

Mid North Coast regional consultation

On 17 September 2015, around 40 people who work with children and young people in the Mid North Coast came together to contribute to a new NSW strategic plan. This is what you told us.



What you thought was **working** for children and young people in NSW and in the Mid North Coast

Vulnerable young people: Case management programs e.g. PCYC for young offenders

Aboriginal children and young people: Aboriginal language program in schools, land care programs

Adolescents: drop in centres eg CHAIN, Headspace

Recreational activities: Environment, beach, skate park, sports, parks

Services: pathways to mental health support, Headspace, Bellingen Youth Hub pilot, family referral service, holistic approach to supports

Collaboration: Excellent consultation and sharing across services and with government, partnerships, youth led initiatives and events, liaison officers and legal reps (Police, PCYC, indigenous, schools), use of Chapter 16a for open communication, problem solving and innovation

Education efforts: Trying alternative programs for special needs, schools and parents engagement, improved transitions to schools, good for non-vulnerable families, options including CHEC, TAFE and university

Other: Opportunity to connect to community, recognising success in the media, welcoming of diverse communities



What you thought was **not working** for children and young people in NSW and in the Mid North Coast

Education and training: outcomes, enrolment processes (captain's call); lack of support for behavioural problems; ESL—earn or learn pressures for kids; lack of innovative pathways for young people not suited or capable of engaging in classroom environment; **not enough flexibility for education→employment pathways;** driven by HSC; lack of support for at risk and disadvantaged children and young people

Employment: job opportunities limited, need to move to the city

A lack of funding or funding certainty: instability and lack of security, staff turnover

Transport in general: for older kids, **no access to public transport*** and limited private transport, bus service expensive

Service workforce and systems: need multidisciplinary training, training in cultural awareness, speed of responses, too much paperwork

Community safety: high crime rates, unsafe children's parks eg needles

An overloaded system: need to further strengthen planning and relationships between agencies, not enough resources for mental health needs (Headspace overloaded); DV support for children, refuges full; lack of support for Aboriginal and CALD groups; no time for professional development; lack of affordable, safe, secure housing; not enough allied health (eg OT/speech)

Children with additional/complex needs: access to behavioural disturbance management support;

Vulnerable young people: youth homelessness, drugs and alcohol, not enough services for complex needs, lack of support for leaving care and LGBTQI

Recreational activities: cost, environmental education, design of skate park (no young person involvement) (Nambucca)

Communication: opportunities for engagement; lack of representation from young people at local government level; bullying in social media; lack of trust by children and families in service providers; lack of knowledge of options and supports available

*We've bolded popular issues

What you thought were **priorities** for children and young people in NSW and in the Mid North Coast

Issues:

- Safety
- Affordable available housing with support
- Health
- Financial literacy
- Increase employment opportunities
- DV
- Generational change
- Drugs esp Ice
- Mental health support services
- Life skills education
- Child protection
- Transportation
- Social media/exploitation
- Support for parents
- Punitive nature of government income support policies

Approaches:

- Strength-based community development
- Focusing on attachment in parenting support
- Role models for young people
- Responding to individual need
- Schools as Communities
- Avoiding duplication
- Engaging kids in schools

Systems:

- Resources
- Responsiveness
- More early intervention
- Increasing access to education
- Including voice of young people in local government
- Staff training in cultural awareness
- Accessible service information
- Right people in right positions
- Centralised resources/efficient allocations



we asked you:

What **three big ideas** do you have that could, if supported across the state, improve the lives of children and young people?

and we gave you some prompt questions:

What **state-wide directions** currently support **effective local decision making and service delivery** for children and young people?

What **state-wide directions** currently hinder **effective local decision making and service delivery** for children and young people?

What makes for **good child-centred practice** in this area

How should **children and young people** be involved

What **local initiatives** could be adapted and scaled up across the state?

"Be trusted and respected"

Mid North Coast school children reporting back on what makes for a good society for children and young people.



you told us your big ideas for the strategic plan*

Jobs, training, innovation, education:

Collaboration: in government initiatives, RDA research (jobs of the future), strengthening the link between employers and job seekers, find funding from projects that aren't working

Innovate: Create a new project (local apprentice scholarships) that focuses on young people who want to learn a trade, where there is a local capacity for employment.

Strengthen school to work transition: Create practical work experience and options for early school leavers through a literacy/numeracy program with cert level qualifications. Links to TAFE.

Individualised, flexible learning plans that support (rather than punish) those that fall behind. Includes the capacity to "taste" new careers.

"Kindness, care, respect"

Mid North Coast school children reporting back on what makes for a good society for children and young people.

Effective service integration:

State level processes and protocols to support sharing information (eg Patchwork)

Programs/initiatives to build on, include

- Macleay Valley—16 schools working together: creating a vision of "the Place to Be", engaging with Aboriginal Community, changing the discussion to opportunity.
- Breaking the cycle in Kempsey, a generation plan.

Major agencies to meet up regularly with the "top 10" cases (current government culture can hinder—we need open, accountable relationships)

Transitions:

Inclusivity throughout transition—for parents, schools, students, community

A junior school program that covers the transition from primary to high school

School→work, a life skills program that caters to all different learners

*And lots of other ideas about how to make the strategic plan work that we also captured.

here are more big ideas for the strategic plan

Vulnerable youth and leaving care:

Funded mentoring model, creating lifelong links eg sister to sister program (but for both genders)

Funded support programs for 16-25 year olds, based on a partnership approach.

Rotary youth exchange—for only \$5k pp give young people an amazing year's life experience

Programs to support transitions, including a “starting out” package (with funding and support, addressing security of tenure). Linking funding to outcomes rather than cost (specifically, when YP stabilise, the funding should not be reduced)

Support for Aboriginal children and young people:

Extend support for 18+ for transitions out of support services

Devise meaningful measurement of program impacts

Strengths-based development programs

(And underpin this all with involvement of elders through facilitated consultation, empower leadership at all levels so children are heard, and scale up local successful innovations such as school lunches, funding school uniforms and storing them at school)

Vulnerable children and families:

Child centred plans and interventions

One door entry to services for all children and families and all that backs that, from assessment of ALL needs through case coordination and a service continuum. Includes long-term intensive family support and restoration support services.

Look at alternative DV strategies, eg the “Dallas Solution” (zero-tolerance initiative combining specialised police units, trained counsellors and a dedicated domestic violence court headed by a understanding judge)

More positive media around family roles, such as the dads ad.



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p. thank you.



keep communicating with us via
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"A chance to speak"

*Mid North Coast school children reporting back on what makes
for a good society for children and young people.*

