

POLICY REPORTS

11 CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY STRATEGY 2017- 2021

FILE REFERENCE INT1754169

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RECOMMENDATION

That Council adopts the Child, Youth and Family Strategy 2017-21.

Attachments

1 Child, Youth and Family Strategy 2017-21 14 Pages

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Child, Youth and Family Strategy is now finalised having been presented to the council briefing on 7 August 2017 with a summary of community feedback.

Where possible the document has been amended to include some of these, others will be fed through into the business planning for Community and Family Services and provided to others for consideration in their business planning for the next five years.

BACKGROUND

The development of the Child, Youth and Family Strategy (Strategy) for Council provides a framework for the prevention and early intervention priorities and key focus areas over the next four years.

Previously there has been two strategic documents, one for children and families and one for youth. Providing one strategy will enable the learning around issues and interventions that young people are facing in the Shire, to inform and influence the planning for child and family services and programs to help prevent problems longer term.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

2012-2016 Youth Policy (is no longer required as principles now embedded into the Strategy)

Youth Affairs Council Code of Ethics

Child Safe Standards

Cardinia Shire Council Liveability Plan (under development)

RELEVANCE TO COUNCIL PLAN

- 1.1.1 Continually review services to ensure those provided by Council meet community needs
- 1.1.2 Routinely review overall community needs for services and either deliver or advocate for others to provide services to meet those needs.
- 1.2.1 Ensure Council either provides or advocates for others to provide employment, recreation and leisure opportunities for young people.

- 1.2.2 Advocate for an increase in locally based health and wellbeing services to support young people.
- 1.2.3 Investigate opportunities for allied services to be co-located with Council facilities
- 1.4.4 Support children, young people, families, older adults and people of all abilities by providing a range of accessible services and facilities
- 2.1.4 Plan for the provision of facilities to service and support the changing community.

CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION

The Strategy was developed through a range of consultation methods to determine the priorities and key focus areas. The draft Strategy was then sent back out to school communities, local child, youth and family networks, community groups, internal and external professionals for further feedback and refinement.

Planning for work with children and young people to interpret the Strategy into child friendly charter is underway. The intention being that children and young people will have an easy reference to understand what Cardinia Shire Council will be doing on their behalf.

FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The Child, Youth and Family Strategy has been developed within existing resources. The plan clearly states that Council will need to work in partnership with other agencies and organisations to jointly develop children's services provision in the Shire over the life of the Strategy. The guiding principles within the Strategy will underpin how we do our work. They will provide accountability in how we develop working relationships to achieve outcomes; attract services into the Shire; develop quality services and programs; and take up the role in advocating for resources into the Shire.

The Strategy will underpin our annual business planning process and in setting the strategic and operational actions required to achieve the outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The Child, Youth and Family Strategy is now finalised and reflects input from the community in its development. The document will now offer a strategic framework for Community and Family Services across the next four years. The Strategy is now offered to Council for adoption.

Child, Youth and Family Strategy 2017 – 2021

Children aged 0 – 11 and Young People aged 12 – 25 in Cardinia Shire
and their families

May 2017

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Child, Youth and Family Strategy 2017 – 2021

INTRODUCTION

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Introduction

Cardinia Shire Council's 2017-2021 Child Youth and Family Strategy (for children aged 0-11 years and young people aged 12-25 years) is aligned to the Council Plan and its Liveability Health Plan. It provides the framework which supports the prevention and early intervention approaches that respond to priorities and key focus area identified by community, including children and young people themselves. The detail of how we will achieve these will be planned on an annual basis through Council's business planning process and the development of strategic and operational actions with resources allocated to where they are most needed.

The strategy has been aligned to a number of other Victorian Government plans/strategies/policies that inform the work of Community and Family Services as follows:

- *Roadmap for Reform*
- *Education State*
- *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*
- *Ten Year Early Childhood Compact* (between Department of Education and Department of Health and Human Services)
- *Starting out Strong* (Maternal and Child Health)
- *Early Childhood Reform Plan*
- *Building Stronger Youth Engagement in Victoria*

In determining the priorities contained in this strategy we have carried out:

- a review of the 2012-2016 Youth Strategy and Child and Family Plan
- a review of the statistics relating to the health, wellbeing and development of children, young people and their families across the Shire
- consultation with children, young people, professionals and parents/carers
- cross referencing with the consultation undertaken through the Liveability Health Plan development

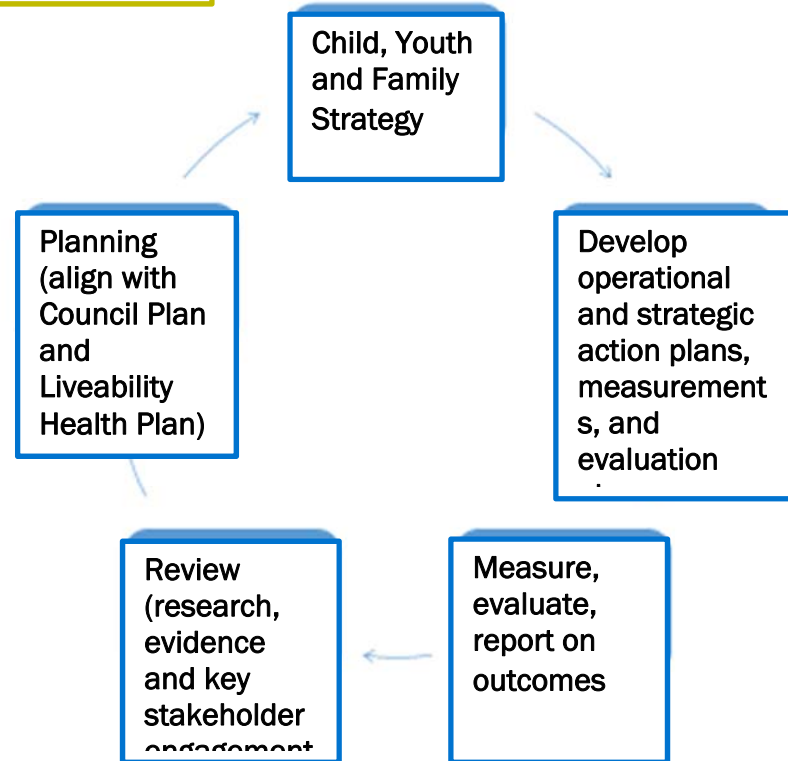
This evidence has provided us with insight into some significant issues affecting children, young people and families in the Shire that are in some cases entrenched and require a whole of community approach such as family violence. There are other emerging needs such as financial hardship, reduced educational outcomes and school non-attendance for our children and young people that require us to plan early so that we can prevent them becoming enduring issues. We know that vulnerability can present itself to families at any time, and we want to ensure that the systems in the Shire will work when and how families need them.

Equally as important is the acknowledgment that broadly our families are strong and resilient and there are positive outcomes being seen. We have a continued role in ensuring that Cardinia is a great place for children and young people and their families to live, work, learn and play. A place where the strengths and differences of our families are celebrated and parenting is supported.

For this reason, the strategy takes a long term approach to making a difference - with the flexibility to plan responsive strategic and operational actions so that we can influence the long term outcomes achieved. It is also broad enough to ensure that we consider the longevity of our priorities and approaches and where we can we will revisit them as community data informs us.

Underpinning the strategy is a set of principles, almost a 'checklist' of those things we that we will consider in our planning, design, delivery, evaluation and advocacy. These align with our values around the way in which we support the needs of the community and hold ourselves to account that we are being inclusive and equitable.

Planning and development cycle



Mission Statement

Cardinia Shire is a place where children and young people are safe and able to optimise their health, wellbeing and development, with the support and encouragement of their families and trusted adults. Through the adopted Child Friendly City Charter, it promotes a place where they are acknowledged as young citizens in their own right and where their voices help to shape the place where they live and the services and opportunities they receive.



Outcomes

Children, young people and their families will:

Be Safe

- they will be protected from harm and receive support to keep safe
- they will build resilience and help keep themselves safe
- they will have access to trusted adults
- vulnerability, location and disadvantage will not determine outcomes

Be Healthy and Happy

- their mental health and emotional wellbeing will be supported
- they will experience optimal health and development
- they will have access to information, advice and education to improve their health and wellbeing

Be Connected

- to culture, their family and friendship networks and their communities
- they can actively participate in community life and activities; and can access help when they need it
- they have a range of accessible facilities that encourage community connection

Realise their potential

- they will have access to quality education and training that takes account of individual learning needs
- their talents and strengths will be taken into account and they will have the opportunity to shine
- their transitions will be supported
- difference will be recognised and celebrated

Achieve Economic Wellbeing

- those experiencing hardship will have access to information, advice and referral to support agencies
- volunteering opportunities will support their aims
- services and activities will be free or low cost and accessible
- they will have career aspirations and opportunities for employment

Guiding Principles

We will ensure that these principles underpin the design, development, implementation and evaluation of our service actions and activities:

Evidenced based services that are affordable, relevant, contemporary and high quality

Access to information, advice, support and education

Voice of the child, young person and parent/carer in the planning and decisions that affect them and the services they receive

Safe and trusted adults as role models

Free or low cost, inclusive, accessible, healthy and safe activities/programs – that are family friendly

Place based approaches

Building a better system

Attract services to base themselves in the Shire

Prevention approaches and workforce development

Working in partnership with others to achieve outcomes, provide advocacy and co-design

Strategic Priorities

The Strategy will support the following identified priorities for 2017-2021 to inform our key focus areas for service development, provision and improvement.

Be Safe

1. Family violence
2. Vulnerability /health and social care

Be Healthy and Happy

1. Mental health and emotional wellbeing
2. Healthy lifestyles

Be Connected

1. Infrastructure and planning
2. Activities, programs and events

Realise their potential

1. Education, training and employment
2. Personal growth and development

Achieve Economic Wellbeing

1. Financial welfare
2. Pathways

Strategic Priorities

Priority:

BE SAFE

Family Violence

Key focus area:

- Work in partnership with Together We Can to help reduce the impact of family violence on children and young people
- Embed Child Safe Standards across child and youth services
- Support the respectful relationships agenda
- Provide information, referral and support opportunities
- Strengthen the Maternal and Child Health (services) family violence assessment undertaken at the 4 week Key Age & Stages (framework) consultation and active follow-up processes for those who are missed, or who engage after the 4 week consultation.
- Strengthen processes around engaging and maintaining engagement of vulnerable families in Maternal and Child Health services.
- Workforce development (upskilling of staff across Council and in partnership with the service sector)

BE SAFE

Vulnerability/Health and social care

- Ensure children and young people with additional needs are clearly represented within the local service planning and delivery, particularly those from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, those with a disability and those from particular groups such as LGBTIQ+
- Improve access for vulnerable children into early childhood education and services
- Work collaboratively with health and social service agencies to improve early identification and service referral and support systems
- Support the direction and implementation of the Victorian Government Early Years Compact for Vulnerable Children and a better connected universal, secondary and tertiary service system
- Collaborative planning for those experiencing vulnerability (e.g. homelessness, mental health, drug and alcohol abuse)

Priority:**BE HEALTHY AND HAPPY**

Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing

BE HEALTHY AND HAPPY

Healthy lifestyles

Key focus area:

- Early identification of mental health problems and referral to support services
- Building resilience and coping skills
- Strengthen the voice of children and young people in identifying their needs and having involvement in the decisions that affect them

- Promote exercise and healthy choices
- Provide education and awareness
- Provide programs and activities that encourage active participation and help reduce obesity
- Work in partnership with Aligned Leisure and maximise healthy lifestyle opportunities
- Plan for the needs of young people after school hours and during school holidays

Priority:**BE CONNECTED**

Infrastructure/planning

BE CONNECTED

Activities, programs and events

Key focus area:

- Ensure there are adequate kindergarten places for children in the Shire through strategic and integrated planning for Child and Family Centres
- Provide accessible, safe and quality community facilities
- Plan for the growth needs of young people and the development of integrated youth facilities
- Strengthen the role of children and young people as young

- Work across Council departments to support a sense of community through the accessibility of activities within open spaces, sports and recreation and community events
- Ensure the needs of children and young people living in rural and remote areas are embedded into planning and delivery
- Plan for the inclusion of fathers and partners in early childhood services

Priority:**REALISE THEIR POTENTIAL**

Education, training and employment

REALISE THEIR POTENTIAL

Personal growth and development

Key focus area:

- Support strategic planning efforts to provide job opportunities for young people in the Shire and advocate with education and training providers to develop affordable employment pathways for young people
- Promote the importance of education with families and help support the reduction in kindergarten and school non-attendance
- Promote the importance of individualised learning needs approaches and development of quality teaching methods
- Support the drive to improve the retention of young people in school to year 12

- Plan for programs and activities that celebrate difference and promote the talents and strengths of children and young people
- Celebrate the achievements of children and young people with their families
- Raise the profile of young people within the community through positive messaging, that promotes intergenerational and cultural understanding and tolerance
- Collaborate in the identification and support of education and early learning and development transition needs

Priority:**ACHIEVE ECONOMIC WELLBEING**

Financial welfare

ACHIEVE ECONOMIC WELLBEING

Pathways

Key focus area:

- Ensure Council facilities provide families with information around financial and welfare support agency contacts
- Plan for free or low cost activities, services and programs available to families

- Advocate for volunteering and training opportunities
- Help raise the career aspirations of young people
- Advocate for improved transport options

Review and Evaluation

The Strategy aligns with the Council’s Plan four yearly business cycle. As such the Strategy will be reviewed on a four yearly basis to assess outcomes being achieved and make minor amendments as required to continue to align with the Council Plan and the reviews of the Liveability Plan. It will incorporate the results of the youth survey which takes place on a three yearly basis.

Council also reviews its business operations through its annual budget planning process, utilising the evaluations that are carried out across services and programs on an on-going basis. The outcomes will be considered at these times to reflect on emerging trends/issues and where our strategic and operational actions may need to be adjusted to ensure we meet our objectives.

