



Health
Western Sydney
Local Health District

WSLHD Youth Council Annual Report

2020



**CONSUMER
PARTNERSHIP**

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WSLHD Youth Council

The Youth Council was established in 2017 with the aim of embedding the youth voice in Western Sydney Local Health District (WSLHD) services.



WSLHD places high value on youth participation – this involves young people being active in decision-making processes for issues that affect their healthcare.

Through empowerment, purposeful engagement and inclusiveness, WSLHD wants to engage young people as partners in their health-care with a mission to:

- Develop the voice of adolescent and young adult health in western Sydney,
- Increase young people’s understanding of health and improve health literacy,
- Contribute to the development of youth focused health services,
- Make recommendations and suggestions to enhance current health services in western Sydney,
- Develop and inform policy about transition care from paediatric to adult services, and;
- Advocate on planning, development, integration and implementation of policy development and programs for young people.

Acknowledgements

The WSLHD Youth Council is supported by many people and roles both internal and external to the LHD. We would like to acknowledge the huge support of the Integrated and Community Health directorate, in particular Youth Health. The Youth Council acknowledges the many opportunities and ongoing support provided by Youth Health which is integral to the success of the Council’s work. We are very thankful to the WSLHD executive team who work to embed consumer participation in the LHD, and our key partners.

Above all, the Youth Council would not exist if not for the young people committed to working towards better health outcomes for other young people in western Sydney. The passion, insights and advocacy provided by this group of young leaders has led to innovative outcomes. The Council’s work illustrates the power of young people when they are supported to raise their voice.

Members

This year the Youth Council welcomed four new members to bring membership to eleven young people:

- Isha Ahmad
- Kasin Ahmet
- Rebecca Copping
- Stephanie D'Souza
- Amar Hamed
- Hamza Kahn
- Ikneet Kalsy
- Jessica Lam
- Adnan Shah
- Emily Smith
- Monique Van Acquoy

The Youth Council also said farewell to:

- Lauren Moujalli
- Gianina Marie
- Adam Huynh
- Nadine Lebde
- Cameron Cole
- Jessica Hardy
- Mitch Holder

Meeting facilitators:

- Stephanie Mora
- Molly Sinclair

Key achievements

Youth Week

The theme for Youth Week 2020 was: **Speak up. Be involved. Get connected. Have fun.**

In line with the impact and restrictions of COVID-19, the council's plans of Youth Week stalls at Westmead and Blacktown hospitals were modified, and like many other face-to face events it was adapted to utilise digital platforms.

In partnership with WSLHD Youth Health, the campaign was a youth focused health promotion strategy developed by young people for young people.



The Council worked together to identify, discuss and take action on the health needs affecting young people in response to social distancing and COVID-19 restrictions. The Wellness Week campaign ran from the 4th to the 10th of May 2020 on the WSLHD Youth Health Facebook platform.

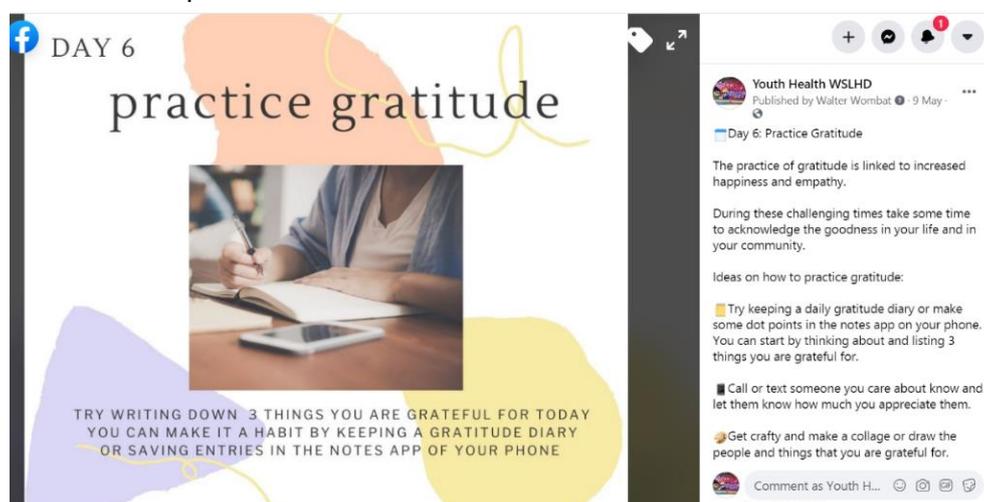
Over the 7 days Council members promoted wellness prompts for the mind and body specifically aimed at enhancing the wellbeing of young people with a particular focus on mental health.

The digital campaign also served as an opportunity for the Council to have a greater presence on the WSLHD Youth Health Facebook page and introduce their role and the purpose and function of the Council as a whole.

With the support of the WSLHD communications team the campaign was shared on their socials, through the Prevention and Early Intervention Recovery Service internal blog for young people as well as Youth Health and Council networks.

The creation and circulation of the campaign via relevant and accessible social media platforms for young people correlated with Goal 2 of the NSW Youth Health Framework 2017-2024; that outlines the need to utilise technology and social media to improve youth engagement. Overall the Wellness Week digital campaign reflection the ways in which WSLHD Youth Council continued to work collaboratively and engage young people during an unprecedented time.

Example of Facebook post:



Response to Covid-19

The Council's monthly meetings continued as per usual though on a virtual platform, and as a result the Council was able to continue to collaborate and discuss ideas and key issues facing young people.

Presenters were invited to meet with the Council virtually and share information and seek feedback from members.

Opportunities included:

- Partake in survey by Youth Health to better understand the needs and impact of Covid-19 on young people and to where they are sourcing health information from.
- Provide feedback on a Covid-10 Community Resources website for western Sydney residents that was formulated by the Western Sydney Health Promotion Team.

Moving forward the Council will continue to make the virtual option available to members as a means of supporting participation in the monthly meetings.

Podcast

The Youth Council was invited to join the WSLHD 'Western Sydney Health Check' podcast to discuss some of the effects the pandemic has had on young Australians. Jess and Ikneet joined the hosts and spoke about their experiences and those of other young people during the pandemic, including social isolation, loss of work and study disruption. The podcast also helped to raise awareness about hopeful stories of how young people are helping others, and how the challenging period may lead to improvements in the future.

Western Sydney Health Check

How COVID-19 is affecting young Australians

JUNE 19, 2020 JESSICA LAM AND IKNEET KALSY



LISTEN ON



SHARE EPISODE



WSLHD Health of Young People Strategic Plan workshop

The WSLHD Health of Young People Strategic Plan was developed to improve the health and access to health services for young people in Western Sydney. Workshops were hosted by an independent consultant to ensure young people were involved in the development of the plan.

The Youth Council attended a workshop run during their November meeting that focused on identifying:

- Issues in improving young people's health;
- Experiences of accessing health care (their own experience, or what they have seen among their friends);
- Priorities for improving young people's health.

Recruitment of new members

Due to a number of members having to resign from the Youth Council due to study and work commitments, a recruitment drive took place in August. Over 25 young people applied to join the Council and after eight interviews four new members were brought on board.

Engagement with Youth Action

The Western Area Coordinator from Youth Action joined the Youth Council's November meeting to provide an overview of the organisation and provide some information on advocacy and hosting consultations. The Youth Council felt inspired after the presentation and confident in their ability to host consultation with other young people in the future!

Youth Council 2020 Reflections

“Being a part of the youth council since its inception has been a wonderful opportunity to help shape our local health system with the goal of making it more accessible for young people. I’ve particularly enjoyed advocating for youth mental health services which is an issue that I am partially passionate about. While we have had some interesting twists and turns along the way, for example, the E2 adolescent clinics we helped to design being opened as Westmead Hospital’s COVID clinic instead, it truly have been an amazing experience.”

- Stephanie D’Souza

“Being a part of the WSLHD youth council in 2020 with the online meetings reflected togetherness with the aim of one goal in ultimately making decisions in the best interest of Western Sydney youth despite the consequences of the global pandemic and thus making my position on the council more meaningful.”

- Isha Ahmed

“In the brief time I’ve had the pleasure to be a part of the WSLHD Youth Council, I’ve constantly been amazed by the passion and dedication put in by not only the members of the council, but also the organisers. It gives me a sense of ballast to see our youth voice be perpetuated through the council, and echoed forward by the organisers who help tremendously in making a strong connection to those in need of help or guidance not only through the NSW Health system, but also their personal issues; whether that be mental or physical wellbeing. I hope to keep the voice of the children and adolescents strong within the healthcare system, and I have no doubt that WSLHD’s Youth Council can make it happen.”

- Adnan Shah