

JULY 2022 – JULY 2024

Youth Engagement Framework

Empowering young people to participate in and shape their community





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Acknowledgment of country

The City of Canning acknowledges the traditional custodians of country on which this framework was based, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation, and their continuing connection to this land and community. We pay our respect to their Elders both past, present and emerging, as well as acknowledge and celebrate the ongoing contributions of Aboriginal young people in our community.



Introduction

The City of Canning is a local government that strives towards providing welcoming and thriving environments for all its residents.

The decisions made by local government impact on the lives of young people in a variety of ways. Young people interact with, and are impacted by, the physical, social and environmental infrastructure in their local community. Young people live in, rent, and buy homes in our suburbs. They drive, walk and cycle on roads and pathways across the City. Every day young people play, learn, perform and participate in activities and events in our facilities, parks, and reserves. They socialise with friends, study, and access information and support at our youth centres, community centres, and libraries.

Young people are current and future influencers and changemakers, contributing in many ways to shaping our community now and into the future. They are learning in local high schools and studying to be the next generation of tradespeople, professionals, and policy makers in Canning based tertiary education institutes and technical colleges. They are drivers of our local economy as consumers, workers and entrepreneurs. Young people are actively involved in community sporting associations, cultural groups and devote time to a range of social causes.

Young people care passionately about a range of issues and offer fresh perspectives on how society can tackle challenging problems. Whilst young people significantly contribute to our community, their voices are underrepresented in the conversations, decisions and planning processes at the City of Canning.

This framework recognises the significance of young peoples' voice and engagement and has been designed to further unlock their potential for positive impact in the communities in which they live. It provides a practical model for how, the City of Canning as an organisation, commits to value, support, promote and increase engagement and active citizenship in young people across the City.

Young people in Canning

Account for
1 in every 5 residents



Almost
9000
attend
secondary
school

41.3%

Speak a language other
than English at home

45.9%

were born overseas

30%

Are attending
university

1.5%

Are Aboriginal and Torres
Strait Islander

Approximately 500
live in homes with no
access to internet

55% live in homes

with two parent/
guardians



335 are
accessing NDIS

19.6% of our young workforce
are unemployed

Young people aged 15 - 24 are considered the young workforce according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Bentley, Parkwood, East Cannington, Wilson and St James were the areas with the highest youth unemployment.





Key issues and trends

This framework is grounded in an understanding of the issues facing young people today, what matters to them and the barriers that impact on their participation and engagement in their communities. Here is what we discovered through our conversations with:

- **six local high schools**
representing more than six thousand young people
- **67 individual young people**
directly through the 2021 Youth Forum,
2018 Youth Summit and
- **participating leadership group sessions**
- **16 youth organisations**
that participated in the 2020 Possibility Playground workshop.



Representation matters

Young people feel more confident, likely to be understood and inclined to participate when they see decision-making representatives they can relate to.

Intimidation and fear exist

Young people don't always identify as leaders or feel capable, confident or qualified in making decisions. Fear of their voice not mattering or not being of equal weight to others in the process leads to disengagement.

Life is complex

Many young people experience complex issues affecting their focus, involvement or commitment; COVID related anxieties, homelessness, family conflict, drug and alcohol addictions, mental health issues, truancy, fear of racism, mistrust of authority, low literacy levels etc.

One size does not fit all

Young people are diverse and so are the schools and communities they participate in. Strategies need to be inclusive of those differences.

Promotion, communication and accessibility is important

Young people found navigating existing information regarding Council matters, complex and overwhelming and felt "unsure where to start". There is a need to target opportunities to build awareness of decision-making processes and opportunities to get involved.

Meet young people where they are at

Young people indicated they wouldn't, or couldn't, attend formal engagement meetings and needed consideration of the times that work for them and the spaces they feel comfortable accessing. We need to meet young people where they are if we want authentic engagement.

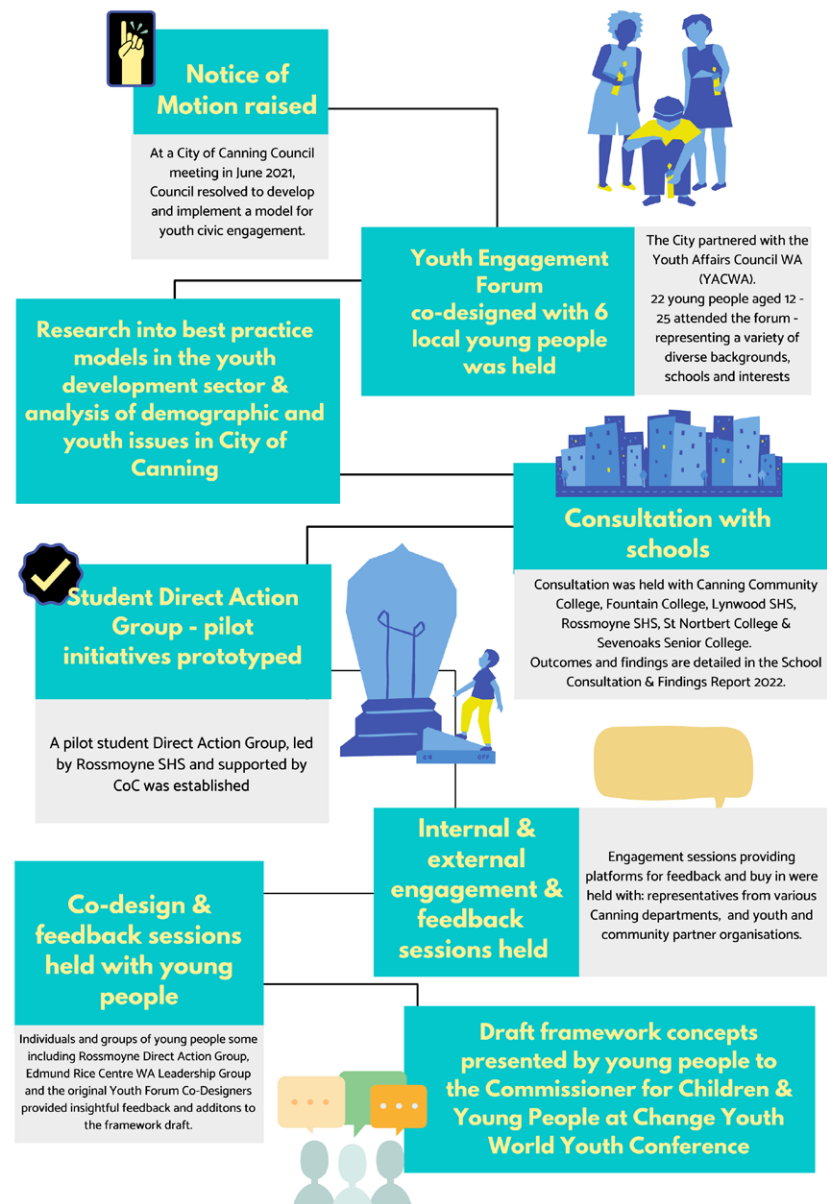
Trust is needed first

Young people often face intersecting, complex issues, making it hard for them to trust, feel respected by and engage with organisations or people they don't have existing rapport with. Connection with schools and organisations that have existing rapport with disengaged young people is important.

"Young people that have come from other countries and were born outside Australia may feel like their voice is being suppressed due to their countries having leadership that does not let people have freedom of speech."

**- Ahmed, 18 year old
Youth Forum Member**

The journey to this framework



Our Vision

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE EMPOWERED TO PARTICIPATE IN AND SHAPE THEIR COMMUNITY.

Recognising the significant role and impact local government has in a young person's life, this framework will focus on how the City of Canning communicates, collaborates, empowers and embeds a focus on youth engagement organisationally.

The framework has been designed to stand as a high-level guiding document that will support and underpin the City of Canning's approach to achieving its vision of being a welcoming and thriving place for all residents. It is underpinned by authentic youth perspective and consultation and critical insight from City of Canning secondary schools.

The framework will be reviewed and updated every two years to ensure it remains relevant and responsive. It will be aligned to the *Learning City Strategy 2 Measurement and Evaluation Framework (2021)* with output and outcome measures.

The framework is accompanied by the YACWA *Canning Youth Forum Report (2021)* and a School Consultation & Findings Report (2022) detailing the findings from meetings with six City-based secondary schools regarding youth engagement and future collaboration.





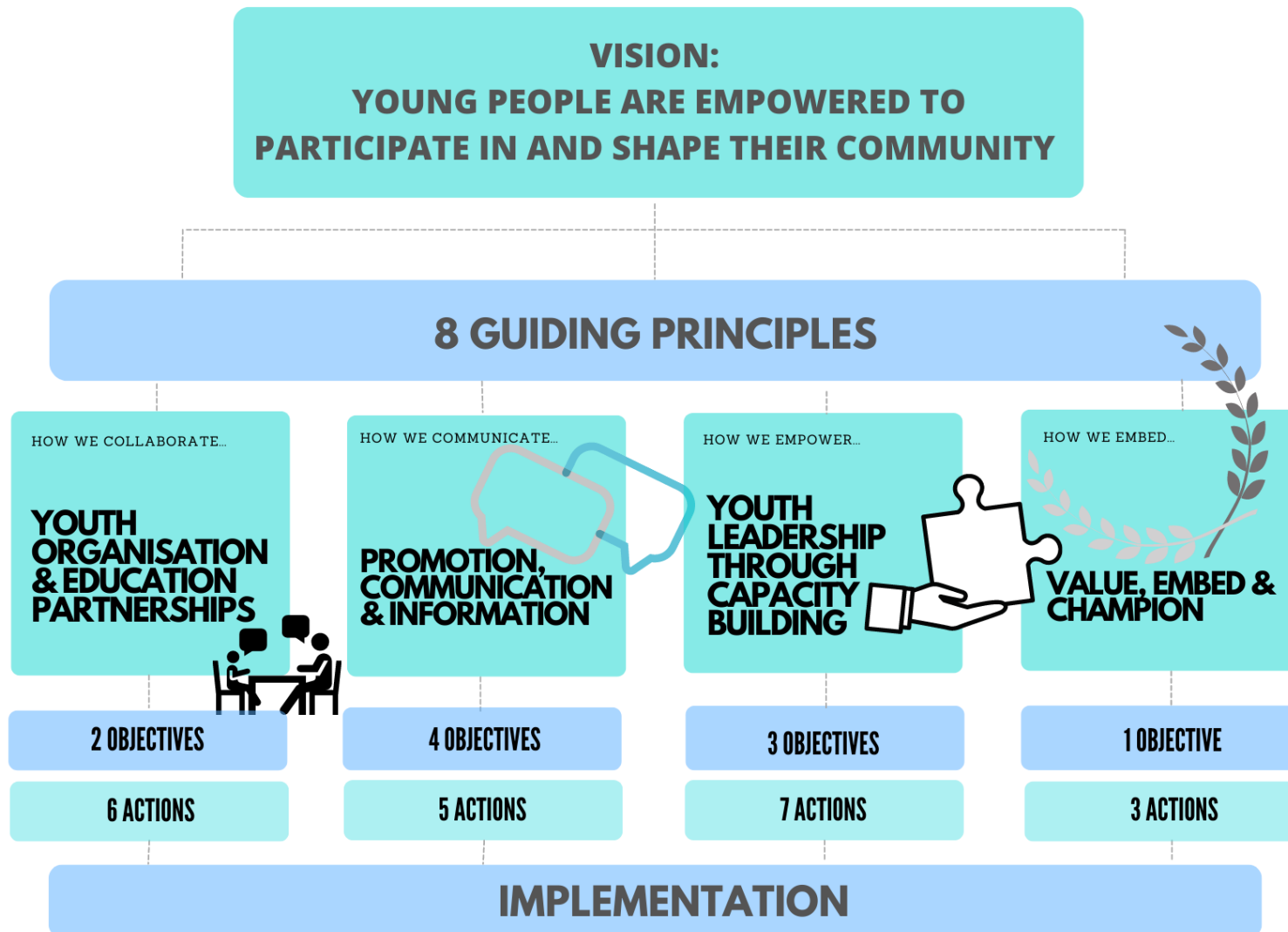
Strategic alignment

This framework will help the City deliver on the vision outlined in our Strategic Community Plan (2021 – 2031); *Our City continues to be one of Western Australia's most multicultural and inclusive communities. It's a place where people of all background and abilities are welcomed and encouraged to thrive.*

The Framework particularly addresses priorities identified in the SCP key themes of "Connect" and "Lead".

It complements the City's Engagement Policy and Framework, as well as the Learning City Strategy (2020 – 2024).

Youth engagement framework





Guiding Principles

The below eight guiding principles underpin the success of this framework's implementation and outcomes for young people and should inform all youth engagement undertaken by City of Canning departments.

1. Be youth informed and driven

Young people are the subject matter experts for their own unique challenges, perspectives, needs and context. Youth involvement works best when young people have influence in informing, driving or co-designing engagement/decision making opportunities or projects.

2. Keep it flexible and responsive

Young people are growing up in a rapidly changing world. Their needs, challenges and interests continually evolve – as does the way they receive their information. Committing to learning, adapting and keeping our finger on the pulse of their changing contexts is integral to stay relevant, supportive and accessible.

3. Make it creative & fun

Young people are most likely to engage in processes and activities that feel creative and fun. Games, events and competitions (with prizes!) can be effective in reaching a youth audience.

4. Use youth-friendly communication

Providing information via youth-friendly channels, tools and language can ensure our messages reach and are understood by young people. Empowering young people to inform, develop and moderate the content and communication can help us achieve this.





5. Empower through capacity building

Young people can overcome fears and barriers to participation when equipped with the skills, knowledge and confidence to become leaders who are engaged in their communities.

6. Offer a variety of ways to engage

Some young people are keen on intensive engagement opportunities – though others may only be ready for lower levels of engagement such as participating in social media polls. Offering a range of engagement options ensures we reach a broader cross section of young people.

7. Consider diversity and inclusion

Canning youth represent a variety of intersecting identities. We can ensure all young people feel welcome, included and valued by putting in place supports that respond to individual needs and recognise barriers experienced by underrepresented groups.

8. Reach young people through their relationship with schools and organisations

Young people hold existing rapport and trust with schools and youth organisations. A collaborative approach to engagement ensures youth have increased access to opportunities for involvement and feel safe and supported to do so.



FOCUS AREA 1

How we collaborate . . .

YOUTH ORGANISATION & EDUCATION PARTNERSHIPS

OUTCOME: Young people have increased access and pathways to civic engagement opportunities.

Schools and youth organisations provide safe places of connection, support and development for young people and are connected to disengaged youth. Connecting with young people in environments already established to teach curriculum topics relevant to civic engagement can help young people connect an understanding of local decision-making processes with access to influence them.

OBJECTIVE 1.1

Foster and strengthen relationships with local schools and youth organisations to help facilitate youth civic engagement.

ACTION 1.1.1

Maintain a database of Canning high schools and youth organisations including relevant contacts.

ACTION 1.1.2

Deliver a schedule of communications to keep schools and youth organisations informed on opportunities for students to engage with Council.

OBJECTIVE 1.2

Collaborate with schools and youth organisations to align youth leadership and engagement opportunities with existing curriculum or programs.

ACTION 1.2.1

Facilitate quarterly meetings with Canning high schools to explore, develop and implement collaborative activities, events and projects.

ACTION 1.2.2

Support school staff and youth organisations to deliver structured civic and community engagement workshops and mentoring sessions across identified programs/ classes of synergy.

ACTION 1.2.3

Help identified youth organisations connect their young people into civic and other engagement opportunities through individual tailored support.

ACTION 1.2.4

Establish a grant category that supports youth organisations and schools to facilitate youth led projects that promote civic engagement.

Jess (16) and Tom (17) find school hard to engage with. They regularly hang out at the Lynwood and Willetton Youth Centres – as safe spaces in their lives. After building rapport with the City's Youth Workers and being referred into the MercyCare Support Program – both Jess and Tom were encouraged to join and now regularly attend the weekly Leadership Program on a Wednesday at Lynwood Youth Hub.

FOCUS AREA TWO

How we communicate...

PROMOTION, COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION

OUTCOME: Young people understand, are aware and informed of Council matters and decision-making opportunities.

A new creative and relatable approach to promotion, engagement and communication is needed to make information relating to Council matters and decision-making opportunities more interesting and appealing to young people. Presenting information through fun and youth-friendly ways means young people can better understand the content and their own power in influencing community and council matters.

OBJECTIVE 2.1

Involve young people in the design, development and communication of decision-making opportunities.

ACTION 2.1.1

Establish a youth ambassador/ mentor program: recruit approximately 10 youth ambassadors and support them to act as conduits for information from the City to other youth – communicating information on engagement opportunities to their schools, networks and own communities.

OBJECTIVE 2.2

Use youth friendly tools and methods to communicate information regarding active citizenship and youth engagement opportunities including local decision-making processes and outcomes.

ACTION 2.2.1

Co-design with young people a Youth Communication Toolkit to frame the way City information is presented in youth friendly mediums and language.

OBJECTIVE 2.3

Celebrate and champion young peoples' diversity, achievements and positive views in the areas of change making, civic participation and local leadership.

ACTION 2.3.1

Develop and deliver a communications campaign that showcases the diversity of young people, their achievements and contributions to civic life.

ACTION 2.3.2

Investigate the development and implementation of an annual Youth Changemaker Award.

OBJECTIVE 2.4

Enhance young people's recognition and association of the City of Canning with opportunity to be involved in local decision making and having a say.

ACTION 2.4.1

Develop an annual schedule guided by schools of opportunities and events City staff can attend e.g. school carnivals, assemblies and sporting club events to increase branding visibility and connection.



FOCUS AREA 3

How we empower...

YOUTH LEADERSHIP THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING

OUTCOME: Young people have the skills, knowledge and confidence to be active citizens and leaders in their communities.

Many young people feel passionate about change and politics in their community though do not yet feel empowered to get involved in the decision-making processes. Young people must feel empowered to identify as change-makers and leaders capable of making a difference in their community and be provided opportunities to do so.

OBJECTIVE 3.1

Strengthen young people's knowledge and understanding of local government.

ACTION 3.1.1

Provide tours of council chambers and information sessions focused on local government process and operations to young people and schools.

ACTION 3.1.2

Develop and implement strategies to increase young people's (18 – 25) participation in local government elections.

OBJECTIVE 3.2

Upskill young people in areas of leadership, change making and active citizenship and activities.

ACTION 3.2.1

Establish a designated Youth Engagement Officer role to facilitate capacity building activities and the broader implementation of this framework.

ACTION 3.2.2

Develop and maintain a database of existing programs, partnerships, activities and opportunities that align with active citizenship and leadership skills.

ACTION 3.2.3

Develop a schedule of leadership and active citizenship workshops, programs and activities that build on and complement existing opportunities.

OBJECTIVE 3.3

Provide young people with platforms to contribute meaningfully to decision making processes.

ACTION 3.3.1

Host an annual youth summit/conference co-designed with young people.

ACTION 3.3.2

Establish a model for and network of youth consultants that provide strategic advice and support to City projects.

"Leadership opportunities shape who you are and help you navigate your entry into the world after school – confidence, interpersonal skills, connections can all be built."

– Maria, 17 year old Youth Forum Member

FOCUS AREA FOUR

How we embed...

VALUE, EMBED & CHAMPION

OUTCOME: The City of Canning values, celebrates and champions youth engagement across all departments.

While the City is committed to the development and support of young people with a dedicated Youth Development Service – championing the voice and civic participation of young people needs to be firmly embedded across the organisation to be authentic and successful.

OBJECTIVE 4.1

Work collaboratively across internal City of Canning departments to ensure opportunities for youth engagement are incorporated in City wide projects.

ACTION 4.1.1

Identify and support youth engagement champions across identified internal departments.

ACTION 4.1.2

Lead quarterly interdepartmental meetings to share opportunities for collaboration with school, community and youth organisations enhancing representation of young people in City wide projects.

ACTION 4.1.3

Collaborate with other departments to support youth involvement in City projects – including advocacy of youth-specific engagement opportunities or representation on advisory groups and committees where possible.

A group of students at Rossmoyne SHS formed a Direct-Action Group in 2022. A Youth Development Officer supports this group and found out the young people wanted to advocate for youth-informed planning with bus stops in their area. They needed the chance to share solutions they had created with the relevant decision makers and influencers. The City's Manager of Transport & Sustainability Engineering was invited and able to meet with the group of young people and hear their thoughts and ideas.



Youth co-designers with City of Canning previous interim CEO after presenting to the sustainability team's Change Your World Conference about current youth issues.

"Don't underestimate young people. Include them in discussions and communicate with them as adults/young adults."

– Young person in the Edmund Rice Centre WA Lynwood Leadership Program

Implementation timeline

| ACTION | KEY ACTIONS/ PROJECTS | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|--------|--|---------|---------|
| 1.1.1 | Maintain a database of Canning high schools and youth organisations including relevant contacts. | ● | ● |
| 1.1.2 | Deliver a schedule of communications to keep schools and youth organisations informed on opportunities for students to engage with Council. | ● | ● |
| 1.2.1 | Facilitate quarterly meetings with Canning high schools to explore, develop and implement collaborative activities, events and projects. | ● | ● |
| 1.2.2 | Support school staff and youth organisations to deliver structured civic and community engagement workshops and mentoring sessions across identified programs/ classes of synergy. | ● | ● |
| 1.2.3 | Help identified youth organisations connect their young people into civic and other engagement opportunities through individual tailored support. | ● | ● |
| 1.2.4 | Establish a grant category that supports youth organisations and schools to facilitate youth led projects that promote civic engagement. | ● | ○ |

| ACTION | KEY ACTIONS/ PROJECTS | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|--------|---|---------|---------|
| 2.1.1 | Establish a youth ambassador/ mentor program: recruit approximately 10 youth ambassadors and support them to act as conduits for information from the City to other youth – communicating information on engagement opportunities to their schools, networks and own communities. | ○ | ● |
| 2.2.1 | Co-design with young people a Youth Communication Toolkit to frame the way City information is presented in youth friendly mediums and language. | ● | ○ |
| 2.3.1 | Develop and deliver a communications campaign that showcases the diversity of young people, their achievements and contributions to civic life. | ○ | ● |
| 2.3.2 | Investigate the development and implementation of an annual Youth Changemaker Award. | ○ | ● |
| 2.4.1 | Develop an annual schedule guided by schools of opportunities and events City staff can attend eg school carnivals, assemblies and sporting club events to increase branding visibility and connection. | ● | ● |

| ACTION | KEY ACTIONS/ PROJECTS | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|--------|--|---------|---------|
| 3.3.1 | Provide tours of council chambers and information sessions focused on local government process and operations to young people and schools. | ● | ● |
| 3.1.2 | Develop and implement strategies to increase young people's (18 – 25) participation in local government elections. | ○ | ● |
| 3.2.1 | Establish a designated Youth Engagement Officer role to facilitate capacity building activities and the broader implementation of this framework. | ● | ○ |
| 3.2.2 | Develop and maintain a database of existing programs, partnerships, activities and opportunities that align with active citizenship and leadership skills. | ● | ○ |
| 3.2.3 | Develop a schedule of leadership and active citizenship workshops, programs and activities that build on and complement existing opportunities. | ● | ● |
| 3.3.1 | Host an biannual youth summit / conference co-designed with young people. | ● | ● |
| 3.3.2 | Establish a model for and network of youth consultants that provide strategic advice and support to City projects. | ● | ○ |

| ACTION | KEY ACTIONS/ PROJECTS | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|--------|--|---------|---------|
| 4.1.1 | Identify and support youth engagement champions across identified internal departments. | ● | ○ |
| 4.1.2 | Lead quarterly interdepartmental meetings to share opportunities for collaboration with school, community and youth organisations enhancing representation of young people in City wide projects. | ● | ● |
| 4.1.3 | Collaborate with other departments to support youth involvement in City projects – including advocacy of youth-specific engagement opportunities or representation on advisory groups and committees where possible. | ● | ● |





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CANNING**

Youth Engagement Framework

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