



professional recording studio, gallery, and through presenting the Barrenjoey Music Room gigs.

Despite Pittwater's relatively small population, there is an extensive range of creative classes and extra-curricular activities tailored to children and young people. Dance, painting, drawing, sculpture, photography, drama, writing and music classes are all on offer within Pittwater. The combination of a high demand for creative activity and a predominantly wealthy population in Pittwater has meant that a number of types of user-pay creative classes for children, young people and young adults have proliferated. While many young people in Pittwater are in a position to participate in paid activities, it is important that free and low cost offerings continue. Council has a role to play in supporting organisations and programs that run free cultural programs.

In addition to producing art, young people are great consumers of art, particularly literature, music and film. Young adults are more likely than any other age groups to attend gigs and consume music⁹. The levels of attending gigs are highest with 18 – 24 year olds who are employed. As outlined in the 'Arts Paper', people are often drawn out of Pittwater to attend cultural events, particularly in Sydney's centre and inner-west. The Arts Paper recognises that as a global city, Sydney City boasts varied and frequent cultural offerings. There is merit in recognising that audiences

will continue to be drawn into the city. Opportunity exists to develop Pittwater as a satellite to existing events, and to continue to foster unique local offerings.

Pittwater's audiences, including young people, have expressed demand for more regular access to high quality art experiences. The "Arts Paper" details opportunities for boosting the regularity, quality and variety of cultural events in Pittwater, and piloting arts-related activities through the Enliven Pittwater project. Young people have been particularly vocal about having access to more and "better" music in Pittwater.

4.2 Showcasing Young People – Creative Spaces

Pittwater is home to many exceptional young artists, musicians, film-makers, writers, producers and creators as shown with the following examples:

- Musicians Angus and Julia Stone launched their careers from Avalon.
- Flip Jazz Quartet is comprised of four young men from Pittwater.
- Four Pittwater visual artists had their work displayed in Art Express 2013 – an exhibition of exemplary works by HSC candidates.
- Annually several local artists and designers are included in Express Yourself curated by the Manly Art Gallery & Museum.
- Local designers such as Alexandra and Genevieve Smart, the creators of world renowned fashion brand Ginger & Smart, and designer/artist



Libby Watkins enjoyed national and international success either before or just after turning 20.

Showcasing young peoples' artistic ability is vital for a number of reasons. Consultation with young people in Pittwater indicates they often feel they are demonised by the community at large by virtue of being young. A minority of young peoples' anti-social behaviour is often attributed to young people as a whole. Taking opportunities to showcase young peoples' skills and highlight their attitudes and experiences is important in debunking these negative stereotypes. Along with that, Arts can often be a vehicle for cross-generational interaction with expression through the arts affording young people the opportunity to speak to people of different ages and backgrounds.

The annual 24/7 Youth Film Festival, Pittwater Council's Youth Week project 100YPP, and Enliven Pittwater are all examples of ways in which Council can support young people to showcase their talents and have the opportunity to positively contribute to the community through the arts.

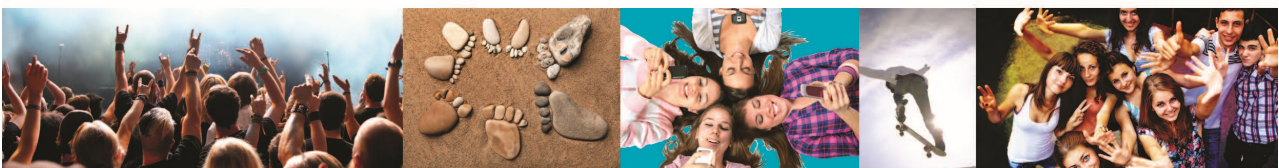
Music venues have been suggested by the community as another option for enabling young people to engage with the Arts. Motivations for such spaces are varied: some young people are interested in performing and presenting their work (see 'Arts Paper' Chapter 4); others seek informal environments to gather with their peers in order to consume both

local and foreign musical acts. In recent years there have been calls by younger people for outdoor music events in locations such as Dunbar Park in Avalon and Village Park in Mona Vale. Although the potential for these types of activities in some parks is limited due to their proximity to residential areas, there is potential for Council to explore the use of outdoor spaces in commercial areas for youth-focused arts and cultural events.

Venues such as YoYos at Frenchs Forest and the Chatswood Youth Centre have a history of working with young musicians to arrange a program of band nights that often cater to the harder core thrash style genre of music fans. Neighbouring Councils have also coordinated annual "Battle of the Band" style events that have catered to a similar market. There is no evidence that the Pittwater community wants to establish another YoYos, however it would be viable to work with groups of interested young people and organisations to establish a program of local music and/or film events that would cater to local youth interests and preferences.

4.3 Health Wellness and the Arts

It is well documented that arts and culture enhance individual and community wellness. The act of making, creating and performing has a range of positive effects including self-expression and meditative outcomes. Recent research indicates that playing an instrument can protect the brain from damage sustained through aging or illness⁹. Chapter 9





of the 'Arts Paper' describes the role that the arts play in wellness, and documents examples of local organisations that utilise arts and creativity for rehabilitation, therapy, learning and health.

Recognising the occurrence of health and social issues experienced by some of Pittwater's young people, there is potential to work collaboratively with organisations that utilise creativity as a therapeutic tool. Council is well positioned to refer young people to organisations such as the Be Centre located in Warriewood, and to creative programs run by organisations such as Relationships Australia and Eramboo Artist Environment at Terrey Hills. There is significant potential for Council to play a brokering role in bringing arts organisations together with health services and youth workers, with a view to developing opportunities for creative expression. Depending on the intended outcome for the program this could occur within either a therapeutic or non-therapeutic environment.

4.4 Creativity and Engagement

Creativity can be a powerful tool for allowing people to express the ideas and issues that are pertinent to them.

Community Cultural Development involves the development of creative skills and processes within a community – or a segment of a community – as a way of exploring and expressing their culture and the values underpinning that culture. Community cultural development

processes can play a vital role in helping young people think critically about their experiences, their perspectives and the concepts that are important to them and their community¹¹.

There is much to be learnt from local and national models of community cultural development. One example is Musicians Making a Difference (MMAD). MMAD is a charity which originated on the Central Coast of NSW. Their mission is:

“to use the power of music to engage, inspire, educate & empower young people to make their lives remarkable”¹²

Their developmental programs team up young people with music professionals and youth workers, and provide space for young people to use music to express themselves in a supportive environment. The results include: the participants build friendships within the group; they develop music skills and knowledge; and they produce unique creative works.

Big hART is another example of an organisation that utilises community cultural development principles to work with young people. The organisation was established in 1992 to partner established artists with people from regional communities to activate a change in self-perception amongst the participants. Big hART runs a number of projects across Australia, typically with communities



that experience a range of complex social issues. Each program is unique as Big hART encourages the participants to tell their own stories using a range of media including multi-media, dance, drama, music, poetry, and gymnastics. Participants are encouraged to utilise skills with which they are already familiar as well as a variety of new creative skills to tell their stories.

Artistic excellence is at the core of the Big hART and MMAD philosophies. Both groups believe that equipping people with the ability to communicate through the arts is a vehicle to

creating change. The groups that Big hART and MMAD work with are defined by experiencing a range of complex social issues or trauma. The visibility of social issues in Pittwater's youth population is less pronounced than in other parts of Sydney or Australia; however, issues such as binge drinking, mental health problems, family violence and relationship breakdown definitely impact family life in Pittwater. There is scope for a family and youth focused service to explore different community cultural development models, and investigate their applicability to Pittwater.

5. INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

5.1 Valuing Young People, Families and Community

The promotion of social and community connectedness within Pittwater is addressed comprehensively in Discussion Paper 2 of Council's Social Plan "Social Cohesion – Connection & Participation". The concept of connectedness applies to community members' relationship with local social groups and networks as well as both the built and natural environments. It is one of Council's many functions to facilitate the processes by which social connection and interaction is promoted and strengthened.

Some of the intended outcomes of a cohesive and connected community are:

The broadening of people's experiences of each other.

The development of more informed opinions about people in their community, and the social and physical environment.

Exchange and sharing of skills, experience and knowledge.

To promote cohesion between local young people, their families and the Pittwater community the challenge for Council is how to generate an environment:





- where young people can safely experiment with their increasing independence
- that encourages young people to gain insights about themselves and the community and environment that surrounds them
- that enables young people to participate in community life and feel genuinely valued
- that assists young people to become involved in decision making about their community
- that connects people across generations and interests
- where young people and their parents know how to access help when required

5.2 Community focuses

Throughout a range of consultations, including Pittwater Council's Community Strategic Plan, Open Space & Recreation Strategy, and Social Plan 2012-2016, the Pittwater community has consistently identified the following opportunities to further engage young people and their families into community life;

more recreation and social opportunities for young people
improved transportation for the whole community
access to alternative education and employment
introduction of youth and family service providers
strategies to address anti-social behaviour in public spaces

The community would like to see the facilitation of a variety of recreational

and social opportunities for Pittwater's young people, particularly at night and on weekends. These activities could be both formal and informal events encompassing a variety of different social, cultural and educational outcomes. While activities would need to be suited to the interests of Pittwater's young people, there is potential for linkages to be made with other local initiatives that target the broader community to promote integration and challenge stereotypes.

Young people and their families have expressed frustrations with the limitations on their mobility, within and out of Pittwater, using public transport. Although the bus service between the Sydney CBD and Palm Beach works with an acceptable amount of regularity it does not deviate from the major corridor and links poorly or not at all with services that extend outside the primary trunk route. If young people do not yet have their license and access to a car, they are dependent on being transported by parents, cycling or walking. These modes of transport are often not the preferred option or may not be safe, especially late at night.

Further access to alternative education, training and employment pathway options within Pittwater could be beneficial in providing an alternative to leaving the area in pursuit of training and employment. In particular for students aged below 17 years who find it difficult to remain engaged in mainstream classrooms but who are legally required to remain



engaged in education or training. As mentioned in Section 3 access to vocational courses and other training opportunities has been highlighted as difficult for Pittwater young people due to the costs associated with travel and due to their location out of the Pittwater area.

The community would like to see the placement of locally based youth and family supports and service providers with which young people and families can identify and access when required. As highlighted in Section 3.4, there are a range of supports and services available to Pittwater young people and their families; however, they are likely to be located in other areas of the Northern Beaches and the Northern Sydney area.

The number of young people with a disability living in Pittwater is unknown however national statistics indicate that just over 7% of young people under the age of 18¹³ report having a disability or long-term condition that restricts their daily lives. These young people experience a number of additional social challenges including being less likely to finish their education or engage in permanent employment, and more likely to spend less time per week with friends and more time alone, increasing their risk of social exclusion.

Sections of the community have also called for the implementation of broader community led strategies to address anti-social behaviour in public spaces and the resulting negative perceptions about young people.

Strategies could potentially focus on intergenerational opportunities that breakdown stereotypes, and providing creative, structured opportunities for young people to interact positively within the community in order to address whole of community concerns and issues.

5.3 Social challenges and opportunities

During consultation for this paper, community based agencies who deliver support services and programs to young people and families identified a number of social challenges present within Pittwater. Having reviewed the information provided during these consultations it became apparent that the social challenges identified could be grouped within three main themes: awareness and access, family support and engagement, and community participation.

The first theme of awareness and access relates to community awareness about the issues young people in Pittwater face and the potential support options and services available to those young people. The second theme, family support and engagement, is related to supporting youth focused initiatives and promoting access to services and support for both parents and young people. The third theme of community participation is related to social inclusion, intergenerational engagement, employment and training opportunities, and the perception and celebration of young people within the community.



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Awareness and Access

- Raise awareness about the incidence of diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health conditions including depression, bipolar disorder and anxiety. It is unknown how many young Pittwater residents live with a mental health problem; however, in Australia it has been estimated that 26% of young people suffer from some form of mental health issue, with depression one of the most common problems¹⁴.
- Services have indicated that children and young people are experiencing stress at progressively earlier ages. Where previously the signs of stress, anxiety and disengagement may have been evident in Year 8 or 9 students, these signs are reported as becoming increasingly evident in Year 4, 5 and 6 students.
- Raise awareness around the incidence of homelessness, in particular couch surfing.
- Improve access by schools, families and young people to youth services and networks in order to gain accurate, up to date information and support.

Family Support and Engagement

- Prepare young people for the transitions associated with schooling especially when going from primary to high school, and from Year 9 to Year 10 at high school.
- Promote engagement with support programs delivered in Pittwater. During consultation it was reported that participants are reluctant to attend programs for 'at risk' youth as this is a term that they do not identify with in reference to themselves or their young people.
- Promote parenting programs and support services. Permissive parenting has been reported as a significant issue in the Pittwater area. Agencies indicated that in some situations where young people have come to their attention, staff held as many concerns about the wellbeing, lifestyle choices and parenting styles of significant adult figures in that young person's life as they have about the young person.

Community Participation

- Provide opportunities for young people to participate in community activities and feel genuinely valued.
- Connect people across generations and interests.
- Encourage young people to gain insights into the environment that surrounds them.
- Promote activities and programs that enhance skill development, experience and knowledge.

5.4 Investing in our young people

Early Intervention and Prevention

As discussed in Discussion Paper 4 (Section 11) of "The Social Plan",

the intent of early intervention and prevention is to recognise the potential for a problem to develop, and to limit the development of that problem.





8. FINAL SUMMARY – YOUTH AND FAMILIES PAPER

This is a summary of the key challenges, opportunities and discussion points which will guide the development of actions for the remainder of the current Social Plan and inform further Social Plan development in order to respond to the social and community priorities of Pittwater's young people and their families.

CHALLENGES

Pittwater's geographic location in relation to the broader funding regions and boundaries for the State and Federal governments has resulted in services locating themselves in the Southern end of the Peninsula in order to service the whole region.

Historically there have been some organisations that have offered services within Pittwater on an outreach basis.

As a result of services being located outside of Pittwater, young people and families that do not have access to a car often have to rely on public transport to access these services.

In the past two decades there has been a reduction in government funding for social services in real terms which has negatively impacted on service provision within Pittwater.

Many parents and young people often cite a lack of awareness about support services that are available to them and they are unsure how to access them.

OPPORTUNITIES

Work with service providers to encourage the re-introduction of outreach programs to be delivered within Pittwater.

Explore opportunities with service providers and State and Federal Government health departments to encourage co-location of services within Pittwater.

Increase provision of social infrastructure and continuity of services for Pittwater's young people and their families.

There is potential to generate greater awareness of support service providers within Pittwater in order to facilitate greater engagement with young people and their families.

Encourage service providers to work more collaboratively with each other.

Remain actively engaged with local Youth Development networks and continue to develop effective working relations with service providers across the Northern Beaches and Northern Sydney areas.



CHALLENGES

Pittwater residents want their community to be an environment that allows young people to contribute to their community positively and experiment with their growing independence in a safe and socially constructive way.

Young people often feel that they are unheard and not represented in the decision making that occurs in Pittwater. This can lead to many barriers to participation and fosters the negative perception of young people generally across the community.

Young people in Pittwater often feel they are demonised by the community at large by virtue of being young. A minority of young peoples' anti-social behaviour is often attributed to young people as a whole.

Limited mentoring opportunities exist within Pittwater for young people; the majority of programs exist within the sporting and recreation organisations that operate along the peninsula.

Young people who do not engage with mainstream activities within Pittwater have limited access to mentor opportunities and intergenerational collaboration and support.

OPPORTUNITIES

Identify more recreation and social opportunities for young people within Pittwater.

Work with young people to develop events that enable young people to positively impact upon their communities and to develop personally and socially.

Provide a variety of recreational and social opportunities for Pittwater young people, particularly at night and on weekends.

Support and collaborate with other local initiatives that target the broader community to promote integration and challenge stereotypes.

Explore opportunities to showcase young peoples' skills and highlight their attitudes and experiences in order to address and re-align these negative stereotypes.

Create opportunities for connections across age, gender and ethnicity to promote social cohesion.

Provide opportunities for cross-generational and inter-age connections within the Pittwater community.

Support the broader implementation of mentoring programs across Pittwater.

