



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

within the Future Planning Unit. It has been developed in close partnership with Council's Community Development Team, and an extremely talented and enthusiastic group of young people and youth service The Youth Engagement Strategy has been co-ordinated by Council's Social Planning Team, located provider representatives. These people have worked together as part of the Youth Facilitation Team.

The Youth Engagement Strategy has been developed in consultation with young people and other key stakeholders.

processes and shared their stories and perceptions about what it is like for a young person to live in the consultation Council would like to thank the young people, providers and community members who participated in businesses, service Wyong Shire.

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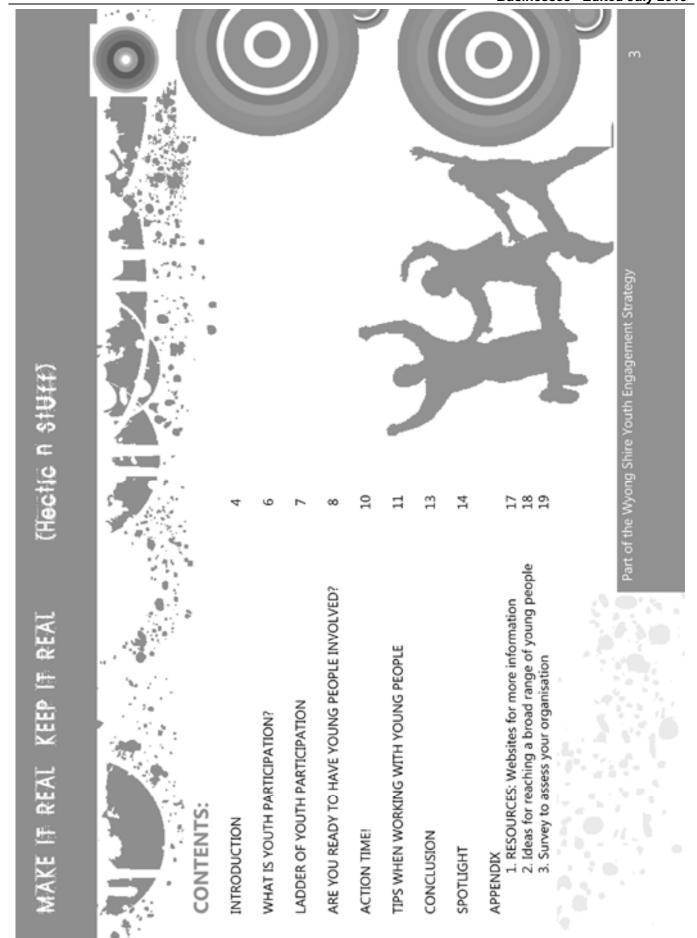
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Vyong Shire Youth Engagement Strategy

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### (Hectic n StUff)

# have told us what they like about Wyong Shire,

### INTRODUCTION:

are keen to involve and support young people, but did not know how to go about it. This Toolkit is From the engagement sessions, we heard that many businesses, organisations and community groups designed to assist you to empower and engage with young people via a "do with" not "do to" approach. What is the Wyong Toolkit?

some ideas and experiences that may help you to make your idea for Wyong Shire a reality. It is a one for young people. Each one has been designed to practically help different parts of the community Toolkit does not tell you what to do, but shares There are two handbooks that make up the Toolkit one for community groups and businesses and make positive "stuff" happen in Wyong Shire. The guide for starting discussion and getting started, giving you the confidence to work with and support young people by making decisions with them. You can view the other documents in the Youth Engagement Strategy to see what young people

Julie, Youth Facilitation

Team member

have no doubts that the youth today can make a difference... they are decision makers.

their brilliant ideas. There are two other documents on the priority areas for action and invites you to help bring the Youth Engagement Strategy alive; and the Background Report shows the process we what they would like to see happen, and some of the Youth Prospectus gives you information went through and the key findings from talking to over 1,000 people about young people in our community.

## The purpose of the Toolkit is to:

- Provide a "how to" guide to make positive "stuff" happen in Wyong Shire;
- people, and of young people making a difference in their communities - to inspire and motivate business groups partnering with local examples community Spotlight ocal action;
- implementing the exciting outcomes from the involved ě Youth Engagement Strategy; and Let you know how to

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Let you know how to get further support to put vour ideas into practice.

**Wyong Shire Youth Engagement Strategy** 

# (Hectic n StUff) KEEP IT REAL

### How do I use this Toolkit?

Prospectus has been developed to invite and enable understand what working with young people will involve. It will help you understand the key foundations of youth participation, and provide you with tips to help you support and engage young people. We encourage you to use this Toolkit in conjunction with the Youth Prospectus. The your organisation to support and connect young By giving practical tips, this Toolkit will help you people to community, education and employment From the community consultations, six priority areas were identified and can be found in the Prospectus They are:

- Strengthening and Connecting our Young People Valuing Young People
  - Involving Young People
- Young People and Places and Spaces Learning and Working

Working Together

A set of key initiatives and suggested actions (as a outcomes for each of these priority areas, (see the Prospectus). These key initiatives may help give you starting point) have been developed to achieve the

deas for how you can partner with young people.

a dream. Don't underestimate the young people. They bring so much behind long hair or a hat or a hooa Don't underestimate the power of Rachel, Youth Facilitation Team power of a group of enthusiastic skill and untapped leadership qualities that often get hidden member Part of the Wyong Shire Youth Engage



#### PARTICIPATION? WHAT IS YOUTH

### How much participation?

viewed as a core activity and not be limited to Youth participation creates better outcomes for in the decision-making process, saving valuable time and energy in the long-term. Programs and better reflect their needs. It should therefore be young people and the organisation that is involved services created by young people for young people trivial decisions. Youth participation is more than just giving the younger members of the community a say - it is about empowerment. Empowering young people is but enabling and resourcing them to achieve their involved so they can have their say in a way that is not just involving youth in projects and processes. own dreams, create their own project and add value to the community. It is about them getting

degree of participation being offered. Therefore, it is helpful to be aware of how much participation It is very important that you communicate with young people honestly and clearly about the and involvement you want from young people

the opportunity for young people to have a say about issues and decisions that affect them, learn new skills, have fun and develop a closer connection

comfortable and relevant for them. It also provides

to their views, taking them seriously and making

sure they are involved in decision-making.

There's absolutely no limit to what young people can do.... A better question would be to ask what can us as a community do to enable young people to achieve their

to their community. It is about adults really listening

take a partnership approach, where young people of ownership of the project, and they are therefore more likely to engage with it successfully. This The most effective participation occurs when you are involved in each stage, including planning, implementing and evaluating. This creates a sense empowers the young people involved, creating opportunities for them to influence, inform, shape, design and contribute to an idea or activity.

dreams, to have the impact that they'd like

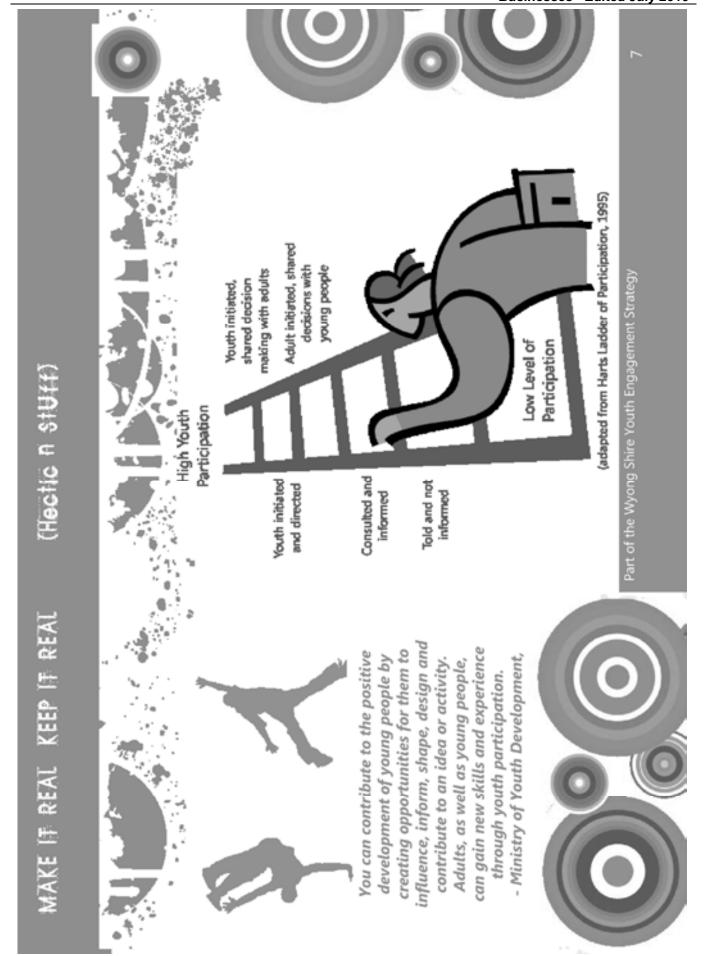
to make and the contribution that they would like to make to society. Jordan, Youth Facilitation Team member

161 347 or email YouthStuff@wyong.nsw.gov.au for help or to provide ideas for how to create more Please call our Youth Engagement Officer on 0408 participation in your organisation.



important place in decision Young people have an making.

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Think – when someone asks you to be involved in a

project, you want to know the details. Young people

This helps to avoid disillusionment as the level of

participation of young people is made obvious.

young people can decide if they want participate.

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### YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED? ARE YOU READY TO HAVE

young people. Before involving young people, can if you are ready to have young people involved, or how you are going if you have already engaged It is a good idea to assess your organisation to see you answer "yes" to the five core foundations for involving young people?

#### 5 Core Foundations for Involving Young People

don't panic! This allows you to see where you need

to improve before you involve young people.

If you answered "no" to any of these questions,

- Are you clear about your reasons for involving young people?
- Are you clear about how young people can participate in the decision-making process?

must be clear about these details so that everyone

affected understands how and why young people

will be involved in making decisions.

It is necessary to have these core foundations resolved before young people are involved. You

- Have you outlined how young people will be involved and supported through this opportunity?
- Does everyone who will be involved in this process know how much weight young people's opinions will have in making

foundations so you can easily articulate to young people what you are asking of them - what is involved and how much input will be required - so

It is also essential that you are clear on these

Can you ensure young people who will be affected by a decision will be given the chance to contribute? decisions? 'n



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Sarah, Youth Facilitation Team

member

people are empowered today so that they can lead tomorrow

It is important that young

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people's opinions in decision-making. You can call Perhaps you need to discuss and write down the our Youth Engagement Officer on 0408 161 347 decide how much weight will be given to young reasons you want to involve young people, or to help and discuss options with you.

Practice Top Tips" to help maximise the enjoyment that's great! You are on the right track to having young people involved in your organisation in a productive and empowering way. See the "Best If you can answer "yes" to all these questions, and benefit of involving young people.

process of working with young people. Don't worry if you don't have all of them - they are a quick These tips will help amplify and support the guide to help you.

 World Youth Café participant Small steps, good steps.

Part of the Wyong Shire Yo

generally wary of older people talking to them in their own settings (e.g. skate park) because they are used to being told to stop doing whatever they are doing. Tell them straight away that you want their views and opinions, and young people will be more

you want to talk to young people. Young people are

Explain yourself! Be upfront and clear about why

(Hectic A StUff)

There is a survey on page 19 to help work through these ideas, and to provide general advice depending on whether your organisation is ready to work with 'Best Practice Tips" and the survey, you can assess young people. By using the "5 Core Foundations". your organisation before involving young people.

Remember that working with young people can be empowering if their opinions and ideas are valued. Therefore it is important to:

- Respect young people's ideas and opinions;
- Take a partnership approach to working with young people; and
  - Avoid over-consulting with a narrow base of voung people.

Beyond all else, the one critical ingredient you consultation or is honest and can bring to any conversation, engagement with young people timely communication.

and contribute to the business sector... Young people have so much to share it's a two-way learning experience. Rachel, Youth Facilitation Team nember

#### ACTION

Now that you know what is involved in partnering with young people, it is time to get going. Below are a few tips and reminders of how to approach and behave around young people.

Youth Café participant mentioned that we have to

Remember that you do not have to be young and 'cool" to work with young people, but you do have

be "making decisions with the next generation".

older members of the community", and a World

people were so willing to build relationships with

the community engagement sessions Sue (Youth

noted that

Facilitation Team member)

or member to your group - how do you begin a Think about how you approach a new co-worker with mutual respect. You should be no different Young people should be treated just like you would treat anyone – with respect and understanding. conversation? You approach them in a friendly way, when meeting a young person.

to be yourself.

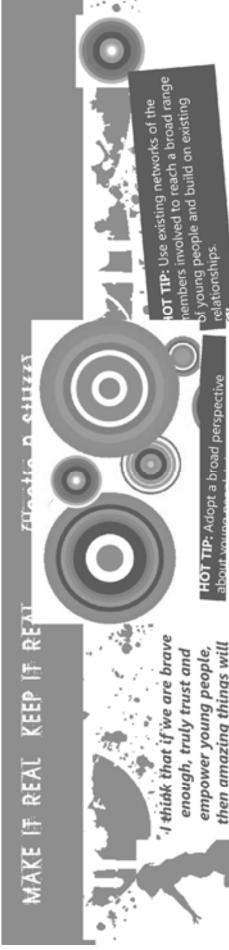
1. Be friendly! Even if the person you are talking to friendly and try to start a conversation. Perhaps the be friendly and real (i.e. no pretences) and explain may seem disinterested at first, you should still be young person is wary, or shy. Whatever the reason, why you are talking to them.

accepting

are "faking it" pretty quickly. Do not let age be a hindrance - intergenerational interaction was seen Be real! Do not pretend you are someone you are not. Young people can determine if you as an important part of community from both young people and community members. For example, from

Young people are people too. World Café participant

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about vous happen. I truly believe that Steve, Youth Facilitation then amazing things will Team member

### WHEN WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

daunting, but we have some simple tips to help Working with young people can sometimes seem Nor.

- Avoid unnecessary formality,
- Ensure language is simple and direct be careful of using jargon;
- Record views accurately ensure everyone can Have regular breaks and break up the monotony see what is being recorded;
- Have no costs involved to participate (e.g. pay (e.g. brainstorming, small groups, food break); for travel, provide food, etc);
- Provide 'soft entry' points where young people

the best opportunity to attend, as some will have to make arrangements around school, work and can come to observe or just come with a friend; Allow a long lead in time to give young people

to attend every meeting, what work will be e.g. time involved – does everyone have expected of the young people involved HOT TIP: Be very clear about what is equired between meetings

relationships

imes) and ensure your meetings are flexible to ransport. Be mindful of busy times (i.e. exam Location of the meeting and who is present may affect how a young person participates, especially if family is present. Be mindful that young people are more likely to be involved if the venue is youth-appropriate, and be conscious of accommodate their needs:

- Ensure you have regular contact and respectful communication between team members; what adults (if any) are present;
- Continue to communicate outside meetings so everyone is "kept in the loop";

conclusion), and communicate the outcomes of (e.g. send participants a thank you letter at Provide feedback in an honest and timely way the consultation; Part of the Wyong Shire Youth Engagement Strategy

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# KEEP IT REAL

### (Hectic A StUft)

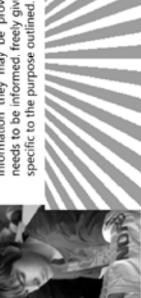
HOT TIP: Consider age appropriate topics, method of consultation, safety (especial) with travel), and relevance (e.g. does this level of consultation required (do they need to be away from school/home?)

group use your service)

Make it real, keep it real by:

- Building trust between all people involved;
- change yourself because you are interacting with youth. Be real to Ensure you (the facilitator) do not yourself, and young people will respect you;
- Create opportunities to debrief;
- encourage Acknowledge participation;

Explain how information gathered will be used,



Be aware of the geographical location of young getting places, especially if they are reliant on people and the difficulty of young people public transport - meet them where they spend time;

people

young

engage

simple questionnaires with simple language,

with space for additional comments;

small-group interviews

structured

around a particular topic;

As a lot of young people are reliant on public transport, be mindful of timetables when setting meeting times;

a topic, usually recorded on film or tape) to

nighlight views of young people;

interactive websites through which young people can voice their opinions and thoughts

Protect privacy and confidentiality of the team. For example, ensure participants know they will have their confidentiality respected, and they are told how the information they contribute

from parents or caregivers for young people to Consider consent: you may need to seek consent be involved in the team. You will need to look at their age, what they are participating in, and information they may be providing. Consent needs to be informed, freely given, current and will be used;

art, posters,

cultural action techniques e.g.

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action or advocacy groups;

brainstorming sessions

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# (Hectic n StUff) KEEP IT REA

### Got an idea – let us know

If you are working on an idea or would like to register a request to get help with making an idea happen, please let us know. We would love to help you engage young people in the way that would best suit your organisation.

#### something to offer Want

Look at the Youth Prospectus for suggested actions you can take to support and connect young people to community, education and employment and make If you are interested in supporting something that young people are working on in Wyong, contact our Youth Engagement Officer to find out how you a real difference to the future of our community. Wyong young people - let us know can help.

## Got a story – let us know

Listed below are just a few stories of projects where local community groups and businesses have partnered with young people, and youth initiated so please let us know how you are partnering with projects. We know there are many more stories young people.

If you have an idea, story or want to help young people make a difference in Wyong Shire, phone our Youth Engagement Officer on 0408 161 347 and discuss your idea.

We will then do one or more of the following: provide you with more information;

- - arrange a face to face meeting;
- partnership, depending on the proposal connect you with appropriate partners; ongoing provide



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partnership with Youth Connections, over 2 days and recently hosted a Retail Skills showcase, in Westfield Tuggerah is a major community player, which involved over 300 young people

community members throughout the centre and the very important and productive. It is important to Approximately 1500 - 2000 young people attend Westfield Tuggerah on any given Thursday evening. As a result, Westfield has employed police officers night. These officers mingle with young people and young people are viewed as valuable consumers. his has lead to relationship building with young people, police and Westfield, and is seen as being note that in instances where problems occur, the majority of the problems are brought into the centre for the past 6 months to be present each Thursday (i.e. existing grievances)

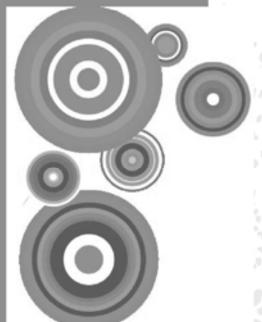
Westfield has taken a number of steps to ensure their

Tuggerah developed a Youth Respect Card which centre is welcoming for young people. Westfield outlines Westfield's commitment to young peo and their expectations of young people when visiti also coordinates a National training program for their store. These are now used nationally. Westfi of their security guards, which includes direction how to work with young people



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provision of free tennis lessons. The Lions Club has

One program they are currently undertaking is the

has many great ideas,

Gwandalan Lions Club

from programs just for girls to intergenerational programs, with the aim to break down barriers. to provide sponsored or free tennis lessons to keep

partnered with a local tennis coach and tennis court

if this is successful, the club is looking at expanding

nto soccer

young people active and connected to local services.

KEEP IT REAL

AKE IT REAL

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that there are caring young people around" - Jodi of a positive effect it might have on them, or if it's just what they needed that day. It's lovely to know Brown, community member touched by "Random

> 2008 members of the Wyong Youth Advisory Council (YAC) posted messages of "Random Acts of

from Youth Advisory Council involved Random Acts of Kindness ream

"I was touched... it doesn't take much to brighten

pass the kindness on

someone's day and you never really know how much

Andre's Prestige Tiling partners with a local training organisation to provide high quality construction work placements for local high school students,

Acts of Kindness" Kindness" throughout the Shire and asked recipients on board to promote the campaign and used the out to members of the community, continuing to to pass the kindness on. More than 3,000 random 200 magnets and 250 badges. More than 800 of the cards were handmade. The community were surprised young people were the ones behind the campaign as "reverse mentoring" - instead of young they were the ones carrying out the program for the broader community. The group had the Mayor media to anonymously promote the Random Acts of Kindness. After receiving a card, one business donated 12 dozen roses to be randomly handed acts of kindness cards were made then anonymously and randomly posted out, along with 1,600 posters, campaign. The young people involved saw the people being the recipients of mentor programs,

to young people in his community - "today's young

committed to providing opportunities for young people to learn quality skills to become talented and knowledgeable tradespeople. He believes he has a responsibility to the future of his trade and

Prestige

Andre's

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Helou,

Andre

hosting nearly 30 students over the past 4 years.

tradespeople. Without passing on skills to them we

will lose quality workmanship."

people are tomorrow's adults and tomorrow's

by the students

When meeting up with young people after their

is inspired

placement, Andre

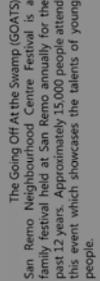
their experience.

gratitude for the time spent with him and the young people have gained direction and confidence from

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KEEP IT REA

### MAKE IF REAL



Over 40 bands and performers across 3 stages have the opportunity to perform to a live audience in a drug and alcohol free environment. Youth of all music genres and all levels of talent perform, creating self-confidence and skills in the young people. In conjunction with the music, schools participate in an art competition.

Youngpeople are part of the organising commmittee, responsible for the organisation, management, delivery, performance and evaluation of the event. Young people are involved in decision making process and performing key roles, for example MC'ing, stage management and risk assessment etc which is crucial to its success.



These stories are truly inspiring and can provide a powerful message about what is possible. But it is even more powerful when we can start to share stories of success happening in Wyong Shire. They are a few examples of many. Do you have a story to share? We would love to hear it! Please email our Youth Engagement Officer on YouthStuff@wyong.nsw.gov.au or call 0408 161

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# (Hectic n StUff) KEEP IT REAL

#### APPENDIX

- RESOURCES: Websites for more information
- Ideas for reaching a broad range of young people
- Survey to assess your organisation

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# RESOURCES: Websites for more information

### Office for Youth publications

Provides a series of publications on different aspects of youth participation. They offer practical tools to help young people and their partners develop effective models for youth participation.

### Youth Consultation Toolkit

This Toolkit will assist organisations in learning how to effectively consult with young people. It provides information on different methods of consultation.

tips about what method to use, and checklists to ensure a good consultation.

This site provides information for employers about

Training

apprenticeships and traineeships. https://www.training.nsw.gov.au

www.hunter.tafensw.edu.au

www.megt.com.au

www.officeforyouth.sa.gov.au/Resources/Toolkit

#### Youth Services Toolkit

This Toolkit has sections for people who are just starting out, and also for trainers to teach people. There are 3 sections: Managing Activities, Manage Staff & Volunteers and Running the Organisations. www.youthservicestoolkit.com.au

This site provides information for employers about

Employer Incentives Scheme

the Employer Incentives Schemes available.

www.workplace.gov.au/workplace/Programmes/

**EmployerIncentivesScheme** 

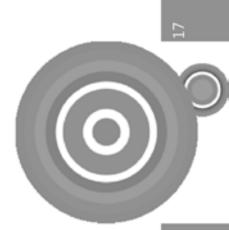
#### Participation Kit

A great resource for organisations who want practical advice about how to involve children and young people in activities, events and decision-making. http://kids.nsw.gov.au/kids/resources/participationkit

#### Practising Participation

These resources outline some principles of young people's participation and practical advice that help ensure that young people are meaningfully included, empowered and purposefully engaged. They were written following consultations with young people and youth service providers across the state. http://www.yacvic.org.au

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Keep checking where you are on the "Ladder

youth participation activities;

of Participation" (page 9), especially with

ф

Use this checklist to identify areas for continual

individual projects;

mprovement



a similar project to what you are considering implementina

stakeholders in your organisation and see what people who they think you should be doing; young Connect with

Consider having adult mentors for youth for adult participants to help the transition of having young people in decision-making roles; participants, and youth mentors

about empowering and encouraging them to Address the relevant points of the checklist for Remember that involving young people be involved and to be decision-makers:

Contact the Youth Engagement Officer on 0408 161 YouthStuff@wycng.nsw.gov.au or your particular project;

Score of 50-75

You are off to a good start! Your organisation has great strengths to build on and some areas in which to improve.

Suggestion

Highlight areas where you scored 4 or more to

dentify your organisation's strengths;

Take opportunities to share your organisation's

Suggestion

experiences, lessons and best practices;

Present your youth

at appropriate conferences to spread great

participation processes

Highlight areas where you scored 3 or less to Develop an action plan to strengthen the youth dentify opportunities for improvement

Young People" (page 10) and look at how you Go through the "5 Core Foundations for Involving can strengthen these in your organisation; participation work you are undertaking:

advice on how to strengthen the involvement of Look at the "Best Practice Top Tips" (page 11) for young people in your organisation;

Contact our Youth Engagement Officer on 0408 .61 347 or YouthStuff@wyong.nsw.gov.au to talk about showcasing your organisation's

with Council;

project ideas, and to see how you can partner

Look at the Youth Prospectus for examples of youth participation;

> empowering and encouraging them to be Remember that involving young people is about involved and to be decision-makers;

"Ladder of Participation" (page 9) and where you is on Consider where your organisation think it should be:

Look at the Youth Prospectus to see how you can further your youth involvement;

Share your organisation's experiences and best practices with others

Score of 76 or more

Fantastic! You have a good foundation in youth participation. Be proud of what you have achieved.

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