

## ITEM 5 UPDATE ON FUTURE DIRECTION OF WOLLONGONG YOUTH SERVICES

This report provides an update on the progress of the current Neighbourhood Youth Work Program (NYWP) as an outcome of the recommendations from Council Minute No 150 of 20 December 2016. These recommendations included:

- '3 Council Officers, and available Councillors, meet with Neighbourhood Youth Work Program providers once more to determine their ability to meet Council's requirements for the delivery of youth services to the 12 to 24 year old demographic in the Wollongong Local Government Area. From 1 July 2017, services deemed compliant will enter new funding agreements setting out clear objectives and data collection methods and these will be reviewed by Council quarterly. Non-compliance will result in the termination of the funding agreement.*
- 4 Any current providers who do not engage in the process in (3) above, will be deemed as non-compliant and the funding agreement terminated.'*

### RECOMMENDATION

- 1 Council note this report.
- 2 A final report be provided to Council for consideration at its meeting of 29 May 2017.

### REPORT AUTHORISATIONS

Report of: Sue Savage, Manager Community Cultural and Economic Development (Acting)  
Authorised by: Kerry Hunt, Director Corporate and Community Services - Creative, Engaged and Innovative City (Acting)

### ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments for this report.

### BACKGROUND

Wollongong City Council's Youth Services Program consists of Wollongong Youth Services (WYS) and the Neighbourhood Youth Work Program (NYWP). WYS is a generalist youth service and has a focus on community development, capacity building and connecting young people with the services, support and opportunities which best meet their individual needs. WYS operates from Wollongong Youth Centre and provides outreach services to Warrawong and Bellambi.

WYS oversees the delivery of the funding program for NYWP. Wollongong City Council (WCC) provides funding, under an annual agreement, to community organisations to provide generalist youth services and community development activities in specific suburbs of the Local Government Area. Currently, funding is provided to five organisations being: Berkeley Development Association; Cringila Cooperative; Careways (Dapto); Helensburgh Community Centre; and Port Kembla Youth Project Inc.

NYWP's provide a diverse range of activities for young people in their local areas funded via a variety of government and non-government sources. Some of the activities delivered via Council's financial contribution are inconsistent with the scope of Council's funding agreement and have been the subject of ongoing discussion. The issues include: programs targeting and including children [under 12 years], activities targeting young people not living within the funded geographical area, and projects offered only within school based environments. As a result of the meetings with each of the NYWPs, clarity has been provided regarding the objectives of the program, and some changes have been made to the scope of the funding program. This includes:

- Inclusion of a transition to high school program in Term 4 for Year 6 primary school students
- Drop-in comprising a maximum percentage of service delivery, with targeted programs providing the majority of the program
- Identification of young people's inclusion in the development of the programs delivered
- Simplified reporting requirements.

The revised plans have now been submitted and assessed, with three of the five requiring further discussion with the service providers before finalisation to ensure the necessary compliance is achieved.

Based on the 12 December 2016 resolution of Council, meetings were held between 22 February and 2 March 2017 with each NYWP to determine their ability to meet Council's requirements for the delivery of youth services to the 12 to 24 year old demographic in the Wollongong Local Government Area. Each meeting was attended by the Lord Mayor, available Councillors, Council staff and representatives from the NYWP. The process for achieving compliance was presented and NYWPs were required to provide, by 7 April 2017:

- 1 A revised 2016-17 One Year Plan which details increased compliance.
- 2 A 2017-18 One Year Plan completely compliant to a new Funding Contract.

Council staff offered ongoing support to NYWPs in developing these documents following the meeting with this offer accepted by four management committees. Three projects are compliant with revising the current 2016-17 Plan and two projects are compliant with their proposed 2017-18 One Year Plan. Council and the respective management committees continue to work towards full compliance.

## PROPOSAL

To enable Council to enter new funding contracts for service delivery in 2017-18, a further round of meetings will be established with Council officers and management committees to achieve full compliance with all projects. A final report will be provided to Council on 29 May 2017 with the goal of reaching required compliance.

The perceived gap in service delivery for 8-11 year olds was raised in many of the consultations with NYWPs. A first stage discussion paper has been developed in response to this concern and during the coming financial year further work will be undertaken by the Community Development Team to understand this service need in the Local Government Area and inform any recommendations for Council.

## CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

The following consultation meetings have been undertaken with NYWP stakeholders including staff, management committee members and Councillors:

- 21 February – Cringila Community Cooperative
- 22 February – Port Kembla Youth Project
- 1 March – Berkeley Development Association
- 2 March – Careways [Dapto]
- 3 March – Helensburgh Community Centre.

## PLANNING AND POLICY IMPACT

This report contributes to the delivery of Wollongong 2022 goal 5 “We are a healthy community in a liveable city”. It specifically delivers on the following:

Community Strategic Plan	Delivery Program 2012-2017	Annual Plan 2016-17
Strategy	5 Year Action	Annual Deliverables
5.1.1 We work in partnership to build on opportunities to strengthen vulnerable communities	5.1.1.1 Partner with community based organisations in the provision of services	Implement recommendations of the youth services review including the future direction of Neighbourhood Youth Projects
5.6.1 Projects that build on community strengths are encouraged	5.6.1.1 Deliver a diverse suite of projects to the community that foster and enhance community strengths	Deliver a range of youth services with a focus on youth participation and community development, targeted programs, music and culture, and sector development and coordination

## CONCLUSION

Youth Services play an integral role in strengthening our community and enhancing the lives of young people. Compliance with the funding agreement by NYWPs is required for service delivery to meet Council objectives.