



SHIRE OF DANDARAGAN YOUTH PLAN

| 2018 - 2023

69 Bashford Street
JURIEN BAY WA 6516
Telephone: (08) 9652 0800
Email: council@dandaragan.wa.gov.au
www.dandaragan.wa.gov.au

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SUMMARY



The Shire of Dandaragan, through its Strategic Community Plan to 2026, is committed to being a community that ‘supports and develops youth’, a philosophy which underpins this youth planning process.

For the purposes of this report, ‘youth’ is defined as people between the ages of 12 and 24¹ years. In the 2011 census, there were 419 young people in the Shire and this equates to over 13 percent of our population.

In previous years, the community development team have facilitated youth activities and programs based on a leadership and development focus, rather than ongoing youth engagement. Programs have included funding students to attend leadership conferences with their school group, scholarships for the Leeuwin Voyages which are heavily weighted towards teamwork and responsibility; and visits to Council Chambers as part of a school activity day.

This style of engagement has resulted in a limited understanding of what young people truly want and where improvements can be made. It is for this reason that we are developing this Plan as a strategic initiative to support the Shire’s fostering of a youth-friendly community in which young people are treated with respect, as well as feeling safe, welcome and included. The aim is to establish processes where young people’s needs and wants are truly represented to Council, and where they are able to share their aspirations and priorities for their own communities.

The Shire of Dandaragan Youth Plan 2018–2023 identifies the youth interests, issues and aspirations of the four towns in our Shire - Badgingarra, Cervantes, Dandaragan and Jurien Bay - and establishes priorities and strategies to guide the Shire over the next five years. It informs the way in which youth services are managed and provides the framework for a collaborative approach with the following key benefits:

- Enable young people to bring new, creative and energetic ideas and solutions to their communities
- Improve the quality of services provided to young people by designing projects, services and policies to meet young people’s self-identified needs, rather than the needs presumed by adults. Targeted projects and services are better received and more cost effective.
- Activities, projects and services are relevant to young people.
- Inclusion of young people can help address exclusion from society, and build social cohesion and social capital. Active involvement of young people can create vibrant local democracies and increase community cohesion.
- Young people are able to build on existing skills and develop new ones, increasing self-confidence and self-esteem.
- Involve young people which can raise their aspirations and create an empowering environment.
- Develop current young leaders and future adult leaders
- Provide opportunities for young people to express themselves which breaks down negative stereotypes.

1. Youth is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood. Increasingly, there is the recognition of ‘youth’ as a distinct and discrete developmental stage. There is no agreed age range defining youth parameters. The United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines those persons between the ages of 15 and 25 as youth, however, in local government it is common to see the youth cohort defined as 12 to 25 years of age - distinct from those under 12 who would be defined as ‘children’.

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- Enable young people to become active citizens in their community.
 - Decisions reached through consultation can result in greater legitimacy and credibility within the community.

Research and reports from federal, state and local agencies, as well as consultant, Jane Forward, have provided additional context and background, as well as helping to establish some guiding principles, including the preference for creative techniques for consultation - ideally peer-designed and led. However, it is the findings of a community consultation process, with over 120 young people, which have shaped this youth plan.

What emerged from the consultation was that no significant social or behavioural issues were identified. Rather than developing a plan aimed at reducing an identified youth issue, the Council has the opportunity to focus its resources on the development of young people and on laying the foundations for future generations of young people. This places the Shire of Dandaragan in an ideal situation in which it can develop its youth plan from a proactive - as opposed to reactive - position. Although leadership as a theme was not reflected as a focus area from the consultation process, leadership can be incorporated into other identified focus areas as an outcome which will continue the work previously undertaken by Council and the Shire.



Jurien Bay Emergency Cadet Corps Camp at Sandy Cape

The four key focus areas that emerged from the information we received from young people in our communities were:

PARTICIPATION

Providing opportunities for young people to feel they are important within their community.

WELLBEING AND SAFETY

Supporting young people to be independent, confident and resilient leaders with opportunities for their future in a safe community.

COMMUNICATION

Sharing information and engaging with young people in a way that respects their contribution and is guided by their needs

OUR ORGANISATION

Forming strong partnerships and involving youth in decision making.

A number of strategies have been identified to support these key focus areas, and these are further developed in the Action Plan. This Youth Plan also commits us to working in partnership, as its implementation will require cooperation with others - internally, as well as with external agencies, service providers and a wide range of community members.

This is a 5-year Youth Plan and progress against targets will be monitored and evaluated annually.

BACKGROUND



In 2016, the Shire of Dandaragan received funding from the (then) Department of Local Government and Communities to undertake consultation and engagement for the preparation of a youth plan under the Youth Friendly Communities program. In developing our inaugural Youth Plan, it is important to understand modes of delivering youth development across all strata of government – federal, state and local (including not-for-profit organisations). The Australian Government's National Strategy for Young Australians² (adopted in 2010), recognises the challenges that young people face in today's society with a vision for all young people to grow up safe, healthy, happy and resilient and to have the opportunities and skills they need to learn, work, engage in community life and influence decisions that affect them. The strategy aims to empower young people to build their own lives, learn to take responsibility for their actions, build resilience in life's challenges and build a healthier, safer and more productive Australia. To achieve these, the government focuses on priorities, which include:

- improving the health and wellbeing of all young people,
- equipping young Australians to shape their own futures through education,
- taking part and being active in their communities,
- increasing their skills and personal networks to gain employment,
- enabling young Australians to participate confidently and safely online.

2. National Youth Strategy for Young Australia, Commissioned by Australian Federal Government, 2010. www.youthpolicy.org/national/Australia_2010_National_Youth_Strategy.pdf

3. Our Youth – Our Future – Youth Strategic Framework for 2016, Commissioned by WA State Government - Department of Local Government & Communities, 2016. www.dlgc.wa.gov.au/Publications/Pages/Youth-Strategic-Framework.aspx

The State Government of Western Australia, through its strategy Our Youth – Our Future³, builds upon the strength of efforts across State Government agencies and presents a shared vision and priority of directions, informed by young people and with support from the youth sector.

The outcomes and priority areas emphasise having healthy, happy and safe young people, who live life to the full, make a difference and have a focus on learning, working and future financial independence.

The State Government also supports the role of the Commissioner for Children and Young People, who provides advocacy for children and youth through research and consultation with children, young people and key stakeholders across the state, making recommendations to the State Government.

This Community Youth Plan has been developed as a strategic initiative to support the Shire of Dandaragan in fostering a youth-friendly community in which young people are treated with respect, as well as feeling safe, welcome and included. However, in order to provide clear information to the community about how the Council can work to support young people, it is important to identify the precise roles that the Shire will undertake.

Role clarity will ensure that the Shire works within its financial and employee capabilities while still producing positive outcomes for the community as a whole and further informing the strategies to be undertaken.

Previously, the Shire has focused on supporting opportunities that build leadership in young people. Although we will continue to work in this area, this Plan will see an expansion of our role into providing a broader level of support, information and consultation across the key areas that young people identified. This means that we will have a stronger focus on working with young local people to understand the issues that affect them and assist them to be involved in decision-making in their community in ways that previously may not have been clear to them.

At the local level this Youth Plan sits under the Shire of Dandaragan 2016 - 2026 Strategic Community Plan and Shire of Dandaragan Corporate Business Plan, specifically aligning with Objective 3.5 : to be supporting and developing youth for a strong and connected community.



OUR VISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

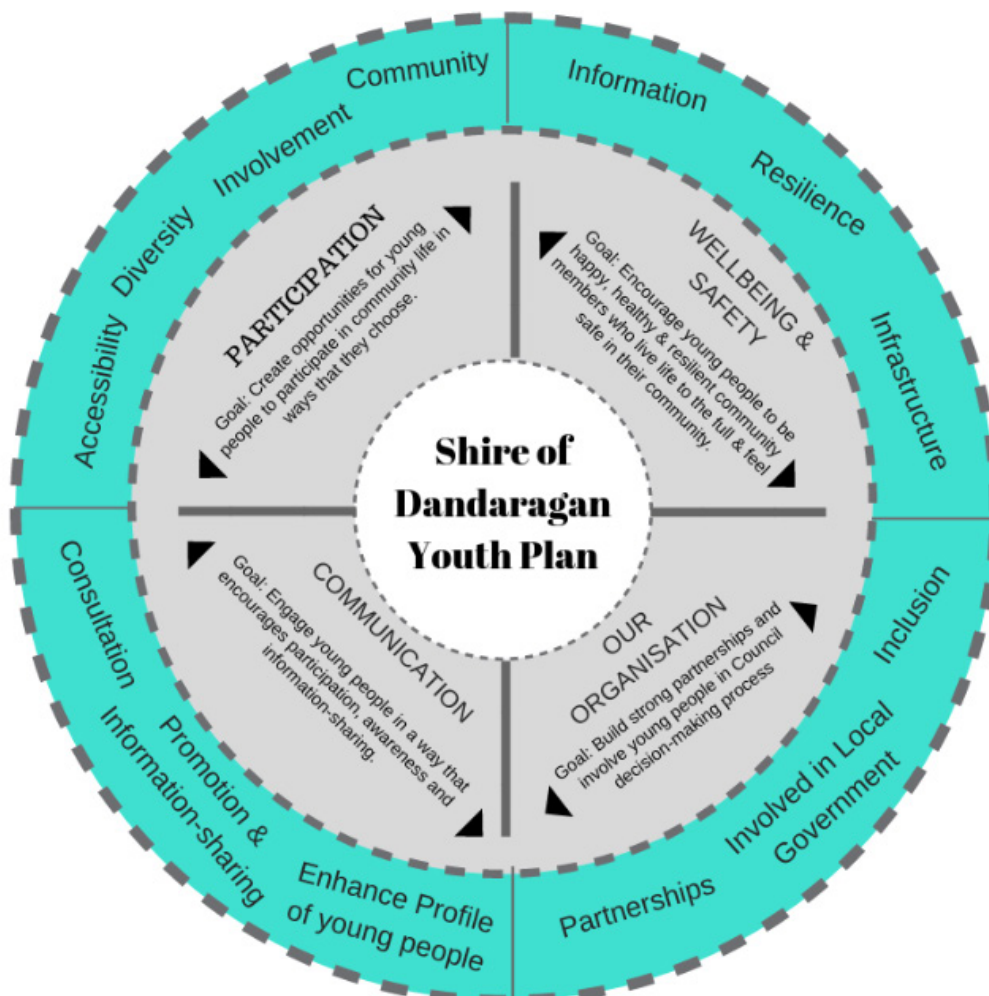


The Shire of Dandaragan is an inclusive and diverse community, where local young people feel respected, safe, valued, and are supported to become resilient individuals. It is a community where local youth have access to information that affects them, have a range of different educational and employment opportunities, and which allows young people to take active roles in local groups, and be part of the decision making that affects them.

KEY FOCUS AREAS



We have listened to the feedback young people gave us and used as much of the information received from the community as possible in developing the following key focus areas, goals and strategies. For more details on the strategies and expected outcomes outlined below, go to Appendix A.



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

In planning, developing and implementing programs for young people we are guided by the following broad principles⁴:

1. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Interest and support from local government councillors and staff is needed to create youth friendly communities, including through:

- governance structures that support the planning and development of youth friendly communities
- youth-related strategies and policies e.g. youth strategy and/or youth engagement strategy (so that youth views influence decisions taken)
- local government councillor and/or staff on youth project reference groups.

2. PARTNERSHIP IN THE COMMUNITY

The development of youth friendly communities needs the support of a range of stakeholders. Youth friendly communities should be widely promoted and ways to engage young people negotiated with community partners. Partners include:

- the local community (including young people)
- local youth service providers
- schools, colleges and universities
- local businesses
- representatives and advocacy groups such as the Commissioner for Children and Young People and the Youth Affairs Council of WA (YACWA).

3. RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

The process of creating youth friendly communities requires the trust of young people and their families. Genuine relationship building with young people enhances their participation in making communities youth friendly. For example:

- provide support and resources for staff for relationship building
- communicate with young people and demonstrate the benefits of their participation in creating youth friendly communities
- consider issues around consent and confidentiality
- help young people build connections with the rest of the community.

4. CONSIDER YOUTH VIEWS IN COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Use an approach to developing youth friendly communities that relates to existing plans, policies and strategies, e.g. Strategic Community Plan, local government plans, policies and strategies.
- Use the outcomes from engaging with young people about youth friendly communities to inform the Strategic Community Plan and local government strategies, policies and plans (new ones and those being reviewed).
- Turn the findings into actions; involve young people in implementing these.

4. Youth Engagement Grants Ten Key Principles, Department of Local Government and Communities, 2018. <https://www.dlhc.wa.gov.au/GrantsFunding/Pages/Youth-Engagement-Grants-Program.aspx>

5. OWNERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP BY YOUNG PEOPLE

It is important for young people to drive any consultation about youth friendly communities. They need to be involved in research, planning, implementing and facilitating the engagement process. This can be achieved by the following:

- youth led, peer-to-peer approach
- adapt to ways young people do things, e.g. communicate, interact, create
- provide opportunities for skills development, e.g. research, planning, consultation, facilitation, use of cameras and video
- provide ongoing support and mentoring for young people.

6. DIVERSITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people are not all the same - they have different backgrounds, experiences, needs and aspirations. A range of innovative approaches are needed to include the diversity of young people in the community and to address barriers to participation. All young people's voices should be heard, including:

- young people with disability
- Aboriginal young people
- young carers
- young people in care
- newly arrived migrants and refugee young people
- marginalised or vulnerable young people (including those who are in the youth justice system)
- young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

7. CONSULT YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES

Young people want to be part of the broader community. It is essential to consult young people about community-wide issues, not just about youth issues. Youth friendly communities are not just about infrastructure and facilities, but also include:

- education, training and employment
- community support and health services
- leisure, recreation and social life
- public spaces, buildings and natural environments
- communication and information
- civic participation and volunteering
- transport and housing
- respect and inclusion.

8. FLEXIBLE APPROACH TO CONSULTING YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people have their own ways of doing things and have multiple commitments and interests, e.g. school, work, family, social media. Consideration should also be given to access to transport and limited financial resources.

Let young people decide the best approaches to use

- Use a range of methods to engage young people, both traditional and non-traditional (innovative) methods
- Choose appropriate venues and times for consulting young people
- Use existing committees, groups, forums and events to engage youth, but also collaborate with local service providers to engage other young people
- Use of social media and online tools where appropriate
- Adapt existing consultation tools or try new ones.

9. FUN AND INNOVATIVE

It is important to make the youth engagement process rewarding and enjoyable for everyone involved, especially young people. The way consultation is done determines the quality of ideas, creativity and participation.

- Let young people design and deliver activities
- Go to where young people hang out
- Use arts and culture programs, games and creative activities
- Find innovative ways to reach those over 18 years.

10. EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

Young people need to hear about the results of their involvement and that their input has been valuable and worthwhile. Young people's views on improving their community should be communicated to other community members.

- Evaluate and provide feedback on the engagement process.
- Communicate the consultation findings to young people.
- Showcase youth participation and promote positive images of young people.
- Make findings from the youth consultation available to the whole community.

THE PLAN

The Youth Plan establishes focus areas and strategies which identify interests, issues and aspirations of the community in relation to youth, and informs the way in which youth services are managed within the Shire. The Youth Plan will inform the way in which youth services are developed and implemented at an operational level, so it will be used on a daily basis. We also intend it to be a 'living' document, regularly reviewed, so that it can remain flexible and responsive to any changing needs, circumstances and opportunities.



YACtivate 2018 Group by LHD Visuals

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION METHODOLOGY



With financial assistance from the Youth-Friendly Communities Grants Program (DLGC), the Shire of Dandaragan appointed an external expert to work with staff and local young people in the creation of a development report in a process which was respectful and inclusive of a wide range of youth voices. To support this process, an initial investigative workshop was held in May 2016 with young people to provide feedback on the intended consultation materials, whilst also identifying potential project advisory members. A key decision of the workshop was the importance of promoting the Council's youth app as a communication and engagement mechanism, and to proceed with an online survey. The online survey was open between August and October 2016. In all, 121 responses were received with a dominance of responses from young age groups. In an attempt to counterbalance this, and to ensure that an older youth voice was captured, it was agreed to run a series of face-to-face workshops at Jurien Bay District High School. The school-based workshops were held in March 2017, and captured the voices of all year 8, 10, 11, and 12 students. The workshops provided an opportunity to continue to promote the Shire and its services as well as the youth app.

SURVEY RESPONSES OVERVIEW

A total of 121 surveys were completed:

- 80 were from the 11-14 age group from lower secondary school
- 36 were from the 15-17 age group from upper secondary school
- 4 were from the 18-21 age group from the workforce
- 21 lived on a farm
- 7 attended boarding school
- 119 were full time students (47% of whom have a part time job)
- 1 was in full-time employment and 1 was unemployed.

Areas which the young people lived included:

- Jurien Bay (town) - 57 respondents
- Jurien Bay (rural) - 35 respondents
- Cervantes (town) - 13 respondents
- Badgingarra (town) - 2 respondents
- Badgingarra (rural) - 11 respondents
- Dandaragan (rural) - 1 respondent



FINDINGS



Analysis of the information from the Community Consultation process and key stakeholders, as well as from other recent youth feedback, provides useful insights and guidance as to how the Shire might provide services for young people.

FEEDBACK	KEY MESSAGES
How do young people think the Shire of Dandaragan could be improved?	
<p>Improving sports grounds with more nets, more courts, & places to play soccer; bouncy pillow; free Wifi, fixing power surges & better broadband; skate park / youth space; outdoor cinema; more events & festivals were all suggestions for improving the Shire.</p> <p>Boredom and lack of things to do was consistently reported by young people across all areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people are not 'one' group and switch between multiple, often diverse interests. Include more technology activities. • Jurien Bay has an amphitheatre which is rarely used - use and promotion of use can be improved. • Include young people in consultations about use or design of community spaces to meet the need for chill-out options.

What are the key concerns of young people?	
<p>Top four concerns reported were 'my future', the environment, crime and safety, bullying.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise building resilience for wellbeing. Explore opportunities to support issues through relevant service providers. • Focus on information provision and, where practical, introduce relevant themes to existing programs and activities.

What services/facilities do young people currently use?	
<p>Top three amenities that young people use are the beach, parks and sporting facilities.</p> <p>Go-karting / motocross, more sports facilities and cafes were reported as the main facilities and services which they would like to access more.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making facilities more youth-friendly could improve how welcome young people feel when accessing them. • Looking at opportunities to improve facilities or support existing ones such as motocross and go-karting may improve accessibility of these spaces for young people. • Cafes may be perceived by young people and the broader community as not particularly youth-friendly which may indicate a need for change in culture of local businesses, or the need for a dedicated youth space adjacent to other youth-focused facilities.

What stops you from using facilities/services or how could they be improved?	
<p>Most young people were generally okay with facilities and services however opportunities for improvement were noted across all areas in the Shire. Of particular note was low levels of satisfaction with public toilets, and access to a community youth gym.</p> <p>Parental restriction, no one to go with, lack of information, and no travel options were the most common reasons reported for young people not accessing facilities and services.</p> <p>Many respondents comment on their desire to see the beaches in their area more fully developed to be spaces for activities and fun - pontoons, a pool, bouncy pillow, beach volleyball, more shade, better toilet facilities, and general activities at the beach and foreshore. It was acknowledged that these improvements would increase tourism as well as increase facilities and activities for local young people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local recreation centres or youth groups could develop community gyms open to young people with barriers removed • Targeted event activities where transport is organised to collect young people to attend community facilities would improve access to existing facilities and highlight that young people are welcome in various spaces around their communities. • Communication improvements are needed to share information with young people about what is available for their use and when. • Transport for young people continues to be a challenge for young people participating in their communities. • Include young people in consultations about use or design of community spaces to meet the need for chill-out options, fun activities and youth-accessible spaces that also ties in with tourism development.

How can Council communicate better with young people?	
<p>42% indicated that they don't know what is going on around the Shire and would like more information.</p> <p>75% of young people felt that the Council does not listen to them.</p> <p>Young people reported that mostly they obtain information through 'word of mouth'; IGA notice board (Jurien Bay); and local & school newsletters.</p> <p>Those surveyed said they would like to communicate face-to-face with Shire officers and friends or through direct email, mail or text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adult perception that all information is via Facebook is not necessarily correct. • New channels of information are needed to ensure young people are given the information they want. • Shire officers must utilise a variety of social media platforms, and keep up-to-date with any new opportunities or changes in preference. • Shire staff must be involved with a variety of activities that put them face-to-face with young people in order to share information. This could be at school assemblies, youth group sessions, at youth spaces, sport facilities, etc. • Schools are challenged with existing internal pressures and reliance on them as a distribution channel is unreliable. Young people reported that the best way to communicate with them was through more direct channels. • Establishing a YAC could provide a new opportunity for sharing and gathering of information between the Shire and young people.

What facilities and services young people think the Shire should provide.	
<p>100% of young people think Shire should continue to provide parks. From there, the most common responses were medical services; fire control / prevention; environmental services; toilets and sports grounds. A community gym and library also ranked high, as did reconciliation planning and a youth centre.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people have a realistic view of what the Shire does and doesn't provide. • In relation to recreation provisions, a place to attend gym and exercise for health and social needs continued to be placed high in the aspirations for young people, and identifies a desire for a good, healthy lifestyle. • Young people are aware of the need for reconciliation and that it should be formalised by Council. • Young people are not only concerned with what Shire can provide for them, but also the ways that the Shire can improve the lives of the inclusion and connectedness of diverse groups within the community.

What else did young people tell us?	
<p>They don't want to leave their towns. Improved local employment, more business choice (shops) and those choices being more affordable would prevent the constant and inevitable travel to Perth for shopping and work.</p> <p>They said they felt they were forced to leave the towns they love.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having either a parent or their own transport is crucial for young people to have choice around purchases and employment due to the lack of local transport options. • Shire support of business development is crucial to allow young people the choice of whether they leave or stay in their towns.
<p>Drugs are a significant concern to young people in the Shire, not only concern for use amongst peers but amongst adults in their life. Peer pressure to participate was high and they felt that there was a clear link between boredom and drug experimentation. Several references were made to underage drinking, however because it was not resulting in anti-social behaviour, it was 'going under the radar'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drugs are not a youth issue, they are a community issue. • A collaborative approach is needed that involves other agencies and groups to ensure young people are safe and supported. • Damaging trends and behaviours don't necessarily result in openly anti-social behaviour, however the impact will still be negative. • The Shire of Dandaragan will need to take a proactive approach to prevent anti-social behaviours becoming more explicit and evident within the community.
<p>Young people love living in the Shire of Dandaragan and are proud of their towns - the relaxed country; friendly community; and everyone knowing each other was why they believed the Shire is awesome.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people are an asset to our towns and not an 'issue' to be resolved. • Young people can be our Shire's greatest advocates • Young people feel safe and secure in the Shire and should be supported to remain so, if they choose.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?



Goals and strategies directly linked to the findings and feedback gathered from this process will be included in the Shire of Dandaragan Strategic Community Plan which will drill down to an Action Plan incorporated into the Shire's Corporate Business Plan.



EVALUATION AND REVIEW



The Shire of Dandaragan Youth Plan 2018–2023 identifies youth issues, aspirations and interests of the towns in the Shire, and establishes priorities and strategies to guide the Shire over the next five years.

The Plan informs the way in which youth services are managed within the Shire of Dandaragan and sets out goals, strategies, actions, measures and outcomes against which our successes can be evaluated.

The community development team will monitor progress throughout the period of this plan and provide a summary report

As a living document, and as the youth sector is one that can change rapidly, a more comprehensive mid-term review of this Youth Plan will also be conducted in July 2020.

Goals and strategies directly linked to the findings and feedback gathered from this process will be included in the Shire of Dandaragan Strategic Community Plan which will drill down to an Action Plan incorporated into the Shire's Corporate Business Plan.

