

# **YOUTH STRATEGY**

## 2022-2026



### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

We, the Benalla Rural City Council, acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present and to Elders from other communities.

Young People are vital to our community. Their contribution is critical to creating a vibrant, viable and progressive rural city in the short, medium and long term.

The 2022-2026 Youth Strategy is a dynamic, evolving plan that recognises the invaluable ideas, energy and aspirations of our young people.

This strategy outlines Benalla Rural City's commitment to young people, outlining what Council will do and how Council will work with young people, schools, workplaces, parents, service providers and other levels of government.

This document will be supported by an annual Action Plan detailing the opportunities and associated measurable activity Council will deliver for our young people over the next four years. The Plans will have the ability to adapt and respond to changing needs, trends and issues.

## Our Commitment

Young people are at the forefront of this Strategy to ensure they are leading and championing youth activities, events and programs.

This will be achieved by:

- giving young people a space to have their voices heard
- providing safe, inclusive and respectful spaces for young people to interact
- enabling young people to lead committees, crews and groups
- ensuring young people's wellbeing is at the centre of all decision making
- establishing committees, crews and groups built on equitable opportunities
- ensuring youth services and organisations work alongside one another to provide the best opportunities for young people
- creating platforms for all young people to be given the chance to engage in events, activities and programs.

## Themes

The Youth Strategy is made up of three key themes, as identified by young people – paths to **evolve**, opportunities to **strengthen** and a chance to **connect**.

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## How our Youth Strategy was created





## THEME 1 EVOLVE

*“Allow for our voices to be heard and provide opportunities for personal and professional growth.”*

### Young people will be:

1.1	Provided a lead role in organising youth activities, events and programs.
1.2	Provided opportunities to lead healthy and active lives.
1.3	Encouraged and presented with opportunities to understand and explore youth enterprise.
1.4	Given a voice to advocate for the delivery of relevant education and training that meets the needs of our local community.
1.5	Engaged in the design of key locations across Benalla Rural City to ensure they have safe spaces to socialise, hold events and study.
1.6	Supported to attain their probationary drivers licence.

### Quotes from youth survey

*“I like being safe and knowing that there are people around me to help if I need it”*

*“I like the space, the quietness, the closeness of the community members.”*

*“Transport into town from just out of Benalla, not many activities for my age group.”*





## THEME 2

# STRENGTHEN

*“Teens can sometimes go through anxiety and everyone’s body is changing and we need something to keep us happy and healthy.”*

### Young people call for:

2.1	Greater community understanding of respectful relationships, gender equity and safe behaviours.
2.2	Increased community awareness about the diversity of educational pathways
2.3	Strengthened and enhanced skills to advocate for matters of importance to them
2.4	Increased training, employment, work experience and volunteering opportunities
2.5	An improved understanding and interest in the impacts of COVID-19 on them and increased support throughout the recovery process

### Quotes from youth survey

*“Have more social opportunities, festivals, movie nights, night life and places we can dance.”*

*“Friendly community and sporting opportunities.”*

*“I enjoy the peace, and the lake with the walking track is great for exercise and relaxing.”*



of young people identify as **LGBTQIA+**



of young people have **casual employment**



of young people are currently **attending high school**

The percentages above are taken from young people surveyed in 2018 and 2021.



## THEME 3

# CONNECT

*“I would offer more programs and youth events that teenagers and young people enjoy, so that they can make friends from different places that share the same interests. This in turn would make it easier for kids that don’t find it easy to make friends.”*

### Our community will:

3.1	Celebrate the accomplishments of young people in our community.
3.2	Investigate and advocate for improved public transportation options.
3.3	Ensure youth organisations, services and schools have a shared focus and key goals across the Benalla youth sector.
3.4	Recognise the need for LGBTQIA+ young people to feel supported and empowered within the Benalla Rural City community.
3.5	Create opportunities for young people to engage with a wide range of activities and events including arts, culture, music, festivals, social and recreational activities.
3.6	Improve access to youth focused health and wellbeing services that target key issues for young people in Benalla, such as; mental health, drugs and alcohol, body image, housing and family violence.
3.7	Be a safe place to live, where young people’s diversity and culture is respected and celebrated.

### Quotes from youth survey

*“Have more facilities for young people to interact and be active.”*

*“It’s a tight community. Everybody kind of knows each other. The people are welcoming and polite, it’s a beautiful looking place with nice scenery.”*

*“Lack of opportunities, lack of connection from the residential areas to the central township.”*

**The top three concerns for young people are:**

**1** boredom/  
nothing to do

**2** body  
image

**3** mental health  
problems

A detailed consultation report is available upon request.



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 #YouthBenalla