

**Joint submission to the  
Government of Western Australia  
Department of Communities  
regarding the new**

## **Youth Action Plan**

**on behalf of the**

**Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia (YACWA)**

**and**

**Youth Focus**

25 March 2024



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

The Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of the lands, waterways and plains on which we live, work and play. This land always has been, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

## **ABOUT YACWA**

The Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia (YACWA) is the peak body for young people and the youth sector that supports them in Western Australia. YACWA operates primarily as a human rights organisation that seeks to address the exclusion of young people in a rapidly changing society. YACWA represents around 60 youth sector organisations and 418 individual members, including both young people and compassionate community members.

## **ABOUT YOUTH FOCUS**

Established in 1994, Youth Focus is a leading not-for-profit organisation that delivers innovative and accessible mental health services and programs across Western Australia to help young people thrive. Youth Focus provides services from eight metropolitan and regional offices, in Burswood, Bunbury, Peel, Albany and Meekatharra and as the lead agency at headspace sites in Albany, Midland, Geraldton and Northam. Youth Focus also delivers services in schools, and in other locations in partnership with local communities.

## **METHOD**

This submission was co-produced by YACWA and Youth Focus through research and consultation with the following mental health sector organisations in January and February 2024:

- Western Australian Association for Mental Health,
- Helping Minds,
- HolyOake, and
- NEAMI National.

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## 1.0 Introduction

The Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia (YACWA) and Youth Focus are proud to present this joint submission to the Western Australian Department of Communities' new *Youth Action Plan*. We applaud the Cook Government for their commitment to achieving better outcomes for young people across Western Australia and we welcome this opportunity to share the expertise of sector with Government.

This submission is primarily focused on the mental health needs of young people in WA, and how this can be addressed in the Government's Youth Action Plan. We outline 17 recommendations for implementation to drive better mental health and wellbeing outcomes for young people in Western Australia within the scope of the following priorities outlined in the Youth Action Plan consultation paper:

- A voice for young people,
- Success and reaching your potential, and
- Wellbeing, connection and inclusion.

### Youth mental health today

The 'rapidly declining'<sup>1</sup> mental health of young Australians today has been described by academics as a 'public health crisis'.<sup>2</sup> Life pressures young people are experiencing today are compounded by the ongoing impacts of the rising cost-of-living,<sup>3</sup> an unprecedentedly unaffordable housing market,<sup>4</sup> family and domestic violence,<sup>5</sup> ongoing recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic,<sup>6</sup> and climate change.<sup>7</sup> Need for support is high, and services are working hard to deliver it: in the 2022-23 financial year, 93 502 young people received support from a headspace centre in Australia.<sup>8</sup>

Sector consultation and related research indicates that many young people in Australia currently require increased support to meet their mental health and wellbeing needs:

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick D McGorry, David Coghil and Michael Berk, 'Mental health of young Australians: dealing with a public health crisis' *Medical Journal of Australia* (2023) 219(6), p 246.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Mental Health Australia, *Report to the Nation 2023* p 9.

<sup>4</sup> Graham Hansen and Emily Hull, *Cost of Living 2023*, Western Australian Council of Social Service (Report, 2023), p 26.

<sup>5</sup> Mission Australia, *10 year strategy to reduce family and domestic violence in WA* (Submission, 2019), p 4 – 5.

<sup>6</sup> See Ben Edwards, Julie Moschion and Anna Zhu, 'Children and youth in the age of COVID-19' *Australian Journal of Social Issues* (2023) 58(1), p 4.

<sup>7</sup> See Tassia Oswald and Georgia Langmaid, 'Considering ecological determinants of youth mental health in the era of COVID-19 and the Anthropocene: A call to action from young public health professionals' *Health Promotion Journal of Australia* (2022) 33(2), p 324-328 and Naomi Godden et al, 'Climate Change, Activism and supporting the mental health of children and young people: Perspectives from Western Australia' *Journal of Paediatrics and Child Health* (2021) 57, p 1759-1764.

<sup>8</sup> headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation, 'An overview of our impact in 2022-2023' (2023, retrieved online 5 March 2024 via [https://headspace.org.au/assets/Uploads/Annual-Infographic\\_2023\\_DIGI\\_Single-Final.pdf](https://headspace.org.au/assets/Uploads/Annual-Infographic_2023_DIGI_Single-Final.pdf)), p 3.

- Social exclusion and correlated mental health challenges were reported by over 60% of respondents to a survey<sup>9</sup> based on 18 800 young people across Australia in 2023;
- Low rates of life satisfaction, self-esteem and high rates of stress<sup>10</sup> were reported by young respondents to the Western Australian Commissioner for Children and Young People's 2021 survey of 16 500 + young people aged 12 – 17;<sup>11</sup>
- Younger Australians are more likely to have experienced high or very high psychological distress than older Australians;<sup>12</sup> and
- Suicide remains the leading cause of death of young people in Western Australia,<sup>13</sup> disproportionately impacting young people living in regional and remote areas and/or who identify as male, Indigenous and/or LGBTQIA+.<sup>14</sup>

The Youth Action Plan presents an opportunity for government to address the mental health needs of all young people through a whole-of-government approach.

While we acknowledge that the Youth Action Plan is focused on the universal services for young people, we strongly recommend that the Plan is developed in alignment with the *At-Risk Youth Strategy 2022 – 2027*.<sup>15</sup> As a sector we understand that cohorts of 'universal' and 'at-risk' young people are not distinct. Through our ongoing work with young people and the sector in Western Australia, we know that one or more challenging life events may rapidly increase a young person's 'risk' of harm. Loss of housing security, for example, is an increasing risk for all young people in Western Australia as the private rental market becomes rapidly less affordable.<sup>16</sup> Fortunately, however, access to adequate support can conversely reduce a young person's risk of harm. Programs based on Housing First For Youth modelling,<sup>17</sup> for example, have demonstrated that access to a safe and stable home enables a young person to achieve levels of social, mental and physical health and wellbeing that are inaccessible without housing security.<sup>18</sup>

We are encouraged by the approach the Department of Communities has undertaken during the consultation period to include the voices of young people from all backgrounds and geographic

<sup>9</sup> K Filia et al, 'Social exclusion and the mental health of young people: Insights from the 2022 Mission Australia Youth Survey' Orygen and Mission Australia (Report, 2023), p 5.

<sup>10</sup> Commissioner for Children and Young People Western Australia, 'Speaking Out Survey 2021. Data snapshot: Students' views on their mental health', p 1 (retrieved online 5 March 2024 via <https://www.cyp.wa.gov.au/media/4902/data-snapshot-sos21-students-views-on-mental-health.pdf>).

Note: female identifying respondents reported higher rates across all three indicators.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'First insights from the National Study of Mental Health and Wellbeing, 2020-21' (published 8 December 2021, retrieved online 5 March 2024 via <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/first-insights-national-study-mental-health-and-wellbeing-2020-21>).

<sup>13</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, 'Intentional self-harm deaths (suicide) in Australia' (published 27 September 2023, retrieved online 5 March 2024 via <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/health/causes-death/causes-death-australia/latest-release#intentional-self-harm-deaths-suicide-in-australia>).

<sup>14</sup> Government of Western Australia, Mental Health Commission, *Western Australian Suicide Prevention Framework 2021-2025* (2020), p 11.

<sup>15</sup> Government of Western Australia, Department of Communities, *At Risk Youth Strategy 2022 – 2027*.

<sup>16</sup> National Shelter, the Brotherhood of St Laurence, and SGS Economics and Planning *Rental Affordability Index* (Report, 2023) reports that 'since mid-2020 rents in Greater Perth have increased by 52.4 per cent' as cited by Hansen and Hull in WACOSS' *Cost of Living 2023 Report*, p 26.

<sup>17</sup> Stephen Gaetz et al, *THIS is Housing First for Youth. Part 1 – Program Model Guide* (Toronto: Canadian Observatory on Homelessness Press, 2021).

<sup>18</sup> Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia, *Housing First for Youth (HF4Y) Project Report* (February 2023) (available online via <https://www.yacwa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Housing-First-for-Youth-Project-Report-FINAL.pdf>), pp 6, 15 and 19.

locations. We look forward to hearing the voices of young people, particularly those with lived experience of mental health challenges, front and centre during the implementation and delivery of the Youth Action Plan.

## 2.0 Summary of recommendations

**Key action 1: Embed and amplify the voices of young people with lived experience of mental ill-health and/or recovery in government decision making and service delivery.**

### Aligned Youth Action Plan priority

- A voice for young people

### Recommendations

1. Implement a governance function which includes the voices of young people and lived experience across government agencies.
2. Provide education and training to the Ministerial Youth Advisory Council, delivered by sector providers, to ensure a shared understanding of the structural determinants and issues impacting the mental health of young people in Western Australia, to inform the deliberations and recommendations of the advisory council.
3. Co-design policies, plans and initiatives with young people with lived experience and sector service providers to ensure that the outcomes reflect the needs of young people.
4. Ensure that the voices of at-risk and disenfranchised young people are actively sought and heard as part of any consultation or engagement activities.

**Key action 2: Invest in programs, initiatives and services which deliver quality care, support and treatment of young people experiencing mental health challenges.**

### Aligned Youth Action Plan priorities

- Success and reaching your potential
- Wellbeing, connection and inclusion

### Recommendations

5. Create local hubs of government and non-government service providers to ensure young people can access a range of services in one location, prioritising accessibility.
6. Within local hubs, fund care navigators to support young people to access and navigate the various services and agencies they may need to manage their mental health.
7. Identify ways in which State Government services and funding can better integrate with Federally funded youth mental health programs, such as headspace, to improve access and efficiencies, and provide seamless support to young people.
8. Support and invest in programs like the [Individual Placement and Support](#) program run by headspace and Youth Focus that helps young clients with mental health challenges obtain and sustain employment, or engage in training or education courses, that they are interested in and passionate about.
9. Support and invest in expanding early intervention programs, like counselling in schools, that help young people manage their mental health, and reduce the number of young people who go on to develop more serious mental health challenges.

10. Review the preventative mental health programs being delivered in schools to ensure they are appropriately accredited.
11. Expand awareness programs like [M8D8](#) run by Youth Focus to reduce stigma and support the mental health of young people in target groups.
12. Advocate for cost-of-living relief for young people by introducing rental affordability reforms.
13. Implement cost-of-living relief through initiatives like cheaper public transport options, such as the Ride to School Free program.

### **Key action 3: Strengthen connections between Government, peak bodies, sector and service providers.**

#### **Aligned Youth Action Plan priorities**

- Success and reaching your potential
- Wellbeing, connection and inclusion

#### **Recommendations**

14. Establish a taskforce for key Government agencies (such as Communities, Education, Justice, Health), peak bodies and sector providers to meet bi-annually to consider the structural determinants and issues impacting young people's mental health and their ability to live their best lives, and develop recommendations to be considered by Government to address these issues.
15. Provide key Government agencies with education and training, delivered by sector providers, to build a shared understanding of the structural determinants and issues impacting the mental health of young people in Western Australia.
16. Improve sector representation on Government taskforces, advisory councils and working groups to ensure that the issues and concerns impacting youth mental health in WA are considered.
17. Build into contracts a need for commissioned services to demonstrate collaboration with sector partners in order to achieve improved outcomes.



## 3.0 Supporting evidence

**Key action 1: Embed and amplify the voices of young people with lived experience of mental ill-health and/or recovery in government decision making and service delivery.**

### Youth Action Plan priority

- A voice for young people

### Recommendations

1. Implement a governance function which includes the voices of young people and lived experience across government agencies.
2. Provide education and training to the Ministerial Youth Advisory Council, delivered by sector providers, to ensure a shared understanding of the structural determinants and issues impacting the mental health of young people in Western Australia, to inform the deliberations and recommendations of the advisory council.
3. Co-design policies, plans and initiatives with young people with lived experience and sector service providers to ensure that the outcomes reflect the needs of young people.
4. Ensure that the voices of at-risk and disenfranchised young people are actively sought and heard as part of any consultation or engagement activities.

### Evidence

We applaud the Government's commitment to including the voices of young people in the development of the *Youth Action Plan* via the consultation options provided and the Plan's structural emphasis on the theme of a 'voice for young people'.

Young people with lived experience of mental ill-health and/or recovery are inadequately included in governance processes and frameworks that impact them. Recommendations 1 – 4 aim to remedy this issue and build on the inclusion of young people's voices in government contexts.<sup>19</sup> Kapeke et al.<sup>20</sup> outline a framework for the inclusion of young people in government decision making that recommends the development of the following processes:

1. Transforming institutional dialogue and perceptions of young people by developing youth-affirming platforms and amplifying diverse voices;<sup>21</sup>
2. Maximising youth agency by supporting young people's leadership and creativity;
3. Generating new policy processes that embed youth voices and are based in meaningful co-design;<sup>22</sup> and
4. Committing to tracking progress and gathering data.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See Corney et al, 'Youth participation: Adultism, human rights and professional youth work' *Children and Society* (2021) 36(4), p 677 – 690 and refer to James I. Charlton, *Nothing About Us without Us: Disability Oppression and Empowerment* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000) for further reading on democracy and marginalised social groups.

<sup>20</sup> Kapeke et al., 'Who holds power in decision making for young people's future?' *Medical Journal of Australia* (2023) 219(S10), p 530 – 534.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p 530-531.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 532.

Any peer work supported by the *Youth Action Plan* should be established and developed in alignment with the principles of 'connection, authenticity, human rights, connection, diversity, mutuality and humanity'<sup>24</sup> as outlined by the *Western Australian Lived Experiences (Peer) Workforce Framework* to reflect best practice.

## **Key action 2: Invest in programs, initiatives and services which deliver quality care, support and treatment of young people experiencing mental health challenges.**

### **Youth Action Plan priorities**

- Success and reaching your potential
- Wellbeing, connection and inclusion

### **Recommendations**

5. Create local hubs of government and non-government service providers to ensure young people can access a range of services in one location, prioritising accessibility.
6. Within local hubs, fund care navigators to support young people to access and navigate the various services and agencies they may need to manage their mental health.
7. Identify ways in which State Government services and funding can better integrate with Federally funded youth mental health programs, such as headspace, to improve access and efficiencies, and provide seamless support to young people.
8. Support and invest in programs like the [Individual Placement and Support program](#) run by headspace and Youth Focus that helps young clients with mental health challenges obtain and sustain employment, or engage in training or education courses, that they are interested in and passionate about.
9. Support and invest in expanding early intervention programs, like counselling in schools, that help young people manage their mental health, and reduce the number of young people who go on to develop more serious mental health challenges.
10. Review the preventative mental health programs being delivered in schools to ensure they are appropriately accredited.
11. Expand awareness programs like [M8D8](#) run by Youth Focus to reduce stigma and support the mental health of young people in target groups.

### **Evidence**

#### *Early intervention*

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<sup>24</sup> Government of Western Australia, Mental Health Commission, *The Western Australian Lived Experience (Peer) Workforce Framework for the mental health, alcohol and other drug and suicide prevention systems* (published October 2022, retrieved online 5 March 2024 via [https://livedexperienceworkforces.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/mhc-lived\\_experience-pw-framework-oct2022-digital.pdf](https://livedexperienceworkforces.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/mhc-lived_experience-pw-framework-oct2022-digital.pdf)), p 13.

Early intervention services deliver essential social services to young people<sup>25</sup> and the community while delivering economic savings to government<sup>26</sup> and should be implemented via the *Youth Action Plan* to achieve wellbeing outcomes which lay the foundations for young people to define and achieve personal success. With well-resourced early-intervention options for young people, 'milder, less persistent illnesses be successfully treated' and 'treatment delays for more severe and disabling illnesses can also be reduced'.<sup>27</sup>

Sector identified the following cohorts of young people as disenfranchised from support within Western Australia's mental health system:

- Young people aged 10 and 11 years old, as many services are funded for young people aged 12 and older;
- Young people living in rural and regional areas;<sup>28</sup>
- Young people from low socio-economic backgrounds;
- Young people who have secondary care needs that are not met by current supply of available primary care and/or crisis care mental health services;<sup>29</sup>
- Young people with complex mental health histories including suicidality and mental health conditions impacted by neurodiversity;
- Young trans and gender diverse people.<sup>30</sup>

*"Primary care generally needs reimagining and a new financial model. The surge in need, workforce shortages and the collapse of bulk-billing has created a perfect storm both for GPs and headspace centres. Rapid, stigma-free access is no longer possible. For the headspace system, a return to nationally coherent commissioning, a new financial model less reliant on fee-for-service bulk-billing, and financial parity with the new adult Head to Health community mental health model are all needed."*<sup>[4]</sup>

### *Increasing access to services for young people*

Sector recommends the development of youth-focussed 'hubs' (recommendation 5) that connect mental health services with other community services for young people, modelled according to place-based, person-first principles like the Department of Communities' FDV One Stop Hubs.<sup>31</sup> The creation of 'soft' entry points increases support available to young people and reduces stigma

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<sup>25</sup> Nous Group, 'Leaving no one behind: the economic imperative to invest in WA's community sector and its workforce', p 9.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p 9 – 11. See also McGorry et al, 'Mental health of young Australians: dealing with a public health crisis', p 246.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p 247.

<sup>28</sup> See Erin Sullivan and Warren Bartik, 'What do rural young people want from their mental health service?' *Australian Journal of Rural Health* (2023) 31(6), p 1072 - 1082.

<sup>29</sup> McGorry et al, 'Mental health of young Australians: dealing with a public health crisis', p 246.

<sup>30</sup> See Davi Macedo et al, 'Self-harm and suicidality among trans and gender diverse youth from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds – A scoping review' *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing* (published 30 January 2024, retrieved online 5 March 2024 via <https://doi.org/10.1111/inm.13291>).

<sup>31</sup> Government of Western Australia, Department of Communities, 'Family and Domestic Violence One Stop Hubs' (updated 29 January 2024, retrieved online 5 March 2024 via <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/departments-of-communities/family-and-domestic-violence-one-stop-hubs>).

attached to seeking assistance. Care navigators should be funded within these hubs (recommendation 6) to support young people to access and navigate the various services and agencies they may need to manage their mental health. Young people are 'looking for help from trusted people who have their best interests at heart'.<sup>32</sup>

### *Reducing stigma*

Stigma 'represents a barrier to help-seeking behavior among people with mental health problems'<sup>33</sup> and impacts provision of services 'negatively'.<sup>34</sup> Mental health stigma for young people should be mitigated through investment into awareness and education campaigns within the *Youth Action Plan*. Awareness raising campaigns should be coordinated with adequate funding for linked support services.

### **Recommendations**

12. Advocate for cost-of-living relief for young people by introducing rental affordability reforms.

13. Implement cost-of-living relief through initiatives like cheaper public transport options, such as the Ride to School Free program.

### **Evidence**

Better mental health and wellbeing outcomes for young people can be achieved by addressing the impact of increasingly inaccessible housing, food, and healthcare on the income and socio-economic status of young people, which are determinants of mental health and wellbeing.<sup>35</sup>

Respondents to YACWA's 2024 *Cost of Living* survey reported increasing rates of poor mental health experiences such as anxiety, stress, hopelessness and social isolation due to financial pressures and the rapidly devolving cost-of-living in Western Australia.<sup>36</sup>

The Minister for Youth can mitigate the negative impact of cost-of-living pressures on youth mental health by advocating for relief measures such as implementing systemic rental affordability reforms based on *Make Renting Fair* campaign targets;<sup>37</sup> and advocating for permanent free

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<sup>32</sup> Quote from youth mental health sector staff member.

<sup>33</sup> Kristian Wahlbeck, 'Public mental health: the time is ripe for translation of evidence into practice' *World Psychiatry* (2015) 14(1) p 40.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> See James Kirkbride et al, 'The social determinants of mental health and disorder: evidence, prevention and recommendations' *World Psychiatry* (2024) 23(1), p 60, and Appendix A: Youth Affairs' Council of Western Australia, *Submission to the Federal Senate Committee Inquiry into the Cost of Living* (20 March 2024).

<sup>36</sup> See Appendix A: Youth Affairs' Council of Western Australia, *Submission to the Federal Senate Committee Inquiry into the Cost of Living* (20 March 2024).

<sup>37</sup> See Make Renting Fair Alliance WA, *Submission to the Senate Inquiry: the worsening rental crisis in Australia* (published September 2023, retrieved online 5 March 2024 via <https://makerentingfairwa.org.au/resources/reports/>), p 1. See also Make Renting Fair Alliance WA's 'Tenancy Ten Factsheet' (published October 2023, retrieved online 5 March 2024 via <https://makerentingfairwa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Make-Renting-Fair-Tenancy-Ten.pdf>).

public transport for all young people in Western Australia following the introduction of the Premier's 'Summer of Free Public Transport' and 'Ride to School Free' programs.

### **Key action 3: Strengthen connections between Government, peak bodies, sector and service providers.**

#### **Youth Action Plan priorities**

- Success and reaching your potential
- Wellbeing, connection and inclusion

#### **Recommendations**

14. Establish a taskforce for key Government agencies (such as Communities, Education, Justice, Health), peak bodies and sector providers to meet bi-annually to consider the structural determinants and issues impacting young people's mental health and their ability to live their best lives, and develop recommendations to be considered by Government to address these issues.

15. Provide key Government agencies with education and training, delivered by sector providers, to build a shared understanding of the structural determinants and issues impacting the mental health of young people in Western Australia.

16. Improve sector representation on Government taskforces, advisory councils and working groups to ensure that the issues and concerns impacting youth mental health in WA are considered.

17. Build into contracts a need for commissioned services to demonstrate collaboration with sector partners in order to achieve improved outcomes.

#### **Evidence**

##### *Structural determinants*

Sector tell us that the structural determinants of poor youth mental health outcomes should be the focal point of wellbeing and success commitments in Youth Action Plan.

Social determinants include factors such as:

- Socio-economic disadvantage,
- Income,
- Access to housing,
- Access to food,
- Access to healthcare,
- Employment,
- Education,
- Experience of migration and

- Minority stress.<sup>38</sup>

The likelihood of a young person to develop any mental health condition is ‘inextricably linked to (their) life circumstances’.<sup>39</sup> Social determinants represent ‘the most modifiable set of targets for intervention currently available to prevent the onset of mental health problems and disorders, and to promote positive mental health in our populations’,<sup>40</sup> yet funding is insufficiently allocated towards addressing social determinants to prevent poor outcomes: less than 2.5 per cent of the Western Australian Mental Health Commission’s budget for 2023-2024 was allocated to prevention.<sup>41</sup>

Sector recommends that Government should establish an interagency, sector-inclusive taskforce to investigate and develop a structural determinants approach to youth mental health tailored to a Western Australian context to respond to the growing international evidence base that recommends prioritisation of social determinants as the foundation of improved public mental health outcomes. This approach aims to:

- Reduce pressure on Western Australia’s mental health care system, particularly ED and crisis response service capacities, by focusing on prevention and thus reducing occurrence of high-risk mental health conditions among young people, and
- Align Western Australia’s *Youth Action Plan* with current evidence that recommends a structural determinants approach as the most efficient and effective pathway to improving youth mental health outcomes.

### *Collective impact*

YACWA functions as the representative backbone of the youth sector in Western Australia, working alongside young people and our members towards the shared goal of supporting and upholding the human rights of young people across the State. Our work aligns with the principles of collective impact<sup>42</sup> modelling, which is based on the premise that large-scale social change requires broad cross-sector coordination.<sup>43</sup> This coordination must be grounded in strong foundations of consistent funding, engagement and support, followed by the development and practice of:

1. A shared vision,
2. Open communication,
3. Activities coordinated to advance a common goal,
4. Measured success, and

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<sup>38</sup> James Kirkbride et al, ‘The social determinants of mental health and disorder: evidence, prevention and recommendations’ *World Psychiatry* (2024) 23(1), p 59 – 90.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p 58.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Nous Group, ‘Leaving no one behind: the economic imperative to invest in WA’s community sector and its workforce’, p 9.

<sup>42</sup> See John Kania and Mark Kramer, ‘Collective Impact’ *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (Winter 2011), p 36 and Kerry Graham et al, ‘Power and Collective Impact in Australia’ *Stanford Social Innovation Review* (published 20 December 2021, retrieved online 5 March 2024 via [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/power\\_and\\_collective\\_impact\\_in\\_australia#](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/power_and_collective_impact_in_australia#)).

<sup>43</sup> Kania and Kramer, ‘Collective Impact’, p 36.

5. A backbone entity.<sup>44</sup>

As the largest service provider and funder of community services for young people in WA, the State Government plays a crucial role in the realisation of our shared goal of achieving better mental health outcomes for young people by providing significant structural and financial support to young people and the sector across the state. To continue to collaboratively achieve social change focused on improved wellbeing for all young people in Western Australia, Government and sector should continue to develop a collective impact approach towards youth mental health through the ongoing sharing of expertise, resources and aligned action. The *Youth Action Plan* should prioritise actions that build on and strengthen relationships between Government, peak bodies and service providers.

## 4.0 Conclusion

The development of the new Youth Action Plan is an exciting opportunity for Government and sector to collaboratively drive better mental health outcomes for young people in Western Australia.

Better outcomes across the Youth Action Plan priority areas of *a voice for young people*, *success and reaching your potential*, and *wellbeing, connection and inclusion* can be achieved through the implementation of recommendations 1 – 17.

Any questions regarding this submission can be directed to [yacwa@yacwa.org.au](mailto:yacwa@yacwa.org.au).

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<sup>44</sup> Principles outlined in Surili Sutaria Patel, 'Driving Climate and Health Solutions by Building a Collective Impact Culture' *World Medical and Health Policy* (published 2021, retrieved online 5 March 2024 via <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/share/CNDSVMN63UYEEZQZVAHB?target=10.1002/wmh3.418>), p 10 – 14.