AME High

Leaders for Geelong 2009/2011
Table of contents

AME HIGH (Action, Mentoring, Extreme)

Acknowledgements.................................................................4
Team members.........................................................................5
Executive Summary..............................................................6
Background..............................................................................9
Objective................................................................................11
Aim.......................................................................................12
Methodology.........................................................................13
Findings..................................................................................14
Recommendations...............................................................19
Conclusions............................................................................21
Appendix................................................................................22
Acknowledgements

AME HIGH (Action, Mentoring, Extreme)

City of Greater Geelong  
Leisure Networks
Barwon Headspace  
Bethany
GP Association  
Time for Youth
Duke of Edinburgh Award  
Wathaurong Co-op
Diversitat  
Local Learning and Employment Network
Centre Against Sexual Assault  
Barwon Youth
Adult Community Further Education  
BATforce
Centre for Multicultural Youth  
Golden Plains Shire
The Gordon  
Bellarine Secondary College
Department of Planning & Community Development (Vic)  
Victoria Police
St Joseph’s College  
Bridget Connor - Redstick Strategic Communications
Mc Kellog Family Services  
David Armstrong - Deakin University Research student
Whittington Works  
Teghan Alexandra Keen - Deakin University Research student
Newcomb Secondary College  

Red Cross  

World Challenge  

CREATE  

Daniel Luke Smits (Animator)  
Team members

AME HIGH (Action, Mentoring, Extreme)

The AME High project team is comprised of five participants from the 2009 – 2011 Leaders for Geelong intake.

From left to right

**David Musgrove**
Skills Centre Manager
Service Skills & Recreation
The Gordon

**Di Dahm**
Membership Services Manager
Geelong Chamber of Commerce

**Brad Clarke**
Director
Better Communities Consulting

**Richard Lyle**
Controller Point Henry Smelter
Alcoa of Australia

**Jarrod Moran** (not pictured)
Senior OHS/Workers Compensation Officer
Australian Council of Trade Unions
Executive Summary

AME HIGH (Action, Mentoring, Extreme)

The Geelong region is well supplied with Leadership opportunities for young people that have access to fiscal support and formal education, particularly within the independent school system. State schools in lower socioeconomic communities have little or no capacity to fund such programs. Moreover there is no opportunity within these communities to refer students showing potential leadership qualities or disengaging from education as an intervening strategy.

Taking our inspiration from the philosophies and learnings from local youth services groups we have sought to develop a program that can change the lives of a group of young people who are currently missing opportunities afforded to others in our community. We were concerned that opportunities for marginalised young people to access and participate in programs that build resilience and self confidence were lacking in our community.

We entered our project with a scope of what we wanted to achieve but without a definite view on what a final program would look like.

We set ourselves four objectives:

1. Identify current Youth Leadership Development programs offered by all agencies in the Geelong Region, particularly for “Youth at Risk”
2. Identify deficiencies/barriers in the provision of leadership programs within the Geelong Region
3. Develop a model for the optimum delivery of Youth Leadership programs in the Geelong Region
4. Identify and/or implement specific programs of most need

We initially felt there were opportunities to offer greater support to youth; particularly ‘youth at risk’. It was decided that research was to be conducted in areas of youth and youth support programs offered in the Geelong region. The project team aimed to survey a range of the key Geelong region stakeholders. Questions were developed, and face-to-face interviews were conducted. Data was compiled and common themes were identified. Existing program models from around the world were researched for ideas and content. New program models were developed, and following further consultation, an auspicing body was secured, and funding applied for.

Data was compiled, and a workshop conducted to identify main themes and gaps. At this point it was identified that no programs offered a holistic approach to youth support and development, resulting in the development of the AME High model. This model was taken to external parties for verification.
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A range of auspicing bodies were identified. The City of Greater Geelong was selected and approached to deliver the program (conditional that the project team was able to source the funding). Funding applications have been made to a number of funding organizations, and at the time of this report, funding is still to be confirmed.

A case study and a further report will be developed during and after the completion of the trial program, with the aim to improve and continue future programs

Recommendations:

• The City of Greater Geelong be endorsed as the auspicing body for the purpose of accessing funding and delivery of the AME High Program.

The City of Greater Geelong Youth Development Unit will:

• Form an Advisory Committee to oversee and support the implementation and delivery of the AME High Program. This committee shall be represented by interested volunteers from the Geelong Community, including members of the Leaders for Geelong Project team.

• Appoint a part-time (0.6EFT) Community Development Worker for the purposes of implementing and delivering the AME High Program for the first 12 months

• Facilitate the delivery of the AME High program through its existing relationships with agencies working with the target cohort and substantial experience in delivering ‘youth-oriented’ programs, including the L2P program (mentor-based model). The City Youth Unit is collocated within the Old Post Office Youth Hub; a hub that provides significant scope and opportunity for young people to access housing and health services, alternate education and employment counselling / case management, recreational and other programs. Young people are referred within the Hub to programs that suit their individual needs and interests. Transitional support provided within the Hub provides the critical ‘bridge’ that mitigates the chances of disengagement. Several thousand young people access services within the Hub annually.

• Provide extensive training to mentors through best practice principles and resources developed within the L2P program, Victorian Mentoring Alliance and relationship with other Mentoring Program providers.
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- Provide opportunities to engage with marginalised young people through referrals from collocated agencies such as Time For Youth. Time For Youth operate the FACHSIA funded Reconnect program for young people at risk homelessness or already homeless. This case management model provides opportunity for case managers and clients to access programs that encourage positive outcomes including, but not exclusively, redevelopment of positive relationships with parents / guardians and siblings; re-engagement in education and training, building self confidence and employability skills. Many clients within Reconnect are perpetrators and victims of violence in a domestic setting. They can often have police interventions and / or court appointed orders for violent behaviour.

- Commit to ongoing best practice approaches for mentoring through continued action research within its current L2P program, professional development of staff through relationships and membership with the Victorian Mentoring Alliance and consultation with LGA’s operating similar programs (eg Melton Shire Council). Furthermore, City of Greater Geelong Youth Unit will promote an understanding of the impacts of violent behaviour and anti-social activities generally through the promotion of peer-mediated processes. The City of Greater Geelong has adopted this approach on several programs where diversity of young people was paramount. The peer-mediation model allows young people to explore and develop their own standards of behaviour and consequences for actions outside of expectations / rules.

- Continue to promote linkages between local communities, local government and non-government authorities in building community resilience through the expansion of formal relationships, projects, education and provision of information to the community within the Youth Hub.

- Provide evidence-based case for ongoing funding via its annual forward budgeting processes for the following years and continue to build relationships with local business and philanthropic trusts for the purposes of ongoing fiscal support.

During the development of this program we have found inspiration in the work of dedicated and committed people in seeking to aid local young people who are at risk. We cannot fully describe the effect these hard working people have in our community.

We ask you to endorse our recommendations.

We ask that you consider how you can assist this program.
Background

AME HIGH (Action, Mentoring, Extreme)

Geelong needs to provide supportive recreational and social opportunities for young people to form new friendships and connections to the community

When discussing which topic we would focus on for our Leaders for Geelong project, leadership development opportunities for young people in our region was raised.

We quickly realised that we had each benefited from the positive experience of a positive, solid and reliable mentor during our pre-adult years. After further discussion we settled on the idea to investigate programs available for young people in our area, the age group the programs are aimed at, the duration of programs and importantly, how participants are identified and referred. We formed a position at this point that we would take all due care not to replicate an existing program but rather compliment an already robust sector through consultation with key stakeholders, indentify service gaps and consider options to cater for young people not able to access available services.

We know that the Geelong region is well supplied with Leadership opportunities for young people that have access to fiscal support and formal education, particularly within the independent school system (St Joseph’s College is one such example where Leadership development is identified as a key theme throughout middle and upper secondary curriculum1). State schools in lower socioeconomic communities (Norlane, Corio, Whittington, SEIFA Index below 8002) had little or no capacity to fund such programs. Moreover there was no opportunity within these communities to refer students showing potential leadership qualities or disengaging from education as an intervening strategy.

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2 Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a product developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics that makes an assessment of the welfare of Australian communities based on Census information. A score for a collection district (CD) is created by adding together the weighted characteristics of that CD. The scores for all CDs are then standardised to a distribution where the average equals 1000 and roughly two-thirds of the scores lie between 900 and 1100. Approximately 15% of CDs have a score lower than 900 with the remaining 85% of CDs having a score higher than about 900. Approximately 85% of CDs have a score lower than 1100 with the remaining 15% of CDs having a score higher than about 1100.
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Time for Youth, a key provider of accommodation services to young people in Geelong, had previously operated Leadership and Mentoring programs (XTG Geelong) but due to the Global Economic Crisis, philanthropic funding bodies had withdrawn support in early 2009, resulting in cessation of the program.

The Headspace Youth (Barwon) Consultative Committee has previously indentified that well supported, healthy social opportunities for young people with significant social and health barriers should be a primary focus. In a recent forum, the group stated that: “the lack of new opportunities for young people with social phobias and mental illness makes their issues significantly worse”.

‘Geelong needs to provide supportive recreational and social opportunities for these young people to form new friendships and connections to the community.’

We were inspired by these words and have sought to develop a program that can change the lives of a group of young people who are currently missing opportunities afforded to others in our community. We were concerned that opportunities for marginalised young people to access and participate in programs that build resilience and self confidence were lacking in our community.

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Objective

AME HIGH (Action, Mentoring, Extreme)

We entered our project with a scope of what we wanted to achieve but without a definite view on what a final program would look like.

We were concerned that opportunities for marginalised young people to access and participate in programs that build resilience and self confidence were lacking in our community.

We set ourselves four objectives:

5. Identify current Youth Leadership Development programs offered by all agencies in the Geelong Region, particularly for “Youth at Risk”

6. Identify deficiencies/barriers in the provision of leadership programs within the Geelong Region

7. Develop a model for the optimum delivery of Youth Leadership programs in the Geelong Region

8. Identify and/or implement specific programs of most need

We have used the following to define ‘Youth at Risk’:

Young people aged 15 – 19 years who are disadvantaged due to cultural identity, socio-economic status, religious or sexual persuasion, family breakdown, physical, social or intellectual disability, mental or chronic illness or a Department of Justice executed order.

They are usually regarded as young people whose circumstances or experiences have led to their being marginalised from a range of social structures and groups.
Aim

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*I have learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.*

*Maya Angelou*

- To provide selected young people from our region positive opportunities, experiences and relationships that challenge pre-conceived thoughts and ideas relating to self, aspirations, tolerance, racism, sexism and general violent behaviour. Young people from lower socio-economic communities and those young people engaging in behaviours indicative of attitudes that may lead to acts of violence.

- To deliver a program that will be developed and promoted in such a way that referring agencies and communities will have clear instruction, expectations and links to ensure positive transition into and out of the program via pre and post-program support to young person, mentor and community.

- To develop a program that will work with community agencies responsible for the transition of young people from Juvenile Justice Centres and Remand to provide opportunities for ongoing participation and support post-completion of re-integration into the community.

- To provide an opportunity for young participants and mentors to share their own stories, whatever they may be, to give others within the group opportunities to hear others’ stories, build empathy and understanding for others and build relationships and social expectations that can be peer mediated when broken.
Methodology

AME HIGH (Action, Mentoring, Extreme)

The project team initially felt there were opportunities to offer greater support to youth; particularly ‘youth at risk’. It was decided that research was to be conducted in areas of youth and youth support programs offered in the Geelong region. The project team aimed to survey a range of the key Geelong region stakeholders. Questions were developed, and face-to-face interviews were conducted. Data was compiled and common themes were identified. Existing program models from around the world were researched for ideas and content. New program models were developed, and following further consultation, an auspicing body was secured, and funding applied for.

Survey participants were identified by the project team. (Formal survey participants are appended to this report). Further informal evidence was also gathered and documented. Stakeholders surveyed included: secondary schools, TAFE Institute, local councils, cooperatives, Victoria Police, youth service providers.

With the support of two Deakin University research students, a set of questions was developed and tested. The questions were designed to gather information from all stakeholders relating to their involvement with youth, the programs or support they offer, the “points of difference” with their programs, and identifying areas that needed further support.

Data was compiled, and a workshop conducted to identify main themes and gaps. At this point it was identified that no programs offered a holistic approach to youth support and development, resulting in the development of the AME High model. This model was taken to external parties for verification.

A range of auspicing bodies was identified. The City of Greater Geelong was selected and approached to deliver the program (conditional that the project team was able to source the funding). Funding applications have been made to a number of funding organizations, and at the time of this report, funding is still to be confirmed.

A case study and a further report will be developed during and after the completion of the trial program, with the aim to improve and continue future programs.
Findings

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The research component contained three stages:

- Formal Survey of local service providers covering general service and specific “leadership programs”
- Benchmarking of programs offered outside the region
- Stakeholder engagement/review of proposal

Survey

Detailed formal survey plus informal discussions with 21 local service providers for at risk youth (see appendix 1)

The survey was to provide data for a gap analysis into the provision of services, generally, and specifically leadership programs within the region.

The three main themes that were prevalent in the gap analysis were:

Role Models
- The importance of positive role models
- The high incidence of a lack of positive role models on ‘at-risk’ young people

Connections
- Lack of connection, or belonging, to the community for ‘at-risk’ young people
- Lack of understanding of services available to young people
- Lack of connections / cooperation between some of the service providers

Access
- Inconsistent and competitive funding has caused a lack of access to these services. In some cases good programs have been discontinued
- Many instances where there was difficulty in obtaining physical access to the right programs
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Specific themes identified as part of the analysis:

- Few available leadership programs for young people in low socio-economic status communities and those not engaged in formal education
- Little or no available funding for community agencies to sustain programs that support mentoring, self confidence, resilience and positive social interactions with peers, young people from diverse cultures and adults
- Poor, informal or misunderstood linkages and pathways between schools and community agencies that support disengaged and at-risk young people
- Limited support for young people within the Juvenile Justice system post-release or as a post-completion follow up and support mechanism to reduce likelihood of recidivism
- Little or no ownership or investment in the issues affecting young people by local business and the broader community
- Growing gang cultures in the north and north-west of the city including building racial tensions between emerging new ethnicity backgrounds of young people
- Increasing prevalence of graffiti and tagging, promoting racist slogans
- Recent youth suicides related to bullying in the region
- Organisations who are offering programs will generally aim to minimise barriers to participation, however problems with accessibility may result from lack of community awareness of the availability of the program
- Funding is provided to different programs by the DHS, Federal and State Government departments, Philanthropic trusts and charities. Some specific programs were even supported themselves through fundraising or nominal participation fees
- Lots of interest in mentoring as a system
- Need for greater public awareness of organisations
- Need resources, funding and people to drive organisations- some leadership programs have even been disbanded due to lack of funding, particularly in response to the Global Financial Crisis
- Need for more community role models to foster responsibility in young people
- Need for greater connections between schools and services, making knowledge of organisations available. ACFE particularly reported concerns over the transition process from school to other sectors
- Need for a better organised program
- Transportation varied between organisations as to whether or not it was an issue, with many organisations having central locations which connected well with bus routes
- Concerns over connecting with youth
- Needs for youth based infrastructures
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Benchmarking

Results from the survey led us to examine what programs existed outside of the region, specifically those with an active participation focus:

**Outward Bound**

Not-for-profit educational organisation, serving people of all backgrounds through active learning expeditions inspiring character development, self-discovery and service both in and out of the classroom.

Programs use unfamiliar settings to allow participants to experience adventure and challenge them in a way that will stretch their perceived boundaries and limits.

Courses are customised to provide different curricula for struggling teens, groups which have specific health, social or educational needs and businesses and professional organisations.

Serves 70,000 students and teachers annually.

Particularly focus upon serving youth, young adults, schools and communities throughout the US at-risk of academic failure, dropping out of school, delinquency or becoming chronic offenders.

Courses include backpacking, Rock Climbing, Canoeing, Desert Backpacking.

‘Reality therapy’ approach to problem-solving and counselling focuses on the here and now, and how to make better decisions, as well as taking control and discovering what participants really want.

**Operation Newstart Victoria**

Partnerships between the Department of Education & Early Childhood Development (DEECD) and Victoria Police.

Participants are not necessarily ‘low academic achievers’ but are consistently unable to make best use of their gifts in a formal school setting.

Aim to unlock participants from their current situation and allow them to move on to the positive next phase of their schooling.

8 students spend a school term with a Police and Teacher Facilitator, who provide a multi-layered intervention that creatively engages and challenges each student in a process of change.
Findings

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Activities may be adventure based, involve problem-solving and team-building, music therapy, TAFE taster vocational orientation visits and working in sessions with parents/carers and students to help rebuild relationships.

Salaries paid by DEECD and Victoria Police, with small portion contributed from participating schools, as well as sponsors, philanthropic organisations and charities.

YMCA
Does actually offer a number of youth programs which it could certainly be argued are directed at Youth at Risk

Juvenile Justice- Provides health services for young people in custody, and post-release support

Alternative Education- ‘The Shed’, where young and old work together to reconnect their community and encourage the sharing of experience and knowledge

Community Liaison Programs- Take their services and activities into the community for those unable to access the services at their centre. Assistance is provided through liaising with welfare agencies, schools and other community groups

National Indian Youth Leadership Project
Aims to empower the lives of Native American Youth through year-round adventure-based learning

Project Venture- actively engages youth with in school and after school programming focussing on problem solving, communication, cooperation and team building through experiential games and activities

Nationally recognised as the first Native American Program for resilience to alcohol, tobacco and drug abuse

The program features activities such as building with adobe, mountain biking, hiking or learning basic outdoor survival skills

Bush Venture
Targeted at Australians having issues with truancy, depression or simply developing leadership skills

Waltzing Matilda: Three to five day introduction to camping, bushcraft and navigation

Youth Challenge: Nine day school/youth group program introducing bushcraft, navigation, safety and team building

Champ Camp: Nine day wilderness based intervention helping youth at risk move away from negative behaviours

Pioneer Program: Three month wilderness based intervention
Findings continued

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Stakeholder Consultation

Discussions held with a wide range of groups that are envisaged to continue through implementation.

General feedback was positive and that the AME High project was complimentary to services already provided within the region.

Some specific feedback was also provided and has been incorporated into the current project.
Recommendations

AME HIGH (Action, Mentoring, Extreme)

- The City of Greater Geelong be endorsed as the auspicing body for the purpose of accessing funding and delivery of the MAE High Program.

The City of Greater Geelong Youth Development Unit will:

- Form an Advisory Committee to oversee and support the implementation and delivery of the AME High Program. This committee shall be represented by interested volunteers from the Geelong Community, including members of the Leaders for Geelong Project team.

- Appoint a part-time (0.6EFT) Community Development Worker for the purposes of implementing and delivering the AME High Program for the first 12 months.

- Facilitate the delivery of the AME High program through its existing relationships with agencies working with the target cohort and substantial experience in delivering ‘youth-oriented’ programs, including the L2P program (mentor-based model). The City Youth Unit is collocated within the Old Post Office Youth Hub; a hub that provides significant scope and opportunity for young people to access housing and health services, alternate education and employment counselling / case management, recreational and other programs. Young people are referred within the Hub to programs that suit their individual needs and interests. Transitional support provided within the Hub provides the critical ‘bridge’ that mitigates the chances of disengagement. Several thousand young people access services within the Hub annually.

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AME HIGH (Action, Mentoring, Extreme)

- Commit to ongoing best practice approaches for mentoring through continued action research within its current L2P program, professional development of staff through relationships and membership with the Victorian Mentoring Alliance and consultation with LGA’s operating similar programs (eg Melton Shire Council). Furthermore, City of Greater Geelong Youth Unit will promote an understanding of the impacts of violent behaviour and anti-social activities generally through the promotion of peer-mediated processes. The City of Greater Geelong has adopted this approach on several programs where diversity of young people was paramount. The peer-mediation model allows young people to explore and develop their own standards of behaviour and consequences for actions outside of expectations / rules.

- Provide extensive training to mentors through best practice principles and resources developed within the L2P program, Victorian mentoring Alliance and relationships with other Mentoring Program providers.

- Continue to promote linkages between local communities, local government and non-government authorities in building community resilience through the expansion of formal relationships, projects, education and provision of information to the community within the Youth Hub.

- Provide evidence-based case for ongoing funding via its annual forward budgeting processes for the following years and continue to build relationships with local business and philanthropic trusts for the purposes of ongoing fiscal support.

**Annual Budget**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost (p.a.)</th>
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<tr>
<td>0.6 EFT Project Facilitator</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 special activities @ $1,200 each</td>
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<td>Administration</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Cost (p.a.)</strong></td>
<td><strong>$66,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$46,000 to be sourced from Government and/or philanthropic organisations
$20,000 to be sourced from supporting companies (10 * $2,000)
Conclusions

AME HIGH (Action, Mentoring, Extreme)

The Leaders for Geelong 2009-2011 Project Group of Di Dahm, David Musgrove, Jarrod Moran, Richard Lyle and Brad Clarke focussed on Leadership opportunities for marginalised young people in the G21 region as a response to formal feedback from key stakeholders, Educators and Youth Service Providers.

A literature review of best-practice models for working with ‘at-risk’ youth was conducted, particularly in the areas of personal development and leadership skills. Key themes were identified including combinations of passive and active participation, group and 1:1 engagement and particularly, the presence of positive role models.

Several workshops were conducted and a model was developed that incorporated the key findings of both the provider survey and literature review. The program structure was finalised and following several follow-up consultations with stakeholders, was presented to potential auspicing bodies. It is with many thanks that the City of Greater Geelong agreed to take on this responsibility.

The name AME HIGH (Action, Mentoring, Extreme) reflects the three phases of the program; ‘Extreme’ outdoor physical challenges designed to build resilience and self esteem, completed in a social group setting, 1:1 Mentoring with an adult that allows the young person to build positive relationships with an adult in unfamiliar circumstances and planning for success now and into the future by making positive, healthy choices under the guidance of the same adult, now performing the role as Coach.

A critical component is buy-in and ongoing support of the local corporate and industry based sectors. Mentors will be recruited as part of their own personal development from businesses committed to promoting their own sense of corporate and civic responsibility. A minimum commitment of 12 months, plus some financial support from the employer, will provide fantastic opportunities for both young person and mentor to develop strong relationships and new personal understandings and goals.

The AME High Project team have committed to each other and to the young people of Geelong to ensure the AME HIGH program becomes an integral component of the ‘Youth Services’ scene in the G21 region. There have been many people involved in the development of AME HIGH and we would wish to thank them all for their input. It is with great excitement and enthusiasm we move into the implementation phase and beyond.

Di Dahm, David Musgrove, Jarrod Moran, Richard Lyle and Brad Clarke
Appendix

AME HIGH (Action, Mentoring, Extreme)

Appendix 1 - Gap Analysis Questionnaire

Leaders for Geelong 2010-2012
A Local Gap Analysis – Leadership programs for ‘at risk’ young people.

General Questions

What services does your organisation provide to young people?
In which localities are your services or programs delivered?
How many young people does your organisation support annually?
How are young people referred to your services or programs?
Where do the young people you work with live
  • North
  • West
  • South
  • East
  • Bellarine
  • Surf Coast
  • Golden Plains
  • Colac Otway
  • Other?

What proportion of young people would you contact
  • Daily
  • Weekly
  • Monthly
  • Casually/Occasionally?

Funding Questions

How are your services or programs funded?
What proportion of your funding is derived from
  • Federal Government
  • State Government
  • Local Government
  • Philanthropic Trusts or Charities
  • Other?

Leadership Questions

Are any of your services or programs specifically focused on ‘leadership’?
Do young people need to meet any criteria in order to participate in your services or programs?
Are there any costs associated to participate in these services or programs?
What are your completion/retention rates?
How do you measure success of your services or programs?
Do you have any coalitions or alliances with other organisations with the aim of improving success?
What is the plan for your organisation over the short, medium and longer terms