

Minutes

Meeting of the SWMPF Working Group on Vulnerable and At Risk Young People

9.30am – 11.30am, Wednesday 28 May 2014
Cockburn youth centre, 25 Wentworth Parade, Success

Interim chair: Karin Mac Arthur, Community Partnership Broker, SWMPF

Participants: Jules Martin (Senior Youth Housing Support Worker, Youth Place, St Patrick's Community Support Centre Limited); Maria McAttackney (CEO, Nyoongar Patrol Outreach Service); Craig Green (Youth Worker, Fremantle PCYC); Tracey Hawker (Manager, Public and Community Relations Workforce Development and Skills for Education and Employment, SMYL Community Services); Julie Fitzgerald (Team Leader, Responsible Parenting Services, Department for Child Protection and Family Support); Russ Eldean (Youth Liaison Officer, WA Police); Erinn Litchfield (Youth Worker, City of Fremantle); Bobby Mizen (Youth Outreach Officer, City of Cockburn); Michelle Champion (Youth Services Manager, City of Cockburn); Ian Jorritsma (Team Leader, Department of Housing); Megan Milligan (Senior Health Promotion Coordinator, South Metropolitan Public Health Unit); Joel Woods (Engagement and Transition Manager, Department of Education); Catherine Duce (Y-Shac, Anglicare)

Observer: Melanie Bisnauth (Intern, St Patrick's Community Support Centre)

Apologies: Dylan Smith (Executive Officer, Fremantle Foundation); Claire Heffernan (Manager, South West Metropolitan Youth Justice Services); Sarah Brown (Manager, Y-Shac, Anglicare); Christine George (Youth Project Officer, City of Fremantle)

1. Welcome

Karin welcomed all participants to the inaugural meeting of the South West Metropolitan Partnership Forum's working group, which is dedicated to developing a unique, collaborative approach to supporting vulnerable and at risk young people in the local government authorities of Cockburn, Fremantle and Melville.

The SWMPF is a pilot project, which runs for an initial period of two years. It is Australia's first collective impact model of its kind and is based on robust evidence from the US, which demonstrates that 'bottom-up, cross-sector collaboration' is the most effective means of addressing the complex social issues facing our community.

The working group brings together a wealth of knowledge, skills, expertise and, above all, commitment and goodwill, which will go a long way towards ensuring we deliver our shared outcomes. The essential requirement of all members of the working group is the ability to leave territorial boundaries behind (metaphorical and literal!) and be open to explore bold new ideas.

The working group is responsible for scoping this SWMPF project and ensuring that we develop and implement an innovative coordinated strategy to address issues identified by the young people we are seeking to support.

The Vulnerable and At Risk Young People project is one of four being implemented by the SWMPF. It is envisaged that all four groups will link into and support each other. A consideration may be to include young people in Davis Park in this project.

2. Functions and objectives of the working group

An outline of the key functions and objectives of the working group was provided to all participants before the meeting. In sum, these are to scope the project and develop and implement an innovative plan of action to address the key issues identified by the target group.

The working group approved the draft project outcomes circulated before the meeting, namely:

- Young people involved in the SWMPF project are engaged in meaningful activities (eg education, training or employment)
- Young people involved in the SWMPF project demonstrate increased resilience and well-being
- Young people involved in the SWMPF project participate in their local community activities
- Young people involved in the SWMPF project feel safe and supported in their community

3. Discussion on how the working group will engage young people to ensure their needs are driving all initiatives undertaken

The majority of the meeting was devoted to identifying the age group/s the project should focus on. After sharing a range of views, the meeting agreed to target the 8 – 13 age group. This was the age group that the group believed:

- Would most benefit from a targeted project of this nature and have the greatest chance of breaking the cycle of risk;
- Encompasses both primary and secondary school students, together with the transition years;
- Would be less difficult to engage;
- Could be tracked as they move into the older age groups.

It was acknowledged that any initiatives to be undertaken with this age group must involve the young people's families.

The meeting agreed that we needed to identify an optimum (TBD) number of vulnerable and at risk young people from this age group in each of the three LGAs. These would be the young people we would be seeking to engage and work with.

There were a number of options discussed as to how we would select this group. These ranged from the individual working group members identifying clients we could work with to sending out an invitation to all families in the region to volunteer to take part in the project.

None of the options discussed was considered suitable. For example, if we were to directly target particular families they might feel stigmatized, segregated and therefore not wish to be involved. On the other hand, if we were to issue a general invitation, we risk not engaging the young people whom we are targeting (as they are necessarily harder to reach).

Another (out-of-session) suggestion was to hold a community barbeque to which a large number of families from across the 3 LGAs would be invited (and transport provided). This also risks not reaching the people we wish to target unless we issue invitations only to identified families.

Action: All members agreed to give this issue further consideration and to meet in a fortnight's time to discuss their proposals.

Action : Similarly, the members agreed to give further consideration to the issue of the number of young people involved. Various options were discussed at the meeting, from as little as 3 in each LGA (which would allow for very intensive work but would obviously minimize the impact of this project - while also slipping into the realm of case management, which is not the scope of this project) to an unlimited number of young people who put their hands up to get involved in the project (which would make it difficult for the working group to measure the project's impact across a range of indicators).

Action: A further issue is how we engage with the young people identified. This needs to be framed in a very positive way and demonstrate that it is about supporting the identified young people to realize their potential. Questions need to be framed in such a way that encourage the young people to identify specific initiatives that would make a difference to their lives (and that of their parents), within the parameters of the working group's shared outcomes.

4. Prioritization of possible initiatives to be undertaken – refer draft action plan and notes from SWMPF Planning Day

This item was not covered as the working group was not in a position to prioritise initiatives until there was greater clarity around the project scope.

5. Appointment of permanent working group Chairperson and Secretary

Jules Martin kindly agreed to take on the role of secretary (that is, convening meetings and taking minutes). The Chairperson has yet to be confirmed – we will advise asap.

6. Fremantle Foundation Impact100 and Charity Ball

This item was not covered. For the working group's information, please be aware of the following two Fremantle Foundation funding initiatives:

- Impact100 Fremantle is now calling for grant applications for a primary grant of up to \$100,000 to one local community organisation. The focus area for 2014 is creative solutions that address Mental Wellbeing and Homelessness. Closing date for applications 1 July.
- The Fremantle Foundation Charity Ball is being held on Friday 15 August. All proceeds will go towards supporting disadvantaged young people in Fremantle.

7. Discussion on frequency of working group meetings, best meeting times and days

It was agreed to meet on Tuesdays, from 9.30am – 11.30, at rotating venues throughout Cockburn, Fremantle and Melville.

Given the outstanding issues to be resolved, the working group agreed to meet fortnightly until further notice.

The next meeting will be held at **9.30am on Tuesday, 10 June, at Fremantle PCYC.**

8. Any other business

Many thanks to Cockburn Youth Service for hosting our meeting!



Not-for-profit organisations



Government
(local, State and Commonwealth)



Business



Community



Philanthropy