a share house as they won't be able to afford to purchase a home of their own.
- All attendee's stated they would like to be involved in more forums; their preference is for face-to-face interactions as opposed to online meetings. Students enjoyed the experience, the current format and topics, and stated they had learnt new things.
- To improve engagement in community issues, students suggested engaging through schools by using attention grabbing messaging and advertise upcoming events through social media networks/campaigns. Consultations should be face-to-face with at least 4 young people per table, be open-minded, promote an interactive and engaging environment.
- As a result of participating in the forum, young people would like to see the results of feedback provided and any related advocacy/lobbying related to the topics discussed. In addition, young people would like to see more engagement opportunities, the inclusion of more Indigenous voices, and increased community knowledge about the range of supports that are available.