

**Youth Workers Unite**

**Regional Youth Services Meeting #6 Minutes**

Date: 3 June 2020, 1.30pm – 3pm

Location: Teleconference via Zoom

Chair: Mason Rothwell

Minutes: Matthew Tomich

**Meeting Minutes**

1. **Acknowledgement of Country**
2. **YACWA’s Updates**
* We're pleased to announce YACWA has a seat at the table of Mark McGowan's **State Recovery Advisory Group**, enshrining the voices and needs of young people as we work to rebuild over the coming months. YACWA CEO Ross Wortham will sit on the 24-member group, which also includes executives from WACOSS, Shelter WA and the WA Aboriginal Advisory Council, alongside over 20 industry and business representatives. We will continue to advocate for the views we hear at these workshops at this advisory group.
* **YACWA will be running consultations with young people** in the coming weeks to determine what they would like to see the state government in regards to youth unemployment and we have plans to meet with Hon. David Kelly, Minister for Youth, to discuss the development of a youth unemployment plan.
* **We have continued to provide a voice and advocate for young people in the Youth Taskforce**, and a number of proposals have progressed through the taskforce and are now sitting with the Taskforce coordination committee, including:
	+ A statewide embedded youth outreach model partnering youth services closely with WA Police.
	+ A small grants program to predominantly assist organisations to provide non-face-to-face service-delivery, provide ICT equipment and funding to reduce financial barriers young people face to engaging with services in these new formats.
	+ This proposal is for the establishment of a pool of refurbished ICT devices which will be provided to youth specific services and do not need to be returned.
	+ Additionally, the working group on homelessness is currently looking at fleshing out a proposal for a housing first for youth model to be implemented in pilot programs across Western Australia.
* [**Our Live Service Portal**](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1imELKdbKI7_QKhepL4wFBrQft4X7rfitOFgrUxE1y0w/edit) **lists the latest updates on the status of youth services.** Almost 200 services have updated the latest information on their current service provision levels, staffing, capacity and program operation. As we move into Phase 2 and services begin to re-open and return to something resembling normal capacity, we encourage youth services to keep their information up to date. You can list your service or re-submit your latest service status via the [**Live Status Update form**](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1I0Gw5gqZVSI1mkumYkvxM9hASkDhkv5EyHhBl0qROvk/edit) or email matthew@yacwa.org.au with your latest updates.
* **YACWA is continuing to work with** [**Social Reinvestment WA**](https://www.socialreinvestmentwa.org.au/) **(SRWA)** to seek clarity on mental health supports, access to education, and information provided to young people within Banksia Hill Detention Centre & the Department of Justice has released [an update on Corrective Services during COVID-19](https://mcusercontent.com/988f5ecbc74d03c475487e9ae/files/01d6a2fa-442b-4ffe-93ad-907e41349b05/Corrective_Services_COVID_19_Corrective_Services_Update.pdf), as well as their [Guiding Principles](https://mcusercontent.com/988f5ecbc74d03c475487e9ae/files/01d6a2fa-442b-4ffe-93ad-907e41349b05/Corrective_Services_COVID_19_Corrective_Services_Update.pdf) for community service agreements and contracts during the COVID-19 pandemic
1. **Paul Abbott, Mentoring 2 Work**
* Paul Abbott is the Principal Project Officer behind [Mentoring 2 Work](https://mentoring2work.org.au/), an employment support initiative designed to assist young people in their overall employability and career.
* M2W is an initiative of [Council of the Ageing](http://www.cotawa.org.au/) (COTA WA) and emerged from concerns expressed by COTA members that young people in the community were facing increased difficulties in finding pathways to employment.
* The program pairs young people with volunteer mentors to identify soft skills and strengths, highlight careers of interest, build self-confidence, develop planning and goal setting skills and take both ownership and accountability of their job search.
* M2W’s target cohort is young people aged 18-25 who are unemployed or underemployed.
* M2W is funded by the Federal Government’s Department of Social Services under the [Try, Test and Learn Fund](https://engage.dss.gov.au/try-test-and-learn-fund/).
* M2W is designed to complement existing programs rather than re-invent the wheel or duplicate the impact of services like jobactive.
* The focus for young people is not about getting a job right now but finding the best job to continue onto a career pathway.
* M2W follows an ABCD job model:
	+ A is for A job
	+ B is for a Better job
	+ C is for a Career job
	+ D is for a Dream job.
* Young people’s participation in M2W was voluntary. Often they were linked with the program through jobactive and job providers referrals, but it was important to the success of the program that participants engage of their own volition.
* The conditions were for recruitment were:
	+ Young people must be age 18-25
	+ Living in the catchment areas (Perth North Metro)
	+ Receiving Centrelink payments for at least six months
	+ Express a desire to move forward with employability
	+ Attend a one-on-one meeting with someone from the Mentoring2Work program
* M2W began with a trial phase with 25 young adults in Vic Park to test its model.
* After the success of that trial, M2W’s second phase was rolled out across two more DSS regions in the Perth North Metro area; first covering the suburbs of Midland, Morley, Mirrabooka and Osborne Park; then Yanchep, Joondalup, Clarkson and Wanneroo.
* The statistics for the second phase of recruitment were:
	+ Recruitment goal of 240 young people
	+ Actual recruitment of 252 young people
	+ 173 commenced the toolkit phase
	+ 65 young adults were then paired with a mentor
	+ 31 commenced education commitments during the course of the M2W program
* The focus areas that the program sought to develop were:
	+ Soft skills like time management and communication
	+ Validating, networking and brand development
	+ Resilience, lateral thinking and perspective
	+ Proactive job search and application techniques
	+ Employability and career development
	+ Self-worth and appreciation
* Mentoring in the M2W encourages mentors to share their perspective and knowledge, be a sounding board, offer feedback and advice, lead by example and provide encouragement. Mentors are discouraged from counselling or making judgements.
* M2W recruited 100 volunteer mentors from the private and public sector.
* Mentors expressed that they were motivated by their own understanding of the difficulties of navigating the job market, as well as the value of a mentor in their own professional development, or the potential benefits a mentor could’ve had in their early career if the option were available to them.
* Mentors were recruited through United Way WA, undergoing a recruitment process involving interviews, reference checks and police clearances and finally an orientation and welcome.
* The process for matching mentors with the correct mentee took into account personality compatibility, industry alignment, similarities in backgrounds, engagement and commitment.
* M2W brokered the initial meeting between mentors and mentees, after which the pair were encouraged to meet for a hour a week, and then with a more flexible frequency suitable to their respective schedules.
* The outcomes of the program were that mentees felt:
	+ Treated as adults
	+ Boosted in their confidence and validation
	+ Boosted in their mental health
	+ A sense of social inclusion
	+ Better equipped to set and achieve goals
	+ That their skills and strengths had been developed
* The main learnings about mentoring process that emerged from the program are:
	+ Creating an ecosystem environment is essential – bringing together likeminded organisations to share expertise broadens the view of participants.
	+ Measurements of success are essential to identify and maintain sight of the purpose.
	+ Start small and focused – the pilot initiative of Mentoring2Work was essential to its eventual expansion.
	+ Build a social community – create opportunities to interact and network as often as possible to help break barriers of social isolation.
	+ Everyone’s journey is their own – one young adult’s inch of success is another’s mile.
	+ Young must come first – this is an unconditional factor that mentors must recognise. Change may take a long time and mentors need to be mindful of the long game.
	+ Hands-on and intuition is key.
* The overall reflections and learnings hf the program were:
	+ Mentoring works – the guidance, judgement-free support that mentors can provide has a profound impact
	+ The power of listening and empathy is vital to young people’s development
	+ Young people are incredibly busy and thinking in the now – but a mentoring program enables them to think in the big picture
	+ Conversely, perspective can be elusive
	+ Careers aren’t a life sentence; it’s important
	+ Young people respect cross-generational knowledge and experience
	+ Voluntary participation and self-drive are essential to the success of a program like this. Some young people felt like they were obliged to adjoint, which entrenches low engagement. The M2W team worked hard to communicate that participation was voluntary.
	+ The sooner, the better – the value of mentoring can’t be overstated enough.
* Mentoring2Work is coming to an end but the Federal Government is looking at extending some programs funded through the Try Test Learn initiative as part of Australia’s economic recovery.
* Paul can be reached at **paul@cotawa.org.au**.
* [**Download Paul’s Mentoring 2 Work presentation.**](https://www.yacwa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Mentoring-2-Work-Presentation-Slides.pdf)
1. **Charlotte Glance, YACWA**
* Charlotte is YACWA’s new COVID-19 Youth Engagement Officer.
* Charlotte will be working with YACWA’s networks and partner organisations to co-design resources to support young people through the recovery phase.
* Those networks are:
	+ [Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network WA](https://www.yacwa.org.au/youth-leadership/myan-wa/) (MYAN WA)
	+ [Youth Pride Network](https://www.youthpridenetwork.com/) (YPN)
	+ [Youth Homelessness Advisory Council](https://www.yacwa.org.au/youth-leadership/yhac/) (YHAC)
	+ [Youth Disability Advocacy Network](http://www.ydan.com.au/) (YDAN)
	+ [Regional Youth Leadership Development](https://www.yacwa.org.au/youth-leadership/rlyd/) (RYLD)
	+ [Aboriginal Health Council of WA](https://www.ahcwa.org.au/youth) (AHCWA)
	+ [Telethon Kids Institute](https://www.telethonkids.org.au/) (TKI)
* For organisations with specific resource needs for young people, or organisations looking to test resources with a diverse group of young people, contact Charlotte at **charlotte@yacwa.org.au**.
1. **Survey results**
* In May YACWA surveyed participants of previous Youth Workers Unite sessions on their training and professional development priorities. As we’ve entered the recovery phase and services have begun to resume some for their regular programs and operations, we’ve begun to shift the focus of these sessions from problem-solving and status updates to upskilling and future-proofing our youth services.
* From a list of 14 possible PD topics, the most popular themes were:
	+ Deepening youth engagement (64%)
	+ Resilience and recovery (58%)
	+ Managing young people’s stress and anxiety (48%)
	+ Engaging with diverse young people (43%)
	+ Supporting young people to access and manage Centrelink payments (40%)
* Other suggestions included financial empowerment, young parents, justice and court matters and in-depth mental health, trauma and recovery-sorted training.
* The results of this survey are informing the future trainings in these series, set to run through to mid-August.
* **Our next session** will be a joint regional and metro session led by educator Bella Broadway of Connection and Wellbeing Australia. Bella will explore the specific challenges and impacts faced by LGBTQAI+ young people through COVID-19, equip youth workers with the preventative and postventative tools to support and respond to their needs.

This workshop is suitable for both those seeking to upskill and improve their support for LGBTIQA+ young people and those seeking a refresher on best practice engagement for LGBTIQA+ young people.

* The details for that workshop are:
* **Youth Workers Unite #17: Supporting LGBTQAI+ Young People**
with Bella Broadway (Connection and Wellbeing Australia)
Wednesday 17 June, 9.30am-11.30am
Free registration
**Register via Zoom**
**More info**
1. **Service Updates and Issues**
* **Centrecare** have shifted service delivery. They’ve largely been doing telephone and zoom catch-ups for the past several months. This week is the first of resuming face to face groups of young people. The format is modified – fewer people per group with more frequent engagement, so they’ll see all clients but still abiding by social distancing requirements. Taking it as it comes based on recommendations.
* **Peel Youth Services** have returned to normal operations for the most part, though they’re unable to do group programs within school, and young people aren’t able to visit PYS during school hours. A face-to-face program was scheduled recently but cancelled 45 minutes before it was due to commence. One-on-one counselling sessions within school are permitted, but schools aren’t doing excursions. They’ve found greater engagement during school hours via Zoom, but young people clearly want face-to-face engagement to return.
* **Ngala** commenced school visits from week 2 term 2. They’re able to do one-one visits but no group activities. They’re also unable to have young people come into the office due to the spacing rules on social distancing, so they’ve made use of their outdoor garden. Aside from group activities, services are back to pre-COVID capacity.