



YOUTH

Discussion Paper

City of Ryde | 2019 – 2023





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This Youth Discussion Paper was created for City of Ryde Council by The FRANK Team.

INTRODUCTION

from the Mayor



Jerome Laxale

I am delighted to present the City of Ryde's landmark discussion paper 2023, which is Council's first for young people aged 12-24.

The City of Ryde supports young people to be active in their community, explore their interests and passions, and celebrate their truly multicultural City.

We celebrate our young people by including them in our Volunteer and Citizen of the Year awards. Both have a youth category and the inspirational young people that have been nominated through this process contribute daily to the Ryde community.

Ryde Youth Council has been an advisory committee for Council for more than 15 years and gives young people an avenue to advocate and provide advice to Council on matters affecting youth in our community. It encourages positive views and opinions of young people and their achievements. Through this committee, the Youth Ambassador program has been developed, to give young people a voice at civic functions and events.

The City of Ryde also supports the Ryde Youth Theatre, providing a building for them to operate from, as well as funding and support for performances.

More than 500 young people have engaged in this program since it started in 2009 and we hope that it continues to offer an affordable option for those who are passionate about theatre and performance.

Our events cater for young people from Youth Week programs, The Core at Granny Smith and inclusion in events such as Australia Day through the Battle of The Bands event.

Today City of Ryde's population aged 12-24 is 18,904, which is 16.2% of our population. This population is expected to increase to more than 28,000 by 2023 which is why we need to make sure we are planning now for the rise in the number of young people coming into the area.

Young people are not the future, they are the now. It is the responsibility of our community to support our young people and allow them to thrive. This paper will help us to achieve this. As such this paper is Council's commitment to its young people.

This discussion paper was developed with input from local young people, service providers, parents, carers, schools and business. Those who contributed told us about their concerns around employment and education, community safety, affordable housing and their general wellbeing.

Council will support our young people by providing for and advocating for their needs to all spheres of government, the business sector, youth service providers, parents and carers and in the community.

Thank you to those who gave up their time to provide input through surveys, forums, community pop-ups and interviews. I hope we have reflected your views and opinions within this document which will help to make the City of Ryde the best it can be for our young people.

Mayor of the City of Ryde

COUNCIL'S VISION

and commitment

City of Ryde Council is committed to its youth. We believe that young people matter.

This Youth Paper creates a shared vision for the City and its young people to continue to work together. We will support active participation in civic life as well as young people's capacity to affect change and lead. We will encourage young people to embrace and build on their knowledge, support active involvement and contribution to society, and ensure young people have a voice.

We will continue to engage, listen to and consult with our young people on matters that affect them both in the short and long term. We will provide opportunities for young people in our City and we will advocate on their behalf.

Council is committed to the actions as detailed in this, our first Youth Discussion Paper.



"We will continue to engage, listen to and consult with our young people on matters that affect them..."

WHAT WE'VE

delivered in the last 4 years

- » We established a **Youth Ambassador Program** to give young people representation at civic functions and recognise their contribution to Ryde.
- » We have secured funding for the **Ryde Youth Theatre** project into 2021 and we found them a permanent building to base themselves.
- » We have identified a location for a brand new **youth and family precinct** which will include a skate facility and is due for completion in 2019.
- » We have worked with our community partners at **Our Space youth hub** to ensure that Ryde has a vibrant and fun youth facility, enabling young people to access much needed services.
- » We hosted the **2017 NSW Youth Council Conference**, attended by over 200 young people from across NSW.
- » We have celebrated **Youth Week** each year by putting on many different events including Shoreshocked youth music festival, gaming and cosplay day, Model United Nations debate, careers workshops and skate jams.
- » We have provided programming in our **libraries** for children and young people every school holiday.
- » We have worked to increase the **youth collection** in our libraries to ensure its relevance and popularity.
- » We provide a **specialist community project officer** for young people and a specialist children's and youth librarian.
- » We provide thousands of dollars per year through our **community grants** for local projects for young people.
- » We worked with our **youth theatre** to put on 19 productions over the last four years in various locations across the City.
- » We hosted the **2014 Youth Empowerment Summit** with over 300 local young people discussing youth mental health.
- » We partnered on the **2018 Youth Mental Health Forum** that hosted 19 schools and 200 young people.
- » We developed strong relationships with **youth and community services** so that we can all work together to support young people in Ryde.
- » We deliver an annual **Youth Environment Prize and Junior Youth Environment Prize** as part of the Sustainable Waste 2 Art Prize.
- » We host and chair the monthly **Ryde Hunters Hill Youth Interagency meetings** to support local youth workers and youth services.
- » We worked with our **corporate partners** to supply Our Space youth hub with up-to-date technology for use in coding and robotics programs.
- » We delivered **information sessions** for parents of young people on many different topics.
- » We attended many meetings, forums and conferences and hosted workshops to **advocate for young people**.
- » **We consulted young people** on our Sport and Recreation Strategy 2016-2026, Graffiti Management Plan, Night Time Economy Study, Disability Inclusion Action Plan, this Youth Discussion Paper as well as canvassing their views on how to promote multiculturalism and inclusiveness in the city.
- » We host **'the Core' at Granny Smith Festival** – an area designed specifically for youth with dance parties, local bands and attractions for young people.
- » Our **Ryde Youth Advisory Committee** members have represented us at various forums, conferences and events.

SNAPSHOT

of young Ryde

Age

18,904
young people
aged between
12 – 24yrs

=
Approximately
16.2% of the total
population in the
Ryde area.

Cultural Diversity

Indigenous background

353
Aboriginal &
Torres Strait
Islander
people
living in Ryde

**30.9% of them are
aged 0 – 17yrs.**

The original inhabitants of the Ryde area were the Darug Aboriginal people.

Overseas born
**34.8% of young people aged
12 – 24yrs are overseas born.**

**The top countries of birth for young
people aged 12 – 24yrs in Ryde are:**

China (7.4%) (Excluding SARs and Taiwan) | **South Korea** (1.8%)
| **India** (1.0%) | **Hong Kong** (0.7%) | **Indonesia** (0.6%).

Languages

**In 2016, 45.7% of 12 – 24yr olds in the
City of Ryde spoke a language other
than English at home.**

The top 3 Languages (other than English) spoken at home by 12 – 24yr olds:

1. Mandarin (16.1%)
2. Cantonese (6.9%)
3. Korean (4.7%).

Education

**A total of 19,941 of people living in Ryde LGA
attend secondary school (6,142), TAFE (2,516)
or University (11,283).**

In 2016, 45.0% of the City of Ryde's population aged 12 – 24yrs attended an educational institution.

As a percentage of the population we have more young people at Uni and TAFE than the Greater Sydney average and all of the comparison LGAs.

Disability and Carers

**In 2016, there were
717 carers
aged 15 – 24yrs
in the City of Ryde...**

... providing unpaid
assistance to a
person with a
disability, long term
illness or old age.

Work Life

**In 2016, 7,177 people aged 12 – 24yrs living in the
City of Ryde were employed, of which 34.6% were
working full time and 62.7% part time.**



Household income

In the City of Ryde, 37.4% of people aged 12 – 24yrs were in households earning \$2,500 or more per week.

Migration

**18 – 24 yrs was the age group
with the highest net migration
to the City of Ryde.**

WHO WE

listened to

It is important that we engage, listen and consult with our young people as well as with service providers who engage with young people to receive feedback that is actionable and meaningful.

We engaged the following stakeholders;

- » Young people aged between 12-24 years including CALD, disabled and LGBTIQ young people
- » Youth service providers
- » Business community
- » Schools
- » Ryde Youth Advisory Group
- » Peak bodies
- » Macquarie University
- » TAFE
- » Parents/carers
- » Health institutions

In 2018, City of Ryde Council conducted a Youth Survey with young people aged between 12-24 years old. The purpose of this Youth Survey was to hear directly from young people what both interests and concerns them and their friends and peers.

The survey looked at the following 6 themes;

1. Health and Wellbeing
2. Transport and Safety
3. Future Aspirations and Housing
4. Arts and Culture
5. Sports and Recreation
6. Education and Employment

These surveys and consultations enabled us to identify clear priorities and goals for action in the next 4 years.

How We Engaged with the Community

As part of the development of this Youth discussion paper, we undertook:

1. 109 online surveys with young people aged 12-24 years old
2. Online survey with youth service providers
3. An Interagency consultation with young service providers
4. Focus groups with parents/carers, CALD community members, LGBTIQ young people and disabled young people
5. Pop up stalls at Macquarie University, TAFE and Eastwood Shopping Centre
6. Face-to-face interviews with service providers
7. Phone interviews with service providers



WHAT WE'VE

been told and what we've learned

Education and Employment

Young people in Ryde place a high value on their education and employment. However, they are feeling a sense of increasing anxiety and stress over decisions such as subject selection at school, getting work experience and getting a job. Young people are also reporting high expectations and pressure placed on them from parents and carers.

Many young people feel they lack foundational employability skills as well as life skills like budgeting and they are finding that getting jobs, even their first jobs is becoming increasingly difficult. They indicated that their top barriers to achieving their study and career goals were motivation/procrastination issues, financial barriers and lack of social support. Approximately 34.43% of young people surveyed in the 2018 Ryde Youth Survey had not participated in any employment programs/services or activities in the last 12 months.

Getting jobs may also be harder for young people with disabilities.

Young people need help when deciding on future careers and jobs. They also reported that the current information, support and resources available aren't adequately meeting their needs. To help achieve their study and career goals, young people stated a further need for financial and family support, higher motivational levels and additional work experience opportunities.

To address these issues around employment, there needs to be better engagement, resources and incentives for employers to support young people. There is also a need for meaningful relationships between schools and industry.

2018 Ryde Youth Survey Results

Young people have been involved in the following employment programs/services/activities in the last 12 months:

- » Volunteering (27.87%)
- » Work Experience/Placements (24.59%)
- » Job and career expos (21.31%)
- » Careers advisors (19.67%)

Young people who had undertaken vocational education in the last 12 months:

- » Apprenticeship (1.64%)
- » Traineeships (1.64%)

How likely or very likely is it that young people will do any of the following in the next 5 years?

- » Travel overseas (85.25%)
- » Get a job (80.33%)
- » Undertake further studies at university (62.29%)
- » Start or work in a community organisation (49.18%)

Young people who intend to start their own business in the next 5 years:

- » 29.51% of young people said it would be very likely or likely

Young people who intend to undertake further studies at TAFE in the next 5 years:

- » 29.51% of young people said it would be very likely or likely

Young people who intend to undertake an apprenticeship/traineeship in the next 5 years:

- » 29.51% of young people said it would be very likely or likely

Health and Wellbeing

Young people care both about their mental and physical health.

Mental Health

When it comes to mental health, young people are reporting feeling stressed, anxious and depressed. They are also reporting these feelings at a younger age, and social media anxiety may be a contributing factor.

Despite mental health being a key issue of concern for young people, the 2018 Ryde Youth Survey indicated that young people are not accessing counselling services; with the existing mental health services being one of the least used services by young people. This points to challenges in promotion, visibility and access.

Additionally, there is stigma around accessing mental health support, with young people opting to get help online using the internet.

To address these issues, there is a need for culturally specific and tailored mental health initiatives as well as the need for more parent and carer buy-in. There is also the need for fit-for-purpose, youth-friendly mental health infrastructure, which is accessible to all young people in the local area.

Physical Health

Young people identified physical health and having a healthy lifestyle as a key issue of importance for them including the need for regular fitness and exercise as well as the need to have a healthy diet. However, service providers and parents told us that young people are not exercising, opting instead to spend a lot of their time on social media and on screens.

Young people also reported having to go to neighbourhoods away from Ryde to access services and facilities such as gyms, sports organisations etc.

Young people would like to access more outdoor and open area sporting and recreational facilities as well as have access to workshops and programs on healthy eating, meditation and yoga.

2018 Ryde Youth Survey Results

Services listed as very important or important to access in the Ryde area:

- » Recreational services (84.28%)
- » Youth-friendly GP (82.86%)
- » Counselling services (75.72%)
- » Youth services (78.58%)
- » Mental health services (64.28%)

Services listed as most used in the Ryde area in the last 12 months

- » GP/medical centre (51.43%)
- » Sports organisations (45.71%)
- » Personal fitness (31.43%)

Services listed as least used in the Ryde area in the last 12 months

- » Homelessness services (1.43%)
- » Youth services (4.29%)
- » Youth drop-in centres (5.71%)
- » Mental health services (7.14%)

“There is a stigma around accessing mental health support, with young people opting to get help online...”

Affordable Housing

Young people in Ryde are being impacted by and are concerned by the lack of affordable housing options. They do understand that this is a Sydney-wide issue but would like options to be considered to enable them to be able to live in Ryde as they get older.

Young people also reported concerns about the rapid growth of high-density developments, which was leading to congestion, lack of parking and the stretching of resources. Parents also reported that with the growth of subletting of apartments, residents felt that “they didn’t know who their neighbours are anymore.”

Young people reported a lack of local youth housing options as well as a lack of support and resources to help them find appropriate housing. Service providers reported a lack of accommodation options for young people experiencing homelessness, or at risk of homelessness.

Safety

Overall, young people feel safe in Ryde with 86.21% of young people indicating they feel ‘very safe’ or ‘safe’ in the 2018 Ryde Youth Survey.

Despite the general feeling of safety in Ryde, young people did highlight 4 issues that impact their sense of wellbeing in the community. These 4 issues were;

1. Safety in public places such as train stations, bus stops, parks, pedestrian crossings and public toilets especially at night
2. The prevalence of cyberbullying and bullying especially in high school environments
3. Their experiences of discrimination and racism in the community and the need for greater inclusivity in the community, and
4. The exposure to drugs and alcohol especially for underage young people

2018 Ryde Youth Survey Results

How many young people drank alcohol in the last 3 months:

38%

Top 3 places where young people were exposed to alcohol:

1. Parties (35%)
2. Friends (29%)
3. Home (26%)

How many young people were exposed to drugs:

7%

Top 3 places where young people were exposed to drugs

1. Parties (19%)
2. Friends (12%)
3. University (10%)

“Young people reported a lack of local youth housing options as well as a lack of support and resources...”



PRIORITIES

for action

Transport

Young people in Ryde are avid and frequent users of public transport and overall are happy with the transportation options available in the area.

Young people and service providers indicated that there are many options for buses, trains and ferries but they did suggest the following improvements;

1. Better coordination and scheduling of timetables between buses, trains and ferries
2. Better promotion of the existing free shuttle services in the Ryde area
3. Increased frequency of buses especially in the Top Ryde, West Ryde, Eastwood and Macquarie areas, and
4. The need for advocacy to Transport NSW to ensure that all buses have clear and well-lit signage numbers

Arts & Culture

Young people appreciate the varied arts and cultural programs available to them like Ryde Youth Theatre, City of Ryde Eisteddfod and the Film Festival. In the last 12 months, 36.67% of young people in Ryde had taken part in arts/ cultural and theatre activities whilst 46.67% had attended music events, festivals and gigs, according to the 2018 Ryde Youth Survey.

Young people would however like to see more activities all year around as well as more culturally specific activities.

The primary issue highlighted by both service providers and young people is the lack of creative spaces for young people e.g. recording and theatre spaces and graffiti walls. There were also suggestions for young people in the Arts to be recognised more and celebrated in the community.

1. Young people are empowered, enabled and prepared for future education and employment
2. Young people are healthy, active and are able to live positive lives
3. Young people have access to affordable housing options and are able to live, work and play in Ryde
4. Young people are safe and are celebrated for their diversity

2018 Ryde Youth Survey Results

What type of transport do young people use everyday?

1. Walking (71.67%)
2. Bus (70%)
3. Car as a Passenger (70%)

In an average week, how often do young people use public transport?

1. More than 10 times per week (40%)
2. About 5-10 times per week (33.33%)
3. Less than 5 times per week (18.33%)

“Young people appreciate the varied arts and cultural programs available to them...”



REFERENCES

City of Ryde Youth Discussion Paper 2019 – 2023 is connected to key local, state and federal policy frameworks.

Young people are important to all areas of council. The City of Ryde Youth paper 2019 – 2023 is linked to the following City of Ryde strategies and plans:

- » City of Ryde, *2028 Community Strategic Plan*
- » City of Ryde, *Sport and Recreation Strategy 2016 – 2026*
- » City of Ryde, *Disability Inclusion Action Plan*.

Other state and federal guiding policies include:

- » Greater Sydney Commission, *North District Plan*
- » NSW Youth Health Framework 2017 – 24
- » NSW Department of Education, *The Wellbeing Framework for Schools*
- » NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Premier's Priorities*
- » NSW Family and Community Services, *Targeted Earlier Intervention program reform (TEI)*
- » *Mission Australia Youth Survey 2017*
- » *National Strategy for Young Australians 2010*

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THANK YOU

Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Ryde would like to acknowledge the Darug people who are the traditional custodians of this land. The City of Ryde would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present of the Eora nation.

Other Acknowledgements

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