

Hepburn

SHIRE COUNCIL

HEPBURN SHIRE YOUTH STRATEGY

2016 - 2021



01. FORWARD	3
02. INTRODUCTION	4
03. OUR YOUNG PEOPLE	7
04. ACTION PLAN.....	11
05. WORKS CITED	23
06. APPENDIX 1 HEPBURN YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2015	24

01. FORWARD

In 2015 Hepburn Shire Council (HSC) acted to engage in a meaningful way with the young people of the Shire. Using innovative engagement methods, widespread communications took place to find out all about the young people of Hepburn and their needs and wants. Engagement took place through pop-up events around the Shire, local discussions and online forums. Many community stakeholders were also involved and their input is valued along with the many comments received from young people. The resulting report captures the diverse needs and wants of young people in Hepburn. The information provided by the HYES 2015 directly informs this Youth Strategy and is provided as Appendix 1.

The engagement process has reinvigorated Hepburn Shire's focus on young people and the commitment to provide service, projects and activities that have meaning. This strategy has identified where there are shortcomings and how HSC will address them using collaborative practice and by the provision of supportive services and infrastructure.

Hepburn Shire aims to maintain the excitement and momentum created by the 2015 engagement process and the following strategic document explains how this will happen over the next 5 years



02. INTRODUCTION

1.1 YOUTH STRATEGY 2016 - 2021

This strategy will cover the next five years of service delivery for young people in Hepburn Shire. It follows the Hepburn Shire Council Youth Strategy, 'Close to Home' which covered the period of 2011-2014.

This strategy has been developed in good faith with the community. Delivery of the strategic outcome is subject to outgoing budget commitments and available resources. It will be reviewed every two years to ensure that we are on track.

This document will provide an action plan as a part of the strategy.

[Links to other strategies and plans](#)

This strategy has been developed alongside the following council strategies and plans:

The Hepburn Youth Engagement Strategy 2015

Hepburn Shire Council Plan 2013 – 2017

Hepburn Shire Council Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2013 – 2017

Hepburn Shire Council Events Strategy

WHAT WE WILL DO

Hepburn Shire Council will complete tasks and projects with the following objectives:

- Facilitate participation that is meaningful to young people
- Collaborate with organisations and the community
- Provide opportunities for involvement of young people in projects and programs

All the projects and initiatives will be delivered with the following guiding principles:

- Encourage opportunities for learning and participation
- Ensure we are providing a safe environment in our activities and events
- Provide access to information and technology
- Be mindful of the transport issues that young people face in Hepburn Shire
- Promote fairness and acknowledge diversity in young people

HOW WE WILL DO IT

Through the facilitation of events that are planned and delivered by young people, for young people.

This will be through the State funded FReeZA program which provides young people with the opportunity to attend affordable and accessible music and cultural events.

Operated through the non-profit organisation, 'The Push', music related programs aim to educate, entertain, inspire and empower young people.

Council will implement this program as a part of the Action Plan of this strategy.

By listening to what young people in Hepburn Shire want and need, and acting on it.

The HYES 2015 provides five winning ideas, plus many other valuable contributions from young people across the Shire as a result of the Hepburn Youth Ideas Competition.

These ideas communicate the events or projects young people would like to see happen in their community. Hepburn Shire intends to act on these ideas, and others.

Promoting and maintaining channels of communication for youth is also a priority, in particular, social media and online options will be considered.

Continuing to build and support infrastructure provision aimed at youth organisations, initiatives and activities will also remain a priority for HSC.

By acknowledging the challenges and seeking solutions.

Hepburn Shire Council acknowledges that there are challenges for young people in Hepburn. Council intends to work or collaborate with organisations and agencies where research, advocacy, support, funding and solution finding are promoted.

This includes the 'Bridging the Barriers' project which represents partnership between educational and research stakeholders as well as invested community members.

HSC recognises that there is a valuable resource in the strong community and volunteer base across Hepburn that contributes to the health and wellbeing of young people in Hepburn.

03. OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

DEMOGRAPHICS

Youth is defined in this document as 12-24 years of age. This includes the three main stages of adolescence - early, middle and late - in which the physical, intellectual, emotional and social changes take place (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2011).

In addition to this, Hepburn Shire Council recognises the benefits of early engagement with young people, from as early as ten years old, promoting a connection through the transition phase of primary school to high school. Through earlier engagement there is a greater possibility of maintaining a relationship during the high school years and on to higher education and employment.

CHALLENGES

Challenges exist in that Hepburn Shire has one secondary school, (Daylesford Secondary College), that students from other areas in the Shire cannot easily access. Students from areas outside of Daylesford are more likely to attend secondary schools in other localities such as Ballarat or Kyneton. This situation is problematic on two fronts:

1. The education choices for some families are limited;
2. Engaging with young people in Hepburn is difficult as they cannot be reached via the schools they attend.

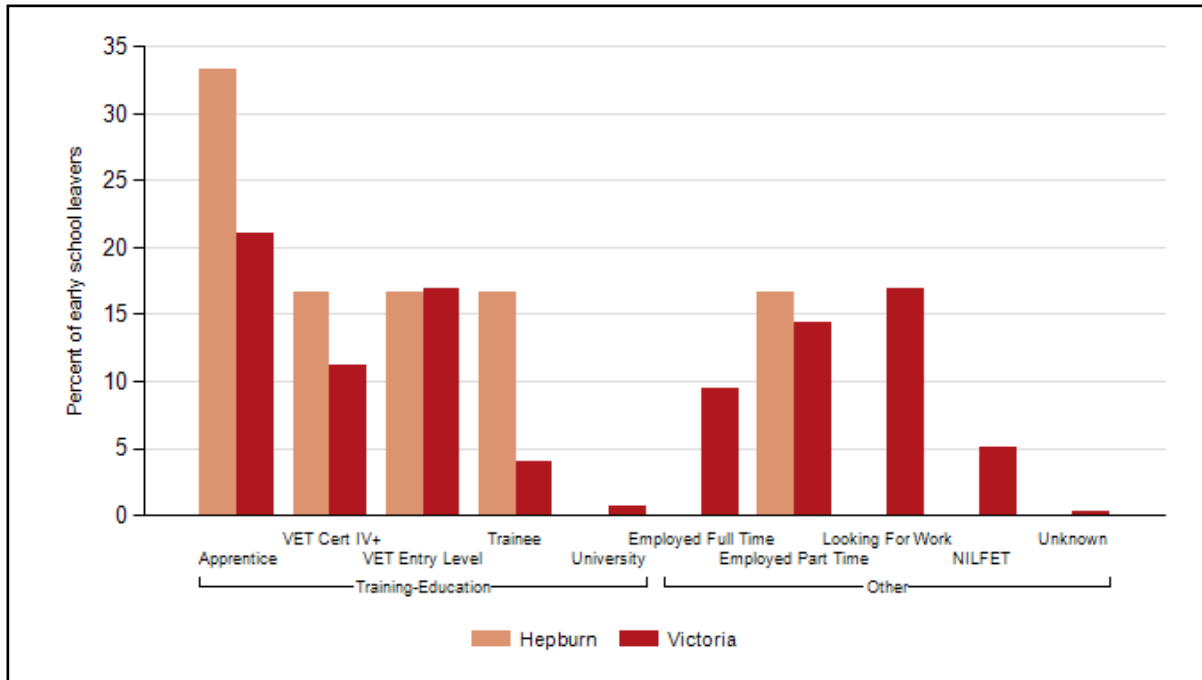
In addition to this, there is a reported high percentage of disengagement (with formal schooling) by young people across the Shire which is being addressed by the *Bridging the Barriers* project.

Bridging the Barriers is a project designed to investigate the reasons for low school attendance in Hepburn Shire, as compared to other LGAs in the region. The project represents a partnership between Federation University and schools in the Shire as well as other key organisations. Findings from this research will be important to understanding this education issue and how it can be addressed.

HSC also supports the investigation of alternative environment education options. This involves working with specific program providers (such as LLEN) to identify and offer appropriate education solutions for young people that have been identified as disengaged or at risk of disengagement.

Pathways and options for young people's access to higher education options are also of note. Data from the *On Track* report (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2014) suggests that young people in Hepburn that leave education before finishing Year 12 do not pursue further education and that a low percentage of these young people pursue higher education pathways when compared to the rest of Victoria (See Table 1). This shows the importance of providing young people with a range of options for their future.

Table 1 Destinations of 2013 early school leavers: Hepburn LGA and Victoria (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development 2014)



Reports from community members working with young people also report several challenges around climate, rural isolation, socio-economic disparity and diverse family blends across the Shire. These challenges must be acknowledged and, where possible, addressed in the implementation of projects and initiatives.

SUMMARY OF THE HEPBURN YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2015 (HYES 2015)

In 2015, Hepburn Shire Council undertook an engagement strategy in order to more fully understand the position of young people in the Shire, their needs and wants. Through consultants, a project was delivered that aimed to:

- Connect widely with young people in places where they are comfortable and familiar;
- Increase awareness about the youth strategy and the youth services Council offer;
- Build the capacity of local young people to plan and design initiatives for their local neighbourhood;
- Gather ideas for future activities for young people, places and services;
- Commit to acting on what young people want to see in the neighbourhood, through the youth strategy action plan; and
- Reach 10 per cent of Hepburn's youth population.



Hepburn Youth Ideas Competition

BIG IDEAS!



The 'Hepburn Youth Ideas Competition' was created to address these aims by providing young people in Hepburn Shire with an opportunity to receive \$1,000 to put towards their idea for young people into action. This competition received 300 submissions, 1,659 votes and 177 comments from across the Shire through the online medium 'Our Say' and pop-up events.

In addition to this, meetings with local stakeholders were held for broad perspectives on the needs of young people across the Shire. From this data and the online submissions, ideas and issues could be grouped into five themes, these being:

ACTIVITY



Activity

Ideas centred on activities young people can do such as improving existing facilities or creating new spaces that are conducive to different activities.

320 Responses

SOCIAL



Social

Increased opportunities for safe, low cost interactions; this includes movie nights, festivals and gathering spaces for young people.

80 Responses

CLUBS & organisations



Clubs & Organisations

Upgrades to established clubs such as football or netball clubs; this includes opportunities for the creation of new clubs, such as the visual arts, music or gaming.

22 Responses

PRIVATE SECTOR & government



Private Sector and Government

Projects driven by the private sector to improve things for young people; this was largely access to retail stores and also opportunities for entertainment and employment. This theme has a strong relationship to the Shire's economic development strategies.

80 Responses

TRANSPORT



Transport

Improved transport, with an emphasis on improved services to and from Ballarat and at times that would enable inter-town employment after school and on weekends.

25 Responses

Several recommendations under each theme were provided as potential projects or services for Council to consider. As such, the HYES 2015 should be viewed in conjunction with this document (Appendix 1). These recommendations, along with the top five ideas from the Hepburn Youth Ideas Competition will form the basis of the Action Plan for this strategy.

04. ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan is a set of initiatives that have been developed to address the objectives of this strategy and the needs and wants of young people in Hepburn Shire. They are listed according to the themes and recommendations that have been developed by the HYES 2015. Reference has been made, where applicable to these recommendations.

The Hepburn Youth Ideas Competition contributed to the Youth Strategy by asking young people in Hepburn for their 'Big Ideas' through an online forum and pop-up events. Ideas were voted on providing a snapshot of what young people would like to see happen for their area. As a result there are five top ideas from across the Shire; implementing these ideas, or projects, is a priority for Council, to work with the individual winners and ensure that their idea and vision comes to fruition. They are listed as the first five initiatives of the Action Plan. These ideas will be treated as pilot projects and assessed for continued implementation.

Additional initiatives in the Action Plan address other recognised issues such as education, recreation facilities, transport challenges and employment options for young people. These are drawn from information provided by youth engagement as well as what we have heard from educational and community stakeholders in Hepburn Shire that have strong links and involvement with young people and their activities.

BIG IDEAS!



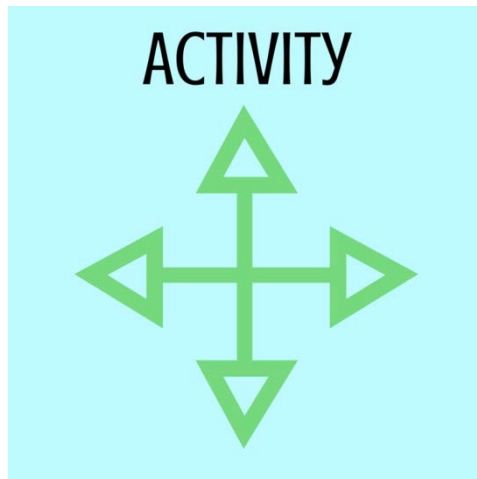
The Hepburn Youth Ideas Competition resulted in five top ideas from the 300 that were submitted. The top five are listed here. The remainder of the submitted ideas will be kept on record and revised periodically for possible inclusion into other activities and initiatives.

The top five come from Clunes, Creswick, Daylesford and Trentham which means young people from across the Shire will have a great opportunity to enjoy these projects. Some of these projects or events will be assessed for continued implementation or inclusion into the school holiday program. Each of these initiatives will be led by the young person who put forward the idea with HSC acting as facilitator and support.

INITIATIVE	WHO WILL DO IT	OBJECTIVES MET	SCHEDULE	MEASURABLE
Big Ideas: Movie Day <i>A movie day/night with popcorn, drinks, ice-cream and beanbags – the lot! Other places do this sort of thing but nothing local. We can just walk down with our parents.</i>	Idea originator supported by Economic & Community Development Team Volunteers from the community	Participation that is meaningful to young people Opportunities for youth involvement Collaborate with organisations and the community	Year 1 – Implementation	Event held in Trentham in Year 1
Big Ideas: Self Development Program <i>A structured program for young people in the community aimed at self development</i>	Idea originator supported by Economic & Community Development Team	Participation that is meaningful to young people Opportunities for youth involvement	Year 1 – Planning & implementation. Year 2 – Conduct assessment on the feasibility of annual implementation	Event held in Hepburn Shire in Year 1

► HEPBURN SHIRE COUNCIL YOUTH STRATEGY 2016 - 2021

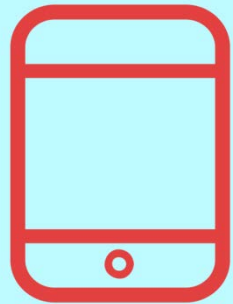
<p>Big Ideas: A Theatre Group <i>A theatre group for the local area. A way for young people to participate in theatre activities and performance.</i></p>	<p>Idea originator supported by Economic & Community Development Team Participants from the community</p>	<p>Participation that is meaningful to young people Opportunities for youth involvement Collaborate with organisations and the community</p>	<p>Year 1 – Implementation</p>	<p>Implementation of the program in Year 1</p>
<p>Big Ideas: Music (Learning and Performing) <i>A place to learn and perform music.</i></p>	<p>Idea originator supported by Economic & Community Development Team Participants from the community</p>	<p>Participation that is meaningful to young people Opportunities for youth involvement Collaborate with organisations and the community</p>	<p>Year 1 – Implementation</p>	<p>Facilitation of a rehearsal and performance space in Year 1</p>
<p>Big Ideas: Gaming Lounge <i>A gaming lounge with lots of different video games. You would have to book ahead for a session and it would be really cheap or free. It would be great for people who don't have video games.</i></p>	<p>Idea originator supported by Economic & Community Development Team Participants from the community</p>	<p>Participation that is meaningful to young people Opportunities for youth involvement Collaborate with organisations and the community</p>	<p>Year 1 – Implementation</p>	<p>Event held in Creswick in Year 1</p>



These are ideas that are centred on activities young people can do such as improving existing facilities or creating new spaces that are conducive to different activities. At HSC, much of this sits with Open Space & Recreation in the Community and Economic Development team.

INITIATIVE	HOW WE WILL DO IT	WHO WILL DO IT	OBJECTIVES MET	SCHEDULE	MEASURABLE
<p>Digital Community</p> <p><i>The facilitation of a digital community platform that provides information about what's on and where for young people. This will provide an opportunity to recognise and support the community members that are engaged in supporting young people such as clubs and organisations.</i></p>	<p>Establish the most appropriate platform, i.e. website, social media, newsletter or App</p> <p>Establish method of maintenance and responsibility</p> <p>Promote the platform for use by the community and by youth</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development Team in collaboration with young people and community groups.</p>	<p>Opportunities for youth involvement</p> <p>Collaborate with organisations and the community</p>	<p>Year 1 – Development of the platform and implementation</p> <p>Year 2 – Ongoing maintenance</p> <p>Year 3 – Ongoing Maintenance</p> <p>Year 4 – Ongoing maintenance</p>	<p>A digital platform that is utilised by the community and by young people</p> <p>Regular and routine maintenance of the information shared through the platform</p>

SOCIAL



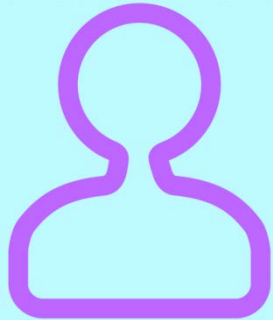
This theme concerns ideas that increase opportunities for safe, low cost social interactions. This includes the provision of spaces and technology for young people to use. There is also capacity to consider youth-led enterprise in this field. For HSC this is the space best catered to by the FReeZA program.

Connection to young people in their early years can be carried out through the libraries and hub spaces to promote future engagement with young people, particularly in those towns where most young people go to school outside of the Shire.

INITIATIVE	HOW WE WILL DO IT	WHO WILL DO IT	OBJECTIVES MET	SCHEDULE	MEASURABLE
<p>FReeZA Program</p> <p><i>The FReeZA program provides young people with the opportunity to attend affordable and accessible music and cultural events that are planned and delivered by youth for youth.</i></p>	<p>Actively seek, promote and encourage young people to embrace opportunities to use FReeZA resources to provide for activities for young people</p> <p>An annual event for Youth Week to be considered</p> <p>Inclusion into community events will be considered</p>	<p>Youth led teams will be formed for each event and on a project basis</p> <p>Community & Economic Development Team</p>	<p>Participation that is meaningful to young people</p> <p>Opportunities for youth involvement</p>	<p>Year 1 – Identification of a suitable event/s for implementation under the FReeZA guidelines</p> <p>Year 2 – As above</p> <p>Year 3 – As Above. Apply for next round of funding</p>	<p>As according to the FReeZA program guidelines and reporting requirements</p> <p>2 events held per year</p>

<p>Space Activation</p> <p>Build on current out of hours youth activities in libraries/hubs and pilot new activities in these and other civic spaces.</p> <p>Promote the spaces with free Wifi and develop a plan to extend Council provided free Wifi.</p>	<p>Work with young people to determine the types of activities and times which would best suit in the spaces we already have available.</p> <p>Advertise current offerings to young people in the format that they want to receive information.</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development Team</p>	<p>Opportunities for youth involvement</p>	<p>Year 1 – Program & promote more events in Hubs/ Libraries after hours.</p> <p>Improved promotion of current offerings.</p> <p>Year 2 - Increase spaces with free Wifi</p>	<p>Spaces in towns across the Shire that are frequented by young people and improved social options for them</p>
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CLUBS & organisations

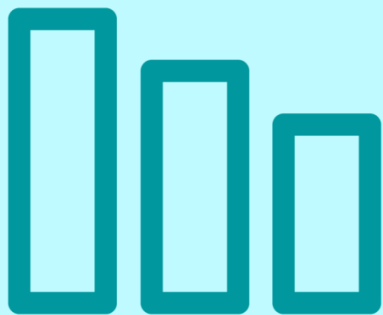


HSC wants to encourage young people to explore the establishment of new ideas and activities in their towns. Becoming involved in Council activities is one way to do this. Harnessing communications with clubs and organisations is one way to communicate effectively between Council and young people in the community.

INITIATIVE	HOW WE WILL DO IT	WHO WILL DO IT	OBJECTIVES MET	SCHEDULE	MEASURABLE
<p>Youth Advisory for Projects Council will work with young people to ensure they have a voice in projects that may affect or have an impact on them. This will be on a case by case basis.</p>	<p>Build on awareness in HSC for inclusion for young people in the community</p> <p>Ensure that engagement is inclusive and relevant to young people.</p> <p>Document and acknowledge young person's inclusion in the development of the project</p> <p>Continue to build networks through bodies such as schools and clubs</p>	<p>All Departments via Community & Economic Development Team</p> <p>Young people</p>	<p>Opportunities for youth involvement</p>	<p>Project to project</p> <p>Ongoing basis</p>	<p>Input is gathered from young people for relevant projects across the organisation</p> <p>Documentation of youth input is recorded</p>

<p>Quick Response Youth Grants The Quick Response Youth Grants are designed to be accessible to young people in Hepburn Shire. The application process is intended to be easier and quicker than other grant processes. They will be available all year round.</p>	<p>Two types of grants will be offered; FReeZA Grants for a maximum of \$1,000 and Leadership Grants for a maximum of \$1,000. Applications will need to meet a set of criteria including:</p> <p>The applicant must be aged between 12 and 25</p> <p>The applicant must live in Hepburn Shire</p> <p>The grant must be used to run a project for young people in Hepburn Shire</p> <p>Projects will need to go through an acquittal and evaluation at the completion of the project.</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development Team</p>	<p>Participation that is meaningful to young people</p> <p>Opportunities for youth involvement</p>	<p>Annual budget release</p>	<p>80% uptake of available funds through the grant process.</p>
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PRIVATE SECTOR & Government



There is much that can be done in the private sector for young people. HSC can advocate for this through groups and organisations where appropriate. Additionally, HSC can provide for young people through the school holiday program.

The provision of employment options and pathways is another way HSC can effectively support young people both directly and through relevant and appropriate agencies.

INITIATIVE	HOW WE WILL DO IT	WHO WILL DO IT	OBJECTIVES MET	SCHEDULE	MEASURABLE
School Holiday Program	<p>Support school holiday programs by coordinating events in libraries.</p> <p>Fund school holiday activities for 12 + years initiated by community and young people's ideas.</p> <p>Pilot a bus option from Creswick, Clunes and Trentham to the Daylesford ARC school holidays program for increased participation</p>	Community & Economic Development Team	<p>Participation that is meaningful to young people</p> <p>Opportunities for youth involvement</p>	Year 1 – Planning and ongoing implementation with assessment	<p>Determined number of events and activities</p> <p>One 12+ years activity/library each holidays</p> <p>Number of school holiday activities funded</p> <p>Bus pilot held</p>

<p>Employment Opportunities Program</p> <p>This is a program for young people to complete a term/period of work placement in various departments of Council.</p> <p>The offering will be tiered for various types and levels of placement.</p> <p>This could involve all Council departments. The program has the potential to create significant benefits such as career development for our young people and increased engagement with Council.</p>	<p>Work closely with the People and Performance Team to develop a program across Council that delivers on benefits for young people.</p> <p>Cooperation and close work with education/employment stakeholders to develop a program that has credibility and the potential to inspire young people in a career pathway</p> <p>Develop an assessment tool for the completion of the program</p>	<p>All Council departments</p> <p>People and Performance Team</p> <p>Daylesford Secondary College.</p> <p>Job Network providers</p>	<p>Participation that is meaningful to young people</p> <p>Opportunities for youth involvement</p> <p>Collaborate with organisations and the community</p>	<p>Year 1- Planning</p> <p>Year 2 - Pilot Implementation and assessment</p> <p>Year 3 - Ongoing implementation with assessment</p> <p>Year 4 – Ongoing implementation with assessment</p>	<p>Appetite for the program can be measured by the response rate of the applicants</p> <p>Results of assessment from the applicant/s, educational institutions and HSC to provide determinants of success</p>
<p>Volunteer Program</p> <p>Promote HSC volunteer opportunities for young people. Benefits would be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Valuable experience in customer service and other work practices; 2. An increased pool of 	<p>Develop promotional message</p> <p>Promote the idea through schools and other clubs and organisations as well as HSC communication channels</p> <p>Investigate any additional requirements needed for young people’s participation</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development Team</p>	<p>Participation that is meaningful to young people</p> <p>Opportunities for youth involvement</p> <p>Collaborate with organisations and the community</p>	<p>Year 1 - Pilot program with ongoing assessment for annual implementation</p> <p>Year 2 – Based on recommendations, continued</p>	<p>Appetite for the program can be measured by the response rate of the applicants</p> <p>Assessment at the end of the program to determine the key competencies</p>

volunteers for the VICs and other organisations; 3. Increased engagement between young people and their communities.				implementation of the program. Year 3 – As Above with assessment Year 4 – As Above with assessment	achieved by the applicant
Education Initiatives Support DSC and other agencies e.g. LLEN to understand the reasons for disengagement from learning in Hepburn Shire and ways to address this..	Establish contact and a working relationship with key bodies Contribute to the meetings and discussion as needed. Provide facilitation where and when needed for the project.	Community & Economic Development Team General Manager Community Services	Collaborate with organisations and the community	As needed according to the program	Delivery of the research report with key findings in place.
Youth-led Enterprise Investigate opportunities to facilitate youth led enterprise and promote employment opportunities for young people in Hepburn Shire either through the private sector or community led venture.	Consult with young people about what this idea could look like and what it could mean for them Identify business or other organisations that are able to help or contribute Develop a plan based on these outcomes Develop an assessment tool for this initiative to be used if future funding is sought	Community & Economic Development Team	Participation that is meaningful to young people Opportunities for youth involvement Collaborate with organisations and the community	Year 2 – Investigate appropriate ventures or opportunities for implementation Year 3 – Implementation and assessment Year 4 – Continuing implementation based on assessment	

TRANSPORT



Young people have identified that all towns across the Shire need improved services, particularly to Ballarat where many attend school but other opportunities exist for employment and social activities. Many young people report that they can get a parent to drive them for school or for a planned activity but not for simply hanging out. Increased public transport services will increase young people's autonomy for educational, employment and social opportunities.

INITIATIVE	HOW WE WILL DO IT	WHO WILL DO IT	OBJECTIVES MET	SCHEDULE	MEASURABLE
<p>Transport</p> <p>Transport options for young people have been identified as a challenge for young people in Hepburn. This concerns transport for education, social and employment needs.</p>	<p>Advocate for improved public transport</p> <p>Conduct an investigation into the State provision of school transport</p> <p>Identify the gaps and ways to make improvements</p> <p>Where necessary, advocate for increased services</p>	<p>Community & Economic Development Team</p>	<p>Collaborate with organisations and the community</p>	<p>Year 2 – Complete investigation and report.</p> <p>Year 3 – Implement findings or advocacy</p> <p>Year 4 – Conduct assessment on impact and adequacy of service provision</p>	<p>Take up of public transport services by young people in the Shire</p>

05. WORKS CITED

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. *Young Australians: Their Health and Wellbeing 2011*. Canberra: Communications, Media and Marketing Unit, 2011.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. *The On Track Survey 2014*. LGA Report, Melbourne: State Government Victoria, 2014.

06. APPENDIX 1 HEPBURN YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY 2015