



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Communities**



# Youth Friendly Communities

Ten Key Principles

## Table of contents

<b>Ten key principles for developing youth friendly communities .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Factors that support youth friendly community planning .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Principle 1 Local Government.....	3
Principle 2: Partnership in the community.....	3
Principle 3: Relationships with young people.....	3
Principle 4: Consider young people’s views in community strategic planning .....	4
<b>Important strategies to engage young people .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Principle 5: Ownership and leadership by young people .....	4
Principle 6: Diversity of young people .....	4
Principle 7: Consult young people about a wide range of issues .....	5
Principle 8: Flexible approach to consulting young people .....	5
Principle 9: Fun and innovative .....	5
Principle 10: Evaluation and feedback.....	5

# Ten key principles for developing youth friendly communities

Simply put, a youth friendly community encompasses spaces, places, programs and initiatives that have been planned and developed with the dedicated input of young people.

## Factors that support youth friendly community planning

### Principle 1 Local Government

Interest and support from local government councillors and staff is needed to create youth friendly communities, including through:

- governance structures that support the planning and development of youth friendly communities
- youth-related strategies and policies e.g. a local youth strategy and/or youth engagement strategy (so that young people's views influence decisions made)
- local government councillor and/or staff on youth project reference groups.

### Principle 2: Partnership in the community

The development of youth friendly communities needs the support of a range of stakeholders. Youth friendly communities should be widely promoted and ways to engage young people negotiated with community partners. Partners include:

- the local community (especially the diversity of young people)
- local youth service providers
- schools, colleges and universities
- local businesses
- representatives and advocacy groups such as the Commissioner for Children and Young People and the Youth Affairs Council of WA (YACWA).

### Principle 3: Relationships with young people

The process of creating youth friendly communities requires the trust of young people and their families. Genuine relationship building with young people enhances their participation in making communities youth friendly. For example:

- providing support and resources for staff for relationship building
- communicating with young people and demonstrating the benefits of their participation in creating youth friendly communities
- considering issues around consent and confidentiality
- helping young people build connections with the rest of the community.

#### **Principle 4: Consider young people's views in community strategic planning**

- In developing youth friendly communities, use an approach that connects with existing plans, policies and strategies, e.g. Strategic Community Plan, community engagement policy, cultural awareness policy, library services policy, alcohol management policy etc.
- Use the outcomes from engaging with young people about youth friendly communities to inform the Strategic Community Plan and local government strategies, policies and plans (new ones and those being reviewed).
- Turn the findings into actions; involve young people in implementing these.

### **Important strategies to engage young people**

#### **Principle 5: Ownership and leadership by young people**

It is important for young people to drive any consultation about youth friendly communities. They need to be involved in each phase including research, planning, implementing and facilitating the engagement process. This can be achieved by:

- a youth led, peer-to-peer approach
- adapting to ways young people do things, e.g. communicate, interact, create
- providing opportunities for skills development, e.g. research, planning, consultation, facilitation, use of cameras and video
- providing ongoing support and mentoring for young people.

#### **Principle 6: Diversity of young people**

Young people are not all the same - they have different backgrounds, experiences, needs and aspirations. A range of innovative approaches are needed to include the diversity of young people in the community and to address barriers to their participation. All young people's voices should be heard, including:

- young people with disability
- Aboriginal young people
- young people who are LGBTIQ+
- young carers
- young people in care
- young parents
- young people living in regional Western Australia
- marginalised or vulnerable young people (including those who are in the youth justice system)
- young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (including newly arrived migrants and refugees).

### **Principle 7: Consult young people about a wide range of issues**

Young people want to be part of the broader community. It is essential to consult young people about community-wide issues, not just about youth issues. A youth friendly community is not just about infrastructure and facilities, but also includes:

- education, training and employment
- community support, health and mental health services
- leisure, recreation and social life
- public spaces, buildings and natural environments
- communication and information
- civic participation and volunteering
- transport and housing
- respect and inclusion.

### **Principle 8: Flexible approach to consulting young people**

Young people have their own ways of doing things and have multiple commitments and interests, such as school, work, family, sport and many of their interests are facilitated by the online environment. Consideration should also be given to access to transport and limited financial resources. Flexible approaches may include:

- letting young people decide the best approaches to use
- using a range of methods to engage young people, both traditional and non-traditional (innovative) methods
- choosing appropriate venues and times for consulting young people
- using existing committees, groups, forums and events to engage young people, but also collaborating with local service providers to engage other young people
- using social media and online tools where appropriate
- adapting existing consultation tools or trying new ones.

### **Principle 9: Fun and innovative**

It is important to make the youth engagement process rewarding and enjoyable for everyone involved, especially young people. The way consultation is done determines the quality of ideas, creativity and participation.

- Let young people design and deliver activities.
- Go to where young people hang out.
- Use arts and culture programs, games and creative activities.
- Find innovative ways to reach young people.

### **Principle 10: Evaluation and feedback**

Young people need to hear about the results of their involvement and that their input has been valuable and worthwhile. Young people's views on improving their community should be communicated to other community members.

- Evaluate and provide feedback on the engagement process.
- Communicate the consultation findings to young people.
- Showcase youth participation and promote positive images of young people.
- Make findings from the youth consultation available to the whole community.