

ETHICAL ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

The Youth Engagement Toolkit has been developed on a foundation of ethical engagement guidelines that are essential for successfully including young people in decision-making processes. These guidelines build on the principles of engaging young people, found in Engage!.

The creation of these guidelines was informed by research, and insights from young people, youth-serving organisations, officials, and the Australian Government Youth Steering Committee.



- 1. Inclusivity and flexibility:** Prioritise inclusivity to foster a sense of belonging and value among diverse youth demographics, and to help policymakers make the right decisions that affect all young people. Flexibility and adaptability ensure all young people are given the opportunity to participate and that their voices are being respected.
- 2. Transparency:** Maintaining open and transparent discussions about process in youth engagement builds trust which is fundamental in forming inclusive policymaking settings. Consistent communication that respects the participation of young people can provide maturity and sincerity in the decisions that youth representatives make.
- 3. Authenticity:** Create unique and meaningful opportunities for young people to approach decision making in different ways that can benefit the outcomes.
- 4. Capacity building and evolution:** Provide mentorship, resources, and support to empower young people's ability to take part and support their peers to be involved. Where possible, innovate new possibilities for young people to work in an ongoing engagement process.
- 5. Collaboration:** Foster partnerships between young people, researchers, and policymakers that support new ways of doing things that embed young people's perspectives. Developing a team that includes everyone involved in the policymaking setting will create a trustworthy community that aims at building better relationships.
- 6. Sustainability:** Ensure and communicate long-term commitment to youth engagement initiatives and strategies, including recognition and remuneration.
- 7. Respect:** Value young people's perspectives and contributions. Listening and providing feedback on the contributions made by young people will foster a sense of compassion whilst also staying true to the ethical obligations of policymakers.

8. Accountability: Implement mechanisms to identify, measure and communicate the activities, outcomes and impacts of youth engagement in policymaking. Providing honest and respectful feedback to young people, whilst remaining open to receive the same, is essential in a policymaking setting that focuses on fairness and truth.

9. Safety: Creating safe spaces where young people can share their insights in a supportive environment. This is highly important when engaging with young people for sincere and enthusiastic involvement.

10 Impact: Plan for the change you're hoping to co-create and track it.

11. Fun: Let's have some.