

“Taking Pride in Belmont’s Young People”

A Plan for the City of Belmont’s work with young people 2009-2014

Prepared by Dave Palmer

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Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements and thanks for the support offered by the City of Belmont's Youth and Family Services Team, Managers and Coordinators from elsewhere in Council, Councillors who met to discuss their insights, and young people who participated in sessions and who used digital cameras to help generate ideas. In particular thanks to Lara Sappal for her tireless efforts in setting up meetings, answering my questions and responding to requests to chase up reports, information and other sources of data.

Finally thank you to Jennifer Buchanan for agreeing to read early drafts of the plan.

Dave Palmer
April 2009

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Executive Summary

“Taking Pride in Belmont’s Young People” – A Plan for the City’s work with young people 2009-2014’ sets out how the City of Belmont will help improve the quality of life and well-being of young people, encourage their participation in the life of the community and ensure their access to support services, activities and programs.

The Plan is built upon the following general themes or values:

1. Celebration - It works better if you see the glass as already more than half full

It is important to recognise that most young people in Belmont are responsible, capable and good. It is therefore smart to focus considerable attention on their strengths, achievements and successes. This involves seeing them as ‘citizens’ in the making, people who have much to offer others in Belmont. It will mean that in the first instance Council’s approach will be to celebrate, showcase, encourage and help strengthen the lives of young people.

2. Participation - If we want citizens tomorrow then we have to start involving them today

If young people are going to inherit Belmont ‘the City of opportunity’ then they need to be treated with respect and taught how to respect. It is therefore important that Council and its staff find ways of demonstrating the same respect for young people as they do other citizens. This will mean creating a range of ways to get young people to start participating in a full range of Council activities.

3. Leadership and intergenerational stewardship - young people and other adults need to work side by side on practical projects

In keeping with Belmont, the City of Opportunity, leaders must act with young people’s best interests in mind. At the same time young people will need to learn to become responsible citizens. It is therefore important that Council carefully consider how actions today will impact on the next generation. It will also mean finding ways to make clear to young people what Council will do and what the community expects in return. Another way of doing this will be to set up intergenerational programs and activities where young people and other adults work together.

4. Support - caring for young people when times are tough

During times of difficulty and hardship it is important to offer young people and their families support and guidance. It is therefore important that Council provide high quality support services such as counseling, education, information and other community services. This will mean that Council will consolidate and continue to improve services provided by its Youth and Family Services Team and encourage other organisations to take on a share of this work across a broad range of service delivery models.

5. Relationships across the community - working with others in the interests of young people

Young people’s interests span the breadth of Council activities (ie employment, environment, transport, planning etc). It is therefore important that Council adopts a ‘whole of local government’ approach, so that Council officers with direct or indirect responsibility for young people’s interests work cooperatively across Directorates and Sections. This will also mean that Council officers will work in association with other groups who share an interest in young people’s future.

These set of themes or values have been shaped by Council's general 'vision' for the period of 2007-2011, where the City of Belmont is described as:

a place to which community aspires; a City that is attractive, safe, healthy and prosperous and fulfils the aspirations of the community; a place that encourages a wide range of lifestyles living harmoniously; where human activities enhance rather than degrade the natural and built environment; where citizens and local businesses can grow socially, culturally and economically; a place that our next generation will be pleased to inherit; a place known as a City of Opportunity.

The Plan also sets out how these general themes or values will be put into practice by Councillors, local government staff, local organisations providing support services and activities to young people and others whose work is related to the interests of young people.

Introduction

The City of Belmont is a city with a strong stake in the interests of young people. Young people between the ages of 12-24 make up a significant number of Belmont residents. In 2006 there were 1,916 young people between 12-17 (6.3%) and 3,100 people between 18-24 (10.2%) (City of Belmont website 2008).

Young people represent one of the City's greatest assets. Many already contribute significantly to the local economy, particularly as consumers and workers in the retail industry. They are leading the way in their interest and active involvement in the use of new technology and the creative industries. There is also good local evidence that Belmont young people share a growing set of values in relation to ecological sustainability and are amongst the most active in stewardship and care for the local environment. A number of local students have also led the way, winning awards for their contribution to science and innovation, community service, sports and the fields of creative arts and performance. Not only have young people shown that they are tomorrow's leaders many have demonstrated that they are also today's citizens.

On the other hand, relative to many living in other local government areas Belmont young people are more likely to experience social and economic disadvantage. For example, compared to other areas some young people from Belmont are participating less in education, are struggling to find work, have to contend with family related problems and are without private means of transport instead relying heavily upon public transport and many local facilities for work, recreation and social life (City of Belmont 2007, City of Belmont website 2008). Evidence also indicates that increasing numbers of young people are leaving the City once they become independent (City of Belmont 2007). Some groups of young people, such as Indigenous Australians and those from recently arrived migrant families, are particularly vulnerable.

Belmont young people are not a homogenous group. Indeed there is an enormous variety of young people living in Belmont. They include students, workers, those who struggle with profound social needs, such as homeless young people, drug users and young people involved in the juvenile justice system. A relatively large proportion of young people come from Indigenous Australian families, are refugees and newly arrived. Some have to contend with a disability. Others are young parents. Their involvement in the cultural life of the community is varied with some enjoying skating, gaming, music, various artistic forms and organised sport. An emergent group of working young adults are moving into Belmont as independent residents.

This document sets out how the City of Belmont will approach its work with and on behalf of the young people who reside in the area. It includes a background discussion of the available evidence in relation to the assets, needs and general aspirations of young people, a summary of the existing services and programs provided through the City of Belmont Youth and Family Services and a brief outline of services related to young people in a number of local government areas in Western Australia.¹ This information offers an important backdrop to the later sections of the document which make up the City of Belmont's Youth Plan 2009-2014.

The Plan is built upon the following general themes or values:

1. Celebration - It works better if you see the glass as already more than half full

It is important to recognise that most young people in Belmont are responsible, capable and

¹ Source: City of Belmont Youth & Family Services (2007) Report on Services Provided to Youth in the City of Belmont.

good. It is therefore smart to focus considerable attention on their strengths, achievements and successes. This involves seeing them as 'citizens' in the making, people who have much to offer others in Belmont. It will mean that in the first instance Council's approach will be to celebrate, showcase, encourage and strengthen young people.

2. Participation - If we want citizens tomorrow then we have to start involving them today

If young people are going to inherit Belmont as 'the City of Opportunity' then they need to be treated with respect and taught how to respect. It is therefore important that Council and its staff find ways of demonstrating the same respect for young people as they do other citizens. This will mean creating a range of ways to get young people to start participating in a full range of Council activities.

3. Leadership and intergenerational stewardship - young people and other adults need to work side by side on practical projects

In keeping with Belmont, the City of Opportunity, leaders must act with young people's best interests in mind. At the same time young people will need to learn to become responsible citizens. It is therefore important that Council carefully consider how actions today will impact on the next generation. It will also mean finding ways to make clear to young people what Council will do and what the community expects in return. Another way of doing this will be to set up intergenerational programs and activities where young people and other adults work together.

4. Support - caring for young people when times are tough

During times of difficulty and hardship it is important to offer young people and their families support and guidance. It is therefore important that Council provide high quality support services such as counseling, education, information and other community services. This will mean that Council will consolidate and update services provided by its Youth and Family Services Team and encourage other organisations to take on a share of this work.

5. Relationships across the community - working with others in the interests of young people

Young people's interests span the breadth of Council activities (ie employment, environment, transport, planning etc). It is therefore important that Council adopts a 'whole of local government' approach, so that Council officers with responsibility for young people's interests work across Directorates and Sections. This will also mean that Council officers will work in association with other groups who share an interest in young people's future.

These set of themes or values have been shaped by Council's general 'vision' in the document 'The City of Belmont's Strategic Plan 2007-2011'. In this planning document the City of Belmont is described as:

a place to which community aspires; a City that is attractive, safe, healthy and prosperous and fulfils the aspirations of the community; a place that encourages a wide range of lifestyles living harmoniously; where human activities enhance rather than degrade the natural and built environment; where citizens and local businesses can grow socially, culturally and economically; a place that our next generation will be pleased to inherit; a place known as a City of Opportunity.

The document then sets out how these general themes or values will be put into practice by Councillors, local government staff and those providing support services to young people.

Why develop a plan?

It is important for the City of Belmont to develop a comprehensive plan for young people for a number of reasons. These include making clear:

- What it sees as the most important conditions to assist young people become healthy, economically strong, socially active and civically responsible members of the community.
- What Council has recently done to respond to the needs and interests of young people.
- What Council will do in the future to respond to the needs and interest of young people.

This will help:

- Council representatives and staff understand what to do.
- Young people understand what they can expect from Council.
- People of the City of Belmont understand what Council intends to do.
- Funding bodies, business and other organisations understand how they can assist Council in its work.

Why should the City of Belmont build upon their commitment to young people?

The City of Belmont has and will continue to be involved in the delivery and support of services, programs and other activities for young people for a number of reasons. These include:

- Young people comprise a significant number of the Council's residents, arguably amongst the most disengaged citizens in Council processes and decision-making.
- Individuals, families and other groups in the community have consistently requested that Council act to support the well-being of young people and encourage their participation as active citizens with the greatest stake in the future of the City of Belmont.
- State and Federal governments have reduced their level of direct service delivery for young people, encouraging local government and local communities to take a larger role in service delivery, policy development and planning.

The process used to develop the plan

Much of the situation confronting the young people of Belmont is well documented in reports, program journals, funding applications, photographic records and many of the creative materials produced as part of the work of the Youth and Family Services Team. This work has been instrumental in shaping decisions about what Council should do over the next five years and forms part of the evidence used to frame the plan. Indeed the first stage in the process of preparing the Youth Plan involved carrying out an audit of these reports, checking these against other sources of evidence. In addition, the following other methodological devices have been used to help understand and gauge what needs to be done in the future:

- Population and other demographic data from various sources;
- A review of Council structure, functions and policies;
- A general overview of existing programs and services delivered by the Youth and Family Services Team;
- A review of the literature concerned with local government youth practice and community development;

- Mapping the federal and state government policy environment;
- An appraisal of media articles;
- A review of surveys and questionnaires administered to young people;
- Interviews, meetings and discussions carried out with staff from the Youth Services Team over a four-month period;
- Analysis of other data – Council records, program attendance, employment/training statistics, meeting minutes, audience numbers.

Regular visits were made to the Youth Centre and a brief tour of the local area was carried out. A meeting was also organised where City of Belmont Coordinators, Managers, Directors and the CEO were invited to discuss their thoughts on the relationship between their portfolio area and young people. Similarly Councillors were invited to attend a workshop to discuss their ideas, see the Youth Centre facilities and provide feedback on early stages of the plans.

In addition, members of the Youth and Family Services Team used a range of techniques to consult young people using the Service. A Social Work student on placement carried out a survey of young people, seeking their views on things such as youth issues of concern, aspirations for the future of Belmont, the strengths of the Service and ideas about what could be done differently. Staff members also carried out a creative youth participation process using digital cameras, sound and an editing suite. This process, known variously as 'photo-voice', 'picture booking participation' and 'photo led democracy', was designed to allow young people to use image and visual means to help communicate their ideas about the future of Belmont.

Throughout this process the most important guiding principle for making assessments was to seek evidence from at least three different sources. Using the well-established social scientific device of 'triangulation'², three different 'positions' were sought to confirm or cast doubt upon the merit of claims made by various people.

Background information about Belmont young people

What follows is a selection of much of the information that exists on the public record about the numbers, backgrounds, needs and assets of young people in the City of Belmont. In particular the information relates to the age structure in Belmont, young people's relative socio-economic disadvantage and the range of social problems and issues experienced by young people.³

This data demonstrates that young people living in the City of Belmont are, relative to many other local government areas, socially and economically disadvantaged. This underscores the important role that the City of Belmont has in responding to the needs and aspirations of young people.

Age structure⁴

The age structure of the City of Belmont is diverse with significant numbers of persons in most young adult and mature adult age groups (18-49). There were comparatively fewer children compared to adults, showing that the birth rates of the area are relatively low. The City of Belmont also had a notable share of its population in the

² Social science has taken this method from the coastal navigational technique of taking readings from at least three distinct markers in order to safely establish one's position.

³ Available from: www.id.com.au/belmont/commprofile.

⁴ For a detailed breakdown of the age structure of residents in the City of Belmont see Table 1: Age Structure of the City of Belmont, in City of Belmont Youth & Family Services (2007) Report on Services Provided to Youth in the City of Belmont.

'empty-nester' and retiree age groups (50-69), whose children would have already left the family home.

The age structure of the City of Belmont is dissimilar to the broader Perth Statistical Division. The most significant differences are:

- A higher percentage of persons aged 70-84
- A higher percentage of persons aged 25-34
- A lower percentage of persons aged 12-17
- A lower percentage of persons aged 35-49

The most significant changes in age structure in this area between 1996 and 2001 were in the age groups:

- 25-34 year olds (+531 persons);
- 35-49 year olds (+426 persons);
- 70-84 year olds (+399 persons)⁵

There has been a consistent percentage of young people living in the City of Belmont since 2001. Relative to many other areas the youth population is significantly smaller. In 2001 there were 1,858 (6.4%) 12-17 year olds living in Belmont, compared to 9.1% across Perth. In 2006 there were 1,916 young people between 12-17 (6.3%) compared with 8.7% across Perth. In 2001 there were 2,874 young people between 18-24 (10%) compared with 10.4% across Perth. In 2006 there were 3,100 people between 18-24 (10.2%) compared with 10.5% across Perth (source City of Belmont website 2008).

Relative socio-economic disadvantage

The City of Belmont rates as the second lowest rating local government authority on the SEIFA Index of Disadvantage. Only the Town of Kwinana with a score of 910.48 rates poorer than the City of Belmont with a score of 951.92). The Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage is a research device that attempts to quantify the level of disadvantage experienced by local government areas in the Perth metropolitan area. The index is derived from attributes such as low income, low educational attainment, high unemployment, jobs in relatively unskilled occupations and variables that reflect disadvantage. High scores on the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage occur when the area has few families of low income and few people with little training and in unskilled occupations. Low scores on the index occur when the area has many low-income families and people with little training and in unskilled occupations (ie. a high score here reflects lack of disadvantage and a low score relative high disadvantage).⁶

⁵ Source: City of Belmont Youth & Family Services (2007) Report on Services Provided to Youth in the City of Belmont.

⁶ For a detailed breakdown see Table 2: Index of Relative Socio-economic disadvantage. In City of Belmont Youth & Family Services (2007) Report on Services Provided to Youth in the City of Belmont.

Current youth issues

There exists on the public record considerable work concerned with the conditions facing young people across the country. The following represents an overview of some of this drawing upon sources such as Mission Australia's National Survey of Young Australians and research highlighted in research journals such as *Youth Studies Australia*⁷.

- The majority of young Australians experience very good mental and physical health although many report Mental Health as an important concern for them with young people regularly reporting issues of concern including suicide, self-harm, coping with stress (ie. two in five young adults are concerned about depression) (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- The majority of young people (62%) live with their parents. More males than females were living with their parents (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- In 2001, 76% of young Australians aged between 15-17 years and 59% of those aged between 18-24 years rated their health as excellent or very good (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- Completion of schooling directly influenced self-assessed health; 63% of those who had completed Year 12 rated their health as excellent or very good compared to 44% of those who had completed only Year 9 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- A higher proportion of young people who were employed assessed their health as excellent or very good than those who were unemployed (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- A greater proportion of young people who were not satisfied with their quality of life had not completed schooling beyond Year 9 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- Death rates for both males and females aged 12-24 years declined between 1982 and 2001 by 43% for males (from 120.4 to 68.3 per 100,000) and 34% for females (from 38.4 to 25.4 per 100,000). The difference in death rates between males and females narrowed from 3:1 to 2.7:1 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- The suicide rate for young people, which had been increasing in Australia, reached a peak in 1997 with a rate of 15.2 deaths per 100,000 young people. From 1997 however, the death rate from suicide decreased to 10.1 deaths per 100,000 young people in 2001 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- The birth rate for young women aged 15-19 years declined from 55 per 1,000 in 1971 to 20 per 1,000 in 1988 and has been fairly stable since then (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- An increasing number of young Australians are being infected with sexually transmitted diseases. The most common STIs among young people were chlamydia and gonorrhoea (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- Twenty per cent of males and 17% of females aged 14-17 years said they were regular drinkers of alcohol. Around 35% of young people in this age group were assessed to be drinking at a level that put them at a high risk of death or injury in the short term. Among young people aged 18-24 years, 57% of males and 42% of females were regular drinkers. In this age group around 64% drank at levels that were risky or high risk for short-term harm (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- Among young people aged 14-17 years, 21% said they had used cannabis, 1% inhalants, 4% amphetamines, 3% ecstasy, 0.5% injecting drugs, and 6% some other illicit drug, in the previous 12 months. Among those aged 18-24 years, 40% of males and 26% of females used cannabis. Use of cannabis in this age group declined significantly between 1998 and

⁷ *Youth Studies Australia* is a quarterly peer reviewed journal with contributions from well-recognised academics carrying out research into youth matters.

2001 (32% in 2001 compared with 42% in 1998) (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).

- In 2001 there were an estimated 116,698 Indigenous young people aged 12-24 years in Australia, 26% of the total Indigenous population (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- Indigenous young people had much lower education participation rates than non-Indigenous young people. In 2001, 29% of Indigenous males and 38% of Indigenous females aged 19 years were still at school or had completed Year 12 compared to 68% of other Australian males and 78% of other Australian females (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- In 2001, Indigenous young people aged 15-24 years were more likely to be unemployed than other Australian young people (13% compared with 9%). Only about one third of Indigenous young people (34%) were employed compared with more than half of other Australian young people (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- The overall death rates for Indigenous people aged 12-24 years were higher than for other young Australians. For young males death rates were 2.4 times higher and for young females they were 2.8 times higher (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- Hospitalisation rates for Indigenous young people were 1.4 times higher than for other young Australians (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- In 2001, more than half of Indigenous young people aged 18-24 were daily smokers, compared with 28% of other Australian young people. More than one quarter of Indigenous young people drank at levels considered to be high risk over the long term compared with 14% of other Australian young people (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2003).
- In 2021 the proportion of young people aged 10 - 24 years in the population is projected to have declined by up to 3.2% (Foundation for Young Australians 2007).
- Young people, particularly young men, are over-represented among those who die prematurely (Foundation for Young Australians 2007).
- Young people 18 to 24 years who are still living at home are the most expensive group of children to maintain (Foundation for Young Australians 2007).
- In low-income families there is a shortfall between real costs and the level of Family Assistance which increases with age (Foundation for Young Australians 2007).
- Child Support ceases at 18 years but around half the young people over 18 years still in study were eligible for support under the Family Law Act. Only 14% however were receiving any financial support once Child Support ceased (Foundation for Young Australians 2007).
- Just on one in four students under 25 years was on Youth Allowance (Foundation for Young Australians 2007).
- According to a recently released Newspoll of young people (Newspoll 2007), the vast majority of young Australians say they are “satisfied with their life overall (half feel very satisfied); are confident that everything will “work out OK” for them in their working life and career in the years ahead; are confident they will be financially secure in the future – and believe they will achieve a standard of living as good as, or better than their parents”.

Evidence also exists of the status of young people's wellbeing in the broader region⁸. For example:

- The region in which the City of Belmont is situated is recognized as one of great socioeconomic disadvantage (City of Belmont Youth & Family Services, Report on Services Provided to Youth in the City of Belmont, 2007).
- Indigenous young people have a higher mortality and hospitalization rate than non-Indigenous young people in the region (Canning Division of General Practice 2002, p. 6).
- "The health needs and social support requirements of young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, in particular refugees and special humanitarian entrants (including unaccompanied minors), are not adequately addressed" (Canning Division of General Practice 2002, p. 6).
- Death rates, hospitalization and mental disorders in young people increase progressively across socioeconomic disadvantage (Canning Division of General Practice 2002).
- The percentage of secondary school aged young people in the region attending school is lower than the WA average. This is particularly so for Indigenous young people (Canning Division of General Practice 2002).
- Both 15-19 and 20-25 year olds living in the region have higher unemployment rates than the state average and the Perth metropolitan region (Canning Division of General Practice 2002).

The following is known specifically about young people and their families living in Belmont:

- The City of Belmont's youth population has remained at a consistent level from 1996 to 2001 with 16.4% (4,732) of residents between 10-24 years of age (City of Belmont 2007).
- Evidence indicates that increasing numbers of young people are leaving the City once they become independent (City of Belmont 2007).
- Many young people are without private means of transport instead relying heavily upon public transport and many local facilities for work, recreation and social life (City of Belmont 2007).
- Compared to other areas young people from Belmont are participating less in education. For example, smaller numbers are attending secondary school, 4% compared to 6.2% across WA. Smaller numbers are attending primary school, 6.5% compared to 8.6% across WA. Smaller numbers are attending University, 3.3% compared to 4.7% across WA (City of Belmont website 2008).
- Belmont young people do not fare well when we compare highest levels of education. For example, 4.9% of young people in the general Perth metropolitan area completed Year 9 as their highest level of schooling. This compares with Belmont where 1,583 (6.3) completed Year 9 as their highest year. In Belmont 5,980 (23.7%) completed Year 10 as their highest year compared to 23.1 across Perth. In Belmont 2,650 (10.5%) completed Year 11 compared to 10.6% across Perth. In Belmont 9,930 (39.3%) completed Year 12 as their highest year compared to 46.3% across Perth (City of Belmont website 2008).
- Indigenous Australians made up 3.3% of residents in the City of Belmont compared to the Perth average 1.5% (ABS 2006).
- Unemployment also rates poorly with 9.6% of Belmont unemployed compared to 6.0% across the state (ABS 2007).
- The average taxable income of people living in Belmont is low, \$33,698 compared to the state average of \$38,309 (City of Belmont 2007a).

⁸ The broad South-East Metropolitan Region.

Additionally the Youth and Family Services Team have identified a number of priority issues:

- Physical/sexual abuse of Western Australian young people.
- Body image with close to 30% of young Australians reporting this as a pressing concern.
- Mental Health is an important problem confronting young people with young people regularly reporting issues of concern including suicide, self harm, coping with stress (ie. two in five young adults are concerned about depression)
- Alcohol and other drugs issues was the top issue for 31% of Western Australian young males.
- Two in five young adults indicated discrimination as a major issue.
- Getting a job and being independent are important issues for Indigenous young people.
- Young people identify friends, parents and relative/family friend as their main sources of support when they have a personal problem.
- Close to 90% of respondents indicated friends were one of the top three sources of advice (City of Belmont 2007a).
- In a recent survey carried out by a University student young people identified the desire for more recreation and leisure facilities, support services and safe public space (City of Belmont 2007b)⁹.

City of Belmont Youth and Family Services – a review of the work

The City of Belmont Youth & Family Services provides support for young people (11-18 years) and their family members who may be experiencing a range of difficult life issues and who live within the City of Belmont.

The broad aims of the opportunities provided by the service are:

- To assist young people to make a smooth transition from 'youth' to 'adulthood'
- To assist young people and their families to become self-reliant
- To strengthen families

The Team offers a range of services, programs and activities.

Services

The Family Worker provides counseling to young people and their family members on an individual basis or as a family.

Youth Workers are available to support young people on a one on one basis, short or long-term.

Parents and caregivers are offered an opportunity to attend workshops that aim to build stronger families and well-being in parents and their children. Topics have included parenting teenagers, communication skills and improving family relationships.

Youth workers provide some outreach to the local high school and the general community to provide support to young people.

Programs

⁹ City of Belmont Youth and Family Services (2007) Youth Survey.

A variety of recreational, arts, music, educational and life skills programs are offered each school term. On average three programs are run each term, ranging from three to fifteen weeks in length. Examples of programs include:

- Simply Delicious – a cooking and nutrition program teaching young people and their significant adult practical skills as well as incorporating education about healthy lifestyle choices.
- Air Headz & Deck Art – art projects that teach a variety of artistic techniques and use a variety of materials including helmets and skateboards. Aiming to engage vulnerable young people in positive artistic pursuits as well as linking them with youth centre staff.
- Moordijt – Aboriginal programs designed to increase the participants self awareness of their Aboriginality in the modern contemporary environment. Indigenous girls and boys are encouraged to develop cultural awareness and personal life skills.
- Rock Guitar lessons – to teach guitar basics e.g. tuning, notes, chord shapes, improve music skills and encourage young peoples interest in live music.

Drop-in Style Games Room

A drop-in style games room is open after school three times a week. As well as providing a time for fostering supportive relationships between young people themselves and with Youth Centre staff, the drop-in times enable young people to use facilities available at the youth centre. These include a pool table, air hockey table, games machines, musical instruments, books, board games, and outdoor ball sports.

School Holiday Activities

A variety of free activities are organised each school holiday period. Holiday activities during 2008 have included surfing lessons, horse riding, art and cooking workshops, sailing, water slides, ten pin bowling and family days to places like Scitech, Kings Park and Perth Zoo.

Collaborative Agency Programs

The Service works collaboratively with other agencies to provide specific short term programs to address an identified need in the community. Examples of these programs are:

- Young Parents Group – A regular and supportive meeting of young parents to provide a social network and opportunities to give and discuss relevant parenting and personal issues. In collaboration with the Cloverdale Child Health Service.
- Girls Sports Group – A sports program for girls from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds that aims to break down barriers that prevent these girls from participating in mainstream sporting activities and provide a safe and culturally appropriate space for participation in different sports, in collaboration with the Refugee Youth Settlement Worker at Gowrie Community Services.

Specialised Skills Programs

Specialised programs are designed to develop young people's skills and abilities. For example:

- Drumbeat - is an early intervention program for at risk young people to target antisocial behaviour by reducing social isolation and increasing social competence. It achieves this through a framework of fun, experiential learning using hand drumming, and a cognitive behavioural approach where analogies draw participants' attention to connections

between their experiences in the drum circle, and their relationships in the wider community.

- What's on in Belmont – a program designed to deliver different topics of interest to young people in the Australian Islamic College New Arrival class. The aim is to increase the newly arrived young people's awareness of resources and services available in the City of Belmont area.

Highlights from 2008 as expressed by staff include:

- 2008 Catalyse Industry Standard for Youth Services
- Positive youth articles in the Southern Gazette
- Youth Urban Art Showcase at the City of Belmont Art & Photographic Exhibition
- 2009 National Youth Week, 'Make a Move' Youth Festival
- Comprehensive School Holiday Program with Family Days
- Very high success rate with funding applications
- 2008 Rock Concert Series
- The Autumn River Festival where a youth space is created for young people to hang out.
- Creative Term Programs
- Positive life changes with young people using the service

Satisfaction with service

A key performance indicator for the Youth and Family Services, as set out by the City of Belmont Strategic Plan, is to 'maintain customer satisfaction level of at least 4.5+ (out of a rating of 5) via customer survey'. After the completion of each program at the Youth and Family Services, the participants are asked to complete an evaluation survey. The outcome of these evaluation surveys is that the Youth and Family Services have maintained a level of 4.85 for customer satisfaction for 2007/2008.

Annually the Department of Child Protection conducts a consumer survey. In this survey young people using the Youth Centre are asked to complete a questionnaire.

Below is a summary of responses received from clients of the City of Belmont Youth and Family Services surveyed in November 2008.

1. Did Services for Young People - Belmont City of Belmont Youth and Family Services meet your needs?

Very well	57.9%
Well	36.8%
Neither	5.3%
Poorly	0.0%
Very poorly	0.0%
No response	0.0%
Total	100.0%

2. Did Services for Young People - Belmont City of Belmont Youth and Family Services involve you in finding a way to meet your needs?

Yes	70.0%
No	0.0%

Not applicable	30.0%
Total	100.0%

3. How satisfied are you with the service you received from Services from Young People - Belmont City of Belmont Youth and Family Services?

Very satisfied	45.0%
Satisfied	50.0%
Neither	5.0%
Dissatisfied	0.0%
Very dissatisfied	0.0%
Total	100.0%

4. As a result of coming to Services for Young People - Belmont City of Belmont Youth and Family Services, did you learn new skills to help you manage in the future?

Yes	57.9%
No	26.3%
Not applicable	15.8%
Total	100.0%

5. As a result of coming to Services for Young People - Belmont City of Belmont Youth and Family Services, how confident are you that you will be able to manage in the future?

Very confident	40.0%
A bit confident	40.0%
Neither	20.0%
Not confident	0.0%
Not at all confident	0.0%
Total	100.0%

6. If the service you received involved providing care and safety to your family, how well did Services for Young People - Belmont City of Belmont Youth and Family Services support you?

Very well	25.0%
Well	20.0%
Neither	15.0%
Poorly	0.0%
Very poorly	0.0%
Not applicable	40.0%
Total	99.9%

Additionally, young people were asked to provide qualitative feedback about what they would like to see change in the service. Remarks included:

A new bass would be good.
I can't really think of anything you guys need to improve on.
It is perfect the way it is.
Making the Youth Centre was a brilliant idea. I like it because everyone shows me respect and listens to me. Also I would like to have an opportunity to prepare a fair.
More concerts.
Need more things to do in drop in. More activities different than games or pool or ping pong more offmaking things.
New guitar leads would be good & new bass.
The youth centre is fun and awesome.
What.
Youth centre is the best place to relax and have fun I will stay here.

According to a number of Community Wellbeing surveys commissioned by the Council (see CATALYSE Community Wellbeing June 2008, CATAYLSE Community & Business Perceptions Study 2007) members of the community have been impressed with the quality, services and facilities for young people. Indeed in 2008 42% of respondents indicated they were delighted with youth services delivered by Council. This compares with an industry average of 21% of respondents.

Taken together this demonstrates that the City of Belmont's Youth and Family Service Team is rated as an industry leader and perceived by the community to be very strong.

Challenges faced by staff

Over the course of the last three years there have been a number of challenges facing staff of the Youth and Family Services. These are discussed below:

- Increased demand

Over the past three years staff had to contend with an increase in the number of 'at risk' young people and family members using the various programs, activities and services. This demonstrated the relevance of the services' operations, the pressing needs of the community and the success of attempts to make the work accessible to young people.

- Complex needs of young people

Young people often present with complex needs, placing greater demands on the time and skills of workers. Added to this is the challenge created when some young people disrupt because their needs are compounded by behavioural problems. This can impact on the participation of other young people, the management of programs and some program outcomes.

- Readiness of young people to “learn”

Whilst programs can be an effective means of helping young people to develop their knowledge and skills in a non-threatening environment, all programs are voluntary and young people make the choice as to whether or not they participate in the programs.

- Family support

Whilst the Service can support the young people to develop a range of strategies a young person’s level of risk can be negated if these strategies are not supported in the home environment. Parental behaviour and communication style are at times in conflict with the non violent style of relating promoted by the service to the young people.

- Increased attendance at the service of Indigenous, CALD (Culturally & Linguistically Diverse) and disabled young people

Due to the popularity of the Centre and the strengthened community networks the Service is experiencing an increase in the number of Indigenous, CALD and disabled young people attending programs. Each of these groups require extra resources and specialized staff skills.

- Financial

All programs and services provided by the Youth and Family Services have been offered free to residents in the City of Belmont. In large measure this reflects attempts to combat difficulties experienced due to financial hardship faced by many young people and their families. As a consequence programs are often arranged on small budgets, supplemented by funding from various funding sources external to the Council.

The City of Belmont's Strategic Plan for the five-year period 2007-2011 sets out the direction Council is to take. The document establishes the goals, strategies and performance indicators around which Council business will be carried out.

Vision Statement - City of Opportunity

This is described by Belmont as a place to which community aspires; a City that is attractive, safe, healthy and prosperous and fulfils the aspirations of the community; a place that encourages a wide range of lifestyles living harmoniously; where human activities enhance rather than degrade the natural and built environment; where citizens and local businesses can grow socially, culturally and economically; a place that our next generation will be pleased to inherit; a place known as a City of Opportunity.

Mission Statement

Our goal is to positively contribute to the wellbeing of the community, and to achieve community satisfaction with what we do.

We will build and maintain a best-practice organisation that:

- Serves the needs of the people of the City of Belmont
- Balances the interests of residents, businesses and the environment
- Fairly administers local laws, and
- Acts in the interest of the long-term sustainability of the City.

Key Result Areas

Teamwork: People building relationships to work together to achieve common goals.

Leadership: To focus and inspire people to achieve.

Integrity: To act in an honest, professional, open and accountable manner.

Innovation: To create new, innovative and alternative ways of working.

People focus: To work safely. To communicate and consult in order to understand people's needs.

To be successful overall, outcomes must be achieved for:

- The residents of the community (Social Belmont)
- The City's business community (Business Belmont)
- The natural environment (Natural Belmont)
- The physical structure and layout of the City (Built Belmont)

These four areas make up the Key Result Areas of the Strategic Plan. Each of the Key Result Areas interact with each other.

General observations to shape the Youth Plan

The following represents an overview of how the previously discussed information may shape City of Belmont's plans in relation to the interests of young people over the next five years.

From the analysis of local demographics

Young people living in the City of Belmont are and will continue to contend with a disproportionate level of socio-economic disadvantage than similar age groups living in other local government areas in Perth. As a consequence it is important that Council maintain its involvement in support and service delivery.

Given that they represent a high percentage of young people than in many other areas in Perth, this will be felt most by Indigenous young people and those from recently arrived migrant families. It will be important to establish these two groups of young people as priorities for Council attention.

Given young people's comparative poor retention and participation rates in formal education there are important reasons for Council to build on its work with local schools and adopt an alternative education and training strategy.

Young people are likely to be increasingly reliant upon public transport and non-vehicular forms of transport. It is therefore important that Council devise mechanisms that seek young people's input into its Transport plans.

From the City of Belmont Strategic Plan

The Vision and Mission Statements both articulate Council's commitment to intergenerational stewardship and building a future for the next generation. For example, the Vision Statement ends by describing Council's aspiration for Belmont as "a place that our next generation will be pleased to inherit; a place known as a City of Opportunity."

The interests of young people are not simply restricted to one Key Result Area. On the one hand, much of the work of the Youth and Family Services Team clearly fits under the Key Result Area called 'Social Belmont'. However, many other youth interests and activities offered by Council are managed by other Directorates within the City of Belmont and sit under other Key Result Areas. For example, young people are regular users of sport and recreation facilities and community events (all activities expressly mentioned under the rubric of Social Belmont). On the other hand, managing safe and accessible parks and public open space is important for young people who frequent and are often subject to special attention in public space (an area mentioned under the Key Result Areas called 'Natural Belmont'). As those often about to move into the labour market young people have a special set of interests in relation to employment development and economic development (an area mentioned under the Key Result Areas called 'Business Belmont'). Although small in number, those responsible for graffiti are mostly young. Evidence suggests that the majority of young people are opposed to damage and defacement of property, particularly in their own neighbourhood. As a consequence, young people have an important stake participating in Graffiti management (mentioned in Council's Strategic Plan under the Key Result Areas called 'Built Belmont').

Young people are subject to and potentially important as 'partners' in a range of existing Council Strategies and Plans. In particular, this includes the Safety and Security Strategy, the Open Space Strategy, the Crime Prevention Strategy, the Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

and the Community Wellbeing Plan.

Those under the age of 18 are presently excluded from participation in the key measures to survey the community on their level of satisfaction and wellbeing.

“Assisting youth in their positive self-development in the community” is expressly articulated as a Strategy in the section concerned with Community access to services and facilities. Actions under this section include developing a corporate mentoring program, an alternative education program, reviewing existing work, maintaining the Youth and Family Services Centre, and maintaining an Aboriginal liaison process.

There has been considerable action by the Youth and Family Services Team in relation to the strategy to “promote art and culture and community engagement through the arts.”

Given the difficulties experienced by young people in gaining employment, young people make up a key target group for the second of the objectives in the area of Business Belmont (ie: “maximising the community’s employment and skills capacity”)

Given young people’s interest in ecological sustainability and the fact that the present generation has expressed considerable interest in the environment, young people could be a key part of Council strategies in relation to conservation, environmental management and care for ‘Natural Belmont’.

Given they are highly reliant upon public and non-vehicular transport, young people could become important participants in measures to review transportation routes and create safe, cost efficient and accessible means of local travel.

Young people appear to be considered as pre-civic, those in need of social, recreational and personal support and with little in the way of social or economic assets. As a consequence there is little mention of young people’s general interest and leadership in areas such as the new technologies, the environment, arts and cultural development and community governance. To put it another way, young people are principally seen as a burden rather than assets who have the potential to contribute to Council and community business. This means that young people’s contribution as active citizens is currently underutilised. An overall shift in this regard represents a critical strategic opportunity for the City of Belmont.

From a review of Council’s present approach to youth

There is sound evidence that over the past three years the approach adopted by the Youth and Family Service’s Team is solid, performing well in relation to youth and community satisfaction, is well regarded by others in the youth field and is managed well. (eg. see early evidence in Department for Child Protection and benchmarking in Catalyse surveys)

Particularly impressive in this regard has been the:

- Successful working relationship between the Team and staff from the Belmont City College.
- Successfully carrying out community development, capacity building and considerable work in association with other community organisations (eg. local schools, Oasis Recreation Centre, Disability Services Commission, Juvenile Justice)
- Capacity of the Team to make available a diverse set of opportunities, events, activities and programs.

- Capacity to hold on to staff in an industry environment where there is much transience.
- Building and operation of an impressively well-resourced and attractive Youth Centre.
- Success of using arts-based practice and multi-media technologies in work with young people.
- Success of recent experiments to incorporate 'intergenerational' exchange and contact between young people, families and older members of the Belmont community.

Although activities and programs have been well-patronised, young people's participation in Council planning, feedback and decision making has not been strong.

It is an ideal time to consolidate the strong emphasis upon youth services, reinforcing this work with new efforts to adopt a 'whole of Council' approach to youth policy and planning.

There is considerable support from other organisations involved in youth services for Council to assist with the coordination of local youth service delivery.

The Plan for Young People

General intent

It is important to begin the Youth Plan with an outline of Council's general intent in relation to young people. What follows is partly shaped by Council's values, vision and mission as expressed in its current Strategic Plan. It also reflects the approach adopted by the Youth and Family Service's Team. Finally, these general statements of intent are also consistent with similar values as expressed by a range of other Australian local government authorities.

Five key themes have been identified as the backbone of Council's approach to its plans in relation to young people.

1. Celebration

The City of Belmont will celebrate, showcase, encourage and strengthen young people, seeing them as future and already realized citizens with assets that can be utilized by others in the City.

By and large young people are responsible, law-abiding citizens and contribute much to the life of their community. The diversity in the rest of Belmont is reflected in the young people of Belmont. Often they share similar values to adults and have a similar stake in a strong and vibrant Belmont. This stands in sharp contrast to many popular ideas about youth as a problem, as those with deficits and as those who place extra burdens on others. It is therefore critical that the City of Belmont adopt an approach that begins with a strong focus on the achievements, strengths and assets of young people. Such an emphasis on the positive contributions of young people, often described as an assets approach to community building, is an important first step in gaining the trust, support and active involvement of young people in Council sponsored plans and activities.

2. Participation

In this way the City of Belmont will demonstrate the same respect for young people as it does other citizens, recognizing the importance of building substantive relationships, encouraging productive contact and creating a range of means whereby young people can participate in a full range of activities and Council processes.

As is articulated in Council's Vision, Belmont ought to be a place that the next generation will be pleased to inherit. This is more likely if young people are given opportunities to start learning about and influencing decisions in relation to Belmont's future. This is not easy or straightforward given young people's relative inexperience, practical difficulties associated with time, training and support, legislative obligations and the formal processes of Council and the diverse and developing interests of young people. However, 'sustainable' government is dependent upon the involvement of younger and emerging interest. It is also dependent upon intergenerational stewardship, the willingness of local government to take account of young people's interests and build a range of means whereby young people become more active citizens.

3. Leadership and intergenerational stewardship

The City of Belmont will act as leaders and role models for young people, providing them with both the promise to care for the long-term interests of future generations in Belmont and clarity in relation to young people's obligations as citizens.

In keeping with this desire to 'act in the interests of the long-term sustainability of the City', it is

critical that Council also act as 'stewards', carefully considering young people as those who will inherit the consequences of Council decisions. In part this will demand that Council set out how it will be accountable to young people, what is expected of young people in return and how, in time, they can take on leadership and a reciprocal role in the community. In part this will mean that Council establish clear 'boundaries' and parameters in its youth related work as well as articulating to young people what they can expect from Council.

One way of doing this will be to establish programs and activities that involve intergenerational contact, with young people and other adults working side by side on practical projects.

In keeping with this, Council activities, programs and events will be provided in a way that is safe and delivered with the same level of quality and care others can expect.

4. Support

The City of Belmont will provide young people access to high quality support services, in particular to those who experience family problems, are in need of additional income support, housing, health and other welfare provision and who come from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds.

While there are a number of well-established services providing specialist intervention and social support in the general region, there is a lack of community service organisations basing themselves specifically in Belmont. In particular, there are few services addressing the needs of the 12-18 year age group in Belmont. It is often during this time that problems are encountered with sexuality, drugs and alcohol, and other risk taking activities. Depressive and mental health problems may also emerge during this time.

As a consequence the City of Belmont has taken on a leadership role in provision of some of these support services, principally through its Youth and Family Services Team. The approach used will build on the well-recognised and excellent track record of Council's Youth and Family Services Team and adopt 'prevention', 'integration' and 'strengthening' strategies. This means that support services and programs will focus upon primary and early intervention strategies, targeting those who are displaying the signs and symptoms of becoming 'at risk'. This will allow Council to make available assistance before the situation becomes chronic. It also means that programs, activities and events are co-ordinated and managed by Council staff in a way that ensures links.

5. Relationships across the community

The City of Belmont will adopt a 'whole of community' approach, stressing the intrinsic value of committing time and resources to relationship building between young people, Council and others from the Belmont community.

Young people's future involvement as active citizens is contingent upon their personal, social and professional relationships with Council and older members of the Belmont community. Likewise the capacity of the City of Belmont to deliver relevant and high quality services to young people is impossible without Council staff first building trust and rapport.

In part this will shape an approach that recognizes that young people's interests cover a broad array of 'portfolio' areas within Council. For example, Council's work in relation to economic development is as much a youth policy issue as it is an older citizen or business policy issue.

It will also be necessary for Council's youth plan to incorporate opportunities for intergenerational contact and interaction into its programs, activities and events.

Directions

The next task for this planning document is to begin to outline how this intent will translate into the directions Council will take. In this way, general statements about what Council believe to be the case in relation to young people will shape what Council proposes to do over the following five years.

1. Celebration

The City of Belmont will celebrate, showcase, encourage and strengthen young people, seeing them as future and already realized citizens with assets that can be utilized by others in the City.

Council Directions:

The City of Belmont's Youth and Family Services Team will recognize and raise awareness of young people's contribution to life in Belmont by organizing at least six events, programs or activities each year that offer an opportunity for young people of different backgrounds, abilities and life stages to showcase the quality and diversity of their involvement in business, art, sport and recreation, music, fashion, film, creativity, work, the environment and community service.

The Youth and Family Services Team in association with the Coordinator of Leisure, Arts and Cultural Services will work to incorporate a Youth Category in art and photography in the City of Belmont's annual Art and Photographic Exhibition held at the Forum Shopping Centre.

Annually the Youth and Family Services Team in association with young people and Coordinator of Leisure, Arts and Cultural Services will catalogue murals and other art pieces owned by the City of Belmont and produced by Belmont young people.

The Youth Centre will be used as a 'working arts space' to exhibit creative work produced by young people from Belmont.

The Youth and Family Services Team in association with young people and the Coordinator of Leisure, Arts and Cultural Services will seek one other public space to be used to annually exhibit creative work produced by young people from Belmont.

The Youth Arts Worker will promote these exhibitions, maintain an archive of copies of this work and create a register of art works exhibited in this way.

The Youth and Family Services Team in association with Council's Media and Communication Officer will prepare at least ten media releases each year to promote the above events and highlight examples of art and cultural production undertaken by young people.

The City of Belmont will consider art produced by Belmont young people as a high priority when purchasing art for its collection. By 2012 Council will have purchased at least four pieces of art produced by local young people.

The Youth and Family Services Team will work with the State and Federal governments and other organisations to coordinate a National Youth Week event each year.

The Youth and Family Services Team will work with local organisations to coordinate at least one Youth NAIDOC event each year.

At the invitation of local organisations the Youth and Family Services Team will provide assistance with at least one Harmony Week event each year.

Each school term the Youth and Family Services Team will continue to offer at least one arts, music and/or 'cultural' program.

2. Participation

In this way the City of Belmont will demonstrate the same respect for young people as it does other citizens, recognizing the importance of building substantive relationships, encouraging productive contact and creating a range of means whereby young people can participate in a full range of activities and Council processes.

Council Directions:

Under the leadership of the Manager of Community Development, various Managers and Coordinators will convene every six months to consider gaps and obstacles to the participation of young people (in particular young people with disabilities, Indigenous young people, culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse young people and homeless young people).

The Coordinator of the Youth and Family Services team will maintain a general register of activities, events, Council meetings, and special processes that have encouraged young people's involvement in active citizenship. Each year the Coordinator will provide a report/presentation to Council on instances of youth participation in this regard.

By 2010 and in association with the Belmont City College and Council's Human Resources Team and the Community Development Team will work to negotiate opportunities for young people to undertake community service with the City of Belmont.

The Youth and Family Services Team in association with Home Care Services will provide at least one program each year specifically designed to enhance opportunities for community interaction amongst elderly people and young people to increase respect and understanding for each group's unique situation and foster civic work that involves young people and seniors.

In association with local secondary schools, the Youth and Family Services Team will offer at least one program each year designed to provide opportunities for students from culturally diverse backgrounds to be given opportunities to extend their participation in community life beyond their immediate family and cultural settings.

Every six months the Youth and Family Services Team will visit the Australian Islamic College and/or Belmont City College seeking input into the design of at least one program designed to meet the needs of young people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

During 2010 the Youth and Family Services Team will seek to employ an Indigenous Youth Worker to work as part of the team, focusing on the development of at least one program aimed at increasing Indigenous young people's participation in the life of Belmont.

By the end of 2009 the Indigenous Youth Worker Team will convene a youth community focus

group to help oversee the work with Indigenous young people.

By the end of 2010 the Youth and Family Services Team will design a brochure to increase the opportunity for Indigenous young people and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate in events and programs run in the City.

The Mayor in conjunction with Belmont City College will carry out an annual event/program designed to encourage young people to visit Council chambers, meet Council representatives and learn about the role and processes of local government.

Each year the Youth and Family Services Team will advertise and support Belmont young people's involvement in at least two other community events in and outside of Belmont.

3. Leadership and intergenerational stewardship

The City of Belmont will act as leaders and role models for young people, providing them with both the promise to care for the long-term interests of future generations in Belmont and clarity in relation to young people's obligations as citizens.

In keeping with this desire to 'act in the interests of the long-term sustainability of the City', it is critical that Council also act as 'stewards', carefully considering young people as those who will inherit the consequences of Council decisions. In part this will demand that Council set out how it will be accountable to young people, what is expected of young people in return and how, in time, they can take on leadership and a reciprocal role in the community. In part this will mean that Council establish clear 'boundaries' and parameters in its youth related work as well as articulating to young people what they can expect from Council.

In keeping with this, Council activities, programs and events will be provided in a way that is safe and delivered with the same level of quality and care others can expect.

Directions:

Each year the Youth and Family Services Team will choose at least three of its programs which will focus on encouraging young people to increase their involvement in community life. These may include using creative and youth friendly methods such as working with digital cameras and sound devices (such as 'photo voice'), new technologies (such as text messaging and blogging), and arts and cultural development techniques (such as dance and music).

At the conclusion of each of these programs the Youth and Family Services Team will carry out a short evaluation exercise with young people, identifying the strengths, challenges and ingredients of success for the program. Records of young people's feedback will be kept and reviewed annually as part of the program planning cycle.

By the end of 2010 and in association with young people, the Youth and Family Services Team will make publicly visible 'boundaries' of behaviour in the youth centre. Young people will assist in the framing of content, language and style of these 'boundaries'.

The Youth and Family Services Team will carry out a tri-annual review of its procedures and Council resolutions particularly in relation to the maintenance of 'duty of care', ethical practice, public accountability, critical incidence responses and compliance with various Articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This should also include strategies to involve young people and a review of the extent to which the language of Council policy is 'youth friendly'.

The Youth and Family Services Team will host an annual Youth Forum/Expo designed to bring a broad range of young people together to discuss young people's needs, interests, plans and aspirations. At this event Council staff will share information about programs and services offered to young people. Young people participating will be encouraged to present the outcomes of this event to Council. Representatives from each of the following Council Departments will attend this event to encourage a 'whole of Council' approach to youth policy and planning:

- Planning Department
- Marketing and IT Department
- Transport Officer
- Economic Development Team
- Environment Team
- Home and Community Care Team
- Library Team
- Crime Prevention Team
- Human Resources Department

By the end of 2011 and in association with Council's Human Resources Section, the Youth and Family Services Team will host an annual training activity designed to prepare young people as voluntary, casual and contract staff for Council.

By the end of 2010 the Youth and Family Services Team in association with Council's Marketing Department and young people will design and 'post' a youth friendly discussion site as part of Council's website. A representative from the Youth and Family Services Team will 'visit', check, answer questions and 'post' events and information on a weekly basis.

The Youth and Family Services Team will work with young people to provide at least one formal presentation per year to Council meetings.

By the end of 2010 Council will establish a small youth incentive fund designed to promote and reward young people involved in community leadership. The Youth and Family Services Team will seek nominations for youth leadership awards and administer this fund.

4. Support

The City of Belmont will provide young people access and their family members to high quality support services, in particular to those who experience family problems, are in need of additional income support, housing, health and other welfare provision and who come from culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse backgrounds.

Directions:

The Youth and Family Services Team will continue to provide services targeting young people (11-18 years) and their family members who are experiencing family, social and educational problems. This will represent a consolidation of the current approach to service delivery and will include but not be restricted to individual and family counseling, one-on-one support and mentoring, long-term monitoring of 'at risk' individuals, referral to specialist services, parenting and caregiver support and educational workshops and outreach work in the local high schools and selected public places.

The Youth and Family Services Team will continue to provide free programs targeting young

people (11-18 years) and their family members from a variety of backgrounds. This will represent a consolidation of the current approach to program delivery and will include a variety of recreational, arts, music, parenting programs, educational and life skills programs offered on a term-by-term basis. At least three programs will run each term, ranging from three to fifteen weeks in length.

The Youth and Family Services Team will continue to provide a free 'drop-in' style youth centre facility and school holiday activities targeting young people (11-18 years) from a variety of backgrounds. This will represent a consolidation of the current approach to the Drop-In Centre and will involve staff supervising at least three after-school sessions per week providing recreational and positive activities and a time for fostering supportive relationships between young people and staff.

The Youth and Family Services Team will continue to work with other organisations to provide at least two specific short-term programs per year to address an identified need in the community.

The City of Belmont will maintain its various service agreements and seek new funding opportunities to provide support and programs to encourage the health and wellbeing of the City's young people.

Each year each member of the Youth and Family Services Team will attend at least one training session on the use of arts practice and new digital media technologies as tools for working with young people.

5. Relationships across the community

The City of Belmont will adopt a 'whole of community' approach, stressing the intrinsic value of committing time and resources to relationship building between young people, Council and others from the Belmont community.

Directions:

The Youth and Family Services Team will maintain its commitments under the Memorandum of Understanding with the Belmont City College to provide human and other resources, including premises, to supplement the provision of educational opportunities to young people.

Council will continue to work with the Belmont City College to provide practical assistance, administrative support and venue for the Belmont Alternative Learning Centre.

Once per year the Manager of Community Development will convene a meeting of City of Belmont Managers and Coordinators to consider youth service gaps and coordinate support services across cross Council Departments/Divisions. The intention of this meeting is to create links within Council, ensure the meaningful exchange of ideas, coordinate provision of support services, maximize youth focused access points such as libraries, parks, the Forum and the Oasis Recreation Centre and investigate how young people's interests can be incorporated across Council business.

The Youth and Family Services Team will host at least four meetings per year of local agencies involved in the provision of services to young people. These events will assist groups to come together, exchange information, consider gaps in service provision and share resources to carry out events and projects.

The Youth and Family Services Team will continue providing information and referrals to young people individual adults, families, community organisations and other Council staff. At least once during each year the Team will carry out an auditing exercise over a period of two weeks to review the number and type of inquiries dealt with.

At least every six months the Youth and Family Services Team will update a data-base of local organisations, government departments and other interested groups involved in supporting the wellbeing of Belmont young people. This data-base will include details of contact people, addresses and emails details.

The Youth and Family Services Team will prepare at least four flyers per year and a page in every Belmont Bulletin outlining the major youth related activities offered by Council. The flyers will be sent to all groups with details on the data-base of local organisations.

By the end of 2009 the Manager of Community Development will establish (as part of a community contribution scheme) mechanisms to provide support to organisations working with local young people.

By 2010 the Coordinator of the Youth and Family Services Team will work in conjunction with the Marketing Department to create a style guide that is 'youth friendly' and adopt an approach that portrays young people in a respectful manner.

As requested, the City of Belmont will provide free venues for organisations offering support to young people. The Coordinator of the Youth and Family Services Team will maintain a register of those taking up these opportunities.

Celebration

Plan	Timeline	Responsibility	Priority
Recognize and raise awareness of young people's contribution to life in Belmont by organizing at least six events, programs or activities that offer an opportunity for young people of different backgrounds, abilities and life stages to showcase the quality and diversity of their involvement in business, art, sport and recreation, music, fashion, film, creativity, work, the environment and community service.	Each year	Youth and Family Services Team (Y&FST)	Very high
Work to incorporate a Youth Category in art and photography in the City of Belmont's Art and Photographic Exhibition held at the Forum Shopping Centre.	Annual	Y&FST and Coordinator of Leisure, Arts and Cultural Services (LACS)	Medium
Catalogue murals and other art pieces owned by the City of Belmont and produced by Belmont young people.	Annual	Y&FST, young people and Coordinator of LACS	Very high
The Youth Centre will be used as a 'working arts space' to exhibit creative work produced by young people from Belmont.	Constant	Y&FST to manage	Very high
Will seek one other public space to be used to exhibit creative work produced by young people from Belmont.	Annual	Y&FST, young people and Coordinator of LACS	Very high
Promote youth arts exhibitions, maintain an archive of copies of this work and create a register of art works exhibited in this way.	Annual	Youth Arts Worker	High
Prepare at least ten media releases to promote the above events and highlight examples of art and cultural production undertaken by young people.	Annual	Y&FST and Media and Communication Officer	High
Consider art produced by Belmont young people as a high priority when purchasing art for its collection. Council will have purchased at least four pieces of art produced by local young people.	2012	City of Belmont	High
Work with the State and Federal governments and other organisations to coordinate a National Youth Week event.	Annual	Y&FST	High
Work with local organisations to coordinate at least one Youth NAIDOC event.	Annual	Y&FST	Medium
At the invitation of local organizations, provide assistance with at least one Harmony Week event.	Annual	Y&FST	Medium
Each term offer at least one arts, music and/or 'cultural' program.	Each term	Y&FST	High

Participation

Plan	Timeline	Responsibility	Priority
Managers and Coordinators will convene every six months to consider gaps and obstacles to the participation of young people (in particular young people with disabilities, Indigenous young people, culturally, linguistically and religiously diverse young people and homeless young people).	Every six months	Manager of Community Development	High
Maintain a general register of activities, events, Council meetings, and special processes that have encouraged young people's involvement in active citizenship. The Coordinator will provide a report/presentation to Council on instances of youth participation in this regard.	Annual	Coordinator of Y&FST	High

Negotiate opportunities for young people to undertake community service with the City of Belmont.	2010	Human Resources and Community Development Team	High
Provide at least one program specifically designed to enhance opportunities for community interaction amongst elderly people and young people to increase respect and understanding for each group's unique situation and foster civic work that involves young people and seniors.	Annual	Y&FST and Home Care Services	High
In association with local secondary schools offer at least one program designed to provide opportunities for students from culturally diverse backgrounds to extend their participation in community life beyond their immediate family and cultural settings.	Annual	Y&FST	High
Visit the Australian Islamic College and/or Belmont City College seeking input into the design of at least one program designed to meet the needs of young people from culturally diverse backgrounds.	Six monthly	Y&FST	Medium
Employ an Indigenous Youth Worker to work as part of Y&FST team, focusing on the development of at least one program aimed at increasing Indigenous young people's participation in the life of Belmont.	2010	Y&FST	Very high
Design a brochure to increase the opportunity for Indigenous young people and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to participate in events and programs run in the City.	2010	Y&FST Marketing	Medium
In conjunction with Belmont City College carry out an event/program designed to encourage young people to visit Council chambers, meet Council representatives and learn about the role and processes of local government.	Annual	Mayor	High
Advertise and support Belmont young people's involvement in at least two other community events in and outside of Belmont.	Annual	Y&FST	Medium

Leadership and intergenerational stewardship

Plan	Timeline	Responsibility	Priority
Choose at least three programs which will focus on encouraging young people to increase their involvement in community life. These may include using creative and youth friendly methods such as working with digital cameras and sound devices (such as 'photo voice'), new technologies (such as text messaging and blogging), and arts and cultural development techniques (such as dance and music).	Annual	Y&FST	High
At the conclusion of each of these programs carry out a short evaluation exercise with young people, identifying the strengths, challenges and ingredients of success for the program. Records of young people's feedback will be kept and reviewed as part of the program planning cycle.	Annual	Y&FST	High
Make publicly visible 'boundaries' of behaviour in the youth centre. Young people will assist in the framing of content, language and style of these 'boundaries'.	2010	Y&FST and young people	Medium
Carry out a review of Y&FST procedures and Council resolutions particularly in relation to the maintenance of 'duty of care', ethical practice, public accountability, critical incidence responses and compliance with various Articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This should also include strategies to involve young people and a review of the extent to which the language	Annual	Y&FST	High

of Council policy is 'youth friendly'.			
Host a Youth Forum/Expo designed to bring a broad range of young people together to discuss young people's needs, interests, plans and aspirations. At this event Council staff will share information about programs and services offered to young people. Young people participating will be encouraged to present the outcomes of this event to Council. Representatives from a range of Council Departments will attend this event to encourage a 'whole of Council' approach to youth policy and planning.	Annual	Y&FST and Planning Department, Marketing and IT Department, Transport Officer, Economic Development Team, Environment Team, Home and Community Care Team, Library Team, Crime Prevention Team, Human Resources Department	Medium
Host an annual training activity designed to prepare young people as voluntary, casual and contract staff for Council.	2011	Y&FST and Human Resources	Medium
Design and 'post' a youth friendly discussion site as part of Councils website. A representative from the Youth and Family Services Team will 'visit', check, answer questions and 'post' events and information on a weekly basis.	2010	Y&FST, Marketing Department and young people	Low
Provide at least one formal presentation to Council meetings.	Annual	Y&FST and young people	High
Council will establish a small youth incentive fund designed to promote and reward young people involved in community leadership.	2010	Y&FST to seek nominations and administer the fund	Medium

Support

Plan	Timeline	Responsibility	Priority
Continue to provide services targeting young people (11-18 years) and their family members who are experiencing family, social and educational problems.	On-going	Y&FST	High
Continue to provide free programs targeting young people (11-18 years) and their family members from a variety of backgrounds.	On-going	Y&FST	High
Continue to provide a free 'drop-in' style youth centre facility and school holiday activities targeting young people (11-18 years) from a variety of backgrounds.	On-going	Y&FST	High
Continue to work with other organisations to provide at least two specific short-term programs to address identified need in the community.	Annual	Y&FST	Very high
Maintain various service agreements and seek new funding opportunities to provide support and programs to encourage the health and wellbeing of the City's young people.	On-going	City of Belmont	High
Attend at least one training session on the use of arts practice and new digital media technologies as tools for working with young people.	Annual	Y&FST	High

Relationships across the community

Plan	Timeline	Responsibility	Priority
Maintain commitments under the Memorandum of Understanding with the Belmont City College to provide human and other resources, including premises, to supplement the provision of educational opportunities to young people.	On-going	Y&FST	High
Continue to work with the Belmont City College to provide practical assistance, administrative support and venue for the Belmont Alternative Learning Centre.	On-going	City of Belmont	High
Convene a meeting of City of Belmont Managers and	Annual	Manager of Community	High

Coordinators to consider youth service gaps and coordinate support services across Council Departments/Divisions. The intention of this meeting is to create links within Council, ensure the meaningful exchange of ideas, coordinate provision of support services, maximize youth focused access points such as libraries, parks, the Forum and the Oasis Recreation Centre and investigate how young people's interests can be incorporated across Council business.		Development	
Host at least four meetings of local agencies involved in the provision of services to young people. These events will assist groups to come together, exchange information, consider gaps in service provision and share resources to carry out events and projects.	Annual	Y&FST	High
Continue providing information and referrals to young people individual adults, families, community organisations and other Council staff. At least once during the year the Team will carry out an auditing exercise over a period of two weeks to review the number and type of inquiries dealt with.	Annual	Y&FST	Medium
Update a data-base of local organisations, government departments and other interested groups involved in supporting the wellbeing of Belmont young people. This data-base will include details of contact people, addresses and emails details.	Six monthly	Y&FST	Medium
Prepare at least four flyers and a page in every Belmont Bulletin outlining the major youth related activities offered by Council. The flyers will be sent to all groups with details on the data-base of local organisations.	Annual	Y&FST	High
Establish (as part of a community contribution scheme) mechanisms to provide support to organisations working with local young people.	2009	Manager of Community Development	Very high
Create a style guide that is 'youth friendly' and adopt an approach that portrays young people in a respectful manner.	2010	Coordinator of Y&FST and Marketing Department	High
As requested, provide free venues for organisations offering support to young people. Maintain a register of those taking up these opportunities.	As requested	Coordinator of Y&FST	Medium