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Youth Action Plan 2024-2027

Second Phase Consultation Report 2024



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Acknowledgement of Country

The Department of Human Services acknowledges and respects Aboriginal Peoples as the State's first people and recognises Aboriginal Peoples as traditional owners and occupants of lands and waters in South Australia. We acknowledge that the spiritual, social, cultural, and economic practices of Aboriginal peoples come from their traditional lands and waters, that they maintain their cultural and heritage beliefs, languages, and laws, which are of ongoing importance, and that they have made and continue to make a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the State.

1 Background

The South Australian Government is developing a new Youth Action Plan. The new Plan aims to provide young people with better access to opportunities, resources, and support; especially those young people experiencing isolation, disadvantage, marginalisation, and discrimination.

The South Australian Government is committed to involving young people throughout the development and implementation of the new Youth Action Plan.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) held the first phase of consultation in mid-2023. Over 880 people engaged in this consultation and 728 of these were young people. Participants identified the following six key themes as being the most important:

1. Mental health and wellbeing
2. Connection to services and information
3. Recreation, community hubs and activities
4. Transition to adulthood
5. Housing and cost of living
6. Participation in decision making.

DHS publicly released the Consultation Paper from this initial consultation in January 2024.

Following this, DHS formed the Youth Action Plan Steering Committee made up of representatives from the Youth Minister's Advisory Council, State Government, and the youth sector.

Over the first half of 2024, the Steering Committee developed 33 proposed actions for the new Youth Action Plan in response to feedback provided in the initial consultation.

The second phase consultation was run in July and August 2024 to test the 33 proposed actions directly with young people. This consultation included:

- The Youth Action Plan Forum held at Carclew Youth Arts Centre on 11 July 2024.
- Engagement with young Aboriginal peoples through Tauondi Aboriginal College.
- Engagement with the Youth Minister's Advisory Council.

2 Who we engaged

The South Australian Government engaged with 116 young people aged 12 to 25 years during the second phase of consultation.

The second phase consultation began on 11 July 2024 with the Youth Action Plan Forum held at Carclew Youth Arts Centre. This Forum was attended by 92 young people and involved group discussions on what actions were most important, how they may be best implemented, and any actions missing. This was followed by a voting exercise where each participant could vote for their top five actions. DHS commissioned Matthew Wright-Simon from Engage Change to support this youth-led event. Members of the Youth Minister's Advisory Council and DHS Graduate Officers also supported this event.

Following the Forum, DHS engaged Tauondi Aboriginal College to conduct targeted engagement with 19 young Aboriginal people on the drafted actions. Through this process young people had input on the actions and were then given the opportunity to vote on their top five actions through an online survey.

The Youth Minister's Advisory Council was also given the opportunity to provide feedback on the drafted actions and vote on their top five actions through an online survey.

Some young people who were consulted with provided further information about how they identified and their specific age. This information has been summarised in the below tables:

Identified as	Number	%
Culturally and linguistically diverse	27	23%
Neurodivergent (e.g. autistic, ADHD)	14	12%
LGBTIQA+	10	9%
Remote or regional	9	8%
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	25	22%
Living with disability	4	3%
Not applicable or not provided	40	34%

Age range	Number	%
12-17	40	34%
18-25	37	32%
Not provided	39	34%

3 What we heard

Young people were asked which of the proposed 33 actions they supported; which were most important to them; and whether there were any actions missing from the plan.

3.1 Most important actions

Young people were given the opportunity to place five votes for their top five actions. Not all young people used all five of their votes and overall there were 277 votes cast for specific actions.

Young people also indicated which of the six overarching themes were important to them. Housing and Cost of Living as well as Mental Health and Wellbeing were consistently listed as being of the highest concern. These two actions as well as Connection to Services and Information were highlighted as being particularly important to Aboriginal young peoples, reflecting the complex and interconnected challenges faced by Aboriginal young peoples.

There was a range of support shown for 32 of the 33 proposed actions. An action to increase the supply of affordable housing received the strongest support with 30 votes. There was one proposed action to improve pathways for employment with the government that received no support.

Young people voted for and provided feedback to the 33 proposed actions as follows:

Theme	Action	Feedback	Votes
Housing and Cost of Living	Increase the supply of affordable housing	Introduce incentives for converting older properties into affordable housing as well as a multiple properties tax. Reduce barriers to the creation of additional living spaces on a property. Make single-room apartments available, as well as public housing for people under 16, and offer fully funded housing.	30
Recreation, Community Hubs, and Activities	Support the development of social connections through community activities	There needs to be better outreach and engagement efforts by providers, including more culturally safe spaces where Aboriginal youth can access support without feeling judged or marginalised Community activities need to be accessible for all young people and address existing gender and cost barriers.	19

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Theme	Action	Feedback	Votes
Connection to Services and Information	Develop a youth website with information on supports, opportunities, and useful information for young people on various topics	Any website should be accessible and made in collaboration with young people. Information needs to be culturally appropriate that meet the needs of Aboriginal young people. This could emphasise community groups in regional and remote areas and be promoted by local councils and also needs to consider barriers to internet access. Could also be used in collaboration with the not-for-profit sector and businesses where they can update their information.	19
Transition to Adulthood	Increase community-based life skills programs	Awareness needs to be raised of existing programs, such as those that build job hunting skills. Should be provided at youth centre spaces in local communities which run adulthood, employment and social skills programs.	16
Mental Health and Wellbeing	Receive training in how to look after your own mental health and support your friends and family with their mental wellbeing	Training could include Mental Health First Aid as well as how to deal with issues of racism and discrimination. This information must be inclusive and accessible, and made available online.	12
Housing and Cost of Living	Create fair rental and housing conditions and opportunities for young people	Reform rental legislation to increase rental affordability as well as the availability and accessibility of longer-term leasing. Promote better quality boarding houses and increase access to rental subsidies by changing 'independence' criteria. Improve maintenance standards for tenant safety. Increase investment in housing services and provide quicker access to housing support.	11
Housing and Cost of Living	Support young people from the Child Protection system to access secure long-term housing	Providing specific housing for young people leaving care.	11
Connection to Services and Information	Strengthen government agencies' early intervention support for at-risk young people and families and using data to inform policy	Programs should be provided with long-term funding for stability. Youth advocates with lived experience should be supported to share information relating to these services. Existing programs could be built upon, such as Kids Helpline.	10

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Theme	Action	Feedback	Votes
Transition to Adulthood	Create a youth website to develop work and life skills	Need to consider barriers such as language and internet. Needs to be easy to find with clear branding and links through social media and other partner organisations. Information should include financial literacy.	9
Connection to Services and Information	Provide accessible menstrual products	Should be made available in all primary and high school bathrooms, sporting clubs, and other community hubs (particularly in regional areas).	9
Mental Health and Wellbeing	Increase mental health services, prioritising regional services	Services must recognise the holistic nature of health in Aboriginal culture, which encompasses physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. Need to ensure services are delivered by culturally competent mental health practitioners who understand the unique challenges faced by Aboriginal youth, including the trauma associated with historical and ongoing systemic racism. These should be promoted on social media with information on where people can receive help. This should also utilise cross-collaboration and existing support systems. Address wait times and responsiveness of mental health services. Need school-based interventions and home visit programs that are accessible and culturally appropriate to avoid young person having to seek intimidating clinical environments.	9
Participation	Increase the number of Youth Advisory Committees	Need to address age barriers to entry. These groups should have direct access to decision makers and should be used to inform decision making from an early point. Advisory Councils should also be promoted through schools.	8
Recreation, Community Hubs, and Activities	Increase access to existing sport and recreational activities for young people from low income families	No specific feedback provided in relation to this action.	8
Transition to Adulthood	Explore ways to help young people with limited family support to get a driver's license	Explore partnership opportunities to increase access to cheaper driving lessons/tests, as well as a volunteer driver program to help young people get their hours up at a discounted price. The Road Awareness Program should also be built upon with more road safety skill practice in schools.	8

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Theme	Action	Feedback	Votes
Mental Health and Wellbeing	Develop a website that tells you the location of the nearest mental health services and how to get support	No specific feedback provided in relation to this action.	8
Mental Health and Wellbeing	Provide training on bullying prevention and response to staff and students, including peer-to-peer student training initiatives	Teachers need better training to recognise mental health issues and schools need to side with students more. Training should be centred on the causes of bullying, including ableism, racism, queerphobia, and sexism/misogyny.	8
Participation	Develop a website clearly explaining your legal rights, government processes, and how you can influence decision-making	Information needs to be put forward in an accessible and youth-friendly format.	8
Participation	Improve the connection and information sharing between Youth Advisory Committees, as well as with decision-makers	Decision makers need to talk directly to advisory committees. Funding needs to be made available so that they can reach a wider audience. There is a need for transparency about where advice is going and how it is used.	8
Mental Health and Wellbeing	Develop resources on how to look after your own mental health and support your friends through tough times	These resources should be provided online.	7
Transition to Adulthood	Improve access to career-readiness programs that cover workplace health and safety, rights, and where to get help	No specific feedback provided in relation to this action.	7
Participation	Increase opportunities to have input on State government policies and initiatives	Need to ensure that Aboriginal young people are adequately represented. Input needs to be sought before plans are already made so consultation is not tokenistic. Explore enabling young people to vote directly on government policy that impacts them.	6
Mental Health and Wellbeing	Provide training and resources to teachers and schools to better understand the challenges faced by LGBTIQ+, including bullying and wellbeing	This training should be regular and constantly updated and tailored for diverse family situations and neurodivergent learners. Greater penalties should be explored for bullies of LGBTIQ+ students.	6
Recreation, Community Hubs, and Activities	Use existing equipment and facilities to provide free sport and fun activities	No specific feedback provided in relation to this action.	5

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Theme	Action	Feedback	Votes
Mental Health and Wellbeing	Strengthen consent and respectful relationships education in public schools	This education needs to begin earlier in a young person's life.	5
Transition to Adulthood	Create a campaign to inform young people of the benefits of volunteering, such as gaining SACE credits	Volunteering opportunities for young people living with disability should be explored.	5
Transition to Adulthood	Providing housing support for young people moving to Adelaide for study or employment	No specific feedback provided in relation to this action.	5
Mental Health and Wellbeing	Support schools to give students a say in how to strengthen safety and positive culture at their school	Students should be encouraged to speak freely and then be listened to and believed. The concept of 'positive culture' may be too broad.	4
Mental Health and Wellbeing	Provide evidence-based drug prevention education resources to schools and students	Approaches to education needs to be proactive and culturally tailored to educate young people about the dangers of substances such as vaping, alcohol, and drugs. Education on substance use should be provided by those with lived experience. Roll-out should be targeted at schools that need help the most.	4
Participation	Reduce barriers for young people to be involved in Youth Advisory Committees	Reduce barriers through removing age restrictions, providing transport, more advertising, and having them available in multiple forums (e.g. in person and online).	3
Mental Health and Wellbeing	Deliver school breakfast programs and food security initiatives in schools	Need to consider dietary requirements and schools with different start times.	3
Housing and Cost of Living	Improve access to home internet for families and provide free laptops to high school students on a school card.	This action should be expanded to university and high school students without school cards.	3
Transition to Adulthood	Support education and career pathways for community language school students	No specific feedback provided in relation to this action.	2
Transition to Adulthood	Explore the development of a recruitment and relevant training programs to work for the government	No specific feedback provided in relation to this action.	0

3.2 Suggested Actions

Young people also identified gaps in the proposed actions and suggested actions they would want to see included in the new Plan.

These suggestions will be raised with the Youth Action Plan Steering Committee to determine what is feasible and how these gaps could best be filled, whether it be new actions, combining actions or incorporating the suggestions into the implementation of existing actions.

Young people provided the following suggestions:

3.2.1 Housing and Cost of Living

- Establish grants for first homeowners who are buying established homes.
- Create more affordable education through eliminating/reducing university fees and other related costs (e.g. textbooks).
- Increase the number of youth Foyers in South Australia
- Create spaces where young people can access free wi-fi and laptops.
- Increase financial literacy through accessible education which includes courses on navigating the housing market (including rent and mortgages), tax, and budgeting.

3.2.2 Mental Health and Wellbeing

- Facilitate connection to Country, culture, and community for Aboriginal young people.
- Create a separate Aboriginal Youth Action Plan.
- Enable students to schedule their homework and assignments to avoid stress.
- Introduce scheduled relaxation time in schools.
- Increase connection with nature to improve mental health and wellbeing.
- Employ more School Services Officers and Wellbeing Leaders.
- Prohibit vaping in schools.
- Increase opportunities to socialise across different forums (e.g. online and in person)
- Address the negative impacts of social media.
- Promote accurate representations of mental health across media.
- Increase social opportunities for students who are home-schooled.
- Provide education to male students on sexual violence.
- Provide education to students of all genders on menstruation to remove stigma.

3.2.3 Transition to Adulthood

- Provide targeted support for improving educational outcomes, skills development, or career readiness for young Aboriginal people.
- Include 'life skills' courses in the school curriculum which would cover topics such as tax, banking, buying/renting a house, health, navigating public transport, and worker's rights.
- Promote digital inclusion through greater access to technology and digital literacy programs.
- Employ standalone Career Advisors in schools.
- Provide further education on non-university based, post-school pathways.
- Increase hands-on experiences such as 'open days' for jobs.
- Invest in education and employment opportunities for young people in rural areas.
- Increase and promote scholarship opportunities for young people experiencing financial hardship.

3.2.4 Recreation, Community Hubs and Activities

- Create an app that informs users of opportunities to engage in sport.
- Broaden the age limits for sports vouchers.
- Provide specific inclusion initiatives for young people with disability.

3.2.5 Connection to Services and Information

- Improve menstrual, reproductive, and healthy relationships training for educators in schools.

3.2.6 Participation in Decision Making

- Provide more comprehensive civic education that better explains how Australian politics works in practice.
- Provide more education on climate change.
- Co-design of the school curriculum with young people.
- Increase accessibility of government websites.
- Lower the voting age.

4 Our next steps

This consultation report reflects the voices from the young people during the second phase of consultation.

The proposed actions will now be refined in response to the feedback provided by young people, so that the new Youth Action Plan accurately reflects the aspirations of and makes a positive difference to the lives of young people in South Australia.

Further consultation will be conducted on the final version of the new Youth Action Plan prior to endorsement by Government.

Once the new Youth Action Plan is launched, a new Youth Action Plan Steering Committee will be established to coordinate the implementation of actions across government. Young people will oversee this implementation through membership on the Steering Committee and via the Youth Minister's Advisory Council, who will track this implementation and provide feedback to the YAP Steering Committee.