



DRAFT
MURRINDINDI YOUTH STRATEGY 2012-2015



For your country
If you plan for a year – sow paddy,
If you plan for a decade – plant trees,
If you plan for the future – nurture youth.
(Indian proverb)

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Alexandra Secondary College Staff & SRC	Yea High School Student Leadership Group & Staff	Lesley Bebbington
Berry St	Flowerdale Youth Group	Danni Marshall
Ken Aitken	Murrindindi Shire Youth Strategy Advisory Group	Sue Dundas

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“Nobody can do everything, but everyone can do something”.

~Author Unknown



Defining Young People

For the purpose of this document, a young person is aged 12– 24 years and resides, works, goes to school or has a significant connection to the Murrindindi Shire.

Where does the Youth Strategy Fit?

The Youth Strategy builds on efforts already undertaken by Murrindindi Shire Council with young people. Previous youth focussed projects and initiatives include:

- Murrindindi Youth Charter
- Murrindindi Youth Strategy 2006-2010
- Murrindindi Youth Partnership Group
- FREEZA events
- Dindi Fest
- Youth Website and Facebook Page
- Youth Development Grants
- Music Equipment Grants
- Yea, Kinglake and Marysville Skate Parks

The Youth Strategy 2012-2015 is an opportunity for Murrindindi Shire Council to provide support and leadership alongside key community partners (schools, services, community groups and state and federal governments) to fulfil the hopes, needs and aspirations of young people across the Shire.

Executive Summary

A commitment led by Murrindindi Shire Council to support young people living in the Municipality saw Council, services, schools, parents, carers and the broader community work together with young people to create the Murrindindi Youth Strategy 2012-2015. It is the aim of the Murrindindi Youth Strategy to capture the needs, hopes and aspirations of young people and support young people to achieve their goals and be active and valued community members. The process recognised a young person as anyone aged 12– 24 years who resides, works, goes to school or has a significant connection to Murrindindi Shire – applying this definition there were 1871 young people aged 12-24 in the Murrindindi municipality at the time of the 2006 Census.

In a process led by a purposefully formed Advisory Group dedicated to researching and developing a Youth Strategy reflecting the diversity and geographical spread of young people across the Murrindindi Shire Council the ensuing document was created. Six key focus areas were highlighted through this process.

Key Area 1: Health & Wellbeing focuses on bullying; alcohol, drug and tobacco use; mental health; physical activity and healthy eating and the planning and delivery of programs to support these areas.

Key Area 2: Education, Training & Employment recommends a suite of strategies all with the aim of improving career and education opportunities for youth. These strategies included: mapping the range and accessibility of current education, training and employment options; increasing the availability of work experience opportunities and career expos; developing school mentoring and homework programs; increasing flexible learning options; exploring economic and business development opportunities generally and specifically targeting young people for small business start up.

Key Area 3: Recreation, Activities & Events commits to informing and engaging parents to ensure young people are supported to access recreational activities and events; involving young people in the design and delivery of activities and events; investigating the extension of swimming pool opening hours; planning and developing a collaborative calendar of events for the year; sourcing sustainable funding to allow for successful programs to be run long term; and utilising technology to promote activities and events to young people.

Key Area 4: Leadership, Participation & Citizenship aims to map existing leadership initiatives and programs currently being offered across the Shire; identify barriers to youth participation; develop a Citizenship Program that supports young people to understand Council and how they can get involved; develop a mechanism for connecting young people's voice to Murrindindi Shire Council; formally recognise and celebrate youth leadership and achievements; investigate the opportunity for Men's Sheds to deliver mentoring programs; and engage service clubs to develop and implement leadership opportunities for young people.

Key Area 5: Effective Services & Supports plans to update Council's Community Service Directory; create a coordinated visiting services calendar to better inform services, young people and their families; investigate shared space or 'hub options' for services to utilise; strengthen governance and partnerships for youth service delivery; create an easy to use information sharing resource that identifies service providers and programs; explore

options for integrated service delivery; examine and develop service delivery options to ensure that services and supports are offered appropriately across the geographic expanse of the Shire; and investigate 'Youth Space' options for young people across the Shire.

Key Area 6: Transportation will conduct further research with young people and their parents to better understand the issues surrounding transport; advocate for education and training timetabling options to match with current transportation timetables; develop creative community transportation options that utilise existing resources; and advocate for increased transportation services across the Shire.

In researching the Murrindindi Youth Strategy the Advisory Group recognised the integral role young people played not only in informing the data collection and actually 'giving' the data but in the value of their role in designing the methodology and methods and applying the data collection tools. Whilst the concept of 'youth as researcher' is not new it is not common practice and Murrindindi Shire Council should be rightly proud of their commitment to utilise such a strategy not only for the added rigour it gave the data but also for the respect and opportunity for capacity building it displayed to the youth involved. The three groups of 'Youth Researchers' who were invited to take part were Kinglake Youth Group, Alexandra Secondary College SRC and Yea High School Student Leaders group.

A broad selection of methods to engage stakeholders were utilised throughout the consultation process. These methods included three service provider workshops, four community focus groups (Kinglake, Yea, Alexandra and Marysville), linking to existing youth specific events, meetings and groups, utilising schools as a universal platform to engage youth, youth focus groups and the Youth Survey.

The Youth Survey was delivered in Yea and Alexandra Secondary Schools, electronically via the web, on school buses, in focus groups and via community groups. A total of 539 youth aged 12-24 completed the Youth Survey. Results from the consultation process were circulated prior to the report being drafted as a means of cross checking for information accuracy and thoroughness.

Whilst the Murrindindi Youth Strategy 2012-2015 is recognised as a living document adaptable to changing community needs, it is also critical that implementation commences with the document that now exists. To maximise successful implementation of the Youth Strategy it is recommended that:

- The Murrindindi Shire Council **Youth Partnership** fully support and guide the implementation of the **Youth Strategy Action Plan 2012-2015**,
- Murrindindi Shire Council seek funding to employ a full time Youth Development Officer,
- Formal partnerships be developed and utilised to enhance the capability and resources available to implement the strategic priorities and actions,
- A governance structure be developed to support implementation of the Youth Strategy and strengthen commitment of key stakeholders.

Ultimately the work going forward from the Murrindindi Shire Council's Youth Strategy requires the combined commitment of Council, young people, schools, service providers and the wider community. It is essential that communities continue to recognise the significance of young people and work collectively with Council to build a bright future for young people within the Shire.

Introduction

Murrindindi Shire Council values young people and their contribution to the communities they live in. According to the 2006 Census there are 1871 young people aged 12-24 living in Murrindindi Shire.

Given young people's importance, Council initiated the development of a community based Youth Strategy that would capture the needs, hopes and aspirations of young people and support young people to achieve their goals and be active and valued community members.

The Murrindindi Youth Strategy will provide a framework for Council to facilitate and support the key priorities highlighted from the consultation along with young people and key community stakeholders.

Importantly, the Murrindindi Youth Strategy will require a community-based approach including young people, service providers, community groups, schools and parents working together to provide the best outcomes for young people.

It is intended that the Youth Strategy is adopted not only by Council but by schools, service providers and community groups to ensure a joined up approach and the best outcomes possible for young people.

Crucial to this Strategy is the recognition of the continuing impact of the 2009 bush fires on young people, their families and their communities. The trauma, loss of life, homes and community infrastructure has had an ongoing effect on young people which should be carefully considered when planning for the future.



Our Community

The Murrindindi Shire covers an area of 3873 square kilometres in north-east Victoria and is located 100 kilometres north east of Melbourne. Alexandra, Eildon, Kinglake, Marysville and Yea are the major centres in the Shire.

According to the 2006 Census there are 1871 young people aged 12-24 living in Murrindindi Shire.

The estimated residential population at June 30, 2008 was 14,369 residents, reflecting an annual growth rate over the previous 5 years of 0.9%. At the time of the 2006 Census, 57% of residents lived in the larger towns with the remaining 43% living in smaller towns or rural areas.



In the 2006 Census, the most common industries of employment for persons aged 15 years and over usually resident in Murrindindi (S) (Local Government Area) were Sheep, Beef Cattle and Grain Farming 5.6%, School Education 5.6%, Accommodation 4.4%, Hospitals 3.3% and Local Government Administration 2.7%.

According to DPCD's Victoria in Future Research Report Murrindindi will experience steady population growth over the next 20 years. The age profile of Murrindindi will be considerably older in 2026 compared to 2006. The proportion of people aged 50 and over will rise from 37.6% to 53.7% between 2006 and 2026.

The 2009 'Black Saturday' bushfires have had a devastating effect for communities and residents in the Murrindindi Shire. The Bushfire Reform and Recovery Plan (2011) states that:

In Murrindindi 95 lives were lost, nearly 1400 dwellings, businesses, community facilities and other buildings were destroyed, an unknown number of people were mentally and / or physically scarred for life and 40 per cent of the land area was burnt.

Due to the displacement of residents following the bushfires, true population numbers will not be known until the 2011 Census data is released. It is crucial to note that the effects of the 2009 bushfires are ongoing with communities' still experiencing trauma, loss of employment, homelessness and decreased economic activity and tourism. The ongoing effects of the bushfires should be carefully considered when planning for young people's future.

Our Young People-the Stats & Facts

Population

According to the 2006 Census there are 1871 young people aged 12-24 living in Murrindindi Shire Council.

The percentage of adolescents aged 10-17 in Murrindindi (10.1 per cent) is lower than the percentage of adolescents in the Hume region (11.7 per cent) and is similar to the percentage of adolescents in Victoria (10.1 per cent).

Estimated Resident Population (ERP) of Murrindindi, Hume region and Victoria at 30 June 2009.

	Total Population	Adolescents aged 10 to 17 years	Percentage of adolescents (%)
Murrindindi	13,377	1,354	10.1
Hume Region	270,530	31,659	11.7
Victoria	5,443,228	548,041	10.1

Source: Estimated Resident Population, ABS, 2009 preliminary

Population Projections for Murrindindi, 2006 to 2026


	2006 Population	2011 Population	2016 Population	2021 Population	2026 Population
10 to 17 years	1,513	1,378	1,349	1,327	1,287
Total Population	14,179	14,316	14,666	15,244	15,944

Source: Victoria in Future Population Projections, DPCD

Based on DPCD projections, the population aged 10 to 17 years in Murrindindi will decrease by 15.0 per cent from 1,513 in 2006 to 1,287 by 2026. Based on DPCD projections, the total population of Murrindindi will increase by 12.4 per cent from 14,179 in 2006 to 15,944 by 2026.

It is important to note that due to the bush fires that occurred in 2009 and the displacement of many community members, the true numbers of young people currently residing in Murrindindi Shire will not be known until the 2011 Census data is released.

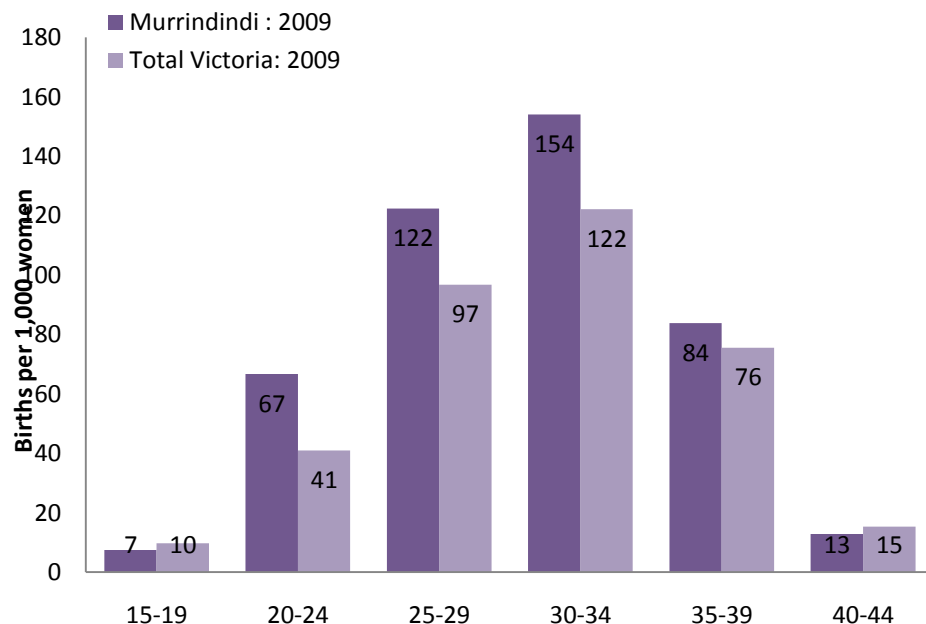
In the 2006 Census (held on 8th August 2006), there were 13,672 persons usually resident in Murrindindi (S) (Local Government Area): 50.7% were males and 49.3% were females. Of the total population in Murrindindi (S) (Local Government Area) 0.7% were Indigenous persons, compared with 2.3% Indigenous persons in Australia.

AGE 	Selected Region	% of total persons in Region	Australia	% of total persons in Australia
Age groups:				
0-4 years	808	5.9%	1,260,405	6.3%
5-14 years	1,816	13.3%	2,676,807	13.5%
15-24 years	1,318	9.6%	2,704,276	13.6%
25-54 years	5,559	40.7%	8,376,751	42.2%
55-64 years	2,095	15.3%	2,192,675	11.0%
65 years and over	2,077	15.2%	2,644,374	13.3%
Median age of persons	42	-	37	-

In the 2006 Census 19.2% of the population usually resident in Murrindindi (S) (Local Government Area) were children aged between 0-14 years, and 30.5% were persons aged 55 years and over. The median age of persons in Murrindindi (S) (Local Government Area) was 42 years, compared with 37 years for persons in Australia.

Estimated Victorian Youth Population and Disengaged by LGA and DEECD Region (DEECD Edutrack)

DEECD Region	LGA	Estimated number 15-18 yo disengaged 2007 [See Note 1]	Region Total	Estimated Resident Popn 15-18 yo June 2007 [See Note 2]	Region Total	Proportion of youth popn who are disengaged	Region Total
Hume	Greater Shepparton (C)	210		3738		5.6%	
	Wodonga (RC)	130		2158		6.0%	
	Mitchell (S)	110		2326		4.7%	
	Moira (S)	90		1619		5.6%	
	Wangaratta (RC)	70		1617		4.3%	
	Alpine (S)	30	760	644	15992	4.7%	4.8%
	Benalla (RC)	30		812		3.7%	
	Indigo (S)	30		986		3.0%	
	Murrindindi (S)	20		742		2.7%	
	Strathbogie (S)	20		499		4.0%	
	Mansfield (S)	10		505		2.0%	
	Towong (S)	10		346		2.9%	



Births to young people aged 15-24

In 2009 there were 7 births per 1000 women aged 15-19 years old in Murrindindi Shire. This was lower than the state average of 10 births per 1000 women in the same age bracket.

Comparatively, the 20-24 year old age bracket in Murrindindi had 67 births per 1000 women which was markedly higher than the state average in 2009 of 41 births per 1000 women.

Summary of AEDI Results for Murrindindi Community

The AEDI is a population measure of children's development the AEDI was completed nationwide in 2009. That is, it reflects the early childhood development outcomes for the whole population. It is therefore important to consider what percentage of the population is represented by the results. The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimated resident population (ERP) for Murrindindi community is 178 and the AEDI was completed for 140 children. This represents 79% of the community. Please consider any difference between the number of children for whom the AEDI was completed and the ERP when viewing these results

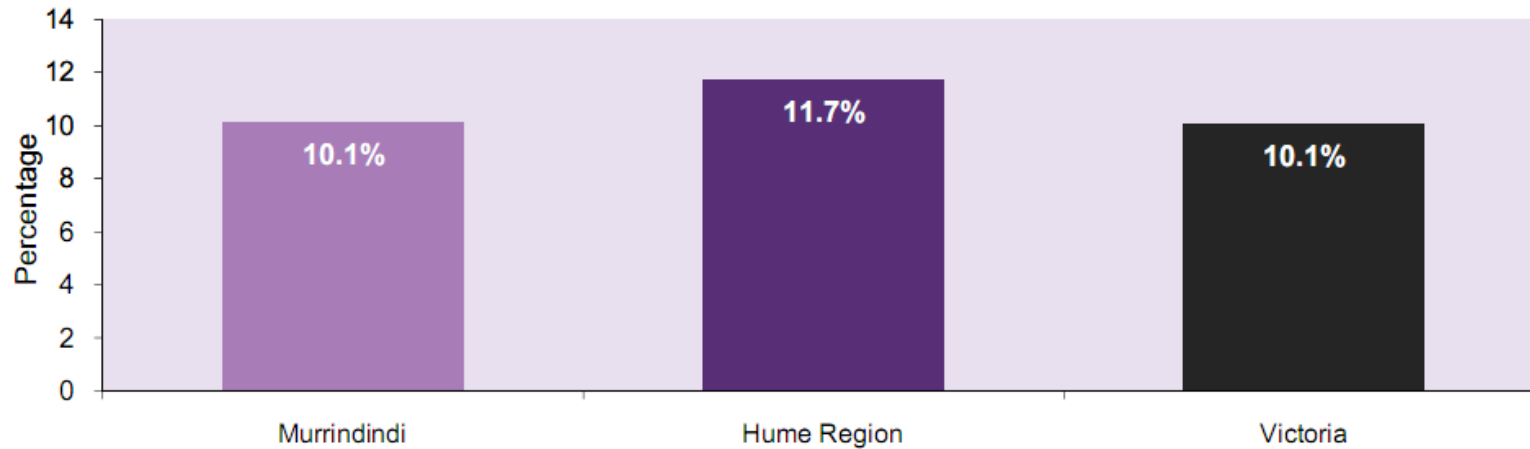
Domain	Percentage of children on track	Percentage of children developmentally vulnerable
Physical health and wellbeing	68.5%	7.7%
Social competence	73.8%	6.9%
Emotional maturity	74.4%	9.3%
Language and cognitive skills (school-based)	81.5%	4.6%
Communication skills and general knowledge	73.8%	8.5%

Overall there are 20.2 per cent of children developmentally vulnerable on one or more domains of the AEDI and 8.5 per cent are developmentally vulnerable on two or more domains

Victorian Child & Adolescent Monitoring System (VCAMS) Data

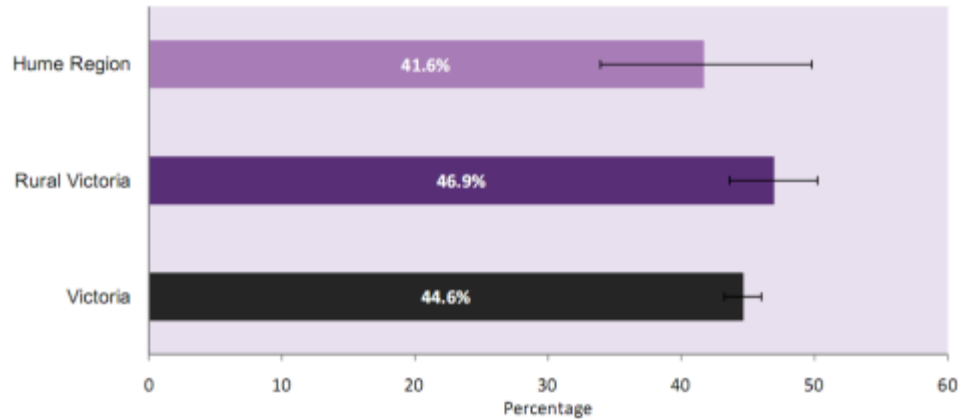
VCAMS is a comprehensive, across government, monitoring system that reports on the safety, health, development, learning and wellbeing of children and young people, aged 0 to 17, in Victoria. It is intended to underpin planning for improvement at a program, local government and state-wide level, as well as to inform research and evaluation to generate new evidence on effectiveness on improving outcomes for children

Figure 1: Percentage of adolescents in Murrindindi compared to the Hume region and Victoria, 2009.



Source: *Estimated Resident Population, ABS, 2009 preliminary*

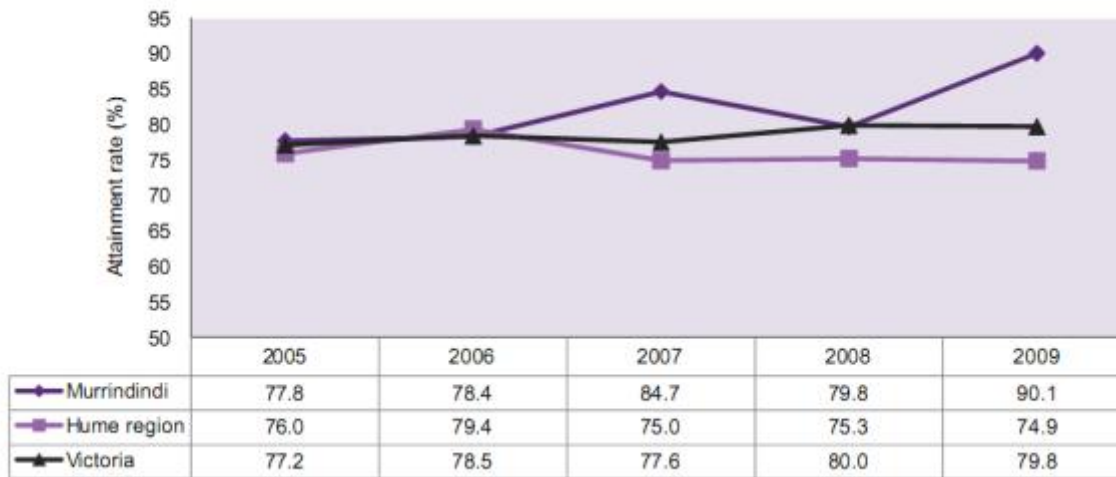
Figure 19: Proportion of adolescents who reported being recently bullied in Hume Region, Rural Victoria and Victoria, 2009.



Source: Adolescent Health and Wellbeing Survey, DEECD, 2009, unpublished.

In 2009, 41.6 per cent of adolescents surveyed in Hume Region were recently bullied. This was lower than the proportion reported across Rural Victoria (46.9 per cent), with the difference being non significant.

Figure 26: Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates at age 19 in Murrindindi, the Hume region and Victoria, 2005 to 2009.



In Murrindindi, over the five year period between 2005 to 2009, the Year 12 or equivalent rates have increased by 12.4 percentage points, from 77.8 percentage points in 2005 to 90.1 percentage points in 2009.

Murrindindi was ranked 12 out of 79 LGAs in terms of Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates. A rank of 1 was assigned to the LGA with the highest Year 12 or equivalent attainment rate in 2009.

Source: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) and Skills Victoria (Department of Innovation, Industry and Regional Development (DIIRD)) administrative data, and Australian Bureau of Statistics Estimated Resident Population data.

Note: The y axis does not start at zero.

Number of adolescents in Murrindindi and Victoria who were victims of crime, by type of crime, 2005 - 2006 to 2009 - 2010.

		Crimes against the person		Crimes against property		All reported crime	
		Number	Rate per 1000 adolescents	Number	Rate per 1000 adolescents	Number	Rate per 1000 adolescents
Murrindindi	2005 - 2006	25	16.2	np	np	28	18.2
	2006 - 2007	27	17.8	np	np	32	21.1
	2007 - 2008	23	15.1	5	3.3	28	18.4
	2008 - 2009	20	13.6	9	6.1	29	19.6
	2009 - 2010	14	10.3	np	np	19	14.0
Victoria	2005 - 2006	5,752	10.6	4,095	7.6	10,018	18.5
	2006 - 2007	6,214	11.4	4,095	7.5	10,493	19.3
	2007 - 2008	6,277	11.5	3,730	6.8	10,217	18.7
	2008 - 2009	6,109	11.2	3,523	6.4	9,820	17.9
	2009 - 2010	6,088	11.1	3,287	6.0	9,606	17.5

Source: Law Enforcement Assessment Program data, Victoria Police, unpublished, ABS Estimated Resident Population at 30 June

Over the past five years in Murrindindi , the rate of reported crime where the victim was an adolescent has decreased by 4.2 per 1000 adolescents, from 18.2 per 1000 adolescents in 2005 - 2006 to 14.0 per 1000 adolescents in 2009 - 2010.

Crime in Murrindindi and Victoria where the offender was an adolescent, by age group, 2005 - 2006 to 2009 - 2010.

		10 - 14 years		15 - 17 years	
		Number	Rate per 1000 adolescents	Number	Rate per 1000 adolescents
Murrindindi	2005 - 2006	24	25.1	56	96.2
	2006 - 2007	44	46.9	54	93.3
	2007 - 2008	18	19.0	60	104.7
	2008 - 2009	18	18.9	43	81.7
	2009 - 2010	39	44.9	61	125.8
Victoria	2005 - 2006	8,271	24.5	20,698	101.2
	2006 - 2007	9,858	29.3	20,776	100.3
	2007 - 2008	10,939	32.5	22,800	108.6
	2008 - 2009	11,019	32.8	24,823	117.7
	2009 - 2010	10,945	32.5	24,836	117.3

Source: Law Enforcement Assessment Program data, Victoria Police, unpublished, ABS Estimated Resident Population at 30 June

In 2009 - 2010, 44.9 per 1000 adolescents aged 10 -14 years in Murrindindi were reported to have committed an offence. This was higher than the rate in Victoria (32.5 per 1000 adolescents aged 10 -14 years).

In 2009 - 2010, 125.8 per 1000 adolescents aged 15 - 17 years in Murrindindi were reported to have committed an offence. This was higher than the rate in Victoria (117.3 per 1000 adolescents aged 15 - 17 years).

Number and rate of substantiated child protection reports for adolescents in Murrindindi, the Hume region and Victoria, 2005 - 2006 to 2009 - 2010.

	Murrindindi		Hume region		Victoria	
	Number of substantiations	Rate per 1000 adolescents	Number of substantiations	Rate per 1000 adolescents	Number of substantiations	Rate per 1000 adolescents
2005 - 2006	11	7.1	230	7.3	2,574	4.8
2006 - 2007	8	5.3	248	7.8	2,331	4.3
2007 - 2008	6	3.9	211	6.6	2,306	4.2
2008 - 2009	11	7.5	186	5.8	2,372	4.3
2009 - 2010	np	np	203	6.4	2,434	4.4

Source: Department of Human Services, 2010, Client Relationship Information System, Children, Youth & Families Division, unpublished. ABS Estimated Resident Population

The rate of child protection substantiations in Murrindindi has increased over the past four years, from 7.1 per 1000 adolescents in 2005 - 2006 to 7.5 per 1000 adolescents in 2008 - 2009. As there were less than five child protection substantiations reports in Murrindindi during 2009 - 2010, a rate of child protection substantiations per 1000 adolescents could not be derived for this period.


Socio-economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)

SEIFA is a suite of indexes ranking geographic areas across Australia in terms of their socio-economic characteristics. The SEIFA indexes are created by combining information collected in the five-yearly Census of Population and Housing. There are four different indexes within SEIFA, these are the Index of Education and Occupation, the Index of Economic Resources, the Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage and the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage (IRSED). These concepts are abstract and difficult to measure, so the indexes aim to capture these abstract concepts by combining information that is related to the concept. For example, the Index of Relative Socio-economic Disadvantage uses information such as low income and low education as markers of relative socio-economic disadvantage. Each index ranks different geographic areas of Australia according to a 'score' that is created for the area based on characteristics of people, families and dwellings within that area. For all of the indexes, relative disadvantage is associated with a low number (ABS 2006).

Statistical Local Areas within Murrindindi

- The LGA of Murrindindi is composed of just one Statistical Local Area. The IRSED for this area is ranked 78 out of the 204 Statistical Local Areas in Victoria.

Statistical Local Area	2009 ERP of population within SLA	Proportion of population within LGA (%)	IRSED score	Rank out of 204 SLAs in Victoria
Murrindindi (S) - East	6,227	46.6	986	78
Murrindindi (S) - West	7,150	53.4	1022	138

FAMILY CHARACTERISTICS 	Selected Region	% of total families in Region	Australia	% of total families in Australia
Total families	3,651	-	5,219,165	-
Couple families with children	1,533	42.0%	2,362,582	45.3%
Couple families without children	1,653	45.3%	1,943,643	37.2%
One parent families	431	11.8%	823,254	15.8%
Other families	34	0.9%	89,686	1.7%

In the 2006 Census, there were 3,651 families in Murrindindi (S) (Local Government Area): 42.0% were couple families with children, 45.3% were couple families without children, 11.8% were one parent families and 0.9% were other families.

Guiding Plans

Murrindindi Shire Council Plan 2009-2013

The Council Plan is the key planning document, specifically the plan:

- guides Council's strategic direction
- identifies Council priorities and strategic indicators
- contributes to the development of the annual budget for the next four years

VISION: Murrindindi will be a vibrant and progressive shire, with strong communities thriving within a healthy environment.

MISSION: To care for, foster and promote the Murrindindi Shire in partnership with communities and other stakeholders.

The strategic directions for Murrindindi Shire Council are

- Governance
- Community
- Local Economy
- Infrastructure
- Environment and Climate Change
- Planning and land use
- Corporate Development

CRLLEN Environmental Scan

The scan provides a comprehensive profile for the Murrindindi Shire Council area with a specific focus on:

- Youth Demographics
- Education and training providers
- Business and industry in the region
- Key community groups and agencies
- Trends, needs and issues of key stakeholders
- Partnerships within the local education and transitions environment
- Gaps in service provision or support; and
- Priorities for the future reflecting region needs and LLEN capacity.

Murrindindi Economic Development Strategy 2011-2016

Vision: To work in partnership with the community, business, and government agencies to encourage economic growth which enhances the liveability and quality of life in the Murrindindi Shire whilst protecting our environmental attributes and conserving our natural assets and attractions.

The six recommended focus areas are:

- Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- Education and Training
- Small Business
- Tourism
- Community Care
- Shared Infrastructure

Murrindindi Shire Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009 – 2013

The Health and Wellbeing Plan underpins the Council Plan and aims to provide direction to Council as well as key community groups and service providers.

The priority areas for the Health & Well Being Plan are:

- Mental health, social inclusion and connection to communities
- Safe, secure and sustaining food
- Physical activity
- Reduction of health damaging behaviours
- Emergency planning and health protection

Murrindindi Shire Bushfire Reform and Recovery Plan

The Reform and Recovery Plan focuses on issues which are additional requirements to those addressed in the Council Plan 2009-13 as a result of the 7 February 2009 bushfires.

"In Murrindindi 95 lives were lost, nearly 1400 dwellings, businesses, community facilities and other buildings were destroyed, an unknown number of people were mentally and / or physically scarred for life and 40 per cent of the land area was burnt."

The Bushfire Recovery Action List is a companion document that identifies goals and actions to guide recovery.

Guiding Policy

The Vulnerable Youth Framework (VYF) Discussion Paper (2008) released by the Victorian Government, provides a framework to identify some of the needed changes to improve outcomes for vulnerable young people. The VYF aims to address the needs of vulnerable young Victorians aged 10-25 years to connect current policy and service delivery efforts across a range of state and local government portfolios.

The VYF outlines five focus areas:

- Prevention and early identification
- Engagement in education, training and employment
- Local planning for youth services
- Tailored responses for particular groups
- Effective service, capable people

Blueprint for Education and Early Childhood Development (2008) The Blueprint sets out the Government's five year agenda for learning and development from birth to adulthood.

Priorities:

- Increase access to high quality early childhood health, education and care services;
- Strengthen public confidence in a world class school education system, with a strong and vibrant government school sector at its core;
- Integrate services for children and families;
- Improve outcomes for disadvantaged young Victorians.

Future Directions: an Action Agenda for Young Victorians (DPCD, 2006). *Future Directions* brings together a 'Top 40' list of initiatives, which are grouped under the following five desired outcomes/ *Future Directions* aims to increase the number of young people who:

- Contribute more to their communities and want to make a difference
- Make a successful transition from school to a job they like
- Know how to access information, support and services they need
- Lead healthy, active and culturally diverse lifestyles, and
- Live in a secure environment and choose safe behaviours

Effective Schools are Engaging Schools: Student Engagement Policy Guidelines (DEECD, 2009)

The Student Engagement Policy Guidelines promote student engagement, attendance and positive behaviours in Victorian government schools.

A Fairer Victoria: Progress and next Steps (2006) *A Fairer Victoria: Progress and Next Steps (2006)* builds on A Fairer Victoria strategy which is State Government's overarching policy for Victoria. The report identifies the progress and next steps of the strategy, that relate to the following five objectives that the State Government have committed to:

- Access to universal services
- Reducing barriers to opportunity
- Support for disadvantaged groups
- Support for disadvantaged places
- Making it easier to work with Government

Because Mental Health Matters: Victorian Mental Health Reform Strategy 2009 – 2019

Victoria's new mental health strategy is based on the following core elements of reform:

- Prevention
- Early intervention
- Recovery
- Social inclusion

Methodology & Research Methods

Community consultation was a key activity in building the Murrindindi Shire Council's Youth Strategic Plan, therefore a significant proportion of time was spent gaining insight and input from youth and the wider community.

A variety of engagement methods were used during the course of community consultation. Youth input and decision making from the Community Advisory Group was key in determining the most relevant ways to capture the variety and diversity of youth voices across the Murrindindi Shire. Importantly, the consultation was strongly shaped by:

- ✓ **Hearing from key local organisations and agencies: Service Provider Workshops**
- ✓ **Hearing from key community members and groups: Focus groups**
- ✓ **Linking to existing youth specific events / meetings/groups**
- ✓ **Utilising schools as a universal platform to engage youth**
- ✓ **Focus groups to engage youth**
- ✓ **Development of a Youth Survey**
- ✓ **Circulating data results and the draft Youth Strategic Plan to the wider community**
- ✓ **Communication through the use of technology i.e. SMS, Facebook etc.**

The draft of Murrindindi Shire Council's Youth Strategic Plan was circulated to communities across the Shire to invite feedback before the draft was finalised.

The methodology used in researching and writing the Murrindindi Youth Strategic Plan (2012-2015) together with the methods of data collection are outlined below. Copies of the specific data collection tools are available in the appendices section.

Murrindindi Youth Strategy Advisory Group

The consultant together with Murrindindi Shire Council invited community services, schools, government and other relevant community groups to become a member of the advisory group that guided the development of Murrindindi Shire Council's Youth Strategic Plan. Advisory Group membership consisted of:

Yea High School
Murrindindi Shire Council

Alexandra Secondary College
Central Ranges LLEN

Mitchell Community Health Service
Kildonan

Berry Street
CVGT

The Community Advisory Group provided direction around the development and promotion of the Youth Strategic Plan to ensure that the wider community embraced and owned the plan. The advisory group met monthly for the length of the project.

Youth Actively Supporting Research

Survey questions, consultation processes and the final look of the document were strongly shaped by young people participating as 'researchers'.

Three groups of 'Youth Researchers' were invited to take part:

- 1) Kinglake Youth Group
- 2) Alexandra SRC
- 3) Yea Student Leaders group

The 3 key groups were invited to participate in the research component of the Youth Strategy. Taking part in research provided an active way for young people to learn about services, citizenship and to gain a variety of skills such as:

- ✓ Strategic planning
- ✓ Research design
- ✓ Data collection and analysis; and
- ✓ Communication

Genuine participation and decision making was a key consideration and feature of the methodology. Approximately 35 young people assisted with guiding, advising and conducting the research. The consultant, Council and a key adult from either the school or the Youth Group supported young people who were directly involved in conducting research.

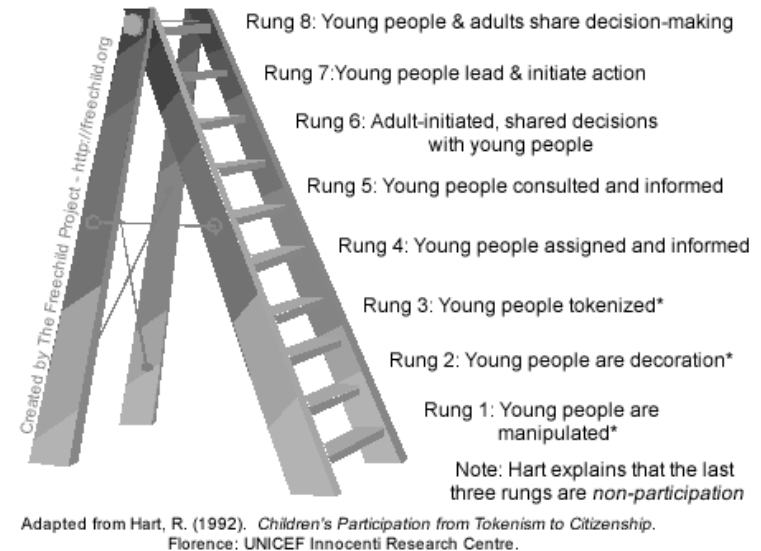
Hands on data analysis sessions were held with the Kinglake Youth Group and the Yea High School Leadership Group.



The Murrindindi Youth Research Groups operated at Rungs 6, 7 and 8 of Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation. The invitation to assist with the research was driven by Murrindindi Shire Council (Rung 6: Adult initiated), however from that point forward the young people involved took part in the decision making (Rung 8).

Evidence that guided the Youth as Researchers component is included in the appendices section of this document.

Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



Hearing from Service Providers

Three service provider workshops were held in Yea. The first workshop was to inform service providers about the Youth Strategy process and to hear about the service needs they were currently experiencing in relation to young people. The second workshop was to present the youth survey findings and develop an action plan and the third workshop was to finalise stakeholder involvement and prioritise actions. Overall, 48 service providers participated in the workshops.

Hearing from Community Groups

Key community groups were invited to focus groups to share their experiences, thoughts and hopes for young people in their locality. A focus group was held in:

Kinglake

Yea

Alexandra

Marysville

Overall, 31 representatives of the following community groups/organisations participated in focus groups:

Yea Business & Tourism Assoc	Yea Lions	St.Luke's Parish	Yea Tennis Club
Yea Community House	Hi Arts Highlands	Flowerdale Youth Group	Kinglake Youth Group
Kinglake Pony Club	Kinglake Neighbourhood House	Victoria Police	Kinglake Ranges Foundation
Kinglake Football Netball Club	Toolangi Costella Youth Group	Marysville & Triangle Youth Group	Narbethong Hall Committee
Marysville Community Golf & Bowls Club	New Beginnings Marysville	Impact Youth Group	Murrindindi Shire Council
Alexandra & District Masonic Fishing & Sporting Club	Masons Alexandra	Alexandra Traders & Tourism Association	Alexandra Truck & Ute Road Show
Thornton Eildon District Sports Club	Murrindindi Cycle Club	Acheron Vocal Nash	Alexandra Scouts

Hearing from Murrindindi Shire Council

A focus group was held with the Executive Management Group within Council. In addition to this two one to one consultations were held with Councillors at Murrindindi Shire Council.

Hearing from Young People

Using Kinglake Youth Group and Alexandra SRC a structured youth survey was designed to gain feedback from young people aged 12-24. The survey included both open and closed questions, and was delivered via various means:

- In Yea & Alexandra Secondary Schools
- Electronically, via the web
- On school buses
- In Focus groups
- Via community groups e.g. sporting clubs, youth groups

A total of 539 youth aged 12-24 completed the Murrindindi Shire Council Youth Survey.

Summary of Key Consultation Findings

Successes & Strengths

Consultation highlighted the following strengths and successes (see appendices section for full consultation results):

- Freeza's
- Young people's connection to and appreciation of family, friends and community members
- Engagement of young people in sport
- Young people's love of the scenery and nature where they live
- Young people's engagement with Youth Groups
- Skate Parks

Challenges & Concerns

Consultation highlighted that what was most challenging and concerning is:

- Physical Isolation
- Boredom/Lack of things to do
- Lack of 'Youth Space'
- Bullying
- Drugs, alcohol and tobacco use
- Lack of employment, career and educational opportunities for young people
- Lack of transport
- Offering a variety of activities that aren't sport focussed
- Providing night time and weekend activities for young people aged 18-24 that aren't pub focussed
- Understanding and sharing information about visiting service availability and access
- Coordination and collaboration between youth service providers
- Reduced funding from Victorian Bushfire Assistance Fund (VBAF) resulting in reduced service provision for young people

What Could Make a Difference?

Consultation highlighted that what could make a difference to improve things for young people would be:

- Increased/improved infrastructure and facilities
- More recreation, events and activities for young people
- Improved transport
- A coordinated and effective youth service sector
- Increased youth participation and involvement in decision making
- Targeted youth informed interventions to decrease drug, alcohol and tobacco use
- Targeted youth informed interventions to decrease bullying

Key Youth Strategy Focus Areas & Actions (2012-2015)

Key Area 1: Health & Wellbeing

Key Area 2: Education, Training & Employment

Key Area 3: Recreation, Activities & Events

Key Area 4: Leadership, Participation & Citizenship

Key Area 5: Effective Services & Supports

Key Area 6: Transportation

Key Area 1: Health & Wellbeing

Action	Desired Outcome(s)	Key Stakeholders	Lead Agency	Timeline
1. Conduct a shire wide mapping exercise of bullying awareness and education programs currently being delivered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification of gaps ▪ Reduce duplication ▪ Promote partnerships 	DEECD/Schools Berry St Other Key Stakeholders as identified	Police and Community Consultative Committee (PCCC)	Year 1
2. Undertake an evaluation of the Safe & Caring Communities model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An understanding of what is working well and what isn't ▪ Recommendations to increase effectiveness of the model 	Schools Young People Other Key Stakeholders as identified	Berry St	Year 1
3. Develop and implement youth led and informed anti bullying interventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decrease in bullying ▪ Increase in youth participation 	Young People Parents DEECD/Schools Parents Other Key Stakeholders as identified	Berry St Schools	Year 1
4. Conduct shire wide research into drug, alcohol and tobacco use to inform the development of targeted interventions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved understanding of young people's drug, alcohol and tobacco use 	Young People Parents DEECD/Schools Murrindindi Shire Council Alexandra & Yea Hospitals Mitchell Community Health Service Key Service Providers	Mitchell Community Health	TBC
5. Develop and implement youth informed interventions to address drug, alcohol and tobacco use.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Decrease in smoking ▪ Decrease in drug use ▪ Increase in safe alcohol use ▪ Young people and their parents are better informed about the health impacts of alcohol, drug and tobacco use 	Young People Parents DEECD/Schools Alexandra & Yea Hospitals Other Key Stakeholders as identified	Mitchell Community Health	TBC
6. Ensure that access to mental health support is available for young people, particularly young people who have experienced trauma as a result of the 2009 bushfires.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved mental health supports for young people ▪ Young people are supported with their mental health needs 	Young People Parents DEECD/Schools Other Key Stakeholders as identified	Murrindindi Shire Youth Governance Group	TBC
7. Identify and implement programs that will promote physical activity and healthy eating in young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase number of young people engaged in physical activity ▪ Increase in healthy eating 	Young People Parents Alexandra & Yea Hospitals Mitchell Community Health Service	Yea Hospital	TBC

Key Area 2: Education, Training & Employment

Action	Desired Outcome(s)	Key Stakeholders	Lead Agency	Timeline
1. Develop and implement career/job forums that feature small business start up information for year nine students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people are better informed on career/employment pathways Young people are better able to select courses that will support their desired pathways Increased knowledge and support for young people considering starting a business 	CRLLEN Schools Parents Young People Key Employment & Training Providers	DEECD	Year 1 (& ongoing)
2. Develop and implement school mentoring/homework programs for students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in young people keeping up with their school work Decreased stress/anxiety surrounding school work loads 	Schools Young People CRLLEN Parents	Yea High School	Year 1
3. Investigate and develop flexible learning options for young people across Murrindindi Shire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of flexible learning options for young people A decrease in young people disengaging from education 	DEECD CRLLEN Murrindindi Shire Council Registered Training Organisations Go TAFE	CRLLEN DEECD	Year 1
4. Examine education and training options that are currently available for young people living in Murrindindi Shire and work to improve the accessibility and range of options for young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased enrolment in education and training options Improved accessibility to education and training options Improved transport and timetabling 	CRLLEN Murrindindi Shire Council Registered Training Organisations Go TAFE Key Education Providers	CRLLEN	TBC
5. Explore economic/business development initiatives that could offer increased employment opportunities for young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in employment and career opportunities for young people across the Shire 	Murrindindi Shire Council Business Owners CRLLEN Key Employment Providers	CRLLEN Berry St	TBC
7. Increase the availability of work experience programs for young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in hands on training opportunities for young people 	DEECD CRLLEN Business Owners	CRLLEN CVGT	TBC

Key Area 3: Recreation, Activities & Events

Action	Desired Outcome(s)	Key Stakeholders	Lead Agency	Timeline
1. Inform and engage parents to ensure young people are supported to access recreational activities and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved information sharing Increase in young people engaging in recreational activities 	Parents Key Service Providers Young People Local Sporting Clubs	Yea Hospital Berry St	Year 1 (& ongoing)
2. Involve young people in the design and delivery of activities and events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved youth participation An increase in skills for young people A stronger connection between service providers and young people 	Young People Key Service Providers	Murrindindi Shire Council Berry St	Year 1 (& ongoing)
3. Investigate the extension of swimming pool opening hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased night time and weekend activities for young people An increase in physical activity for young people 	Young People Parents Key Service Providers	Murrindindi Shire Council	Year 1
4. Plan and develop a collaborative calendar of events for the year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved use of resources Collaboration between service providers Improved planning and information sharing 	Key Service Providers Local Sporting Clubs	Murrindindi Shire Youth Governance Group	TBC
5. Source sustainable funding to allow for successful programs to be run long term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved continuity of programs 	Key Service Providers	Murrindindi Shire Youth Governance Group	TBC
6. Utilise technology to promote recreational activities and events to young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved marketing and promotion of activities and events Increased attendance at events and activities 	Key Service Providers Murrindindi Shire Council Local Sporting Clubs	Murrindindi Shire Council	TBC

Key Area 4: Leadership, Participation & Citizenship

Action	Desired Outcome(s)	Key Stakeholders	Lead Agency	Timeline
1. Map existing leadership initiatives and programs currently being offered across the Shire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved understanding of what is available and any gaps 	Schools Key Service Providers	Berry St	TBC
2. Identify barriers to youth participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved understanding of barriers to youth participation 	Schools Key Service Providers Young People	Murrindindi Shire Youth Governance Group	TBC
3. Develop a Citizenship Program that supports young people to understand Council and how they can get involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger links between Council and young people An increase in young people's understanding of local government Improved engagement of young people 	Murrindindi Shire Council Young People	Murrindindi Shire Council	Year 1
4. Develop a mechanism for connecting young people's voice to Murrindindi Shire Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people are involved in decisions that affect them 	Murrindindi Shire Council Young People Key Service Providers Schools	Murrindindi Shire Council Berry St	Year 1
5. Formally recognise and celebrate youth leadership and achievements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A higher profile for youth leaders 	Murrindindi Shire Council Schools Young People Local Media	Berry St	TBC
6. Investigate the opportunity for Men's Sheds to deliver mentoring programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive role models for young people Skills development for young people 	Men's Sheds Program Participants Schools Young People	Yea High School	Year 1
7. Engage service clubs to develop and implement leadership opportunities for young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in leadership development for young people Positive role models for young people 	Service Clubs Schools Key Service Providers Young People	Yea High School	Year 1

Key Area 5: Effective Services & Supports

Action	Desired Outcome(s)	Key Stakeholders	Lead Agency	Timeline
1. Update Council's Community Service Directory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved information sharing Improved access to services, supports and resources 	Murrindindi Shire Council Key Service Providers	Murrindindi Shire Council	Year 1
2. Create a coordinated visiting services calendar to better inform services, young people and their families of visiting service availability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved information sharing Improved access to visiting services Improved coordination of visiting services 	Murrindindi Shire Council Key Service Providers Berry St Mitchell Community Health	Murrindindi Shire Youth Governance Group	TBC
3. Investigate shared space or 'hub options' for services to utilise, particularly visiting services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved access to services, supports and resources Services working better together Improved use of resources 	Key Service Providers Young people Parents Berry St	Yea High School Berry St Yea Hospital	Year 1
4. Strengthen governance and partnerships for youth service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services working better together Improved use of resources Strengthened commitment to youth service delivery 	Murrindindi Shire Council CRLLEN Key Service Providers Berry St	Murrindindi Shire Youth Governance Group	Year 1
5. Create an easy to use information sharing resource that identifies service providers and programs operating in the Murrindindi Shire Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved information sharing Improved access to services, supports and resources 	Berry St Key Service Providers	Murrindindi Shire Youth Governance Group	TBC
6. Explore options for integrated service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services working better together Improved use of resources Improved service responses for young people 	Berry St Key Service Providers DEECD/Schools	Murrindindi Shire Youth Governance Group	TBC
7. Examine and develop service delivery options to ensure that services and supports are offered appropriately across the geographic expanse of the Shire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of service delivery gaps Improved access to services across the Shire 	Berry St Parents Young people Key Service Providers	Murrindindi Shire Youth Governance Group	TBC
8. Investigate 'Youth Space' options for young people across the Shire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in youth friendly spaces for young people 	Murrindindi Shire Council Berry St Young People Key Service Providers	Murrindindi Shire Youth Governance Group	TBC

Key Area 6: Transportation

Action	Desired Outcome(s)	Key Stakeholders	Lead Agency	Timeline
1. Conduct further research with young people and their parents to better understand the issues surrounding transport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increased understanding of transportation needs 	Murrindindi Shire Council Young People Parents Key Service Providers	Murrindindi Shire Council (Linking Murrindindi)	Year 1
2. Advocate for education and training timetabling options to match with current transportation timetables.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinated timetabling between study options and transportation system Increased accessibility to education and training options for young people 	Murrindindi Shire Council Bus companies CRILEN Go TAFE Training and Education Providers	Murrindindi Shire Council (Linking Murrindindi)	TBC
3. Develop creative community transportation options that utilise existing resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An increase in transportation resources Community capacity building 	Murrindindi Shire Council Young people Parents Community members Key Service Providers	Murrindindi Shire Council (Linking Murrindindi)	TBC
4. Advocate for increased transportation services across the Shire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved transportation across the Murrindindi Shire 	Key Stakeholders Community Groups Parents Young people	Murrindindi Shire Council (Linking Murrindindi)	TBC
5. Review the use of community buses across the Shire to enable improved use of the resource.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved transportation across the Murrindindi Shire 	Murrindindi Shire Council Parents Young people Community groups	Murrindindi Shire Council (Linking Murrindindi)	Year 1

Implementation of the Youth Strategy

It is proposed that the Youth Strategy be used as a living document that can adapt to the changing needs of communities and youth within the Murrindindi Shire Council. To maximise successful implementation of the Youth Strategy it is recommended that:

- 1) The Murrindindi Shire Council **Youth Partnership Group reform as a LGA Place Based Youth Governance Group** and guide the implementation of the **Youth Strategy Action Plan 2012-2015**. This would require a formal commitment from key agencies (through a MOU) and representation that reflects the geographic expanse of the Shire. Members would be required to have decision making authority for their organisation.
- 2) Murrindindi Shire Council seeks funding to employ a full time Youth Development Officer. This position would be responsible for youth planning, youth engagement and supporting the implementation of the Murrindindi Youth Strategy.
- 3) Formal partnerships be developed and utilised to enhance the capability and resources available to implement the strategic priorities and actions.
- 4) The Youth Strategy Action Plan be fully supported by Youth Partnership members.
- 5) Review the Youth Strategy Focus Area's and Actions yearly to gauge progress, prioritise and revise actions wherever required.

The work going forward from the Murrindindi Shire's Youth Strategy is work that requires the combined commitment of Council, schools, service providers and the wider community. It is essential that communities recognise the significance of young people and work collectively with Council to build a bright future for young people within the Shire.

“Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”

-Henry Ford-

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