

QUEENSLAND FIT O Y STRATEGY

Consultation discussion paper
2022



Queensland
Government

Acknowledgement of Country

The Queensland Government acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Australians. We recognise their cultures, histories and diversity and their deep connection to the lands, waters and seas of Queensland and the Torres Strait. We honour and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the role that First Nations young people play in their communities and are committed to empowering and supporting First Nations young people as emerging leaders to build a bright future for themselves, their families and their communities.

Thank you

The Queensland Government thanks all the young people who shared their stories, ideas and experiences in the development of this discussion paper, including members of the Youth Strategy Engagement Group and the First Nations Strategy Engagement Group. Your feedback has provided the foundation for this important discussion and ensures the voices of young Queenslanders are reflected. We look forward to continuing to collaborate with you throughout the development of the youth strategy, so it is responsive to the needs of all young people in Queensland.

Minister's message



The energy, passion and resilience of young people never ceases to inspire me. Young people are a group of dynamic, vibrant, and innovative individuals who are seeking opportunities to have their voices heard and effect the change they need to shape their own future.

Recent challenges and global events mean that life for young people in Queensland has changed. The COVID-19 pandemic has created challenges for young people experiencing new direct economic and social impacts.

The Queensland Government is committed to continuing to improve outcomes for young people. Since the current *Queensland Youth Strategy: Building young Queenslanders for a global future* was released in 2017 there have been record investments in mental health, education and employment. We've delivered policies, programs and services across the housing, education, employment, health, mental health, child safety, youth justice, tourism, domestic and family violence, and environment portfolios. These achievements have supported young Queenslanders to participate in our state's economic, civic and cultural life, but we know there is more to do.

As Minister for Youth Affairs, I am committed to building on our achievements and delivering a new Queensland Youth Strategy, which reflects the significant role young people play in shaping our economic, social, environmental, and cultural success. I am committed to listening to and amplifying the voice of young people—ensuring their contributions, skills, and ideas are heard and valued in building a stronger future together.

As we look to the next decade, when young people today will be in leadership positions, the economy will be increasingly digital, and Queensland will be hosting the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. I want to ensure that we are giving young people the opportunity to shape that future. A key part of that will be ensuring our First Nations young people's voices are heard, that we support them in the Treaty process to take part in truth telling and healing, to work with them to build a better future, and ensure their needs are met by a government that listens.

To make sure we get this right, a statewide consultation is being undertaken to inform the new Queensland Youth Strategy.

We're seeking input and ideas from young Queenslanders across the state, who will provide a range of feedback and opinions that reflect the diversity of their lived experiences.

Importantly, we're also seeking feedback from those individuals and organisations who provide the vital support, care, information and services that our young people rely on.

I look forward to hearing your feedback so we can deliver a new Queensland Youth Strategy that sets a clear plan for how we can work together to build a stronger, brighter future with young people, for themselves, their communities and Queensland.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meaghan".

Meaghan Scanlon MP

Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs

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Introduction

Young people* make up almost 1 in 5 Queenslanders, representing a powerful voice across our state's population. Their views and ideas are critical to shape the best future for our state.

The period of life between 12 and 25 years of age is characterised by momentous changes and transitions, many of which occur at the same time. While this can be an exciting time for young people, it can also be a challenging time to navigate.

The Queensland Government is committed to ensuring that young people receive the support they need to contribute to the social, economic, cultural, and environmental direction of our state. As future leaders, it is important that their voices, ideas and experiences are reflected in the policies, programs and services that impact them.

The current *Queensland Youth Strategy: Building young Queenslanders for a global future*, released in 2017, outlines the government's priorities for supporting young people and its commitment to giving them a voice. Since then, young Queenslanders have had a range of opportunities to share their experiences, concerns and ideas with government, about the issues that are important to them.

Overwhelmingly, they have expressed a strong desire to be actively involved in informing and developing policies, programs and services that interest and affect them. They are looking for opportunities to collaborate with decision-makers in accessible and inclusive ways.

(*For the purposes of the *Queensland Youth Strategy*, young people are aged between 12 and 25 years.)

New Queensland Youth Strategy

Over the past five years, global events and emerging issues have changed the landscape for young people, particularly those transitioning into independence. The COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on all aspects of our lives and young people have arguably been one of the cohorts most affected.

To reflect the changed environment, the Queensland Government is undertaking statewide consultation to develop a new Queensland Youth Strategy.

The new Queensland Youth Strategy will acknowledge the contemporary and emerging priorities and challenges affecting young people in Queensland. It will extend the commitment to support young people to develop skills and knowledge through youth leadership and youth engagement to enable young people to engage with government and shape the policies, programs, and services that impact them.

The new Queensland Youth Strategy will reflect the needs of today's young Queenslanders and help them reach their full potential. It will be informed by young people, for young people. It will acknowledge the broad diversity of our youth population including First Nations young people, culturally and linguistically diverse young people, LGBTIQ+ young people, young people with disability, those living in regional and remote areas, and young people with lived experience of hardship including the care system, criminal justice system or homelessness. It will include consideration and understanding that some young people may face additional challenges and barriers before they can engage with government.

Snapshot

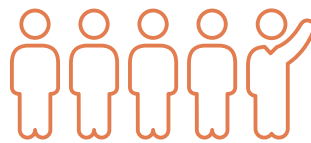
Young people in Queensland



931,800

young people aged 12–25 years living in Queensland

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics (Estimated residential population as at March 2022)



Almost

1 in 5

people in Queensland are young people



44,204

young people aged 15–24 years identify as being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Queensland: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population summary 1/07/2022



Issues and concerns



97%

of Youth Allowance is required to rent a studio or one-bedroom property in Brisbane and 65% of Youth Allowance is required for a shared rental

Source: Rental Affordability Snapshot 2021



43%

of young people aged 18–24 years said climate change was the biggest issue affecting their generation

Source: Triple J's What's up in your world survey



33.3%

of young Queenslanders aged 15–19 years reported the environment as a key national issue

Source: Tiller, E., Fildes, J., Hall, S., Hicking, V., Greenland, N., Liyanarachchi, D., and Di Nicola, K. 2020, Youth Survey Report 2020, Sydney, NSW: Mission Australia



more than
43.6%

of young Queenslanders felt some barriers affected their study or work goals

Source: Tiller, E., Fildes, J., Hall, S., Hicking, V., Greenland, N., Liyanarachchi, D., and Di Nicola, K. 2020, Youth Survey Report 2020, Sydney, NSW: Mission Australia



38%

of young Queenslanders aged 15–19 years reported mental health as a top concern for them

Source: Tiller, E., Fildes, J., Hall, S., Hicking, V., Greenland, N., Liyanarachchi, D., and Di Nicola, K. 2020, Youth Survey Report 2020, Sydney, NSW: Mission Australia



9.5%

unemployment rate for young people aged between 15–24 years in Queensland

Source: QGSO Regional Youth Unemployment August 2022

What government is already doing

The Queensland Government is committed to improving outcomes for young people, acknowledging many of the challenges and key issues facing young people are complex.

That's why the needs of young people have been prioritised across the work of the Queensland Government through initiatives such as:

- Queensland Housing Strategy 2017–2027
- Advancing Education
- Towards ending homelessness for young Queenslanders 2022–27
- Working Together, Changing the Story: Youth Justice Strategy 2019-23
- Supporting Families Changing Futures 2019–2023
- Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2026
- Prevent. Support. Believe. Queensland's framework to address sexual violence
- My health, Queensland future: Advancing health 2026
- Shifting minds: Queensland Mental Health, Alcohol and Other Drugs Strategic Plan 2018–2023
- Activate! Queensland 2019–2029
- Queensland Women's Strategy 2022–2027
- Department of Education Youth Engagement Strategy 2022–2026
- Queensland Climate Action
- Queensland Multicultural Policy and Action Plan
- Children's Health Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Equity Strategy 2022–2025
- Making Tracks Together: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Equity Framework 2021.

Queensland Government agencies have been delivering programs and services to create a positive future for young Queenslanders. This includes supporting the overarching commitment to listen to the voices of young people and the four building blocks of the current Queensland Youth Strategy— Supporting our most vulnerable young people; Housing; Healthy Futures; and Educating into Employment. Achievements across government to date include:

- Development of the Queensland Youth Engagement Charter to reflect the Queensland Government's commitment to giving young people an opportunity to have their say and listen to their views in government business. In 2019, all Queensland Government agencies became signatories to the Charter.
- Delivery of the annual Queensland Indigenous Youth Leadership Program. Since 2004, more than 680 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have participated in the program to strengthen their leadership skills and build their capacity to drive change in local communities.
- Supporting the delivery of the annual YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament program providing 93 young people a year with the opportunity to develop their leadership skills, Parliamentary and public speaking skills.
- Funding is provided to youth support services across Queensland, with more than 90 youth support services funded in 2021–22, to deliver information, advice, referral and case management support to young people at risk of disconnection from family and friends, education, employment, and community. Nearly 16,000 young people have been supported by these services.
- Working across government to advocate for and support the Shifting Minds Implementation Roadmap to ensure improved mental health outcomes for young people.

- Providing mobile support services for young people aged 16 to 25 years who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness across Logan, Gold Coast and Townsville Local Government Areas.
- Providing 51 schools in regional and rural areas with funding for a School Breakfast Program to provide young school children with healthy and nutritious breakfasts to enable better learning and concentration.
- Delivering the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, which includes programs with a specific focus on supporting young people.
- Launched the Speak OUT series during Queensland Youth Week 2021. Across the state, 17 Speaks OUT events were delivered with more than 500 young people taking part and sharing their views from Mossman to the Gold Coast.

Funding investment

The Queensland Government is investing more than \$1.05 billion to support young people by committing long-term funding across the following priority areas:

\$73.4 million

towards enhancing education and employment opportunities including GPs in Schools pilot program, Share the Dignity in Queensland Schools Initiative, Great Barrier Reef Education, and Queensland Future Skills for All program.

\$29.8 million

over four years to support implementation of *Towards ending homelessness for young Queenslanders 2022-2027* to improve housing outcomes for young people.

\$40.6 million

homelessness program funding provided to non-government organisations to deliver specialist homelessness services across Queensland specifically for young people, in 2022-23.

\$81.8 million

towards delivering delivering the Youth Justice Strategy reforms and Community Partnership Innovation Grant scheme.

\$7.3 million

towards encouraging First Nations women to remain actively engaged in education, and through the Investing in Queensland Women grant program and the Queensland Disability Advocacy Program.

\$850.8 million

towards keeping young people safe through the Supporting Families Changing Future program, Queensland Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce, the Family Pathways Model, supporting young people leaving care and priority actions to respond to young people who have experienced sexual violence or child sexual abuse.

For more information visit
<https://www.des.qld.gov.au/stories/qld-gov-youth-investment>

Consultation and engagement

The purpose of this discussion paper, and the associated consultation activities, is to prompt feedback from individuals, organisations, industry and stakeholder groups about key themes.

- What are the key issues and challenges facing young people in Queensland?
- How should we respond to these issues and challenges?
- How can we improve the lives of young Queenslanders?
- How can the Queensland Government support you to better meet the needs of young people?
- How can the Queensland Government support youth sector stakeholders to better connect your youth networks and encourage young people to engage with government?

To help inform feedback, this discussion paper provides an overview of what we've heard from previous engagement and feedback activities with young people.

Responses to the discussion paper and the questions it presents can be provided by completing an online survey. A consolidated list of the survey questions is included for reference at the end of this discussion paper.

Consultation is open until **25 November 2022**.

Youth engagement

Consultation is also being undertaken with young people aged 12 to 25 years across the broad diversity of the youth population. A range of in-person and online feedback mechanisms will provide opportunities for young people to share their ideas and feedback.

Consultation on the development of a new Queensland Youth Strategy provides an opportunity to empower young people to champion the issues that matter to them and help shape their future.

For a copy of the dedicated Youth-focused consultation paper visit www.des.qld.gov.au/YouthStrategy-YouthConsultation





What we've heard from young people

Through a range of existing engagement events, activities and other mechanisms, we've heard from young people about the issues that are important to them now and into the future.

Although there are some emerging issues and challenges such as the global COVID-19 pandemic, increased social isolation, and acknowledgement of what makes respectful relationships—many of the issues young people are facing are ongoing.

“This next generation is one of the most understanding of issues—we know what the problems are—we just need help from the big people and them to listen to us in order to help us get there.”

– Youth Strategy Engagement Group
(YSEG) participant 2022

Place

Young people are connected and have access to safe spaces and a healthy environment.

Climate change and sustainability

Young people understand and acknowledge climate change, they support action to address climate change and have a higher desire to see more regulations on businesses. They consider that decision-makers in generations before them have a responsibility to manage the environment responsibly. They are positive about the economic opportunities of sustainable technologies.

First Nations young people consider that there are lessons to be learned from traditional land management practices and want recognition for their skills and knowledge in the management of land in areas including the response to climate change, bushfires, and sustainable agriculture.

In a recent national survey, one-third of young Queenslanders reported the environment as an important national issue.¹

“The future of Queensland, a climate-conscious, inclusive place”

– YSEG participant 2022

Place and spaces

Young people are passionate about, and connected to, their culture, communities and environment. They want to feel accepted, respected and valued at home, in the community and online. Reliable digital access is essential in rural, regional and remote areas and online security is important. Young people want stable and healthy relationships and to be connected to their culture, language, beliefs and identity. Young people want to be supported to recover from natural disasters and see First Nations knowledge and practices supported by government to mitigate the occurrence of natural disasters.

Transport

A lack of sustainable transport options in regional and remote areas is a driver of community instability, with young people having to leave home, Country and community for work, training, and education. Affordable and accessible public transport options in towns and cities is seen as both facilitating access to employment and offering sustainable choices.

¹ Tiller, E., Greenland, N., Christie, R., Kos, A., Brennan, N., & Di Nicola, K. (2021). Youth Survey Report 2021. Sydney, NSW: Mission Australia.

Success

Young people are supported and equipped with the knowledge and skills to make a successful transition to adulthood and independence.

Transition to adulthood

Young people want to experience an education system that supports them to develop the social, emotional and communication skills they need as they progress through life.

A positive learning experience contributes to the development of social, cultural, emotional and cognitive competencies, including resilience and critical thinking. Education has an important role in supporting young people to transition positively to adulthood and contribute to their family and communities.

They want the knowledge, skills and encouragement to achieve their potential and have choices in their lives so they can successfully navigate the transition into independence.

Housing

Young people said that access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing is the key to supporting their transition to independence. The importance of having a safe place to call home is fundamental to their capacity to pursue education, training and employment opportunities, which enable them to make social and economic contributions.

Young people aged 12 to 24 years make up more than 20 per cent of people experiencing homelessness in Queensland². Those who experience homelessness, or are at risk of homelessness, often face challenges including family violence and mental health or have interactions with the out-of-home care and youth justice systems.

For young people who are looking to transition to independence or for those who are already living independently, they felt their access to affordable housing was disappearing. They are concerned there is not enough crisis housing available, and that the lack of access to safe, culturally appropriate housing could contribute to increased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth justice issues and lower education rates.

The availability of safe, affordable housing in regional and remote areas is a key concern, with young people having to leave their communities or Country due to a lack of affordable housing. The lack of public transport or suitable employment is also a driver for young people relocating to major cities.

Young people want more inclusive services for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness. They require access to safe and secure private rental properties and a social housing model that is appropriate, free from stigma and culturally safe.

Cost of living

The cost of living is a concern for young people. Having enough money for essentials such as food, clothing, household costs and housing is one of the most important things for their overall wellbeing. Financial hardship and not being able to meet expenses such as food, bills, transport, petrol, healthcare or sanitary products can lead to poor health and wellbeing, homelessness, and for some young people, crime.

While many interrelated factors contribute to the cost of living, different parts of Queensland also face unique challenges. For example, accessing quality, affordable and healthy food on Country and in remote communities is an issue, with support of proposals for community-led initiatives to encourage self-sufficiency.

Life skills

Young people say they feel ill-prepared for the transition of leaving home and living independently. Finance, tenancies and budgeting are life skills they feel should be given at school to prepare them for adulthood.

² Australian Bureau of Statistics: Census-population-and-housing-estimating-homelessness

Education

A 2020 survey of young Queenslanders described the implications of the pandemic on education as an important issue and a barrier to achieving their goals³.

Young people acknowledged that teachers are currently managing an enormous workload with the limited resources at their disposal. However, there is a view that the current education method was too rigid and did not meet their current demands.

There is a desire to see psychological safety increase in schools with government providing better support to students who may be suffering a mental illness or learning difficulties. Education is also seen as the key to embedding cultural competency and safety in our communities, supporting the rights of First Nations young people, and sharing knowledge of how to care for Country in the face of climate change.

3 The State of Queensland (Queensland Family and Child Commission) Voices of hope: Growing up in Queensland 2020

Training and working

Young people need support to gain the knowledge and skills to successfully navigate economic and social pathways to employment in a changing job market. The career trajectory of young people may look different to previous generations. Entrepreneurship and innovation, the gig economy and new opportunities mean that new skills may be required to succeed.

Unemployment often disproportionately impacts young people. During the COVID-19 pandemic this was especially true as much of the hospitality sector shut down and young people who are typically casually employed were left with no income. In outback Queensland in August 2022, the youth unemployment rate was 39.3 per cent.

Young Queenslanders want an innovative economy that creates opportunities for them to explore their diverse passions and interests and experience economic opportunity so they can take control of their lives.

Finding long-term, quality employment is important, as job insecurity can affect young people reaching some of life's traditional milestones like paying off student debt, having a family, buying a home and saving for retirement. Providing young people with access to lifelong learning opportunities is important as the digital age continues to advance and there is an increasing shift to a skills-based economy.

The economy depends on the participation of young people, especially as the aging population transitions into retirement. Helping young people overcome barriers to employment will help them reach economic success and further strengthen the economy.



Wellbeing

Young people are physically, mentally and emotionally strong and resilient in order to navigate life's challenges and opportunities.

Young people have told us that their physical, mental health, emotional and sexual health and wellbeing is important. Young people deserve support to make healthy choices, and have access to appropriate, affordable, responsive mental health and other services that support their health and wellbeing.

Young people have unique mental health needs that require targeted and responsive youth support services. They and their families need to be supported to make healthy choices around relationships, sexual health, alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Mental health

Good mental health and wellbeing help young people make and maintain strong connections with their families and friends, build new connections with their communities and jobs and gives them the best possible platform to thrive. Poor mental health can have an impact on all areas of life including employment, education, self-esteem and relationships with those close to them.

In a nationwide survey of young people, over half of young Queensland respondents felt that mental health was the top barrier to the achievement of their study or work goals. Young Queenslanders further identified their top issues of personal concern as coping with stress and mental health.⁴

A 2020 survey of young Queenslanders also identified mental health as the most important issue for people their age.⁵

Young people want better and more accessible mental wellbeing promotion and mental health and addiction services designed and tailored to their needs. Culturally appropriate and accessible promotion, prevention and early intervention programs are important to provide holistic support across the spectrum from early mental health support to crisis mental illness services.

Fundamental to good mental health is a sense of empowerment, safety and security, and a feeling of optimism.

COVID-19 has also exacerbated social isolation and loneliness with collaborative efforts across government and the community sector to understand and address the issue.

“A higher emphasis on mental health care. There is more to be done, our generation has some of worst mental health in history—and we can't pass that onto the next generation too.”

– YSEG participant 2022

4 Tiller, E., Greenland, N., Christie, R., Kos, A., Brennan, N., & Di Nicola, K. (2021). Youth Survey Report 2021. Sydney, NSW: Mission Australia.

5 The State of Queensland (Queensland Family and Child Commission) Voices of hope: Growing up in Queensland 2020

Healthy relationships

Experiences of domestic and family violence have negative impacts on young people, who may be both victims and perpetrators. Impacts include poorer physical and mental health, homelessness and disruption to education and employment. Young people want support in place for those affected by domestic and family violence and gambling. For those who experience domestic and family violence, having proper support reduces the likelihood of intergenerational cycles of family violence. Young people need trauma-informed services, as well as prevention measures such as respectful relationships education to help address the drivers of family violence.

Physical health

Young people are resilient and active with many wanting more information and knowledge to make positive life choices. Sport and physical activity and access to quality greenspace can improve confidence, self-esteem and body image and improve overall cognitive and mental health in young people.

Young people need accessible specialist health services to provide timely and responsive services including alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs support.

In remote and rural places, access to services and healthy food options are more expensive and less accessible.



Diversity

Young people have equal access to opportunities to thrive irrespective of their circumstances.

Stories of challenges faced by young people throughout Queensland told us that racism and discrimination continue to affect their lives. Young people have told us that they want to live safely, with fair and equal treatment, including freedom from discrimination and equal access to opportunities and services that meet their needs.

Equity

The challenges associated with racism and discrimination continue to affect their lives. Young people from Queensland have ranked equity and discrimination in the top three issues of national concern for the past three years⁶. Further, 57.1 per cent of Queensland young respondents reported witnessing unfair treatment due to a person's race or cultural background, and half indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality⁷.

While considerable progress has been made towards equality, young people from groups more susceptible to discrimination continue to experience inequity and difficulty accessing the inclusive and tailored support and services they need. These challenges impact young people's experiences in education, home and the community and can result in significant mental health challenges, higher rates of homelessness, poorer employment outcomes and health and wellbeing results.

Young people who may require additional support

The perspectives of our young people with diverse needs, and who may require additional support to thrive, helps strengthen the policies, programs and services that impact them. Access to sustainable and culturally sensitive support and opportunities is important to help them thrive.

Young people with disability

Young people with disability have a right to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability, in an environment free from bullying, harassment or exclusion. Improving access to, and participation in, post-school education and training assists people with disability to achieve their full potential and access the same opportunities as Australians without disability⁸.

Young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds (CALD) bring with them a multitude of strengths and resources. However, being from a CALD background, whether from a first or second generation, adds a level of complexity for young people looking to access education, training, employment, health services and recreational activities.

6 Tiller, E., Greenland, N., Christie, R., Kos, A., Brennan, N., & Di Nicola, K. (2021). Youth Survey Report 2021. Sydney, NSW: Mission Australia.

7 Tiller, E., Greenland, N., Christie, R., Kos, A., Brennan, N., & Di Nicola, K. (2021). Youth Survey Report 2021. Sydney, NSW: Mission Australia.

8 Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–2031 | Disability Gateway

LGBTQIA+ young people

LGBTQIA+ young people should feel free to express who they are, safe in the knowledge they live in an inclusive society. A disproportionate number of LGBTQIA+ young people experience poor mental health and higher suicide rates than their non-LGBTQIA+ peers.

Young people who have been in the youth justice or in care systems

Young people in, and exiting from, out-of-home care are at greater risk of being homeless and have a higher likelihood of negative life, education and employment outcomes compared to other young people. On leaving care, many young people enter early adulthood without the safety net of their family and peers.

Young parents and carers

Young carers help in families where someone has an illness, a disability, a mental health issue or who has an alcohol or drug problem. Having carer responsibility affects a young person's ability to participate in wider community life, bringing with it a higher risk of social isolation. The additional responsibilities at home make it difficult for young carers to continue their education and can affect their longer-term independence.

“Going into remote communities so that youth know their needs are valued”

– YSEG participant 2022



First Nations young people

First Nations young people are supported to strengthen their future and grow their communities.

First Nations young people are the emerging leaders of their communities. They are a diverse group of young people who face unique realities and challenges. Too often, First Nations young people grow up without access to culturally appropriate, equitable health and education services. In addition, First Nations youth continue to experience racism and discrimination and carry the intergenerational trauma of Australia's colonial history. These circumstances affect First Nation young people's ability to thrive and can have lasting impacts on their health, social and economic futures.

First Nations young people want to feel a sense of self and engage with systems and services that recognise their cultural identity. First Nations young people want equitable access to responsive systems and services, including available, culturally capable health, education, and employment policies, programs, and services.

Throughout the Speak OUT series young First Nations Queenslanders have shared experiences of living in remote communities, and the challenges faced due to a lack of employment opportunities, lack of accessibility and transport to access education and employment. We have heard that government funded services targeting First Nations people are provided to and delivered by non-First Nations organisations. We have heard that First Nations communities, particularly in rural and remote areas experience a disadvantage in access to clean, affordable and nutritious food.

Young people have told us about a sense of losing their cultural identity as their history is being lost. They want to see government funded programs that support the recording and teaching of First Nations languages. First Nations young people have expressed the impacts that the fight for Native Title has had on their mental health when they are asked to prove a connection to Country when that connection was broken by colonisation.

Young people want truth-telling through teaching the history and impact of colonisation, and to continue the significant step forward in reframing the relationship with First Nations people through Queensland's Path to Treaty—to enrich the lives of all Queenslanders and provide for greater recognition, celebration and learning from First Nations peoples.

Through Queensland's recent Path to Treaty Commitment, we commit to be courageous, curious, and optimistic as we hear the truth and collaborate to build a place where the world's oldest living culture of Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples is celebrated as central to the identity of all Queenslanders.

First Nations young people have powerful voices that must be heard, valued and respected, now and into the future.

Responsive government

Government systems are connected and coordinated, and government services are accessible and responsive to the emerging needs of young people.

Young people have told us that government services need to be integrated, coordinated and responsive to their needs. When government agencies operate in silos, young people are not given the wrap-around support they need, and the systems are complex for them to navigate. Young people want strengthened multi-agency responses to complex issues and culturally capable services delivered for First Nations young people. The importance of alignment and coordination of policy, programs and services is particularly important for young people in key social areas such as housing, mental health, child safety, youth justice and education.

Through the Speak OUT series, Queensland Government agencies have engaged directly with young people to hear youth voices on topics including Tracks to Treaty, health and wellbeing, housing, gambling, and energy. Young people want a connected government that considers their ideas, experiences and opinions and to have these reflected in the policies, programs and services that impact them.

Youth engagement

Young people want meaningful opportunities for their voices, perspectives and opinions to be heard and to see these adopted in government decision-making and policy.

Young people want to be involved in the development of policies, programs and services that impact them. They want to have their voices and ideas heard through increased youth engagement mechanisms and opportunities. They want engagement to manifest in visible and meaningful change. Young people want accountability, action, and transparency from decision-makers and want to be involved in driving meaningful change.

Some young people are already engaged with government and are confident in sharing their voices, ideas and experiences through the range of mechanisms available but this is not the case for all young people.

Young people believe there is a lack of opportunities, or at least an awareness of those opportunities, to engage with decision-makers, particularly in regional locations. Young people are calling for their voices to be better represented in decision-making and in service design and delivery. Some suggestions from young people include dedicated leadership positions for young people in government, more youth groups to speak directly to government, broader engagement channels through areas such as sporting and art events, and increased engagement in community and on Country.

Leadership

Young people have the energy, vision, depth of understanding and ability to articulate what they want and need from government. They want to be trusted to engage with government with maturity and integrity on the issues that matter to them.

Queensland's youth leadership programs—the YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament and the Queensland Indigenous Youth Leadership Program—help young Queenslanders to build the skills and to find their voice to be influential leaders in their communities and in their engagements with government.

Voting

Ensuring young people understand the importance of voting and are engaged in the democratic process is essential for strong communities. When young people know how they can have their say and speak to their local, state or federal member about issues important to them they may feel more empowered about their future.

Summary of questions

The discussion paper questions are included here for informational purposes.

Provide feedback via the online survey or by making a submission in response to this discussion paper, as detailed on the following page.

1. What do you think would be the most positive difference a new Queensland Youth Strategy could make for young people in Queensland?
2. What would you like to see change for young people in Queensland over the next 5 years?
3. To what extent do you agree with the statement, “COVID-19 continues to impact young people’s lives”.
4. What learnings from COVID-19 could inform a new Queensland Youth Strategy?
5. Please rank in order of priority, what do you think are the most important issues or challenges facing young Queenslanders?
 - ▶ Climate change
 - ▶ Getting and holding onto a job where young people are treated fairly
 - ▶ Learning the skills and information that will help young people in life
 - ▶ Access to affordable housing
 - ▶ Mental health and access to mental healthcare
 - ▶ Healthy lifestyle (includes physical health, sexual education and healthy food)
 - ▶ Access to domestic and family violence and sexual assault support services
 - ▶ Drugs and alcohol including use and misuse
 - ▶ Discrimination (being treated differently because of a young person’s age, race, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, disability, or another factor that makes them different)
 - ▶ Young people being involved in government decision-making
6. To what extent do you agree that the issues listed above accurately reflect the key issues young people are facing in Queensland?
7. Are there any other issues or challenges that you think are just as important as those listed?
8. What would you like the Queensland Government to do to respond to the issues and challenges identified?
9. What do you consider to be the key role of the Queensland Government in addressing the needs of young people?
10. To what extent do you agree the Queensland Government’s policies, programs and services are addressing issues important to Queensland young people?
11. How can the Queensland Government better support youth sector stakeholders to deliver initiatives that improve the lives of young Queenslanders?
12. How can the Queensland Government communicate better with youth sector stakeholders about what it is doing to address issues important to young people?
13. How should the Queensland Government collaborate with youth sector stakeholders to meet the diverse needs of young people?
14. How can the Queensland Government support Youth sector stakeholders to help young people build their leadership skills to be influential and effect change in and for their communities?
15. How can the Queensland Government better connect with the youth networks which you or your organisation support to promote opportunities and encourage engagement with government to ensure their voices are heard?
16. Is there anything else you would like to say about what should be considered in the new Queensland Youth Strategy?

How to make a submission

Any individual or organisation can make a submission in response to this discussion paper and the questions it presents.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Youth sector peak bodies/representative organisations
- Youth service providers
- CALD service providers
- LGBTIQ+ service providers
- First Nations service providers
- Mental health service providers
- Education institutions
- Non-government community service providers
- Community youth organisations
- Queensland Government agencies
- Local governments
- General community members.

If you are a young person aged 12–25, you can complete the dedicated Youth survey at www.des.qld.gov.au/YouthStrategy-YouthConsultation

Options

1. Complete the online survey at www.des.qld.gov.au/YouthStrategy-GeneralConsultation
 - ▶ You will need to set up an account to complete the survey. It only takes a few minutes.
 - ▶ Setting up an account help protects the integrity of the survey results.
 - ▶ Log in and respond to the questions posed in the discussion paper. Responses can be completed gradually—you can save and return to your submission at any time.
 - ▶ Submit the response
2. Provide a written submission in response to questions outlined in this discussion paper
 - ▶ Return by email to: youth@des.qld.gov.au
 - ▶ Return by mail to:
Office for Youth
GPO Box 2454
Brisbane City, QLD 4001

The closing date for submissions is **5pm 25 November 2022.**

Translation and interpreting services

The Queensland Government is committed to providing accessible services to Queenslanders including those from all culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Those who require interpreter support due to having English as a second language, please contact call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 131 450 and ask them to telephone department of Environment and Science Library Services on +61 7 3170 5470.





www.qld.gov.au/YouthStrategyConsultation