

Tabled by Mr Foley
during a ministerial
statement 9-4-2002

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LAI UPON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE
THE CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENT



Youth Participation
Action Kit

for Queensland Government

How government can engage with young people through the Youth Participation Strategy

The Youth Participation Strategy is an initiative of the Queensland Government to enhance opportunities for young people to engage with the Queensland Government and their communities.

One of the key initiatives of the strategy is the *Queensland Youth Charter: Queensland Government's Commitment to Engaging with Young People*.

The youth charter outlines the values and principles that underpin the government's commitment to young people. It also includes a model of participation for government departments to follow when working towards best practice models of engagement.

In addition to the youth charter, a number of strategies have been implemented to facilitate and encourage young people to participate in government decision-making processes and community life.

Four major components of the Youth Participation Strategy are:

- the Queensland State Youth Advisory Council, which advises the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth on youth issues
- the GENERATE youth website, which provides information and connections between young people and the Queensland Government
- the Get on Board initiative which aims to increase the numbers of young people on government boards and committees
- youth participation grants, which aim to resource young people to participate in their local communities.

Government departments and decision-making bodies can utilise existing initiatives to engage with young people. Contact the Office of Youth Affairs for more information on any of the following:

Queensland State Youth Advisory Council

What is it?

The council provides advice to the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and the Queensland Government generally on issues identified by young people and recommends strategies to address these issues.

Council membership consists of 15 young people aged 15 to 25 years, five community organisational representatives, one representative from local government and six representatives from government agencies.

The Office of Youth Affairs provides administrative and financial support for the operation of the Queensland State Youth Advisory Council.

How can I use it to engage with young people?

- You can seek advice from the council about appropriate ways to consult with young people when developing policies, programs or services.
- You can ask the council to put you in touch with regional youth networks. Each regional youth representative has extensive networks in their communities.
- You can ask council members to sit on boards, conduct evaluations, or work with you as a consultation partner.
- You can inform your client groups and communities you deal with about the council, thus providing a means for them to engage with government.

Youth website: www.GENERATE.qld.gov.au

What is it?

The GENERATE website provides information and connections between young people aged 15 to 25 and government. There are a number of components to the site.

Ministers On-line allows young people to discuss issues and raise questions with Queensland Government Ministers in an on-line chat environment. A schedule of chats is available on the site.

The *GENERATOR* facilitates discussion between young people across the state. The issues discussed by young people on the *GENERATOR* are raised in a regular report to Cabinet.

Legislation On-line facilitates feedback from young people on proposed or amended legislation that could affect their lives.

How can I use it to engage with young people?

- You can post proposed changes to legislation or discussion papers on issues that will affect the lives of young people on the site to obtain the perspective of young people.
- You can raise issues with young people by setting up chat facilities or discussion forums on the site on a particular topic.
- You can promote your programs, activities, resources or publications that are relevant to young people through various sections of the site.
- You can link relevant parts of your site to GENERATE, to connect young people to your own site.
- You can gauge current 'youth issues' by checking topics on the *GENERATOR* discussion board and subscribing to the on-line newsletter G-News.

Get on Board initiative

What is it?

The Get on Board initiative aims to increase the number of young people aged 18 to 25 on governance organisations such as boards and committees.

There are over 600 boards, committees and statutory authorities across Queensland. People aged between 18 and 25 are currently under-represented on these bodies and, as a result, the valuable perspective of young people is sometimes lacking.

Through the Get on Board initiative young people are encouraged to nominate themselves as potential candidates on the *Central Register of Nominees*. The *Central Register of Nominees* contains a listing of the people who have expressed interest in becoming a member of a government board or committee.

How can I use it to engage with young people?

- You can refer to the register for inclusion and representation of young people when developing membership for boards and committees.
- You can encourage young people to register themselves.

Resources for youth participation

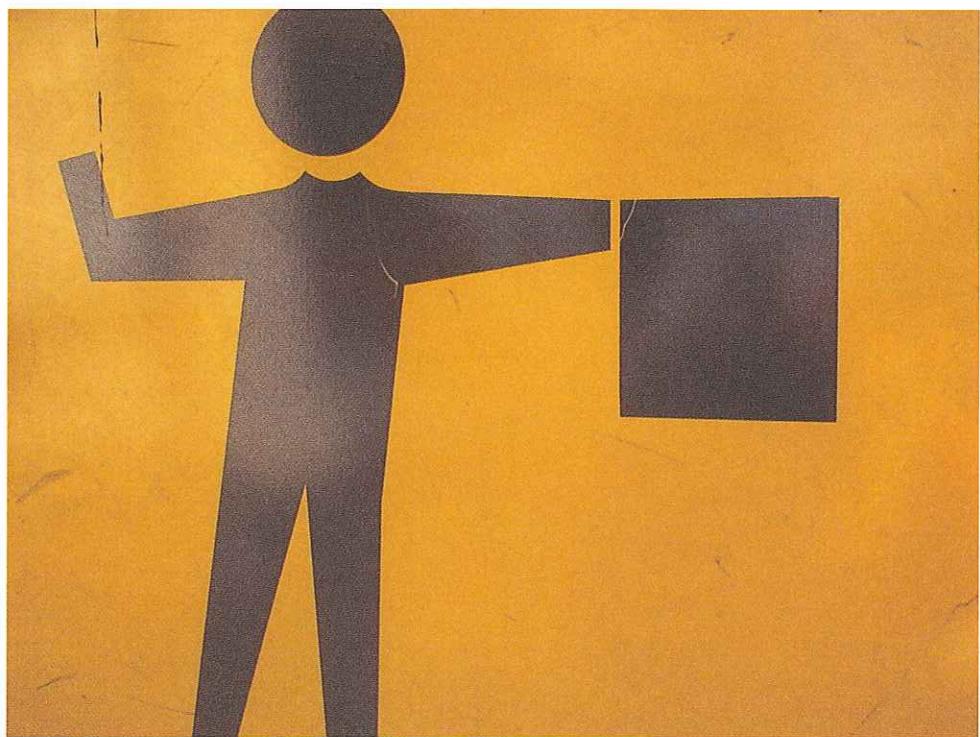
To assist Queensland Government departments when implementing the values and principles outlined in the *Queensland Youth Charter: Queensland Government's Commitment to Engaging with Young People* the Office of Youth Affairs has developed the *Youth Participation Action Kit*. The kit contains:

- *Queensland Youth Charter: Queensland Government's Commitment to Engaging with Young People*
- *Getting Young People on Board: how government can engage with young people through boards and committees*
- *Two-way Street: how government departments can engage with young people through consultation.*

To obtain a copy of the *Youth Participation Action Kit* or any of the publications mentioned above contact the Office of Youth Affairs or visit www.youth.qld.gov.au



Queensland Government
Department of Employment and Training



QUEENSLAND

YOUTH

CHARTER

QUEENSLAND YOUTH CHARTER

Queensland Government's Commitment
to Engaging with Young People

FORWARD

A Message from the Minister

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the *Youth Charter: Queensland Government's Commitment to Engaging with Young People*. The Youth Charter is a key component of the Government's youth participation strategy and demonstrates the Queensland Government's commitment to increasing young people's participation in government processes and therefore influencing decisions that impact upon their lives.

I acknowledge the work of the Queensland State Youth Advisory Council in providing leadership throughout the development of the Youth Charter and congratulate the Council, and all those involved, on an excellent result.

The Youth Charter will guide the Queensland Government in developing programs, policies and services that impact on young people.

The Youth Charter outlines the basic principles required to ensure the views of young people are not only heard but are included in decision-making processes. It serves as a practical guide to identifying the varying levels of participation and the standards required to achieve best practice in involving young people in the business of government.

It is through adherence to best practice that we will create a welcoming climate and real opportunities for young Queenslanders to play a positive role in the development of policies, programs and services that impact on their lives and the lives of their communities. The inclusion of young people in decision-making will result in a balanced, representative and democratic community that ultimately benefits all Queenslanders.

I urge you to incorporate the Youth Charter in departmental activities. The Youth Charter will effectively guide government in including young people in the development of policy, programs and services.



Matt Foley MP
Minister for Employment, Training and Youth
Minister for the Arts

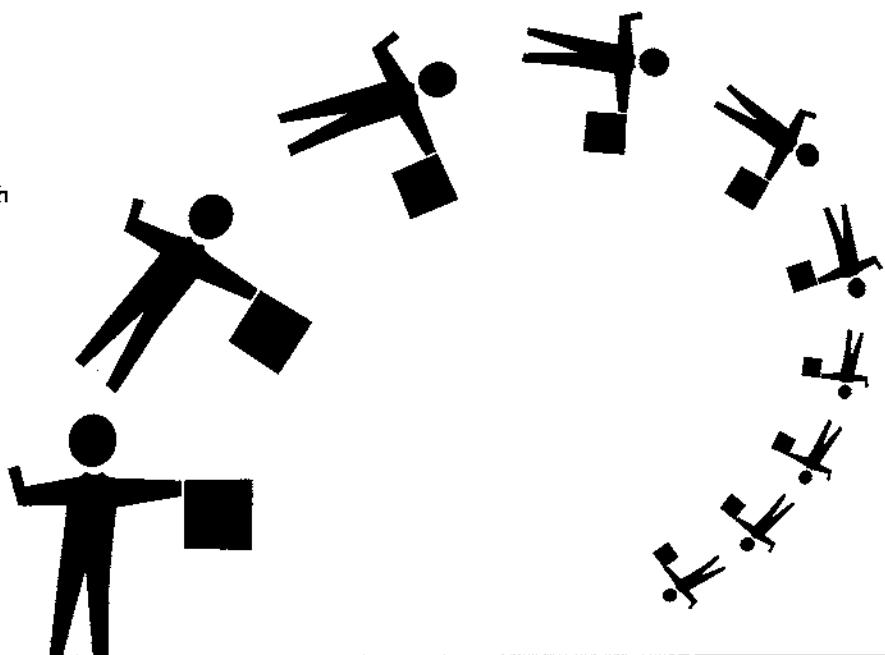
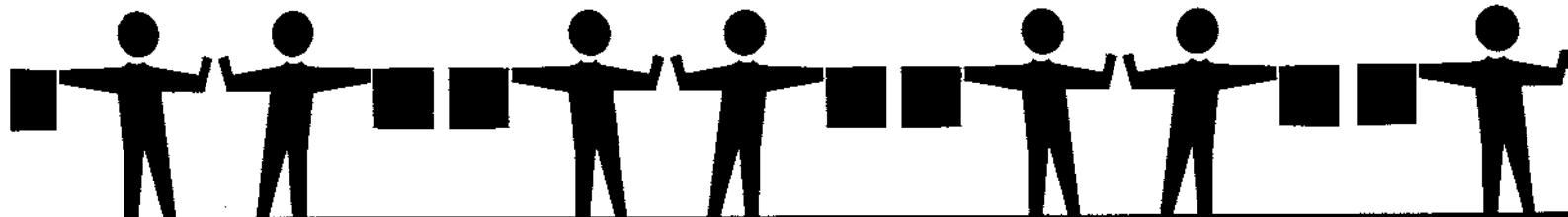


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STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

All Queenslanders have a right to participate in Queensland's processes of governance. Through the Queensland Youth Charter, the Queensland Government recognises its obligation to involve young people, aged between 12-25 years, in government decision-making regarding the development of policy, programs and services.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child acknowledges that those under 18 years of age have the ability, and therefore the right, to be involved in decision-making. Government will also seek the participation of those under the age of 12 when it is appropriate to do so.

Participation can take many different forms. At a minimum it is about young people having timely and meaningful opportunities to be involved and heard. Government will work *with* young people and seek their involvement. This will provide an avenue for young people to be responsive and will create a climate where young people are welcome, and feel safe to raise proposals or ideas for consideration.

Government will also consider young people's diversity in all aspects such as age, gender, cultural background, education, differing levels of ability, lifestyle choice and economic status. As such, government will provide considered and varied levels of support to young people to ensure access to decision-making processes.



PURPOSE

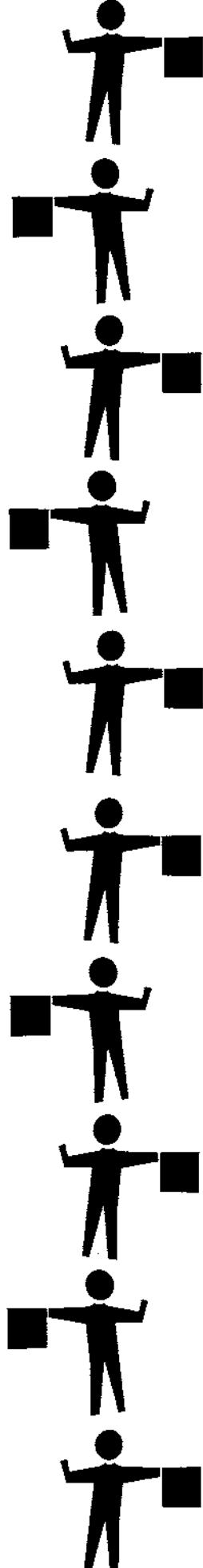
The Queensland Youth Charter sets a benchmark for best practice to assist government in fulfilling its commitment to involve young people in decision-making regarding the development of policy, programs and services.

VALUES

The following value statements regarding young people and participation underpin the principles outlined in this charter and establish a positive context for young people's participation in government processes.

Young people

- *Young people are valued members of the community.*
- *Young people are entitled to the same human rights and protections as all other members of the community.*
- *Young people are entitled to respect and dignity.*
- *Young people have unique and diverse gifts, knowledge and skills.*
- *Young people make valuable and significant contributions to society.*



VALUES

Participation

Government values young people's participation in its decision-making. It also recognises the power imbalance that can exist between young people and those who make decisions around the development of policy, programs and services. Government commits to engaging with young people for the wellbeing of present and future society.

This charter supports engagement and participation that:

- *recognises young people as citizens and empowers them to be involved in all aspects of community life*
- *provides young people with timely information about government processes*
- *maximises opportunities for programs and policies to be meaningful and effective for a diverse range of young people*
- *demonstrates respect and dignity for young people by listening to young people and considering their ideas and views seriously*
- *creates opportunities for young people to demonstrate, develop and use their skills and knowledge*
- *encourages democracy as a reality so that young people can play an active and positive part in government decision-making*
- *recognises that young people can shape society through their involvement in government decision-making*
- *requires supportive relationships between young people and other members of their communities that are based on respect, equality, and accountability*
- *provides linkages, networks and diverse pathways for young people to connect with government and community.*

PRINCIPLES

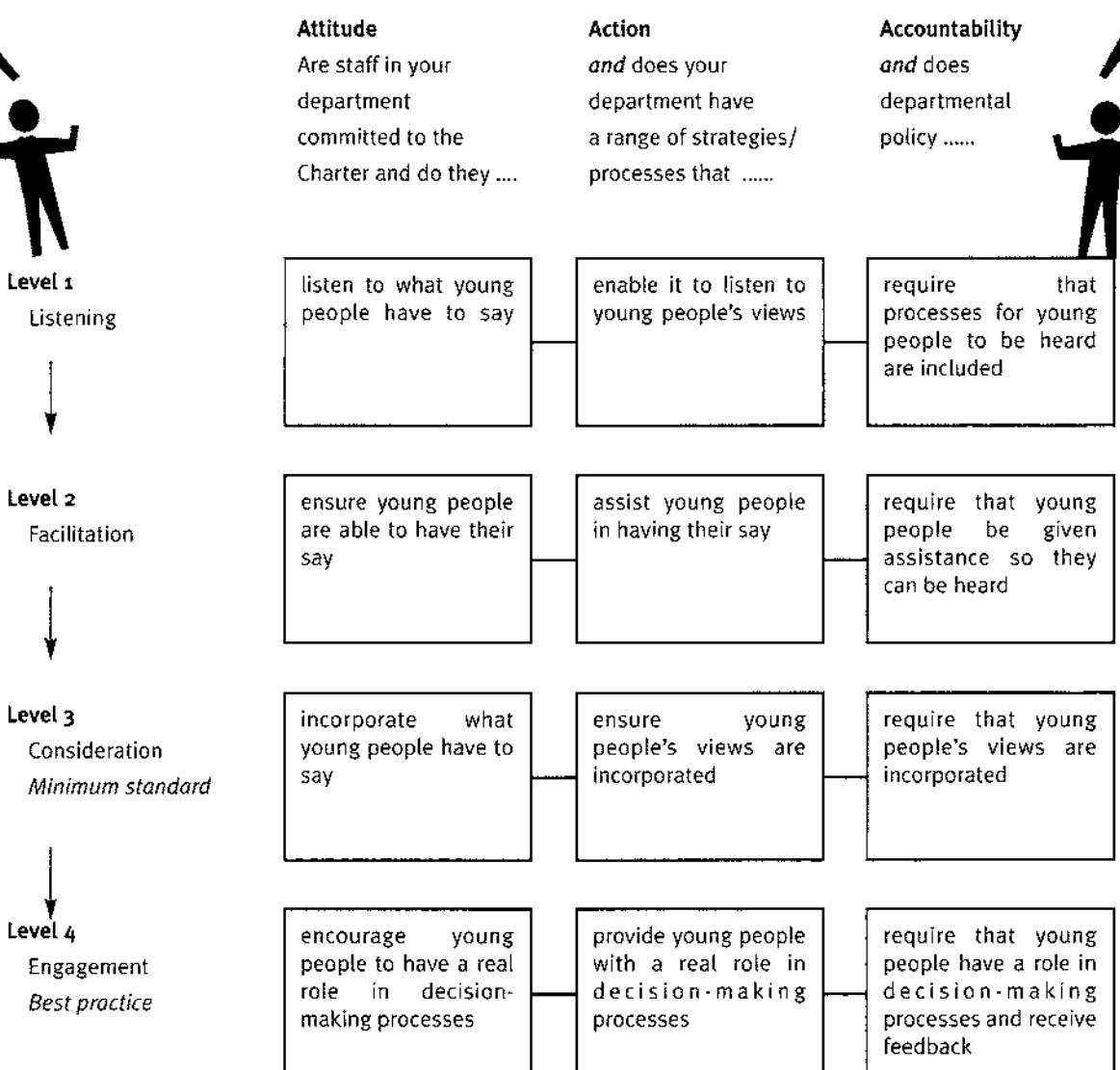
The Queensland Government is committed to the following principles which underpin young people's engagement and participation in government processes.

1. When making decisions about policies, programs and services, government has an obligation to actively engage with young people on relevant issues. This includes issues that directly impact on young people as well as broader community agendas.
2. Young people have a right to participate in government processes. They also have a right to choose whether they wish to participate or not, and the degree to which they wish to be involved.
3. Government has an obligation to ensure that it considers how the impacts of proposed changes to policies, programs and services impact on young people.
4. Participation will be beneficial to young people. It is intended to be a positive, meaningful experience which acknowledges young people's input and contribution. The government and community will also benefit through young people's active engagement in governance and decision-making processes.
5. A broad range of young people will be involved, with appropriate supports, to ensure that principles of access and equity are met, and the diversity of young people is recognised. This may include the use of an interpreter or the involvement of an advocate or peer.
6. Young people will have access to a diverse range of ways to participate or convey their ideas, for example, orally, in writing, through technology or through the arts.
7. Opportunities for young people to participate will be advertised and promoted in diverse and relevant ways and places.
8. Sufficient resources will be provided to enable young people to participate, including information about how they can be involved in democratic processes, adequate preparation to enable them to engage in processes, and necessary practical supports, for example, assistance with transport.
9. Young people are entitled to timely feedback on the outcomes of decisions made where young people have participated. Government will promote young people's contribution.
10. Opportunities will be created to enable young people to respond to government agendas and to share ideas and initiate matters for government consideration.
11. Where young people are involved in, or are subject to, the legal system or government administrative decision-making or review, government will ensure that they have the opportunity to participate. For example, government may engage with young people by:
 - explaining processes or proceedings in a meaningful, accessible and relevant manner
 - dealing with matters promptly and explaining anticipated time frames to young people
 - establishing practices and procedures which recognise the different needs of young people
 - providing support for young people's well-being before and after proceedings
 - ensuring processes to challenge decisions are available and accessible for young people.
12. The principles outlined are subject to the laws of the State of Queensland and the Commonwealth.

model of participation

Government interacts with the community at varying levels ranging from one-way information provision to collaborative engagement.

The following model outlines these varying levels of participation¹. The minimum standard of participation expected of government is the third level—consideration. However, in striving for best practice, Queensland government seeks to achieve level four—engagement.



¹ Derived from Shier (2001)

IMPLEMENTING THE YOUTH CHARTER

The Queensland Youth Charter provides guidance to government in its commitment to engaging with young people in the development of policy, programs and services. To implement the youth charter, government departments and agencies will:

1. integrate the values and principles outlined in this charter into the development of policy, programs and services processes
2. provide training for staff on the intent, content and implementation of this charter
3. establish diverse and accessible participation mechanisms, including those needed to:
 - provide and inform young people of opportunities to participate in the development of policy, program and services
 - promote young people's contribution and participation
 - provide young people with feedback on the decisions that have been made where young people have participated
 - monitor compliance with this charter's provisions
4. liaise with the Office of Youth Affairs, to obtain advice and assistance on how to best implement this charter
5. consider the impact of this charter upon the existing legislative framework in which government operates and ensure the values and principles in this charter are integrated into that framework as appropriate.

PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

The Office of Youth Affairs will work collaboratively with the Community Engagement Division in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to monitor whole of government implementation of the Queensland Youth Charter.

On an annual basis Queensland government departments will provide information about the actions and processes they have conducted to include young people in program, policy and service development. The Office of Youth Affairs will report this information to the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts and the Queensland State Youth Advisory Council for consideration.

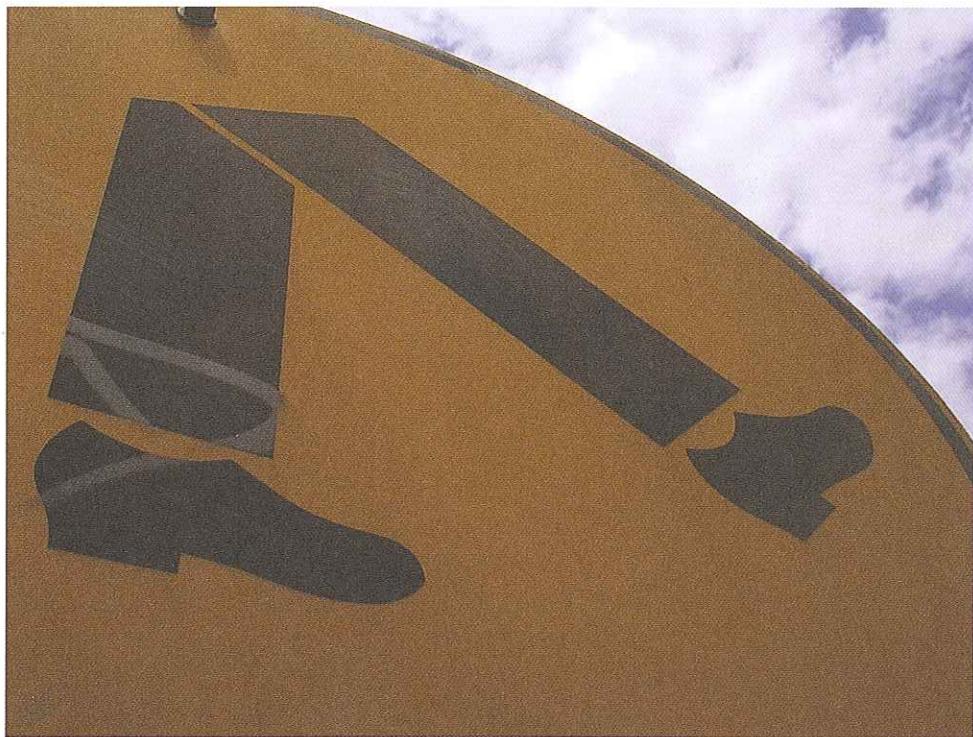
The State Youth Advisory Council, upon consideration, may provide advice and recommendations to the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts about ongoing improvements to the Queensland Youth Charter and its implementation by government.

In accordance with the spirit of this charter, the Minister will consider what action needs to be taken to address any concerns.



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GETTING YOUNG

PEOPLE

ON BOARD

GETTING YOUNG PEOPLE ON BOARD

How government can engage
with young people through
boards and committees

FOREWORD

The *Queensland Youth Charter: Queensland Government's Commitment to Engaging with Young People* demonstrates this government's recognition of the valuable contributions young people make to our State.

The values and beliefs that underpin this recognition, as well as the standards required to achieve best practise in involving young people in the business of government are outlined in the charter.

It is not enough to simply recognise the contributions of young people. We must also provide practical opportunities for young people to contribute to and enhance public policy.

Traditionally the contribution of young people has not been actively sought in government decision-making. Securing positions for young people on boards and committees will assist in ensuring their active engagement in government decision-making processes.

Getting Young People on Board: how government can engage with young people through boards and committees outlines the advantages and benefits of recruiting young people to Queensland Government boards and committees, and provides suggestions for how to achieve this.

I recommend this publication to you as a resource when identifying opportunities to engage with young people through government boards and committees.



Matt Foley MP
Minister for Employment, Training and Youth
Minister for the Arts



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PURPOSE OF hANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to resource the effective involvement of young people on governance structures – i.e. boards, committees and advisory groups. The handbook is divided into two sections with the first section outlining why young people should be recruited to Queensland Government Boards and Committees, and the second section provides suggestions about how this can occur.

This handbook is designed to be utilised in conjunction with the other resources in the Youth Participation Action Kit for Queensland Government Departments. Other resources include the *Queensland Youth Charter: Queensland Government's Commitment to Engaging with Young People, Two-way Street : how government departments can engage with young people through consultation*, and information on how to engage with young people through existing mechanisms. Referring to these resources will assist government representatives in harnessing the contribution of a diverse range of young people and ensure that the issues and interests of this large demographic group are represented across government.



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SECTION ONE

1. WHY INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE ON BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

A sense of responsibility to young people is not sufficient reason for structuring youth participation in governance, but it is the fundamental drive which underpins other motives for ensuring their engagement.

When decision-making affects young people, it is appropriate to support their right to participate in the structures and processes by which those decisions are determined.

Most people recognise the value of bringing a range of perspectives to decision-making processes, particularly in relation to problem solving and direction setting. Young people are often valued because of their ability to bring fresh perspectives to traditional ways of operating. As a result of being excluded from positions of power or influence, their point of view is usually that of the outsiders' as much as that of a young person.

Recruiting young people to a committee or board has many **advantages**. It can assist and support a board or committee to:

- Obtain a better understanding of **young people's issues and needs** to ensure that the department or agency does not overlook them.
- Increase **diversity of membership** and provide representative decision making, particularly if the board or committee has a significant youth target or interest in youth issues.

- Harness the **specific skills, knowledge, or expertise** held by young people.
- Provide young people with the **opportunity to develop valuable skills and experience** in governance and related procedures, which may lead to future leadership roles.
- Acknowledge that **participation is a fundamental right** for all people regardless of age.
- Encourage young people's involvement in the political process, to help mitigate the culture of mistrust often displayed toward young people, by **highlighting their capabilities**.
- Encourage young people to pursue careers in the public sector, as they will have a **better understanding of the workings of government**.

Young people can offer a creative and energetic perspective. Adults can benefit from working with young people at this level through experiencing the competence of young people; this may also enhance their own commitment and energy.

On being a young person on a board or committee...

"Being a young person on an Advisory Committee has made me aware of how difficult, yet important, it is to highlight the interests of a broad range of young people.

I've learnt to listen to the perspectives of others and am more aware of the expectations other members of my committee place on the contribution of young people.

On a personal level, I hope to develop my skills and knowledge of government processes, promote the ongoing and increased involvement of young people and earn a bit of extra money."

**Adam Barnes: Youth Representative,
Queensland Transport Planning Advisory Committee**



On working with young people on a board or committee...

"Young people are well equipped to look at issues rationally and we encourage them to consider their environments and help map out the future of their towns.

It's their input into the issues that affect them today, which will undoubtedly affect them and their families tomorrow.

After all, they are among the largest proportion of public transport, bikeway and cycleway users in Queensland!"

**Steve Bredhauer MP; Minister for Transport
and Minister for MainRoads**



SECTION ONE

1.1 The "Yes, it's a nice idea but..." Debate

It is often the case with new initiatives, particularly ones which challenge tradition, that it is put in the "too hard basket". The idea itself can be accepted, yet the practical aspects of implementing new initiatives become barriers in themselves. Some of the myths and benefits for including young people on boards and committees are explored below.

IT WON'T WORK BECAUSE....	BUT HAVE YOU CONSIDERED....
Young people are not really interested in the business of government.	Many young people have a very strong sense of social justice and a keen interest in the political process.
Meetings are too complicated and agendas too full to have to worry about a young person keeping up.	Many young people are avid learners. If the board or committee establishes sound induction processes which involve orientation, training, and mentoring, then younger board members will soon be able to contribute meaningfully.
Issues that are discussed are of a highly confidential nature.	Like all board members, younger members will need to be made aware of confidentiality requirements.
The business that this board or committee is concerned with would not interest young people.	Generally young people would not invest the time or energy in an issue unless it had the potential to have a significant impact on their lives. Young people are a diverse group and have many interests and skills. The key is to recruit young people who are specifically interested in the issue at hand. A sound selection process will ensure that the most appropriate young person is selected for the job.
Young people do not have the professional or life experience to be able to contribute meaningfully.	Young people may not have administrative or organisational experience, yet this is not always necessary for boards and committees given the role of Chair or secretariat. Young people have a great amount of energy, are aware of issues that impact on young people, and have a strong sense of commitment to democratic processes. They are often also mission driven and action oriented: keen to complete tasks and achieve outcomes.
Government is not really committed to the notion of youth participation.	The Queensland Government has identified the greater participation of young people in the political process as imperative.

There are many documented examples and cases, both nationally and internationally, where young people's involvement in governance structures has been successful. There are many young people who have gained invaluable experience on 'youth focussed' committees, including school councils, youth advisory committees, youth parliament, government roundtables, and the Queensland Government's State Youth Advisory Council. However, there are also many instances where young people have contributed successfully to other boards that are not solely concerned with youth issues. These include local government councils, committees of sporting bodies, community based management committees for non-government organisations and student bodies.

Generally it is accepted that boards and committees that have sound selection processes, provide induction and ongoing support, and actively encourage participation, find that the benefits of the involvement of young people outweigh initial concerns.



SECTION TWO

2. HOW TO INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE ON BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

2.1 The Role of Government Boards

Government boards have two broad roles. There are those which provide governance and those which provide policy and management advice. A detailed listing of the scope and functions of these boards can be accessed via the website, Governing Queensland: Welcome Aboard, A Guide for Members of Queensland Government Boards, Committees and Statutory Authorities at <http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/>.

A highly desirable feature of government boards is that they are reflective of the community or industry that they are established to serve. This entails seeking a diverse group of members with consideration given to age, gender, and culture. Although, for this purpose, age is the common denominator, it is important to recognise that, like adults, young people will vary in maturity, ability, and experience. Therefore, using age alone as a means to define involvement or level of contribution is not appropriate.

On working with young people on a board or committee...

"All the young people I've worked with take their roles on Boards and Committees very seriously.

Young people are brave enough to say things others wouldn't. I strongly believe young people's participation in government decision-making shouldn't be limited to what we define as 'youth issues'.

We might have a more caring and friendly community if we were able to talk more across age groups and get rid of stereotypes."

Paul Spooner: Community Organisations representative, State Youth Advisory Council



On being a young person on a board or committee...

"I was 19 when I served as a student representative on the Dalby Agricultural College Board.

I met a lot of people who were very helpful and supportive of the younger generation.

Not only has it broadened my horizons but I also have a better understanding of the opportunities available to young people today.

Now I understand how important Agricultural Colleges are to the future of Queensland's rural industry."

Ann Dent: Marketing and Promotions Co-ordinator, Dalby Agricultural College



INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

3. INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Meaningful involvement of young people on boards and committees relies on effective working relationships between all board members. This includes clear communication and decision making processes, as well as considering and addressing barriers to meaningful involvement.

To effectively involve young people on boards and committees, consider the following questions:

- What is the role and what are the expectations for young people on this board or committee and how does this role relate to the rest of the agency or department?
- How can the committee's role and function be structured to avoid tokenism and promote meaningful participation?

- How can support processes be structured to ensure that the young people involved will have or develop the skills needed to maximise their participation?
- What does the agency expect from this involvement and what can young people expect to gain from their involvement?
- What review processes can be established to identify the outcomes for the young participants, the board or committee, and related departments?

3.1 Addressing Barriers to Participation

There are a range of barriers that may affect young people's capacity to participate in formal decision-making forums. However with adequate thought and planning, these barriers can be overcome.

POTENTIAL BARRIERS	POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS
Large amounts of documentation and papers requiring substantial reading and comment.	Providing adequate time for meeting preparation and provision of appropriate resource material, i.e. lists of acronyms, background material.
Lengthy meetings and overly formal meeting procedures.	Ensuring meetings are time limited and that members have opportunities for some informal conversation.
Lack of skills, for example in committee-related roles and responsibilities, or budgetary issues.	Identifying appropriate training options for all board members.
Feeling intimidated by the status of some adults on boards and committees (e.g. Ministers, Chief Executive Officers etc).	Allowing opportunities for board members to be acquainted and delineating roles and responsibilities of members.
Lack of support.	Provide opportunities for involvement and implement a mentoring system.
Lack of information and knowledge of the industry, its issues and associated jargon.	Facilitating access to departmental orientation or induction seminars, providing sufficient background material, and implementing a sound induction process.
Practical constraints such as limited access to transport or departmental parking for meetings, or reimbursement of fares.	Providing remuneration for attending meetings, access to finances to travel to meetings.

Aside from these organisational barriers, it may also be necessary to consider attitudinal barriers some board members may hold in regard to young people's participation. A significant benefit of sharing decision-making power with young people is the opportunity to challenge negative stereotypes or assumptions about young people.



RECRUITMENT

4. RECRUITMENT

4.1 Young People and Statutory Responsibilities

The Queensland Government defines young people as being aged between 12 and 25 inclusively. Formally there are no restrictions with regard to the age of members of boards and committees. Due to the statutory obligations and legal responsibilities associated with many boards and committees, however, it is advocated that young people should be over 17 years of age at the time of recruitment. In some instances, the legislative functions of a particular board or committee will determine an appropriate age category; for example, if the board is concerned with aspects of the Corporations Law then members must be 18 years of age.

4.2 Selection

For effective board performance, individual members need to have a broad range of skills and personal attributes. Knowledge and understanding of accountability, strategic thinking, networking, and teamwork are core competencies of many boards. There are also additional competencies for trading, governing, and regulatory boards. No one member, however, needs all these attributes and it can be helpful to also focus on the collective capacity of the board.

There may be an assumption that young people do not have the required level of experience to contribute effectively on a government board. This assumption is misled. For young participants, as for inexperienced members of any age, governance skills and knowledge can be developed.

On being a young person on a board or committee...

"Public speaking has just become a whole lot easier!"

Now I'm going to try and make governments more aware of the benefits of listening to young people's ideas on how to solve their own problems and come up with their own solutions."

Kim Irving: Member, South East Queensland North Ministerial Regional Community Forum



This knowledge base will grow quickly if the board is clear about the level of involvement expected from all members and the younger members themselves are committed and motivated.

4.3 Registers

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet maintains a Central Register of Nominees to Government Bodies. This Central Register aims to provide all members of the community with the opportunity to express their interest in being nominated for appointment to government boards. Nomination to the register is by application.

In order to complement government policy, it may be appropriate to appoint members with certain expertise or from certain target groups such as women, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, people with a disability, or people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The Queensland Cabinet Handbook states that the Register of Women, the Register of Indigenous Women and the Register of Multicultural Advisors, must be consulted.

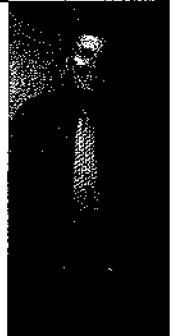
If there is a failure to identify appropriate young people after accessing the available registers, other informal avenues may need to be pursued. It may be useful to access appropriate networks, peak bodies, or community based organisations. The Office of Youth Affairs can assist in identifying those networks. The Office of Youth Affairs has established relationships with young people and a range of organisations that can support departments, or boards or committees in the recruitment process.

On working with young people on a board or committee...

"Young people provide the balance that helps us older board members think outside the square."

They always challenge us to be more expansive in our thinking and by getting involved on working parties, they have helped to implement positive change in our organisational processes."

Glenn Smith: Director, Dalby Agricultural College Board



INDUCTION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

5. INDUCTION AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

All new board members need access to information detailing the links to relevant government departments and community organisations, the history of the board, current issues under consideration, minutes and past actions taken, clear description of roles and responsibilities of board members, and administrative arrangements including remuneration.

Ensuring that new members are familiar with the "culture" of the board may also be helpful. This could include acquainting the young person with the flow of the meetings, making certain they have an opportunity to meet members of the board prior to the commencement of the meeting, and advising the board in advance of who the new members are. Information about the board's decision-making processes, its linkages to other agencies, and a simple glossary of industry jargon and acronyms would assist new members.

5.1 Mentoring

Young people benefit from structured support in order to ensure that their participation is sustained and maximised. This can be facilitated through the implementation of a mentoring system, whereby an experienced board member is nominated to guide the young person. Mentors provide critical support by helping new members learn the terminology, by introducing them to the organisational culture, and by supporting the new members to build confidence to act as full partners in the group.

5.2 Requirements of Board Members

The role played by the chairperson can be critical in ensuring the involvement of young people during meetings and in structuring discussion to enable them to both learn and participate. The chair of the board, as well as other members, needs to be mindful that the young members may see them as role models.

Members should also acknowledge the diversity of young people. Adult members sometimes expect that young members represent the needs and interests of all young people. As with representatives from other target groups, there should be no assumption or expectation that one young person is able to be the voice for all young people. If this is a need of the board, perhaps additional younger members could be recruited or alternative consultation strategies explored, for example sub committees or once off focus groups that can provide a broader representation of the target group. Additionally, efforts should be made to ensure that young members are given the opportunity to be included in consideration of all issues, not just those affecting their age group.

Tokenism must be avoided. There is no reason why young members should not have equal voting status or the same rights as other members to substantially influence the decision making of the board.

On working with young people on a board or committee...

"I live on a cattle property near Theodore in Central Queensland. By working with young people to represent the environmental sector on my local board, I hope to have a positive influence in shaping the future direction of service and resource management in Central Queensland.

I also really enjoy getting to know the variety of people that are involved in different parts of my community."

Fiona Anderson: Member, Central Queensland Ministerial Regional Community Forum



On being a young person on a board or committee...

"Being a member on this Forum has taught me so much about the State Government.

Now that I'm aware of the issues affecting my community and other communities in North Queensland, I hope to make a difference in someone's life.

That would fulfil my personal philosophy and make me extremely happy."

Christopher Church: Member, North Queensland Ministerial Regional Community Forum



EVALUATION AND REVIEW

6. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

For youth participation at this level to be effective for all concerned, a review process is recommended. It is critically important that the younger members do not perceive this process as a negative one. It is not about criticising performance, nor is it an examination. It is a review concerned with ensuring that the entire participation process is positive and beneficial for all concerned and involves opportunities for young people to also provide feedback. Ideally this process should be undertaken within the context of a broader evaluation of the performance of the board.

Given this, a review process for members should focus on the following:

- the degree to which specific governance related skills and knowledge has been achieved
- areas requiring specific developmental input
- the effectiveness of the different forms of support provided
- the degree to which the governance structures and processes have included and excluded young members and the potential for adapting any aspects of these to make them more user-friendly
- providing an opportunity for the young person to give general feedback and contribute to the board or committee's direction
- establishing a new set of outcomes for the young person and the board or committee, and a date to review their attainment.

On being a young person on a board or committee...

"I don't take my role in this organisation lightly. I'm really learning about the depth of commitment that goes into policy development. The young people of Queensland need representation and hopefully I will be able to have an influence and see action taken."

Cameron Ball: Member, Far North Queensland Ministerial Regional Community Forum



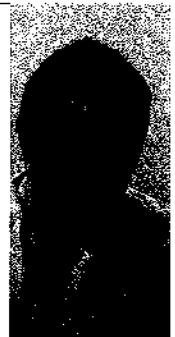
On working with young people on a board or committee...

"The calibre of students that come through to represent their peers is fantastic. They make our council complete."

In many ways, young people are the recipients of the services we are providing - their needs are many and varied.

And they certainly aren't shy about offering advice and different perceptions that other members wouldn't necessarily bring."

Craig Sherrin: Director, South Bank Institute of TAFE Business Council



CONCLUSION

7. CONCLUSION

The Office of Youth Affairs anticipates that this handbook will provide useful information and practical assistance in realising the Government's election commitment to increase young people's participation on government boards and committees.

Ongoing support is available through the Office of Youth Affairs to further assist boards and committees to:

- recruit young people to boards and committees
- support young people through the selection and recruitment process
- access relevant resource material specific to youth participation models and decision-making
- review and evaluate the progress and outcomes of young people's participation in governance.

For more information, advice, or support contact the Office of Youth Affairs in the Department of Employment and Training on 1300 55 59 54 or (07) 3224 8451.

On being a young person on a board or committee...

"My role as a Forum member is to raise and discuss issues of concern to the people of Central Queensland with Cabinet Ministers at quarterly Forums.

I have learnt a lot about the various ways Government Departments consult with the community.

During my time on this Forum I want to make a positive influence on the Government's provision of services to rural and regional areas of Queensland."

Brett Gibson: Member, Central Queensland Ministerial Regional Community Forum



On working with young people on a board or committee...

"It is essential that young people are involved in any groups that discuss or make decisions about matters that affect them, their families, and their future.

They play an invaluable role in making our Advisory Council aware of their experiences during Years 11 and 12 and, subsequently, in their transitions from school to work, TAFE or university.

Not only have they provided practical advice about our information publications, videos, and community information program but, indeed, the young members of the Council have often provided the most useful and practical input to the Advisory Council's deliberations and decisions."

Professor Diana Davis: Chair, Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority and TEPA Advisory Council



READINGS AND RESOURCES

8. READINGS AND RESOURCES

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Zeldin, Shepherd, McDaniel, Kusgen Annette, Topitzes, Dimitri & Calvert, Matt 2000, *Youth In Decision-Making: A Study on the Impacts of Youth on Adults and Organizations*. Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development and National 4-H Council & National Association of Extension 4-H Agents Youth in Governance Taskforce. University of Wisconsin, USA.

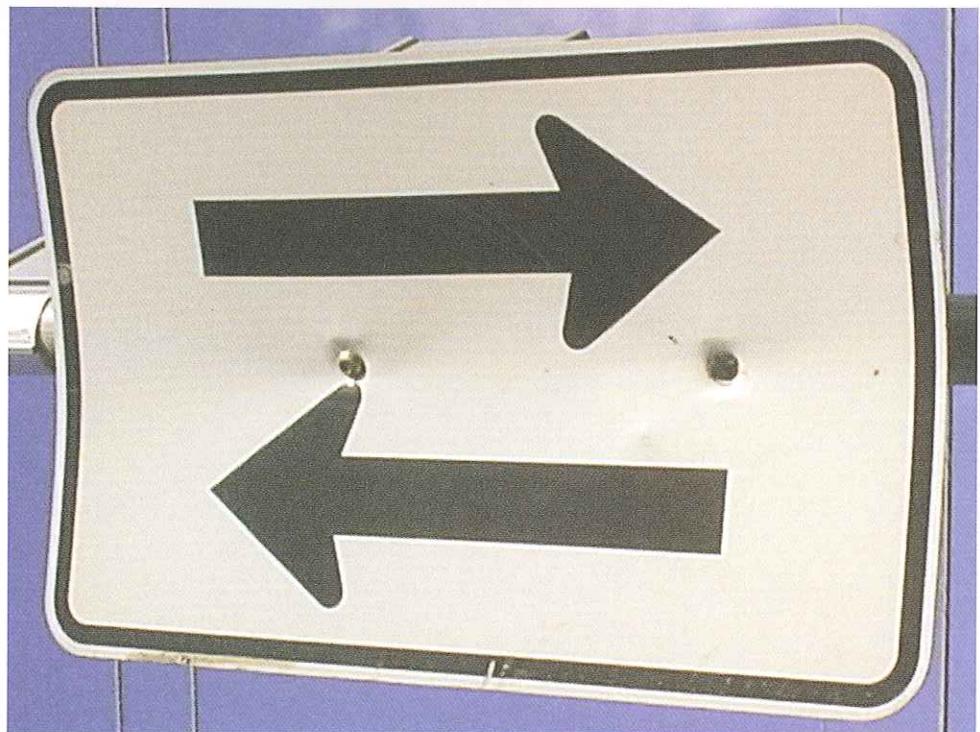
Queensland Government. *Governing Queensland: Welcome Aboard, A Guide for Members of Queensland Government Boards, Committees and Statutory Authorities*. www.premiers.qld.gov.au/governingqld/welcome/rolegovboards2_1.htm. (accessed 27 November 2001).





Queensland
Government
Department of
Employment and Training

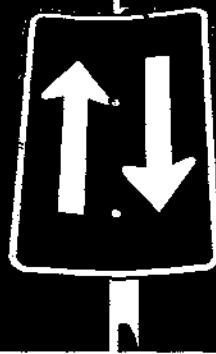
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Web: www.GENERATE.qld.gov.au or www.youth.qld.gov.au
Email : oya@det.qld.gov.au



TWO WAY STREET

TWO-WAY STREET

How government departments can engage with young people through consultation

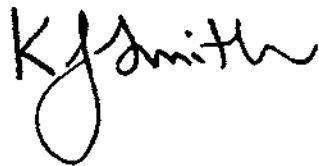


FOREWORD

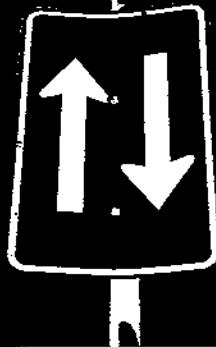
Young people are key stakeholders in our State. We value young people as important community members and welcome their participation in, and contribution to, community life and government decision-making processes.

The Queensland Government firmly believes in the ability of young people to contribute to and enhance public policy. The Department of Employment and Training has a strong commitment to engaging with young people. This commitment is embodied in the Youth Participation Strategy, approved by the government in March 2000. Ensuring that young people are engaged through government consultation processes will assist in achieving the goals of the Youth Participation Strategy to engage young people, government and the broader community in decision-making processes.

I encourage other departments to consider the advantages and benefits of continuing the development of processes to effectively engage with young people through consultation. To work towards achieving this, the Office of Youth Affairs in the Department of Employment and Training has developed *Two-way Street: how government departments can engage with young people through consultation*. This handbook is a resource for government representatives seeking to effectively involve young people in consultation processes.



Ken Smith
Director-General
Department of Employment and Training



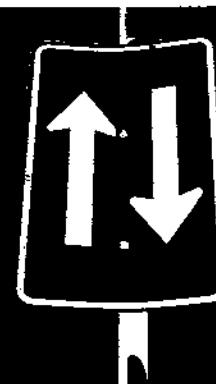
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In developing *Two-way Street* we acknowledge the existing depth of skill and commitment demonstrated by government representatives in the daily business of community consultation. The intent of *Two-way Street* is to build on this skill base by providing access to practical skills and advice on engaging young people in community consultation processes.

Sincere thanks to the young people who participated in the Six-Ways project for their honesty and invaluable input.

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design and photography by cutts creative 0412 611 745



PURPOSE OF HANDBOOK

The purpose of this handbook is to resource government representatives to effectively involve young people in community consultation processes. The handbook is divided into two main sections. The first section outlines why young people should be engaged in consultations, and the second section provides suggestions for how this can occur.

What sets *Two-way Street* apart from the myriad of other 'how to consult' manuals is its' focus on the Queensland Government context. A checklist for developing a well-designed consultation is backed up with information, resources and examples relevant to the needs of Queensland Government representatives.

Two-way Street is designed to be utilised in conjunction with the other resources in the *Youth Participation Action Kit for Queensland Government Departments*. Other resources include *Queensland Youth Charter: Queensland Government's Commitment to Engaging with Young People*, *Getting Young People on Board: how government can engage with young people on boards and committees*, and information on how to engage with young people through a number of existing mechanisms. Referring to these resources will assist government representatives in harnessing the contribution of a diverse range of young people and ensure that the issues and interests of this large demographic group are represented across government.

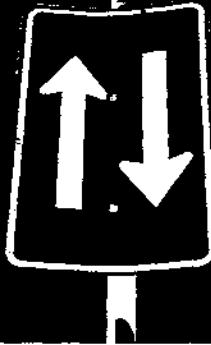


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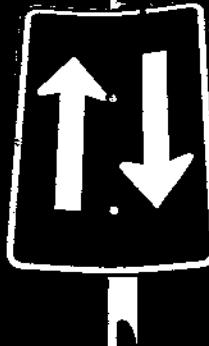
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WHY INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION PROCESSES

1. WHY INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION PROCESSES

1.1 Within the context of the Queensland Government

Involving young people in government consultation processes meets the following government priorities:

- It contributes to realising Queensland as the *Smart State* and securing Queensland's future prosperity, by providing young people with support, pathways and encouragement to reach their potential.
- It is a practical means of implementing the commitment to include young people in the development of programs, policy and services as stated in the *Queensland Youth Charter*.
- It supports the Queensland State Government *Community Engagement Direction Statement*.

1.2 Within the context of the Queensland community

In Queensland young people are:

- a *significant proportion of the community*, with Queenslanders aged 15-24 years making up approximately 15 per cent of the Queensland population¹
- *major consumers* of government goods and services such as public transport, public space, education, vocational training, employment, housing, health, justice, and cultural services
- *present and future community leaders* who demonstrate an active and involved concern for their communities
- *representative of the diversity* of backgrounds, cultures, opinions, interests, abilities, lifestyles and ambitions that make up the Queensland community
- *innovators* who provide solutions and new ways to tackle complex issues
- *skilled and informed* members of the community
- *effective and interested partners* in government decision-making processes.

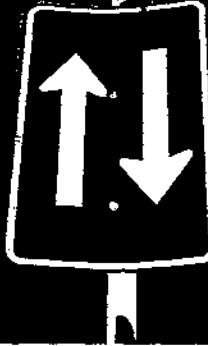
1.3 Benefits of consultation as a means of engagement

Engaging with young people through consultation brings a number of benefits to government, young people and other members of the community. Within the context of the types of strategies government can employ to engage with the community in general, and young people specifically, **consultation** provides government with the opportunity to:

- *demonstrate respect* towards young people through open, transparent, and accountable processes
- *promote goodwill and understanding*, both between young people and government, and between young people and other community members
- *build relationships* with young people
- *become more accessible* to young people
- *become more responsive* to the needs and interests of young people
- *provide opportunities* for young people to develop skills, information and experience in decision-making processes
- *recognise diversity* and that, like all members of the community, young people have preferred ways of working
- *provide ongoing opportunities for involvement* in decision-making processes, and recognise the importance of this involvement
- *build cooperative partnerships* between government, young people and the community
- *build a sense of ownership, pride and involvement* in government decision-making within the community
- *improve government efficiency* by targeting government policy and expenditure to reflect the needs and issues of importance to the community.

As a government representative your role is to acknowledge young people as a community stakeholder and engage appropriate consultation strategies to capture their opinions and involvement in the business of government. You will be tapping into a wealth of energy, insight, critique and support for government initiatives and actions.

1. ABS Catalogue No. 6227.0, 2000C



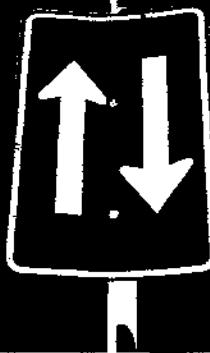
WHY INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION PROCESSES

1.4 The "Yes, it's a nice idea but ..." debate

The concept of consulting with young people is accepted and welcomed by government, yet the practical aspects of engaging with young people through consultation processes becomes a barrier in itself. As a result, efforts to engage with young people through consultation could be put into the "too hard" basket or not given thought. This could result in the failure of government to capture young people's valuable contributions and insights. Some of the myths and barriers to consulting with young people are explored below.

IT WON'T WORK BECAUSE...	BUT HAVE YOU CONSIDERED...
Young people are apathetic, indifferent, and too cynical.	Many young people are interested in community issues. Young people are already active in their communities in many different ways.
It takes too long / it's too hard / it costs too much.	Consulting with young people does not need to be any more expensive than consulting with other people in the community. Innovative approaches can sometimes be cheaper than traditional consultation methods.
Young people are stakeholders in the future, not the present.	Young people have an interest in today, the future, and the past.
Young people don't have the skills or knowledge to meaningfully contribute.	Young people already know how to communicate with others, and how to develop and present their ideas. Young people are fast learners and innovative thinkers. A fresh perspective is frequently invaluable.
I don't know how to consult with young people / I don't know where to find young people.	You can recruit consultation partners who can assist you to access young people and communicate with them appropriately. Much information already exists within government that can help you access young people and design effective consultation processes.
Young people wouldn't be interested in my issues.	Young people are members of a wide range of groups and are interested in a range of issues.
Young people want everything their own way.	Young people are able to negotiate about issues. If you give reasons for your ideas and information about constraints, this shows that you respect young people. If they are respected, young people are more likely to participate.





HOW TO INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION PROCESSES

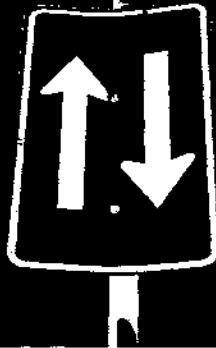
2. HOW TO INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION PROCESSES

To engage with young people effectively through consultation, you will need a well-designed consultation process. Consider the following points to ensure your consultation with young people is a success. Information, examples and resources to assist you to meet these goals are outlined in following sections.

2.1 Considerations for a well-designed youth consultation

A well-designed consultation:

- provides benefits to government, community and young people that out-weigh the costs
- builds on existing knowledge, rather than re-discovers it
- has a clear purpose, and makes that purpose clear to those involved
- is appropriately targeted at young people who may be interested in, or directly affected by the outcome
- engages relevant consultation partners to assist in the process
- is mindful and inclusive of the diverse range of young people
- uses a method or methods of engagement that suit a diversity of young people
- takes a respectful and positive approach to the consultation topic and young people
- includes in-built opportunities to ensure mutual understanding
- utilises appropriate avenues and methods to invite participation
- allows for the provision of appropriate support and information to assist the meaningful participation of young people and consultation partners
- minimises practical barriers to participation
- is mutually beneficial for young people *and* government
- includes a review process that offers young people further opportunity for participation and shares findings with stakeholders.



SCOPING THE CONSULTATION

3. SCOPING THE CONSULTATION

To properly assess the scope of your consultation you will need to identify available resources and identify what consultation has previously been done. You will also need to identify anticipated outcomes, which type/s of young people are appropriate for your consultation topic and assess the need for engaging consultation partners.

3.1 Identifying available resources

- *A well-designed consultation provides benefits to government, community and young people that out-weigh the costs.*

To assess the scope of your consultation consider the following factors:

Time

- Do you have to include this consultation with other regular tasks?
- Are there any important community events and holidays that will affect the availability of participants?
- How will department processes affect the time that is available to gather information?

Budget

- How much money has been allocated to the consultation?
- What expenses are you likely to have?

Significance

- How important is the support of young people and the community to the long-term success of the program/policy?
- What impacts will the program/policy have on young people?
- What level of support is likely to be given by your department to engage young people in this particular topic?

Existing resources

- Are there any groups in the community who can help with the consultation?
- Are there people within your department or other departments who can help with the consultation?
- What information is already available about the topic?

3.2 Identifying and building on what has been done before

- *A well-designed consultation builds on existing knowledge, rather than re-discovers it.*

When you are planning your consultation consider whether there have been consultations about this topic before. Young people often comment that someone from another department, local government, federal government, or a private consultant has asked them the same questions about the same topic. It does not make much difference to young people, or the community generally, who is asking the questions. They just know they have been asked the same questions time and again without seeing results. This state of affairs is being termed 'consultation overload'.

Check within your department, and with other departments, to see if there are any previous reports or discussion papers that could give you some useful information about the consultation topic.

You may also be able to identify how your consultation will add to work that has already been done, or will contribute to a project that someone else is doing.

3.3 Identifying anticipated outcomes

- *A well-designed consultation has a clear purpose, and makes that purpose clear to those involved.*

Young people will be interested in the information that is collected and how government will use it. They will want to know what you expect to achieve from the consultation. These outcomes need to be achievable and realistic.

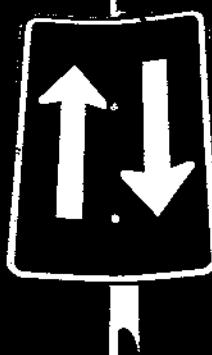
The outcomes that you anticipate will affect which young people you decide to include in your consultation, and the methods you use to involve them in the consultation process.

Expected outcomes will also determine who will be using the information that you have gathered, and how that information will be included in policy and program development.

When planning for your consultation you need to identify:

- the outcomes that your department expects to achieve
- the outcomes that young people might want to achieve
- the expectations of the community.





SCOPING THE CONSULTATION

3.4 Identifying appropriate young people to engage

- A well-designed consultation is appropriately targeted at young people who may be interested in, or directly affected by the outcome.

You need to connect with those young people who are most affected by and concerned with the identified issue.

If you wish to consult with 'young people generally' be sure to keep in mind the diverse nature of this age group. Young people are students, workers, farmers, parents, sons and daughters. They are gothics, skinheads, ballet dancers, footballers, rock climbers and recreational readers. They live in the city, the suburbs and the bush. They are consumers and entrepreneurs. All have interests and opinions. Be sure to have a clear idea of who you want to consult with before engaging young people in a consultation that may not be relevant or appropriate to them.

3.5 IDENTIFYING CONSULTATION PARTNERS

- A well-designed consultation engages relevant consultation partners to assist in the process.

It can be useful to involve other people in developing and conducting your consultation. By identifying appropriate consultation partners you may tap into already established networks of young people. Consultation partners may be able to help you:

- plan the consultation
- identify ways to consult with young people
- identify young people to include
- gain access to groups of young people
- gather the information by facilitating consultation methods
- interpret the information that you collect.

Consultation partners can be:

- young people
- community and young people's organisations
- schools

- other government departments
- other divisions within your department
- individuals or contractors

If you decide to engage consultation partners you will also need to decide what support you are able to provide them and ensure that you allow for this in your planning.

Example of engaging consultation partners:

In 'Six Ways' project - a consultation with young people about the topics of "Wellness" and "Critical Rights" using six different ways of consulting with young people - the Office of Youth Affairs identified the need to involve gay and lesbian young people. By including consultation partners who openly identified as gay or lesbian, appropriate processes for consultation with these young people were developed.

Specific resources were produced during the consultation. As a result, young people were able to participate in an environment that was safe and recognised their unique perspectives.

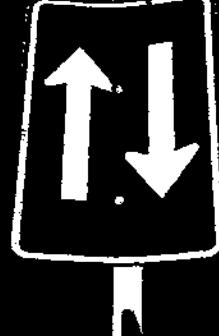
The Office of Youth Affairs also identified the benefits of using an arts-based consultation process as one of the consultation "ways". Organisations with experience in using arts-based approaches with young people were chosen as consultation partners. These groups were able to provide information about resources required as well as facilitating invitations to consult with young people in appropriate venues.

More information on consultation planning:

The CCATS: *Community Consultation Action Tool Set* developed by the Maroochy Shire Council and ekoHost
<http://www.ccats.net>

Bikes, Bands and Strategic Plans and Consultation Guide developed by the Queensland Local Government Association
<http://www.lgac.qld.au>

Governing Queensland developed by the Department of the Premier and Cabinet
<http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/governingqld/policy>
<http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/governingqld/cabinethandbook>



STRUCTURING YOUR CONSULTATION

4. STRUCTURING YOUR CONSULTATION

When planning the structure of your consultation you will need to consider how you will include a diverse range of young people, what consultation methods would be appropriate and how you would glean meaningful information from these methods. You will also need to consider how to structure the consultation so as to take a positive and constructive approach to the topic and to the young people you plan to involve.

4.1 Recognising diversity

- *A well-designed consultation is mindful and inclusive of the diverse range of young people.*

Young people, like the broader community, are not a homogenous group. Involving young people in consultation will help you link into a broad demographic group with various interests, skills, information and abilities.

Structuring your consultation to build in diversity need not make the exercise too large, expensive, or time consuming. If you are clear on what you are consulting about, and the impact the service or policy may have on young people, you will have determined the scope of the consultation, the type of young people you will need to engage with, and consultation partners who can help you do this.

Example of the need to recognise diversity:

A park is being redeveloped and young people from a nearby school have been invited to comment on the concept design via a school-based questionnaire. While this method is suitable for obtaining the views and needs of the young people at the school, this consultation method does not include the opinions of young people who have left school but still live in the area, homeless young people who live in the park, the refugee young people who play touch football in the park every month, or the young man with a disability who lives nearby and cannot currently access the park.

While a school-based questionnaire may seem to be an easy way of gauging the needs of some young people, a letter drop of the surrounding area, coupled with information displays inviting feedback in the park, local shops and cinema, and on-the-spot surveys of young people in the park would be just as cost-effective and more representative of the diverse needs of young people with regards to the park.

More information on diversity and inclusive practices:

A plethora of information exists within the Queensland Government on diversity and inclusive practices. Check with your department to see what has already been developed.

Existing resources include:

Queensland Youth Charter, available from the Office of Youth Affairs, Department of Employment and Training.
<http://www.youth.qld.gov.au/>

Multicultural Queensland Policy, Community Relations Resource Kit, Queensland Government Action Plan: Australian South Sea Islander Community available from Multicultural Affairs Queensland
http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/about/maq/pdfs/assi_action_plan.pdf
http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/about/maq/html/cr/comm_rel_kit.pdf

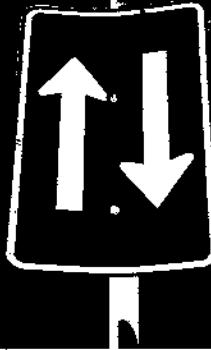
Multicultural Protocol for Consultation available from the State Library of Queensland
<http://www.slv.qld.gov.au/>

Disability Services Queensland has information available to assist government recognise the needs of people with a disability.
<http://www.disability.qld.gov.au/>

Consultation and Negotiation with Aboriginal People, Mina Mirto Ailan Mun: Proper Communication with Torres Strait Islander Peoples available from the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development
<http://www.indigenous.qld.gov.au/>

Public consultation policy, standards and guidelines: public consultation, the way to better decisions available from Department of Main Roads and the Department of Transport
<http://www.transport.qld.gov.au/home.nsf>





STRUCTURING YOUR CONSULTATION

4.2 TAKING DIVERSE APPROACHES

- A well-designed consultation uses a method or methods of engagement that suit a diversity of young people.

Be aware of the diversity of processes you can use to consult with young people. Young people will respond to a variety of consultation techniques. Different consultation processes will suit different young people and different consultation topics.

Structuring your consultation to use a combination of techniques will allow young people to choose their preferred way to participate. This can help you to build effective working relationships.

When you are choosing ways to consult with young people, where possible choose ways that will provide opportunities for two-way conversations. This will allow government and young people to share information and check that they understand each other.

Using different ways of consulting provides a rich variety of information. This gives you a more complete picture of the different perspectives that young people have about the topic.

Example of taking diverse approaches:

The Office of Youth Affairs 'Six Ways' project used six different ways of consulting with young people about the topics of 'wellness' and 'critical rights'. These included a visual art project, a series of two-day workshops, meeting-style consultations, activity-based workshops, a week-long camp and an on-line discussion board.

Young people reported that having a choice of ways to participate enabled them to clearly express their opinions because they were comfortable with the 'way' they had chosen.

Traditional ways such as surveys, questionnaires, or discussion papers, can be combined with non-traditional ways such as graffiti walls, youth forums or writing a play. If you decide to use a way that you are not familiar with, engage consultation partners that can assist you.

You will need to select ways that are sustainable. That is, work on the consultation topics will continue after the consultation has finished. Be aware, you might also need to run the consultation more than once to encourage a diversity of information and to ensure you have gathered all relevant information.

4.3 ADOPTING AN 'APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY' APPROACH

- A well-designed consultation takes a respectful and positive approach to young people.

In order to produce a consultation designed with the needs and interests of young people in mind an 'appreciative inquiry' approach is recommended. Appreciative inquiry concentrates on identifying strengths, benefits, and positive experiences. Structuring your consultation to explore issues in affirmative, positive terms fosters a shared spirit of discovery and curiosity about the consultation topic.

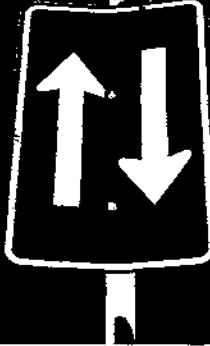
Therefore, when taking an appreciative inquiry approach to consulting with young people it is important that the consultation is:

- mutually beneficial to both participants and government
- appreciative of what already works and accommodating of the ways that young people want to engage with government and each other
- applicable and relevant to everyday life
- provocative and encouraging of active participation and change

Example of an 'appreciative inquiry' approach:

When exploring an issue such as youth suicide through consultation, an appreciative inquiry approach would focus on identifying what makes young people well and happy rather than what makes young people suicidal. Once key factors that contribute towards a young person's 'wellness' are identified, government can use this information to develop policies, programs and services that contribute to building these key factors. Young people who participate in the consultation can use this information to develop their own strategies for building these key factors.





STRUCTURING YOUR CONSULTATION

This approach provides a focus on valuing the experience of young people and encourages hopeful approaches to future changes. Affirming their experiences encourages young people to provide more detailed information, producing 'richer' data about the consultation topic.

Appreciative inquiry provides young people and government with the opportunity to identify what is working in their community and explore ways to build on these positives or transfer them to other situations.

Use questions that concentrate on identifying strengths, benefits, and positive experiences. The following table compares questions from a traditional consultation with those used in an appreciative consultation.

TRADITIONAL QUESTIONS	APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY QUESTIONS
What are the problems with...?	What worked about...?
What is your worst experience in relation to [consultation topic]?	Tell me about the best experience you have had in relation to [consultation topic]?
What don't you like about [consultation topic]?	When was [consultation topic] important to you? What is it about [consultation topic] that makes you feel good?
What is wrong with [consultation topic]?	Why have you decided to do it this way?

More information on the 'appreciative inquiry' approach:

Appreciative Interviewing

Appreciative Facilitation

Appreciative Consultation

Appreciative Mentoring

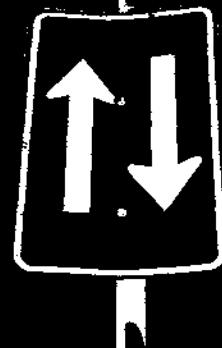
Appreciative Project Management

Appreciative Team Development

web: www.mellish.com.au

www.alleadership.com





STRUCTURING YOUR CONSULTATION

4.4 ENSURING MEANINGFUL DATA

- *A well-designed publication includes in-built opportunities to ensure mutual understanding.*

It is important to structure your consultation to include methods for checking that your interpretation of data is an accurate reflection of what participants meant. Consulting with young people through diverse approaches produces information in a range of formats so identify how you will get meaning from the information you collect before settling on a non-traditional consultation method.

There is the possibility that young people may "encode" their information – they may fear being misunderstood, or feel vulnerable or threatened.

Making sense of the information you collect involves active engagement between government and young people. This includes all the steps that take place in the "arrow" between government and young people in the following diagram:

Active engagement = Government ←→ Young People

Steps to take towards ensuring meaningful data:

- Build in checkpoints to the consultation process where you can check and clarify meanings between yourself and the young people.
- Consider how information and questions could be interpreted. Use appropriate language and a variety of formats if appropriate.
- Look for themes and patterns within the information that you have collected.
- Check the themes and patterns that you have identified with other people that were involved in the consultation. If you have used a consultation process that you are not familiar with, consultation partners will be able to help you interpret the information.

- Wherever possible, check your interpretations with the young people involved in the consultation.
- A draft copy of the evaluation report and summaries of the data gathered should be checked by participants and consultation partners for accuracy.
- Provide participants with copies of reports that are produced as a result of the consultation, or provide them with information about how reports can be accessed.

Example of the need for checking meaning:

In a consultation about public transport, participants were asked to draw an image that typified their idea of "public transport". One young person drew a picture of a foot. There could be a number of different interpretations of the meaning:

1. There is no public transport so the young person has to walk everywhere.
2. The young person feels safer walking compared with using public transport.
3. The young person is concerned about their health and so walks whenever possible.
4. Public transport is too expensive so the young person walks as much as possible.

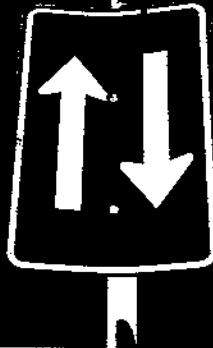
To check the real meaning behind the picture, it was important to check the interpretation with the young person.

More information about interpreting collected information:

The Queensland departments of Transport and Main Roads, in the publication Public Consultation Policy, Standards and Guidelines: public consultation the way to better decisions provide guidelines about using information collected from consultations.

<http://www.transport.qld.gov.au>





ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

5. ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people will engage in government consultations if they are invited; if the topic is relevant to them; if in the process they are respected and their opinions valued; and if they can see timely outcomes for their efforts. You will need to identify ways to attract young people to take part in your consultation, as well as gain permission to access young people where appropriate. You may also need to provide ways to overcome any practical barriers to participation, such as child care needs, wheel chair access or transport issues. Finally, when engaging with young people, it is vital that the consultation experience is a positive one with obvious benefits.

5.1 Finding young people and inviting them to participate

- *A well-designed consultation uses appropriate avenues and methods when inviting young people to participate.*

When identifying ways to invite young people to participate in your consultation, it may be useful to consider:

- locations where young people gather
- organisations who provide services for young people
- individuals who may be significant to young people
- meeting places
- events that attract young people.

You will need to use a variety of methods to invite and inform the young people about the consultation. Not all young people have an address or read or communicate electronically or speak English as their first language. You could consider newsletters, word of mouth, letters, email, telephone, and posters.

If the consultation is not taking place for some time, email, post or phone young people with updates and reminders to ensure your consultation date is not forgotten.

You will need to consider whether you need permission to conduct this consultation or undertake the consultation in a culturally appropriate manner. Be sensitive to cultural protocols. Identify the decision-makers amongst the community and seek their guidance in designing and progressing the consultation. Key community members could be family members, a worker, a young person or a religious leader.

Community organisations that support the young people being consulted will help you identify specific protocols or procedures that may need to be observed and entry points to access these young people.

Some pathways to connect with young people are through:

- schools
- community and youth organisations
- informal networks
- youth spaces
- youth councils
- the world wide web
- Regional Youth Affairs Officers

Schools:

Schools are often viewed as an easy way to connect with young people, however be aware of Education Queensland's school protocols and rules regarding outside access to students. Respect that students have busy and complex school demands. Be careful not to waste their or the schools time.

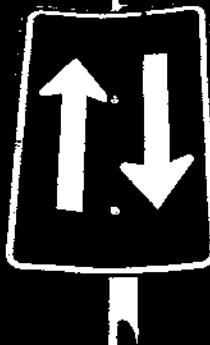
Education Queensland has specific guidelines about consulting young people in schools. Depending on the scope of the project, approval may be needed from the individual school, the school district, or central office. Information can be obtained from the Performance Measurement and Review Branch of Education Queensland. The Education Queensland guidelines on consulting young people in schools can be accessed from the Performance Measurement and Review Branch of Education Queensland.

More information on engaging with young people through schools:

Performance Measurement and Review Branch of Education Queensland

<http://www.education.qld.gov.au/corporate/pmreview>





ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

Community and youth organisations:

Try working with community and youth organisations who have established links with young people. Often adult intermediaries can pull together a group of young people for you to talk to. Be aware of the protocols and respect that the young people, and often the workers, are volunteers. Contact the Youth Affairs Network of Queensland, or the Youth development officer connected with the local council and/or the Regional Youth Affairs Officers, Office of Youth Affairs.

The expectations and experiences of Aboriginal communities have shaped the development by the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development of the *Protocols for Consultation and Negotiation with Aboriginal People*. This document outlines specific issues to be considered in consulting with Aboriginal people including negotiating entry to Aboriginal communities.

Other government departments will also have contacts and information and networks of community organisations that you could access in order to engage with young people from specific communities. For example, you could contact:

- Department of Primary Industries to connect with rural and regional young people
- Disability Services Queensland to connect with young people with a disability
- Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people
- Multicultural Affairs Queensland to connect with young people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

More information on engaging with young people through community and youth organisations:

Community Engagement Division, Department of Premier and Cabinet

<http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/about/community/index.htm>

Youth Affairs Network of Queensland

Contact: 1800 177 899 or 07 3844 7713

<http://home.pacific.net.au/~yanq/index.html>

Local Government Youth Policy Officers, Local Government Association of Queensland

Contact: 07 3000 2216

<http://www.lgaq.asn.au/>

Regional Youth Affairs Officers, Office of Youth Affairs

Contact: 1300 55 59 54

Informal networks:

Young people have their own networks, friends, and friends of friends. Young people are the best qualified to tell you how to tap into these informal networks. Be respectful of privacy and the capacities of young people to take time out to assist you to connect with their informal networks. Remember young people have busy lives too and are subject to competing demands for their time and money. You may need to budget in the costs that are incurred by young people who are assisting you to connect with their networks. Such costs include phone or transport costs, hourly peer research fees.

Youth spaces:

Go to where young people are and talk to young people in their own space. For example try the local skate park, shopping centre, park or a hang out spot.

Youth councils:

Connect with formal groups such as youth councils and student councils. Most local councils have established youth councils. For more information on youth council locations and protocols contact the Local Government Association of Queensland. Likewise, educational institutions have student representatives in the form of student councils, guilds and unions. The usual method of making contact is by approaching the chair of the youth council or president/secretary of the student guild or union. They will also be able to inform you of any protocols and suggestions for connecting with their memberships representatives or individual student guilds, councils or unions.

The Queensland State Youth Advisory Council advises the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth on issues affecting young people in Queensland. The council can be approached to consider and advise government departments on appropriate consultation strategies.

More information on engaging with young people through youth councils:

Youth Policy Officer, Local Government Association of Queensland

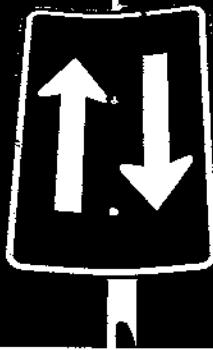
Contact: 07 3000 2222

State Youth Advisory Council (through the Office of Youth Affairs)

Contact: 1300 55 59 54

For councils associated with educational institutions, see the yellow pages.





ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

The world wide web:

The GENERATE website is a whole-of-government youth website that facilitates communication between young people aged 15 – 25 and the Queensland Government. This site provides you with the ability to access young people across the State. A questionnaire or a topic for discussion can be posted and responses monitored.

More information on engaging with young people through the GENERATE youth website:

Office of Youth Affairs
Contact: 1300 55 59 54
Email: manager@generate.qld.gov.au

Regional Youth Affairs Officers:

Regional Youth Affairs Officers, Department of Employment and Training, can provide regional information about connecting with young people and can link you with other Department and their resources and community networks.

More information on engaging with young people through the Regional Youth Affairs Officers:

Office of Youth Affairs
Contact: 1300 55 59 54

5.2 Preparing young people to participate

A well-designed consultation gives the appropriate support and information to assist the meaningful participation of young people and consultation partners.

You will need to provide information to assist young people to participate in the consultation. This includes information about:

- the consultation topic
- the processes being used
- what outcomes and products are anticipated
- how young people will be involved in progressing the consultation

- how young people will get feedback
- boundaries, guidelines or legal issues (which need to be outlined in the first consultation session, and at other times when necessary)
- timelines expected
- on-going opportunities or benefits for participants.

You may not have to do this yourself if you are working with consultation partners. If your consultation partners take on the role of informing young people about the consultation you will need provide this information to your consultation partners to pass on to participants.

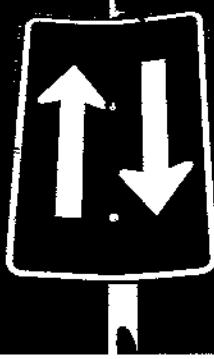
5.3 Providing for practical considerations

A well-designed consultation minimises practical barriers to participation.

The following practical issues need to be considered to ensure that young people are effectively equipped to participate in the consultation process:

- the particular times that young people would be available
- how young people would access the venue/s that you will be using
- how young people would be compensated for their time, travel, labour and other costs incurred
- what resources could be required such as access to child care
- what special needs young people may have, for example interpreters, or venue access for young people with a disability.





ENGAGING YOUNG PEOPLE

5.4 Ensuring a positive experience

- A well-designed consultation is mutually beneficial for young people and government.*

In order to engage young people in the consultation it is important to consider the benefits young people will receive. What will the young people gain through their involvement? Consider how young people's contributions will be used in government decision-making and how you will communicate this to them.

There are competing demands on young people. Identify ways to motivate young people to forgo their usual pastimes and obligations to take part in your consultation. Some suggestions include providing food, hosting a competition, providing free transport or including the consultation in an existing event that attracts young people.

For many young people, their previous experiences of government (at local, state and national levels) will impact on their willingness to participate and their reactions to you as a state government employee. Be aware of possible pre-conceived notions you may encounter when you enter into the consultation and the image you present to the participants.

As a government representative you need to know what the parameters of your consultation are and clearly communicate these to the young people. Do not give rise to expectations of an immediate outcome when you know the time frame of the project will mean that a decision might take some time. If there is a time-lapse do practical things such as sending update emails or setting up a communication strategy.

Example of a young person's negative experience of consultation with government:

"Well I am 17 years old and pretty cynical now about government wanting my opinion. These government guys came out here last year and asked us our opinion about the new mine development in the area. Myself and a few friends from school got excited about it all. Did our own research into the environmental impacts and the impacts on the town, employment etc. Did up a big report and presented our findings to the community and to the government consultants. We got patted on the back from our community for our efforts, even won an environmental research award for the information we collected. But the government people just took our report and we heard nothing for 18 months until we read in the local paper that the development was going ahead – I doubt if they even read our proposal."

Example of a government representative's negative experience of consultation with young people:

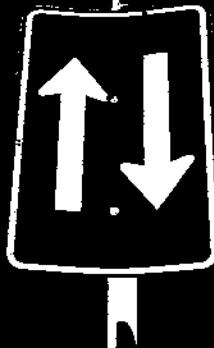
"I was a bit taken aback by the formality of the event, I just assumed that I was going to talking to a group of kids and it would be pretty casual and they wouldn't really have much to say. I didn't even prepare. Where as the young people had gone to great lengths to get their ideas and questions organised. They were determined to be taken seriously. They asked the hard questions and wanted answers."

A well-designed consultation will avoid situations such as those outlined in the examples above and benefit government by fostering a sense of co-operation and partnership with young people and the community. Government will also benefit from a better reputation in the community, richer information and a fuller understanding of the consultation topic to draw from in order to develop beneficial policies, programs and services.

More information on perceptions of consultation experiences:

Council Staff and Councillors' Views About Youth Consultation, How Young People Would Like To Be Consulted, Youth Consultation Checklist developed by the New South Wales Department of Local Government
Web: <http://www.dlg.nsw.gov.au>

South West Region Youth Participation Resource Manual
developed by the South West Youth Workers Network
Contact: 07 4687 2872 - South West Regional Youth Affairs Officer, Department of Employment and Training



EVALUATION AND REVIEW

6. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

- A well-designed consultation includes a review process that offers young people further opportunity for participation and shares findings with stakeholders.

To ensure that your consultation with young people is effective, it is important to review the processes that you have used. Reviewing consultations should be seen as a positive process and an opportunity for young people and government to reflect on what worked, what was beneficial for participants and who else could use the information you have gleaned.

You can use the review process to identify stakeholders who would be interested in the findings of your consultation. Share your information with other government departments or community organisations that can also benefit from knowing the results of your consultation.

Young people will be able to give you valuable feedback about how the consultation process worked. Seeking this feedback demonstrates your commitment to ongoing youth participation and encourages ongoing involvement of young people in government decision-making.

Well-designed consultations with young people provide an opportunity for them to initiate ongoing work related to the project. Consultation is not an end but rather an opportunity for young people to engage in the content areas and develop their own ways to explore these areas further. Identifying opportunities for ongoing involvement demonstrates the government's commitment to implementing policies and programs as a result of the information supplied by young people.

A review process should provide:

- opportunities for stakeholders such as other government departments or community organisations to learn from the results of your consultation
- opportunities for young people and government to identify what worked, what didn't, and what changes could be made to overcome obstacles
- a variety of ways for young people to provide feedback, for example, you using an email questionnaire, a group discussion, visual imaging, or role plays
- opportunities for government to demonstrate their appreciation of the contributions of young people to the community and across government
- information about the results of the consultation process, and how young people's information is included in ongoing government work
- support for young people to initiate activities in their local communities
- invitations to young people to seek their involvement in implementing the results of the consultation, including plans for follow-up activities and information.





FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE

7. FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE

The Office of Youth Affairs anticipates that this handbook will provide useful information for government to realise its commitment to effectively engage with young people.

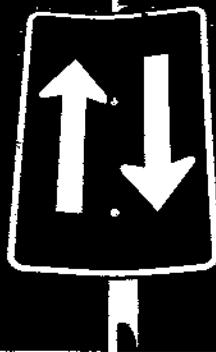
Ongoing support is available through the Office of Youth Affairs to assist government to:

- access relevant resource material specific to youth participation and consultation models and information
- review and evaluate the outcomes of young people's participation in consultation processes
- support young people's participation in consultation processes
- identify relevant organisations and networks that can assist in planning, and implementing consultation with young people
- recognise the diversity of young people through selection of appropriate consultation processes.

The Office of Youth Affairs is interested in hearing about any consultation or youth-related initiatives your department is undertaking or contemplating. This will allow us to disseminate resources and information relevant to young people across government. So keep us informed.

For more information, advice or assistance or to tell us about your consultation contact the Office of Youth Affairs in the Department of Employment and Training on 1300 55 59 54 or (07) 3224 8451.





GLOSSARY OF TERMS

8. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Active participation - is a relationship based on working with government, in which young people engage in the policy-making process. It acknowledges a role for young people in proposing policy options and shaping the policy dialogue.

Appreciative inquiry - takes a future-oriented approach to consultation processes based on the belief that young people are active social entrepreneurs who construct and create through social interaction.

Best practice - in consultation with young people is two-way exchanges between government and young people; sharing information in an effective manner allows for all involved to benefit and gain from participation.

Consultation partners - can be young people, community organisations, representatives from other government departments, representatives from other divisions within your department, or individuals that can help you interact and can consult with participants.

Constructed communities - Young people belong to various communities geographically, culturally and around common interests, issues and lifestyles. Identify how the consultation topic and issues may impact on different communities.

Diversity - ensure that the methods used to consult with young people are chosen in recognition of the diversity of young people. Such issues to take into account are age, gender, cultural background, economic status, and access. To address these issues employ a variety of ways of collecting and providing information and acquire a sound knowledge of the diversity of young people's culture.

Generate website - provides information and connections between young people and government. The website address is www.GENERATE.qld.gov.au

Image - Be aware of your arrival, your status and the image you present to the participants.

Invitation - Consultation partners may be able to make invitations to the young people more easily as they might already be known to the young people and have an established relationship with their community. This can encourage credibility with the group.

Issues - Young people can be interested in all issues, not just those deemed as 'youth issues'.

Patterns and themes - Using different ways of consulting with young people will produce information in a diverse range of formats. It is important to identify a valid way to analyse the information collected. Consult with your consultation partners to look for themes and patterns within the information that you have collected.

Permission - You will need to consider whether you need permission to conduct this consultation. Identify the decision-makers amongst the communities. Your consultation partners will help you identify specific protocols that may need to be observed. It is important to consider specific issues when consulting with young people. This includes legal and ethical considerations. Be aware of the impact discussing these issues might have on the participants and/or community.

Report Consultant - may be an independent evaluator who has experience in consultation with young people and can evaluate your consultation process.

Safe space - The location of consultation and the ability to create the feeling of a 'safe space' physically, socially and emotionally for young people to express their stories and feelings is important.

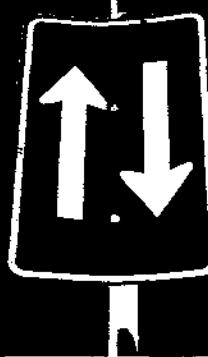
Six Ways Project - The Office of Youth Affairs used multiple ways of consulting with young people about the topics of "Wellness" and "Critical Rights". The ways included a visual art project, a series of 2-day seminars, meeting style consultations, activity based workshops, and an online discussion board.

Stakeholders - are young people, consultation partners in the form of organisations or individuals, and government departments that retain interest and involvement in the consultation.

Suggestions - Ensure strategies are in place as to how suggestions and concerns raised by young people will be incorporated into final products, reports, and program changes. Also ensure the consultation will support the furthering of a young person's concerns, issues, and suggestions.

Support - Ensure access to decision-making processes is provided through appropriate and varied levels of support to young people.





READING AND RESOURCES

9. READINGS AND RESOURCES

Office of Cabinet 1993, Consultation: A resource document for the Qld public sector Government Printer, Brisbane.

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Dr. Liz Mellish, Appreciative Consulting, www.mellish.com.au

Office of Cabinet 2000 The Queensland Policy Handbook, <http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/governingqld/index.htm>

Office of Cabinet 2000 The Queensland Cabinet Handbook, <http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/governingqld/index.htm>

Multicultural Affairs Queensland. 1998, Multicultural Queensland Policy www.premiers.qld.gov.au/about/maq

Multicultural Affairs Queensland (n.d.), Community Relations Resource Kit www.premiers.qld.gov.au/about/maq

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<http://www.premiers.qld.gov.au/about/community/index.htm>

Queensland State Library. 1999, Making Libraries Multicultural: Protocol for Consultation: A Protocol establishing the method of consultation between Queensland's State and public libraries and their multicultural communities.
www.slq.qld.gov.au/pub/multicult/

Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development. 1999, Protocols for Consultation and Negotiation with Aboriginal People
<http://www.indigenous.qld.gov.au/publications>

Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development (n.d.) Mina Mir Lo Ailan Mun: Proper Communication with Torres Strait Islander Peoples

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Youth Affairs Network of Queensland Participation's Worth It: Overview and recommendations about young people's participation in the Queensland Government Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy

Department of Local Government. 1999, Council Staff and Councillor's Views About Youth Consultation www.dlg.nsw.gov.au

Department of Local Government. 1998, How Young People Would Like To Be Consulted, www.dlg.nsw.gov.au

Department of Local Government. 1997, How Local Councils Consult With Young People: A report on findings from a survey of local councils in NSW www.dlg.nsw.gov.au

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Maroochy Shire Council; eKoHost Pty Ltd. 2001, CCATS: Community Consultation Action Tool Set, www.ccats.net

Local Government Association of Queensland, 1996. Bikes, Bands and Strategic Plans: Including Young People in the Business of Local Government.

Local Government Association of Queensland. Consultation Guide.

Young people and place information and links www.yspace.net



Queensland
Government

Department of
Employment and Training

Produced by : Office of Youth Affairs
Department of Employment and Training
Post: Locked Mail Bag 527 Brisbane Qld 4001
Telephone: 07 322 48451 or 1300 55 59 54
Web: www.GENERATE.qld.gov.au or www.youth.qld.gov.au
Email : oya@det.qld.gov.au

WHAT DOES THE OFFICE OF YOUTH AFFAIRS DO?

WHAT DOES THE OFFICE OF YOUTH AFFAIRS DO?

- Provides leadership and stimulates debate across government on youth affairs
- Brokers, develops and delivers young people*-friendly policies, programs and services
- Enhances young people's capacity to engage with government and community
- Enhances community and government capacity to maximise young people's inclusion

HOW DO WE FIND OUT WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS ARE

HOW DO WE FIND OUT WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS ARE?

Through research and consultation with young people, community organisations, federal and local governments, and other state government departments.

*The Queensland Government considers young people as those aged between 12 and 25 years. In recognition of diverse cultural practices this age range may vary in some circumstances.

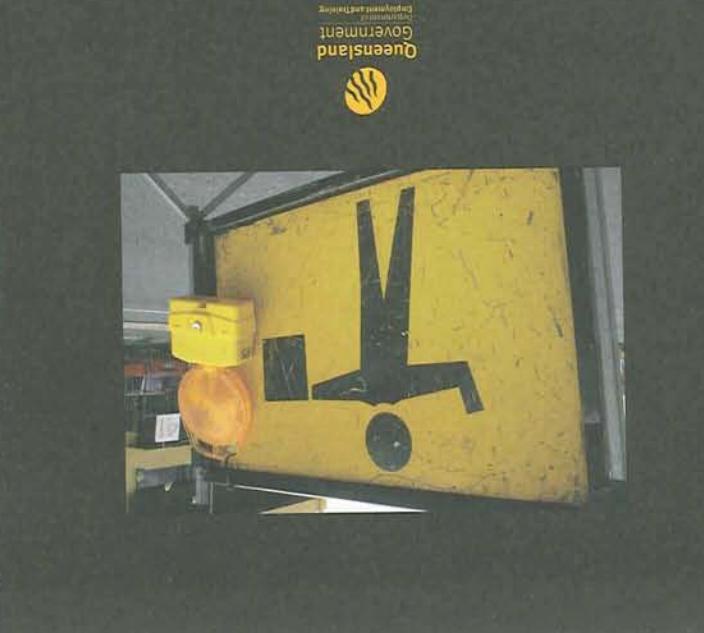


WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK OR PROJECTS?

- Providing advice on a range of issues including social, cultural and economic inclusion of young people in communities, discrimination, homelessness, suicide prevention, drugs and alcohol, crime prevention, employment and recreational activities
- Co-ordinating the Queensland Youth Participation Strategy
- Co-ordinating The Duke of Edinburgh's Award
- Contributing to the Queensland Government Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy
- Organising Indigenous youth leadership initiatives
- Facilitating Queensland's involvement in National Youth Week

EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK OR PROJECTS

WHAT DOES THE OFFICE OF YOUTH AFFAIRS DO?



HOW WE INFLUENCE POLICIES THAT BENEFIT YOU

HOW DO WE INFLUENCE POLICIES AND PROGRAMS?

- By encouraging and supporting direct communication between young people and decision-makers
- By providing advice and information to community, government and business
- By commenting on legislation and policy that impacts on young people
- Through membership on state and national committees such as:
 - Ministerial Council on Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs – Youth Affairs Taskforce
 - National Youth Affairs Research Scheme
 - Queensland Drug Co-ordinating Council
 - Queensland Government Youth Suicide Prevention Strategy Steering Committee



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Queensland, Brisbane North, Brisbane South, Wide Bay/

Youth Affairs Officers are situated in North Queensland, Central

Employment and Training and is based in Brisbane. Regional

The Office of Youth Affairs is part of the Department of

WHAT is the YOUTH PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

WHAT IS THE YOUTH PARTICIPATION STRATEGY ?

This strategy enhances opportunities for young people to engage with the Queensland Government and their communities. The strategy was developed in consultation with young people and endorsed by the Queensland Cabinet in March 2000. The strategy has four major components:

QUEENSLAND STATE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

- The council provides advice to the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and the Queensland Government generally on issues identified by young people and recommends strategies to address these issues.
- Council membership consists of 15 young people aged 15 to 25 years, 5 community organisational representatives, 1 representative from local government and 6 representatives from government departments.
- The Office of Youth Affairs provides administrative and financial support for the operation of the Queensland State Youth Advisory Council.



Ngaere Blair, Listed with Register of Boards and Committees...

I was a panel member on the Youth Consultative Committee for Arts Queensland with 3 other young people, reading through arts funding applications to ensure young people were being appropriately treated, and that the funded activities would benefit youth culture. I learnt so much! Mostly that there are such diverse cultures out there, and that young people have so much potential.



YOUTH WEBSITE: www.GENERATE.qld.gov.au

- The GENERATE website provides information and connections between young people and government.
- "Ministers Online", a feature of the website, allows young people to discuss issues and raise questions with Queensland Government Ministers in an online chat environment. A schedule of chats is available on the site.
- Also featured on the site is a discussion board – the GENERATOR – that facilitates discussion between young people across the State. The issues discussed by young people on the GENERATOR are raised in a regular report to Cabinet.
- A facility to provide feedback on proposed or amended legislation that affects the lives of young people is also included on the site in the "Legislation Online" section.

YOUTH PARTICIPATION GRANTS

- Local level youth participation activities support young Queenslanders to influence day-to-day decisions of state and local government and the community. By being involved in decision-making, young people have opportunities to develop and increase their skills and knowledge in identifying and responding to the issues that are facing them in their local communities.
- The Office of Youth Affairs provides small grants directly to young people to express their views and decide which issues are most important to them and their communities. Small grants are also available to community organisations and local governments.

GET ON BOARD INITIATIVE

- Young people can include their names on a register to indicate their desire to be a part of a Queensland Government board or committee. When developing membership for boards and committees this register may be referred to for inclusion and representation of young people.

Kylie Lewis, Recipient of Youth Participation Grant...

We were stoked on the glorious day that the grant money arrived because this meant we could start making the K-Nekt zine bigger and better and really get it out there. (Next step, world domination!!) Young people usually get talked about by the media, so the zine is a great way for us to "become the media", to represent ourselves and our opinions...



Darren Manns, State Youth Advisory Council Member...

Being a member of the State Youth Advisory Council means working with 14 other committed young people to share a vision and create a better Queensland for all young people. It means having a voice and knowing that you will be taken seriously. I'd have to say, "Young people's opinions are as valid as anyone else's" was the best thing I've ever seen written on a wall.



WHAT is the DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD?

WHAT IS THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD ?

In Queensland, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award is a program operated by community organisations and volunteers and supported by the Queensland Government through the Office of Youth Affairs. It offers young people between the ages of 12 and 25 years an opportunity to develop essential life skills and leadership capacity.

The award is based on an exciting program of individual, non-competitive, personal challenge.

To achieve an award, participants have to complete a range of requirements in each of four sections: *Service* - to encourage service to others; *Expedition* - to encourage a spirit of adventure and discovery; *Skills* - to develop personal interests, social and practical skills; *Physical Recreation* - to encourage participation in physical recreation and to improve personal performance.

Each year in Queensland, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award supports over 22 000 participants and registers more than 1 800 young people as new participants.

For more information, contact The Duke of Edinburgh's Award on

phone: Brisbane (07) 3224 8187

freecall 1800 177 338

or visit www.dukeofedqld.org

Erwin Gamboa, Participant/Organiser of The Duke of

Edinburgh's Award...

During school assembly in year 8 a teacher spoke about the Duke's Award. I became interested and joined. I had so much fun that I set up the Award at Universities and have been running it since. The benefits are countless. I've gained a multitude of skills as well as meeting heaps of really cool people and making many friends.

