

Tamworth Regional Council Youth Forum 2005 Youthweek 2005

Facilitated by Stephen Blanch

Wednesday 30th March 2005

Format:

Arrive 10 am for morning tea & introduction

10.30 - 11 am - Motivational talk Kevin Anderson
(Hunter New England Area Health - Communications
Manager, Former NEWS Reader for Prime TV)

11.00 am -12.30 pm - Generating ideas, thoughts,
concerns, positives/negatives etc.

Review last years prioritised issues.

Top 6 topics from last year (in no particular order)

1. Prejudice and discrimination
2. Teen Safety
3. Not Enough To Do
4. Lack of Jobs
5. More Opportunities/Education
6. Drugs and Alcohol

12.30 - 1.30 pm lunch provided

1.30 - 2.30 pm - Stakeholders invited to attend the forum

1.30 - 2.00 pm - Emma Bock (Queen of Country
Music) and Olivia Morgan (Princess of Country Music)

2.00 - 2.30 pm - Key Ideas/Issues and Solutions & EXCHANGE of
ideas

Introduction

The 2005 Tamworth Regional Council Youth Forum was held on Wednesday 30th March 2005 as part of Youthweek 2005 activities. The aim of the forum was to bring together a diverse group of young people to raise ideas/concerns/positives/negatives that they feel are relevant in today's society and in local communities. 30 young people participated from communities including Tamworth, Manilla and Barraba. Most activities were discussed in small groups utilising brainstorming and open discussion. Stakeholders (people that have a vested interest in youth issues) were then invited to participate in the afternoon session to discuss the issues raised and through dialogue look at possible courses of action and ways forward. 20 stakeholders attended the afternoon session.

In 2004 a similar forum was conducted and identified 6 key issues. These are(in no particular order):

1. Prejudice and discrimination
2. Teen Safety
3. Not Enough To Do
4. Lack of Jobs
5. More Opportunities/Education
6. Drugs and Alcohol

In open discussion it was considered that these 6 issues were still relevant, with the addition of two more topics – Health and Welfare.

Small groups were formed and a variety of ideas were presented for discussion. The results of these brainstorming activities are listed in the following pages.

The ideas discussed included:

- Meaning of life/purpose
- Complaints
- Drugs and alcohol
- Lack of jobs
- Prejudice and discrimination
- Teen safety
- More opportunities/education
- Not enough to do
- Health
- Welfare

The final part of this report outlines suggestions/recommendations based on these discussions.

It is hoped that this report can be referred to by stakeholders when allocating resources and planning future policy development. This report is also a valuable tool that can be used in the application for funding and resources as this report demonstrates a direct consultation with young people.

Meaning of Life / Purpose

- Goals and dreams
- Family
- Love
- Experiences
- Support
- Education
- Friends
- Money
- Entertainment
- Occupation
- Environment
- World News
- Social life
- Society
- Culture
- Environment
- Goals
- Reliability
- Socializing
- Love
- Support
- Hobbies
- Motivation
- Support attitude
- Responsibility
- Achievements
- Ability
- Reputation
- Experiences
- Ambitions
- Commitment
- Family
- Colors
- Self esteem
- Friends and peers
- Money
- Holidays - week ends
- Support
- Love
- Family
- Music
- Entertainment
- Television
- Role models
- A dream
- Cultural influences
- Interaction
- Wanting to make a difference
- Opportunities
- Travel
- Something to look forward to
- Freedom
- Friends
- Motivation
- Shopping
- Friends
- The fact that someone wanted you to be born
- Money! Money! Money!
- Nature
- Your dreams
- Excursions
- Entertainment
- Mobile phones
- Horses
- Jobs
- Food
- Pets
- Passions
- Ambition
- Family
- Pool - swimming
- Love

Complaints

- Siblings
- Peer pressure
- Economic problems
- Protestors
- Religion
- TAFE
- Violence - alcohol and drugs
- HSC
- Environment - pollution
- Chores
- Racism x 2
- Living arrangements
- Families
- Community
- Isolation
- Media
- Benefits
- Population war
- School environment
- Socio-economic
- Bring back the junk food in schools
- More donations to youth to do what they want/ forums
- More counselors for young people
- More mental health workers and more support opportunities for mental health sufferers
- Crime
- More opportunities for young people
- Increase recreational activities for young people
- More youth workers
- More music from society
- More school excursions to other towns/cities/coast
- Beach
- School x 2
- Better skate park
- Better policing
- More out of school opportunities
- Less homework!!!
- Math's
- French
- Have to move for University
- Boys
- Smoking in schools
- Peer pressure
- Comments made about young people - think we are "hooligans"
- Transport
- Culture
- Lack of resources
- Lack of work
- Girls
- Lack of entertainment - boredom
- Homework
- School - math's
- Teachers
- Expectations - family, friends, teachers
- Bitching in schools
- Vandalism
- Lack of medical facilities
- Price of education
- Spitting
- Hypocrites
- Police - double standards
- Politicians
- People who criticize for not putting in any effort
- Drugs and alcohol
- Violence against women and children
- Smoking
- Bullying
- Homeless people
- Leisure opportunities
- Prejudice
- Ignorance
- Judging
- Teenage pregnancy
- Lack of opportunities
- School dropouts
- Understanding the importance of life
- Media influences

Drugs and alcohol

- Safety
- Tougher laws
- Ruins relationships
- Long term/short term effects- physically/mentally
- Public awareness
- Parental involvement
- Respect and responsibilities
- Earlier education - year 7 onwards
- Have more positive role models (in schools, TV, etc)
- More rehabilitation centers
- Laws - increase enforcement
- We should have the right to run drug tests on children to see if they are taking drugs (drug testing)
- Just Say NO!
- Peer pressure
- More education/awareness
- Laws are having less influence
- Police patrols - increase awareness
- More awareness of dangers (e.g. addiction, unprotected sex, etc)
- Individual influences
- Peer pressure
- Special areas for alcoholics and drug users to go
- Effects
- Under age
- Designated drivers
- Always have a sober person
- Don't pressure your friends into your habits
- Drink in safe amounts
- Know your limits
- Responsible drinking
- Know the suppliers - what is in the drugs?
- Peer pressure
- More smoke free zones
- Increase education around drink driving
- More education on the effects of drugs
- Police presence
- On the spot fines
- Say NO
- Always available
- Addiction
- "It's cool"
- peer pressure
- more campaigns/information
- harsher punishments

Lack of jobs

- More people - less machines
- Notice board of vacant jobs - located in schools
- Volunteers
- Offer opportunities in schools
- Offer to work for free
- Apply for jobs that you are enthusiastic about
- Encourage employers to employ young people
- More training centers like TAFE
- Joblink Plus
- Unemployment
- Move to a metropolitan area - Newcastle or Sydney
- More jobs for youth - teens and elders
- People just need to actually go out and find them (jobs)
- Overpopulation
- Get more money if you are out of school
- Technology
- Not willing to take young people on - not enough experience
- Education
- School drop outs
- Lower education fees
- More apprenticeships
- Job agency program brought into schools
- More job advertisements in schools
- More work experience advertising
- More jobs for young people
- Work ethics
- More careers markets (TREC) - find information about different jobs
- More training courses
- More centers for job advertising - like Joblink Plus

Prejudice and discrimination

- Get to know people
- Deal with it straight away
- Look out for your friends
- Stick up for people
- Publicize the problem
- More services available
- Think before you say something
- Community awareness
- Get people to speak up!
- Let them be themselves
- Don't discriminate against others
- Think about what you are saying - would it hurt you if someone said it to you?
- Stick up for each other
- Reverse psychology
- Equal treatment
- Respect other peoples opinions
- Stop, Think, Do...
- "Don't judge a book by it's cover"
- Get to know people first
- Try to treat everyone the same - as equals
- Don't judge their background
- "Make them feel the way victims feel"
- Designated jobs
- Treat everyone equally
- More opportunities
- Celebrations
- Education
- Media issues
- Advertising campaign
- Education - touching on issues
- What you say hurts people
- Think before you speak
- Making people aware
- Deal with directly
- Encouraging people of different cultures to interact - getting to know each other better

Teen Safety

- Feeling safe in your own community
- Community outreach centers
- More rehabilitation centers
- More awareness
- Better lighting
- Free contraception
- More lesbian help centers
- More safety houses
- Education on safe sex/drugs
- Night patrol
- Abortion clinics needed
- Go around with a group of people/friends
- Cameras
- Night watch squad
- More committed Police patrols
- Night time youth activities - supervised
- Don't do anything you don't want to do
- More supervised entertainment - parties
- Know where you are going
- Make aware of danger zones/situations
- Look out for those around you
- More people becoming aware
- Keep people alert of where you are
- Safe drinking - having a sober person
- Communicate with parents and friends honestly
- Don't purposely put yourself in a bad situation
- Safety in numbers
- Honesty with parents
- Safety houses
- Have somewhere to go if you are in trouble
- Safety in parks
- More support for pregnant teens
- Free contraception
- More awareness of pregnancy
- More therapy/help for teens on drugs
- Health care services
- More abortion services
- Reduced cost of contraception e.g. morning after pill

- Safe sex education
- Transport safety education
- Neighborhood watch
- Gangs - bullying
- Stalkers
- Strangers
- School teachers - harassment
- Driving - p plates, l plates
- Bicentennial Park - no lighting
- Uncomfortable walking past a group when you are by yourself

More opportunities & education

- More life education
- Specialty shops
- Creation of a University in Tamworth
- Study groups
- Cheaper courses
- More work experience
- More notices about employment
- More opportunities to discover what occupation you want
- More ways to express your ideas
- Lower HECS fees
- Different teaching styles
- Relate it to the students - more fun
- Make more appealing
- More scholarships

Not Enough to Do

- Go out with friends
- Music concerts for kids
- More youth concerts/activities
- Organize your own activities
- Find stuff that you are interested in
- Apply for volunteer associations like the Scouts
- Get involved with youth organizations
- Try new things
- Nobody willing to help
- Transportation to and from venues
- Places to hang out - like The Youthie
- Facilities in small towns
- Entertainment
- Fund raising
- Business support
- More all schools interactions
- Underage entertainment
- Study groups
- Workshops
- Knowledge of the Youthie
- All school excursions
- Night/after school entertainment
- Modern shops

Health

- More medical facilities
- More specialized practices
- More teenage health facilities - like Bligh St clinic
- Stop teenage pregnancy
- More advertising for the Bligh Street Clinic
- More bulk billing at local doctors
- Quicker access to doctors
- Advertisement of the community center
- Faster access to emergency health services
- Local abortion clinics
- Make the school counselor more accessible - easier to approach, other people available
- Support groups for young parents - increase advertising of these groups

Welfare

- Stress relief
- Education services
- Welfare
- Self esteem
- See your year advisor
- Peer buddy
- Safety
- Whole self
- Community services
- Counseling
- Youth/church groups
- Support classes

Recommendations/suggestions

1. Provide opportunities through the Youth Advisory Council for young people to be actively involved in the broader community, and thereby have the opportunity to propose, influence and develop services/activities/events provided for young people.
2. Extend the opening hours of the Youthie, Tamworth Regional Council Youth Space, to be open late on Friday and Saturday nights during summer and school holiday periods.
3. Continue running monthly entertainment events at the Youthie, Tamworth Regional Council Youth Space. Increase this to bi-monthly during summer and school holiday periods. These events to offer young people the opportunity to participate in all aspects.
4. The Tamworth Regional Youth Advisory Council to undertake a series of community based activities aimed at improving and fostering respect for young people in the community.
5. Apply for grants using this forum report to demonstrate the need for regular entertainment activities and other recreational activities/programs/opportunities for young people in the region.
6. Investigate the further development of the Tamworth Skate Park – proposal has been submitted to the Tamworth Regional Council.
7. Alert Tamworth Police of the concern for safety expressed by young people attending the Tamworth Regional Forum, particularly safety in places like Peel Street at night time.
8. Copies of this forum report will be distributed to all relevant stakeholders including being tabled at the Tamworth Youth Interagency.
9. Continued development of a comprehensive database of youth related services and make this available on the Youthie website at www.theyouthie.org.