

The Young Person's Reference Group 2006 ANNUAL REPORT

1. Introduction

This is the Third Annual Report of the City of Port Phillip Young Person's Reference Group Advisory Committee which covers the activities of the Committee for the period January to December 2006.

The Committee was established in September 2001 to share information about issues facing young people and provides advice to Council and to Council staff.

2. Membership

The membership structure of the Committee has consisted of general members that over 2006 included

Lisa Rodwell, Sam Nikolsky, Kaj Lofgren, Stephanie Rennie, Lucy Maxwell, Alex Heydon, Chloe Caghan, Miles De Carteret. Lily Partland, Paige Magnani Alex Nikolsky. Sarah Ashman, Victoria Darmanin

3. Meetings

The Young Persons Reference Group met on six occasions during 2006:

Jan 31
Feb 20 (Youth Voice Off)
March 7
April 6. (Incorporating FreeZA)
April 27 (Incorporating FreeZA)
May 18 (Incorporating FreeZA)

Meetings were conducted at St Kilda Town Hall

Administration support was provided by Andrew Davis (until March 06) Martin Goffin (From April)

4. Work Program and Issues Arising

The Committee's objectives are:

- Enable young people to communicate directly with City of Port Phillip staff about issues pertinent to young people
- Advise Council on policy relating to young people
- Provide young people with the opportunity to be consulted and contribute to the City of Port Phillip's planning and development of youth initiatives.
- Enable young people to gain experience of local government.
- Provide young people with the opportunity to be involved in various youth projects and activities.
- Provide young people with the opportunity to represent the City of Port Phillip at conferences and forums on youth-related matters.
- Provide young people with the opportunity to receive training and skill development.
- Organise events and processes to enable community-wide consultation with young people.

The Committee's 2006 achievements/ program included:

- Committee participated in Youth Voice Off leading to planning outcomes related to Youth Week and FreeZA.
- Group endorsed FreeZA Collective model in which Council worked with community agencies as project leaders.
- Group provided insight into other issues effecting young people including issues around linking to Education, housing and need for programs for independent living.
- Some members provided continued assistance in planning of FreeZA events inc. Freestyle Fever Dance Comp and Battle of the Bands.
- Some Members provided Youth voice at Big Cake 3 Youth Forum.

Findings and major issues,

- At the completion of 2005 the Young Person's Reference Group was becoming a difficult group to upkeep.
- Issues included;
 - Recruitment. Young people who accepted the challenge to participate in YPRG struggled to meet monthly. This was due to other commitments i.e. the increase in demands of education.
 - The YPRG sat separate to other initiatives that CoPP facilitated around themes of Youth Development and "Whole of Community". Collaborative frameworks were being developed with educators and community agencies however this was not reflected in the development of CoPP participatory models like YPRG. The YPRG model therefore did not fit the model that was developing through Big Cake and FreeZA
 - The resignation and subsequent employment of a new Projects and Participation created an inconsistency that saw new Members of the YPRG disengage.
 - Recruitment attempts via visits to schools, Classroom presentations did not increase membership.
 - FreeZA initiatives saw young people willing to engage on a project by project basis but not in a long term commitment.
 - Later meetings were attempted with no attendance
- Consultations in the second half of 2006 targeted leadership groups with Elwood (Oct 25) and Albert Park College (Oct 26)

5. Reporting

A copy of the minutes of every Young Person's Reference Group meeting are circulated to all members

The Committee's Annual Report to Council outlines the activities and findings of the Committee each year.

6. Recommendations

6.1. Term of Committee

The current term of the Young Persons Reference Group expires on 31 December 2006.

We recommend that the Committee does not continue due to:

- The limited scope of the group to enable true representation of young people in council planning
- The incompatibility of the YPRG to current "Whole of Community" planning driven through the "Big Cake" initiative which if prioritised may raise more legitimate and sustainable participation and leadership opportunities both with young people within the school system and outside of education (Sector supported) and across council
- The limited capacity of Youth services to support successful and ongoing recruitment of members, development of trusting relationships with young people

This report was prepared by Leo Kelly.

Confirmation by the Chairperson could not occur due to

- Declining membership
- Increased focus on project based FreeZA initiatives
- Lack of a nominated of Chair

Signature _____

Date _____