

Young Women's Leadership Handbook

A guide for councils

Target group: Young women aged 15-20 years including CALD / migrant and refugee groups

Setting: Community & education

Key health promotion strategies: Direct participation; community strengthening

Acknowledgements

Traditional owner acknowledgement

VicHealth acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the lands on which these programs operate. We pay our respects to all Elders past, present and future.

Acknowledgement of contributing councils

We would like to acknowledge the work of Monash City and others who co-created and developed the Young Women's Leadership (YWL) program in 2017. Some of the content in this handbook is taken from the Bright Futures Challenge Project Implementation Guide written by Monash City Council in 2019.

We would also like to acknowledge Casey City and City of Whittlesea who ran this program during 2019-2020 and contributed to the writing of this handbook.

Contents

Contents	2
Background	4
About the program	6
Change the Story framework	7
Is this program right for your council?	8
Where to start	10
Funding & costs	11
External funding	11
Rural and regional grants	11
Internal funding	11
Cost considerations	12
Build the team	13
Core team	13
Training	13
Inter-council connections	14
External organisations	14

Marketing & promotion	15
Social media	15
Traditional media	16
Key activities	
Establishment	17
Delivery	18
Outcomes & reporting	
Outcomes	20
Reporting	20
Adaptations	
Online delivery	22
Art program	23
Timing & content	23
Project close	24
Final session	24
Reporting to council and funding partners	24
Opportunities for young people beyond program close	24
Some of the opportunities that can be explored include:	25
Further info	27

Background

The Young Women's Leadership (YWL) program was first created as part of the <u>VicHealth</u> <u>Bright Futures for Young Victorians Challenge</u> (or Bright Futures Challenge), a key initiative within the VicHealth strategic imperative to 'improve mental wellbeing'.

The Challenge aims to build resilience, social connection and mental wellbeing in young people (12–25 years old) and also to strengthen the leadership of local governments in improving the mental wellbeing of young people.

We know that this age range is a critical period for personal development – characterised by important transitions through education, work, family and relationships. During this time, young people are developing physically, intellectually and emotionally, while forming autonomous identities, building independent social networks and initiating intimate relationships.

In 2015, in partnership with CSIRO, VicHealth released the <u>Bright Futures Megatrends Report</u>. The research report described five global 'megatrends' that are likely to have an impact on the mental wellbeing of young people in the next two decades. These megatrends are likely to affect the social, environmental and economic aspects of young people's lives and also on the transitions and changes that occur during this critical period.

The Bright Futures for Young Victorians Challenge was launched by VicHealth in 2016, supporting Victorian councils to develop responses to the identified megatrends and solutions to promote young people's resilience, social connection and mental wellbeing.

The first phase of the Bright Futures Challenge enabled 12 local councils to work directly with young people to co-design and create new programs and initiatives in their local area.

The second phase of the Bright Futures Challenge provided further funding for several of those local councils to expand their program. This phase provided funding for several new councils to join the Challenge by creating new programs and initiatives.

The third phase of the Bright Futures Challenge saw a focus on councils integrating the learnings and achievements of the most promising projects from the first two phases.

In consultation with councils, and based on program evaluation data, VicHealth identified four Bright Futures projects in 2018–9 that showed strong promise for positive health outcomes and potential to be replicated and embedded by more councils. The four councils that initiated these programs were appointed as 'Integration Mentors' with the specific goals of (a) supporting other councils to replicate the program, and (b) sustaining and embedding the program within their own council business and services.

The YWL program was one of the four Bright Futures programs that were selected for integration. Monash City Council was the Integration Mentor for this program and worked closely with Casey City and the City of Whittlesea to replicate the program in those councils.

VicHealth was proud to lead the Bright Futures Challenge during 2016-2020 in partnership with local councils and with young Victorians. Following the evaluation and integration phase, all four of the most promising Bright Futures projects are now available for all local councils to deliver and adapt in their local area. For more information see the VicHealth website.

About the program

Target group: Young women aged 15-20 years including CALD / migrant and refugee groups

Setting: Community & education

Key health promotion strategies: Direct participation; community strengthening

"I've been given the opportunity to discuss ideas that empower and strengthen women with the encouragement of like-minded girls. These experiences will guide my future opportunities".

2019 YWL participant

The Young Women's Leadership program provides a structured approach to increasing young women's skills, confidence and leadership opportunities in a peer-learning environment. The program has an intersectional approach, with a focus on identifying how factors such as ethnicity, religion, migration status, ability, sexuality, gender expression connect to create unique experiences for individuals in society. The program also engages young women from migrant and refugee backgrounds and is designed to be co-facilitated with a local multicultural agency. Fifty per cent of program places are allocated to young women from these backgrounds. The program is inclusive to all female-identifying young people and welcomes varying abilities, sexualities, gender expressions, religious and ethnic backgrounds.

Two central themes underpin the program:

- 1. The first theme is identifying and understanding barriers in the current social climate to women accessing leadership opportunities, supporting participants to understand their strengths and skillsets, and providing information around financial literacy, public speaking, networking and leadership.
- 2. The second theme addresses violence against women and the importance of respectful relationships, with links to relevant campaigns and programs.

Change the Story framework

Change the Story draws upon the latest international evidence on what drives violence against women and what works to prevent it. Its development included consultations with over 400 stakeholders across Australia. It uses this research and practice expertise to demonstrate how, by working together, we can create an Australia where women live free from violence.

Although violence against women has no single cause, Change the Story points to substantial evidence that higher levels of violence against women are consistently associated with lower levels of gender equality in both public life and personal relationships. For example, a major study found that higher gender inequality predicted higher levels of intimate partner violence across 44 countries.

Within this broader context, Change the Story identifies four specific, gendered drivers of this violence:

- 1. condoning violence, particularly by excusing or trivialising it, or "blaming the victim";
- 2. men's control over decision-making, and limits to women's independence in public life and relationships;
- 3. rigid gender roles and stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity; and
- 4. male peer relations that emphasise aggression and disrespect towards women.

Is this program right for your council?

The YWL program can help young women in your community to build leadership skills and learn to overcome barriers to achieve their goals. The program allows young women from all cultural backgrounds, with a particular focus on CALD communities, to realise the positive impact they can have in their world. The program will be well suited to communities made up of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds including migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum.

By building social connections, the program allows women more opportunities to share their experiences and to help each other to connect to the various supports in the community. It provides a way to build independence and create an empowering process to build ongoing capacity for women in the local community.

The key to the program's success is ensuring it aligns to a real need in your community. Use existing research, team knowledge, analysis of intake data and pay attention to issues presented by young people accessing your youth service for support. This may inform your program development and implementation.

"I just wanted to say a big thank you to you (City of Casey YWL team). Previously I would have struggled with severe anxiety in these circumstances but you've taught me a lot about taking care of myself and building myself up. You taught me that it's ok for me to want things and to work hard at it. You taught me how to use my voice positively. The YWL program was the start of that opportunity for me. I have had so many ideas come from inspiration you have provided or things you have said that have stuck with me. You are able to connect me with people who want my ideas to happen just as much as I do and will work to make them possible. I just wanted to say a massive thank you for that. You have made a really positive change in my life and how I see myself. That's something I will never take for granted. So here is a massive

thank you. You've made a better me for this world". Quote from Participant in the YWL program at the City Of Casey.

Where to start

In considering how to establish and deliver this program it's important to consider the needs of the young women in your community and the capacities and resources within your council. It is also important to consider how you might embed strategies for long-term sustainability from the start. Questions you might ask include:

- Do you have buy-in from other departments within the council?
- Have you identified other collaborators?
- How might you build internal support for the council's continuation of the program?
- Can you explore potential future partnerships?

Thinking about the end goal of the program can be helpful to plan the necessary steps to achieve that goal. This might include what referral pathways and opportunities are available to participants on completion of the program. How will you endeavour to keep young people engaged and participating in other youth programs? Think about how to add value to the program by co-designing with participants to create an offering that is meaningful and engaging.

Establishing who will support you in this work, both inside and outside of your council is critical to beginning a program such as YWL. On page 17 you'll find a list of key activities which outlines considerations for the establishment and delivery of the program.

Funding & costs

External funding

There are many grants available to local councils to provide financial support for programs created for young people. Increasing focus on young people and mental health in Victoria may offer new opportunities to apply for funding and work with new partners.

<u>Youth Central</u> is the Victorian Government's website for young people aged 12-25 and has numerous grants available for local councils in Victoria.

<u>Youth Affairs Council Victoria</u> offer 'Hey' Grants (Health Equal Youth) on an annual basis to local councils (and youth groups). They're a unique opportunity for mainstream and non-LGBTIQ+ based services to develop work and new activities which better target and include LGBTIQ+ young people and enhance their mental health and wellness.

The <u>Victorian Government</u> offers grants for local government youth programs which can be accessed via their website.

Rural and regional grants

<u>In a Good Place</u> is a national grants program funded by CCI Giving that provides support for community-driven initiatives that reduce social isolation, increase social participation and connectedness, and encourage people in rural, regional and remote communities who are at risk of or are experiencing mental health issues to seek help.

Internal funding

If no external funding is available, consider how to allocate funding within your youth services budget to deliver activities. How might you advocate to council through budget and business planning processes for funding to support this and other youth programs?

Cost considerations

It can be difficult to determine detailed information about project delivery requirements (like room hire and travel) as these will vary considerably from council to council, however, there are several cost considerations which have been outlined below.

Resource	Notes
0.4 FTE youth project officer	
0.3 FTE external program co-facilitator	
Venue hire	
Catering	May need nine sessions of program catering, one session of graduation catering and one reunion catering.
Promotions	
Transport	
Interpreting	Allowing for translation of participant permission forms, program promotion and interpreting if required at the graduation ceremony.
Professional development	Staff training.
Guest speakers	
Program resources	Facilitator Packs (e.g. posters, question and feedback boxes, participant packs, worker packs, USBs, Post-it®, worksheets, carry tubs).
IT and AV equipment	

Build the team

Core team

Establishing and delivering a successful program requires leadership with vision, skills and knowledge of how to promote change within communities. The ability to have an empathetic relationship with young people (and their supports) builds trust and fosters inclusivity. Staff need to have a good understanding of youth participation, group work and issues for young women in the local area.

Consider the personalities and skillsets of the key personnel in your team. Facilitators should have good knowledge of content delivered and an appreciation of the cultural perspectives of the cohort. Programs will usually be delivered in a two-person team so building a strong facilitator / co-facilitator relationship is important. Consider how these roles can best support each other.

Training

Whilst staff should have a good base knowledge of content delivered in the program, it's advisable to invest in professional development in areas such as mental health and sexual health to ensure staff knowledge is up to date. Some programs, including those from Family Planning Victoria, are free for professional individuals working with young people outside of the mainstream secondary school settings or at-risk young people aged 12-25. Staff should be trained in what local services are available for young people and how to use online platforms.

The shift to online delivery of programs in 2020 due to COVID-19 meant facilitators needed to be trained specifically for the online environment. Participants reported many positives of the online delivery mode so this may be a delivery option at any time and therefore a consideration for training.

Intra-council connections

Make use of internal contacts such as the local government gender equity officer, local gender equity advisory council, cultural diversity officers and other teams that can offer support or ideas for the program. By linking the program across silos, you can create groups with a vested interest in the sustainability of the program.

Engage the communications department to support the marketing and promotion of the program.

External organisations

Make contact with local organisations with specialist knowledge on supporting young refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in order to increase stakeholder engagement with the program and to discuss session content. It may also be valuable to meet with them again after the program has been completed to discuss outcomes and future possibilities.

Make contact with local relationships/family violence/family support services to gain their insights and develop resources to share as needed in the program, and also to build their engagement with the program and council's accountability to local service providers.

Growing good practice

- Build connections with councils that have previously led this program and/or councils that are adapting it now.
- Consider developing a 'community of practice' for program officers across councils.
 During 2019-2020, VicHealth's Bright Futures Community of Practice supported the growth of good practice by providing regular opportunities for knowledge exchange, joint problem-solving and peer support across councils.

Marketing & promotion

Engage your council's communications and marketing teams early to assist with all forms of communication. Together, you should build a comprehensive communication plan to promote the activities, training, events and group activities delivered throughout the program. Develop strategies to celebrate and promote key successes of the program. A combination of traditional and digital media work well for the target group. Also, consider working directly with school coordinators and wellbeing workers to deliver face to face 'info sessions' to students that may have signed up or been nominated by the school staff.

Your communication plan should consider council CALD strategies and inclusivity frameworks to ensure alignment of long term planning.

Social media

Consider the best mode of communication for your audience. Young people embrace social media but it's important to consider which specific platforms they're using. The table below offers some social platforms and pages to consider using. Creating video content can be a quick and powerful way to engage young people and parents online. Take advantage of opportunities to promote your program on school social media sites as parents may be more likely to see them and potentially encourage their children to participate. Local networks/mailing lists are also very helpful.

Platforms: Facebook, Instagram, TikTok
Main Council page/handle
Council Youth page/handle

Community groups page/handle	
Local schools page/handle	

Traditional media

Stories in school newsletters have a high readership with parents whilst posters for schools will be seen by students also. Stories in local print and radio can resonate well with a community, helping to build engagement through pride and identity.

Key activities

Establishment

	Establish a steering committee. Consult with existing local youth groups for
	consultation on the program.
<u> </u>	Write a project plan (with help from the steering committee). The plan should consider service resources, staffing, budget, physical spaces and community partnerships. Consideration should be given to the type of delivery mode - face to face or online.
	Establish sources of funding. Apply for grants if necessary.
	Establish an internal team.
<u> </u>	Engage partners . Make contact with local family violence / family support services to build their engagement with the program and the council's accountability to local service providers. Explore existing networks for potential speakers.
	Engage cohorts. Arrange face-to-face meetings with key staff to engage schools (e.g. principals, cohort coordinators). Outline the community need for the program. Contact local services such as neighbourhood houses, guides, local TAFE and universities, youth residential facilities, sporting clubs, libraries etc. Consider reaching out to families directly via cultural workers.
	Marketing and promotion. Develop a social media promotional plan.
	Workshop planning . Organise venue and catering. Prepare participant workbooks and any other collateral you may need including posters etc. Develop a risk management

plan for the program, including transport, safety, lighting, antisocial behaviour, emergency responses, etc. Consider policies and procedures for online delivery.

Delivery

Growing good practice. Provide learning and networking opportunities for program
staff, for example by connecting with other councils who are also adapting the program
or by creating a 'community of practice'.

■ Workshops: Monash delivered the program both during school term (minimum two-hour session once a week for 10 weeks) and during school holidays (once a week for two hours session, as well as a three and a half day intensive). After-school delivery was found to be the best option, with a 4:30/5pm start time to allow participants to arrive from school or other daytime commitments. Avoid scheduling the program in conflict with cultural events and celebrations such as prayer times and Ramadan as examples.

Be aware that in some cultures young women are not allowed to be out of the house after sundown. To cater for these women, the program should be delivered during daylight hours. School term lengths and student exam commitments can make delivery in term 1 and 4 challenging. The most successful programs in Monash were run in term 2 or 3. Consider how to negotiate to decrease daylight hours at this time (like offering paid or staff-escorted transport home from the programs to save travel time)

- Workshops: The City of Whittlesea delivered the YWL program both face to face and online. The highest recruitment was for the online workshop. Young people found it easily accessible, not having to rely on public transport or travel arrangements. Using the online chat function to engage and being able to choose to use their camera was preferable.
- □ **Launch event.** Does it clash with other major events happening at that time? Can you time the launch to align with events that follow a similar theme or focus? Consider a video screening at the launch event.

$\boldsymbol{Wrap}\;\boldsymbol{up}.$ Organise for a reunion of participants one to three months after the program
end date.
Evaluation & reporting. Develop a report presenting the outcomes of the program.

Outcomes & reporting

Outcomes

In 2018, Monash City council (with the support of the VicHealth funding) delivered the YWL program on four separate occasions, with 61 young women attending the program and 46 young women graduating. Participants stated they felt empowered to recognise and take action regarding gender equality in the community, they felt informed about issues they had been frightened to ask in the classroom and had the opportunity to speak with other women from diverse backgrounds which has increased their feelings of connection and confidence.

Reporting

"In order to achieve program sustainability, we need to present our evaluation data (to council) and show that we've achieved what we've set out to do" Host council

Reporting is essential to help monitor the effectiveness of the program and ensure funding is allocated where it can be best utilised. Consideration should be given to data collection according to the needs of the council and any external funding bodies (if required). A council plan or funding body guidelines should ideally guide reporting.

Implement processes to gather data for reporting, such as:

- participant demographics from indemnities and initial conversations
- pre and post-program evaluations
- parent evaluations
- facilitator evaluations

Considerations:

- Options for how participant/family evaluations will be accessed and completed. Online
 forms may be a barrier for those without internet access; paper forms may be a barrier
 for those with English as a second language or reading difficulties.
- Option to record names on evaluations or provide anonymous feedback. Names on evaluations allow check-ins if required; anonymous evaluations encourage honest feedback.

Adaptations

We know that community-based programs can't be standardised in exactly the same way for all councils. What worked in one place in one time may not work in other places. What worked at one time may stop working as the context changes. Whilst it's important to remain 'true' to the core purpose and principles of the program, a continuous process of learning and adaptation is required to ensure that the program continues to create a positive impact in your community.

The onset of the COVID-19 lockdowns in 2020 forced the rapid adaptation of programs. Social isolation meant councils chose to pivot their programs to an online delivery mode which brought many new considerations, both for the councils but also for participants.

Online delivery

- Do participants have access to a computer/tablet/phone and adequate internet access?
- Do participants have access to a safe physical space in which they can access the program without fear of interruption?
- Do participants have a private area they can use during the session to maintain the group's confidentiality?
- The use of headphones is highly recommended in order to manage privacy and confidentiality.
- An additional section of the registration form is required to inform parents about the online platform.
- It's important to consider staffing ratios for online delivery. It may be beneficial to have an additional youth project officer to assist with online workshop facilitation. You may want one person dedicated to the chat and Q&A management, depending on your cohort.

The City of Whittlesea developed a series of workshops that ran in between programs to keep young people engaged and to support the promotion of future programs. These workshops included quest speakers, creative arts and wellbeing activities.

City of Casey adaptions

Art program

The City of Casey ran a long-term project for youth to create artworks that instil hope, connection and expression through online engagement and from the safety of their own home, resulting in an art mural and online gallery. The project provided a therapeutic outlet for the young people of the City of Casey.

Young people were asked to make artwork in response to three themes that were chosen by the participants of the Young Women's Leadership program: Gratitude, Hope and Community. An online gallery of artworks was also created through the Facebook event page.

Photos and video content were created as the mural boards were developed, and posted on the Facebook Event page. At the time of writing, in August 2020, Victoria was still in lockdown but the intention is to bring youth and community together when restrictions have lifted to colour in the mural, creating a brand new piece of art.

Timing & content

The program was initially designed as a 10-week program but consider what will work best for your cohort. Alternative delivery options (such 4 weeks or 6 weeks duration) may suit participant schedules. It's also important to tailor the amount of content in each session to your cohort. Will they be more engaged with less content? The program can be run over a school holiday period as an intensive 2-day workshop or as a camp model.

Project close

In the programs that have been run to date, they have exceeded expected outcomes. Participants have reported multifaceted increases in their confidence to apply for opportunities they otherwise would have dismissed. Examples include participants successfully applying for scholarships to study at university overseas, becoming community leaders/ambassadors, and achieving educational and career goals. Graduates of the program have also returned as peer mentors.

Final session

To celebrate the completion of a program, it's suggested that the final leadership session be delivered as an event. This may be held in a local theatre or other auspicious settings in which young participants may deliver a speech to a large audience, cementing their leadership journey with the YWL program.

Reporting to council and funding partners

Develop a report presenting the outcomes of the program and the relationships that were developed as a result. Highlight internal relationships that developed across silos throughout the program, in addition to community relationships.

The use of evaluation data will become a key strategy in building a case for the program to become a budgeted part of the council's regular service delivery. This will help to ensure the long-term sustainability of the program within the council.

Opportunities for young people beyond program close

The YWL program opens many new opportunities for the participants who engage with it. For many, it unlocks barriers to accessing leadership positions which may previously have been difficult to access due to a multi-layering of factors including ethnicity, religion, sexuality or

gender. Encouraging your participants' leadership journeys beyond the life of the program can have far-reaching benefits.

Some of the opportunities that can be explored include:

- Joining leadership forums
- Joining youth advisory committees
- Applying for scholarships for overseas universities
- Becoming community leaders/ambassadors
- Linking youth with opportunities within the council (roles like Family Violence Prevention Officers)
- Achieving educational and career goals

As at August 2020, The City of Whittlesea is developing an online platform which will contribute to the sustainability of the YWL Program. The platform will allow schools and community groups to access the program online which will provide a step by step guide with all necessary resources and partnership information required to run the program. Schools and community groups will be required to partner with the City of Whittlesea to roll out the program.

Contacts

VicHealth

Level 2/355 Spencer Street West Melbourne VIC 3003 Telephone: (03) 9667 1333

City of Monash Youth Services

2 Euneva Avenue, Glen Waverley, Victoria, 3150 Telephone: (03) 9518 3900 Email: yrcr@monash.vic.gov.au

City of Casey Youth Services

Narre Warren VIC 3805 Telephone: (03) 9705 5200

PO Box 1000,

Email: caseycc@casey.vic.gov.au

City of Whittlesea Youth Services

Shop MM1, Westfield Plenty Valley 415 McDonalds Road, Mill Park (Melway 183 B11)

Telephone: 9404 8800

Email: <u>baseline@whittlesea.vic.gov.au</u>

www.baselinewhittlesea.com

Further info

- Our Watch 'Change the Story: A shared framework for the prevention of violence against women and their children in Australia'
 https://www.ourwatch.org.au/change-the-story/
- ANROWS 'Promoting community-led responses to violence against immigrant and refugee women in metropolitan and regional Australia' (https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/promoting-community-led-responses-to-violence-against-immigrant-and-refugee-women-in-metropolitan-and-regional-australia-the-aspire-project-research-summary/
- ANROWS 'A preventable burden: Measuring and addressing the prevalence and health impacts of intimate partner violence in Australian women. Key findings and future directions' (https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/a-preventable-burden-measuring-and-addressing-the-prevalence-and-health-impacts-of-intimate-partner-violence-in-australian-women-key-findings-and-future-directions/)



Young Women's Leadership Program

- Talk about women's issues, gender equity and feminism
- Connect with other young women
- Feel empowered to be a leader
- Challenge gender norms
- Learn about women's health and mental health.

FREE program for young women aged between 15-20 years

Mondays 4pm to 6pm, 20 April to 22 June 2020

Edge Services for Young People Shop MM1, Westfield Plenty Valley 415 McDonalds Road, Mill Park

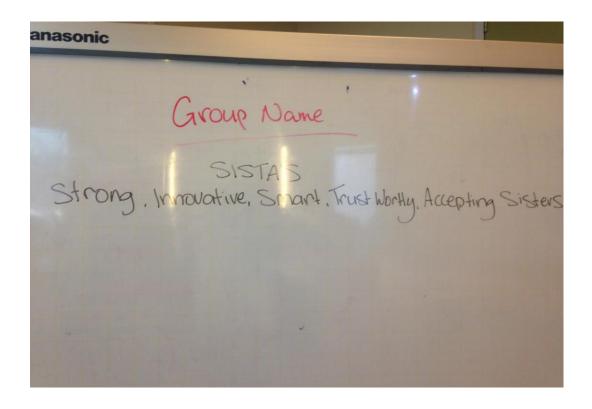


Contact Holly 9404 8800 or email baseline@whittlesea.vic.gov.au









Team name development, City of Whittlesea.

Online workshops, City of Whittlesea.



YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

APRIL 21 - JUNE 23





An artwork made by a young person in the ISO art project, City of Casey.

CITY OF CASEY YOUTH SERVICES

ISO ART PROJECT

GRATITUDE, HOPE, COMMUNITY.

We are calling all young creatives who want to spread some hope and be part of a community project!

Help us to create a community mural and an online gallery all from the comfort of your own homes.

We are asking young people under the age of 25 to make artworks in response to our three themes

GRATITUDE, HOPE & COMMUNITY.

We are accepting all types of artworks NOW! (Visual art, sculpture, photography, poetry etc.)

To find out how you can have your artwork included in the community mural and online gallery email ecarellecasey.vic.gov.au

Or follow the City of Casey Youth Services Iso Art Project event on Facebook for more information.

Unveiling of our community mural will be Sept 2nd - Sept 15th 2020

