

# ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING A YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP

Creating a Youth Advisory Group (YAG) offers an invaluable opportunity to integrate young people's perspectives into decision-making processes. By bringing together a diverse group of young advisors, a YAG ensures policies, programs, and initiatives reflect the real needs and priorities of youth. The below steps will help you get started.



- 1. Clearly communicate** the remit of the group and benefits of being involved. Where there are significant differences in the ages of advisory members, it may be appropriate to set different tasks or activities according to varying developmental needs and comprehension.
- 2. Recruit young people** through social media channels and youth serving organisations.
- 3. Ensure representation of young people** of different ages and diverse backgrounds including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, culturally and linguistically diverse, gender and sexuality diverse, young people living with disabilities, and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Representation across states and territories, and urban, regional, and rural locations is important. See Guide 6 for guidance.
- 4. Meet regularly** to maintain momentum of the group's activities without overburdening members or competing with other life commitments.
- 5. Hold meetings online** to enable all young people to attend and hold some face-to-face meetings to build relationships.
- 6. Establish informal communication channels** for members to facilitate ongoing communication between members. Ask young people for their preferred method of communication. Consideration should be given to the safety of young people and officials, for more information contact the Office for Youth.
- 7. Consider whether there are leadership positions available within advisory bodies/committees**, assigning some members unique responsibilities within the group such as a co-chair role will encourage members to take leadership over the advisory body/committee, build the leadership capability of young people and can maximise involvement and input from all members.
- 8. Have a dedicated staff member** responsible for driving the youth advisory's engagement and activities. This staff member should act as the liaison between the advisory members and the organisation/department, organise and facilitate meetings, activities, and events, monitor, and participate in communication channels and be available to provide support to members when needed.
- 9. Provide training** on relevant topics and skills to enrich the experience for members and support them to build a range of capacities which will benefit them both inside and outside of the advisory group.

**10. Offer a range of internal and outreach activities**, that go beyond providing advice, such as participating in consultations with departments and other organisations and advising on department youth engagement practices.

**11. Co-produce tangible outputs** that contribute to the work of the department/organisation and represent the work of the advisory committee to the broader community. These may include newsletters, community guidelines, and community engagement platforms.

**12. Regularly seek feedback** from Youth Advisory members and department representatives through one-to-one or group conversations, inviting verbal or written reflections at key points (See 'Guide 7' and 'Guide 8' for further information).