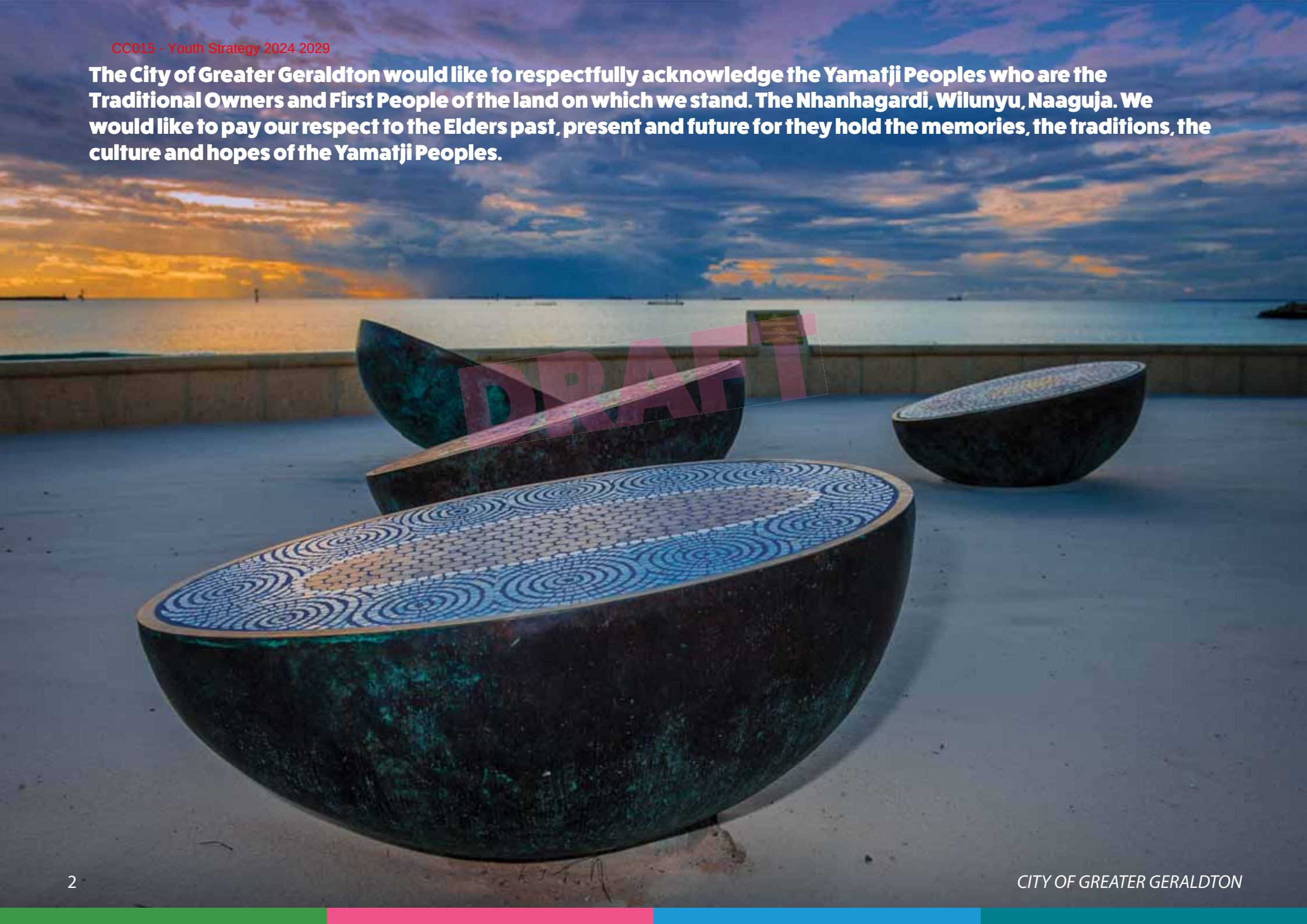
City of Greater Geraldton
a vibrant future

YOUTH STRATEGY
2024-2029

The City of Greater Geraldton would like to respectfully acknowledge the Yamatji Peoples who are the Traditional Owners and First People of the land on which we stand. The Nhanhagardi, Wilunyu, Naaguja. We would like to pay our respect to the Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of the Yamatji Peoples.



CONTENTS

Acknowledgment of Country 2
Mayors Message 4
Introduction 5
Our Vision 6
Objective 6
The role of the Council 7
Youth Statistics 8
Engagement 9
Summary 9
City of Greater Geraldton Youth Services 10
Geraldton Youth Centre 10
Mullewa Youth Centre 10
Youth Events 10
Diversionary Program 10
Youth Vibrancy 10
Strategic Community Plan 12
Greater Geraldton on a Page` 13
Strategic Areas 14
Strategic 1 Empowerment and Participation 15
Strategic 2 Spaces and Places 16
Strategic 3 Connection and Community 17
Strategic 4 Advocacy and Partnerships 18
Works Cited 19

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Message from our Mayor

Jerry Clune

Young people are an important part of our community. It is vital that we encourage, foster and recognise their leadership and strengths, now and into the future. The City of Greater Geraldton (the City) is proud to release the new Youth Strategy 2024-29. The strategy will guide and direct how the City delivers services, builds infrastructure and advocates on behalf of young people over the next five years. The strategy aligns with the Greater Geraldton Strategic Community Plan 2031 and the City's aspiration to create a vibrant community with engaged young people.

Supporting our young people will continue to be a top priority for the City and this strategy provides direction based on engagement and feedback from people aged 12-25 years. To meet the needs of young people now and into the future. It is important we have a tangible and meaningful strategy to guide us. I am proud that this document is a result of a comprehensive consultation process which engaged young people across Greater Geraldton.

It goes without saying "it takes a village to raise a child", and we are grateful to continue to work alongside many community stakeholders, service providers and other organisations to deliver the priority areas of this strategy.

We truly hope the City can provide bright opportunities for young people, the leaders of tomorrow, and see them continue to be change makers in our wonderful community.

Jerry Clune

Introduction

Greater Geraldton is a thriving regional capital city with a population of over 41,000 (REMPLAN 2024 Data). Vibrant public places and spaces support our enviable lifestyle. We will be a recognised leader in the protection of our natural environment and our people will thrive and prosper. We will celebrate our cultural heritage and history. We support business growth through industry diversification, education and employment opportunities. As an inclusive community, we will strive for equal rights and access for all. We will face challenges by working together in unity with integrity and creativity. We will achieve this on the foundation of open and collaborative leadership.

The City of Greater Geraldton's Youth Strategy 2024-29 aims to create a vibrant, inclusive, and safe community where young people are valued, engaged, and empowered to actively participate in shaping their future. This strategy outlines the four key goals and objectives that will be undertaken to address the unique needs and aspirations of our youth population. Through collaboration with youth, community stakeholders, and relevant organizations, we seek to foster an environment that supports personal growth, education, employment, mental health, social integration, and active citizenship.

The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow, and it is crucial that we invest in their development and empower them to contribute positively to society. A youth strategy is a comprehensive approach that aims to address the needs and aspirations of young people and ensure that they have the necessary support and opportunities to thrive.

The challenges facing young people today are numerous and complex, including issues such as employment, access to education, mental health, social exclusion, and the impact of climate change. These challenges require a coordinated and holistic response that considers the diverse needs and experiences of young people.

The goal of a youth strategy is to create a society in which all young people can reach their full potential and contribute to building a better future for themselves and their communities. This requires a long-term and sustainable approach that prioritizes investments in education, employment, health, and social protection, while also addressing the underlying systemic issues that perpetuate inequality and exclusion.

In this context, a youth strategy is not only an investment in the future, but also a recognition of the invaluable contributions that young people make to our societies today. By supporting and empowering young people, we can build a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable world for all.

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VISION

Young people in Greater Geraldton feel proud of and connected to their community. A place where young people feel safe, can contribute, and reach their full potential, and are supported to achieve their aspirations.

OBJECTIVE

This strategy aligns with the City of Greater Geraldton's Council Policy 1.2 Youth and the Geraldton Strategic Community Plan 2031. The strategy will guide Council direction and resource allocation over the next five years. The strategy is informed by comprehensive engagement with young people aged 12-25 years living in Greater Geraldton. The strategy will inform how the City engages with young people.

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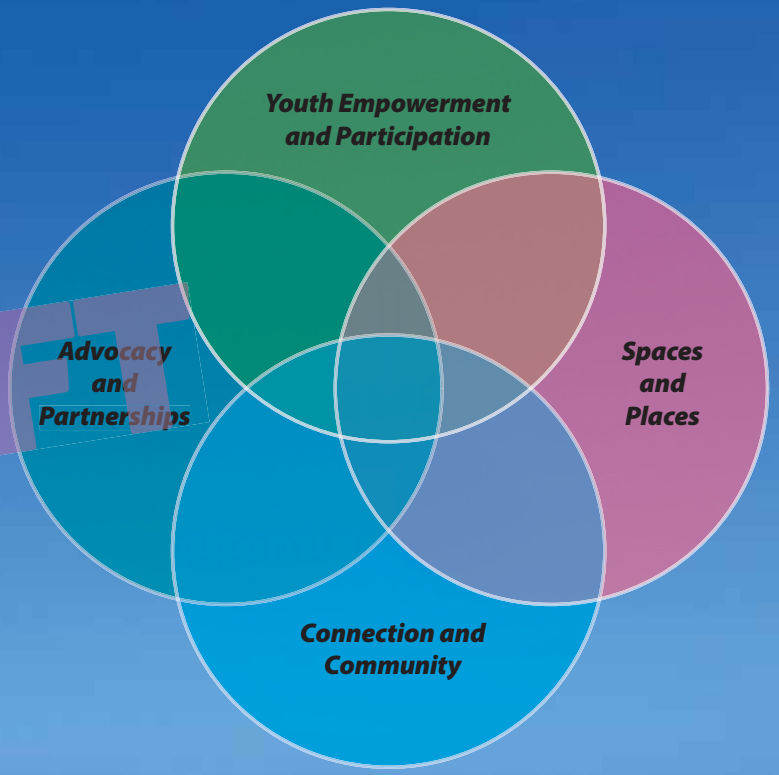
STRATEGIC AREAS



The role of Council

The City of Greater Geraldton Council takes a lead role in the implementation of this Plan however; we do not do this on our own. Responsibility for achieving our long-term goals rests with all levels of government, businesses, industry groups, community organisations and individuals.

Key to Council's role is listening to our community and understanding its desired level of service and demand for key facilities and programs and balancing expectations with what the community is prepared to pay for.

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LEADER

We understand the community's aspirations and challenges. We plan and provide direction through policy and best practice.

PROVIDER

We provide a range of infrastructure, services, facilities and programs that meet the needs of the community.

COLLABORATER

We support and collaborate with the community, private sector and government at all levels to deliver tangible benefits to the community.

PLANNER

We use our professional expertise to undertake research, provide information, and in consultation with stakeholders, develop pathways to achieve our aspirations, and resolve identified issues. We will undertake this work from a whole of community perspective.

CAPACITY BUILDER

We work with community groups and government agencies to meet local needs. We assist community groups to obtain the necessary resources through partnerships with other agencies.

ADVOCATE

We are the voice of the community. We advocate for the best possible outcomes for our community.

Youth Statistics

Youth refers to a period between childhood and adulthood. The age range varies between services but for the purpose of the City of Greater Geraldton, youth are defined as people between 12-25 years.

At-risk youth refer to young people 10-24 years with multiple and complex problems who are at risk of harm and have increased vulnerability of experiencing poor life outcomes. This includes at-risk young people with repeated contacts with the youth justice system, vulnerable Aboriginal young people, young people in out-of-home care or experiencing homelessness.*

**At Risk Youth Strategy 2022-27)*

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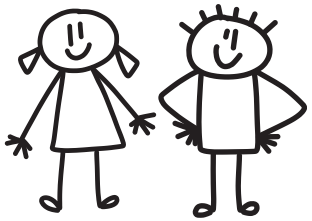
CITY OF GREATER GERALDTON RESIDENT POPULATION

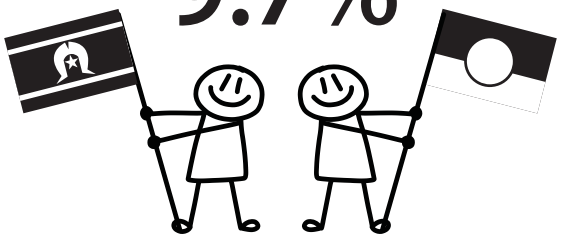
39,489



7,379 people aged between **10-24 years** representing **18.1%** of the population*

**Greater Geraldton 2021 Census all persons quickstats*

9.7%



of the population identify as **Aboriginal** or **Torres Strait Islander***

**Greater Geraldton 2021 Census all persons quickstats*

95%

of young people surveyed in WA believe **climate change** is a serious issue*

**Beyond 2020 WA Youth Action Plan 2020-22*

34.2%

of young people Australia-wide listed the **environment** as their top concern in 2019*

**2021 Youth Survey*

Engagement

The City conducted the Youth Strategy Survey from 2 November to 4 December 2023.

The survey was promoted in a media release, a social media campaign on Facebook and Instagram and advertisements in the Geraldton Guardian. A dedicated website page with links to the online survey and information on the availability of paper surveys at the City Civic Centre. The City's Youth Team also visited the high schools, Central Regional TAFE and the Geraldton Universities Centre where they directly engaged with students. School leaders also shared the opportunity for young people to have their say with students. The City received 298 responses, all of which were online.

Summary

The majority of respondents were students aged 12-15 years old and have unlimited access to the internet at home.

Most respondents enjoy living in Geraldton, feel connected to and proud to be part of their community and felt growing up in Geraldton was a great experience.

About a third of respondents said they saw themselves still living in Geraldton in five years' time with the top reasons for leaving being the lack of work opportunities in Geraldton, studying, wanting to travel and experience new things and there not being enough for young people to do in the City.

Although most respondents rated the City as good/really good in terms of things to do and places to go, two thirds also said the lack of places to go and things to do was a top issue for them. The top recreational activities they said they want more of include shops, restaurants, events, and sports.

Transportation is an issue for the majority of respondents with just over half of respondents stating although they are able to use public transport to go to and from study and/or work only a third of them use it. Just over half said their parents or carers drive them.

The majority of respondents are planning on attending university outside of Geraldton but acknowledged they aren't confident about leaving the City and understand it may be difficult.

Although the majority of respondents said they were optimistic about their own futures, just over a third were optimistic about the future of the planet and only half said mental health services were easily accessible in the City.

The top issues facing young people are the use of drugs and alcohol by their peers, not feeling safe which includes being bullied and lack of job and study opportunities in the City.

The majority of respondents said their ideas and concerns were not being represented in decision making and the reasons why were that youth aren't listened to, evidenced in lack of effort to make the City more appealing for them, they didn't know how to have a say and they had no formal representation such as a Youth Council. The things they want to be consulted on the most include events and facilities.

Social media was the preferred communication tool with the majority using Snapchat, Instagram and TikTok.

The top suggestions on how to make the City a better place for youth were to engage with them, provide more places to go, things to do and activities and to improve safety/reduce crime.

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City of Greater Geraldton
YOUTH SERVICES

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The City provides multiple services to the community that are essential to young people from sporting grounds and facilities to paths and parks. It is critical that the voices of young people are captured as part of community engagement and infrastructure planning. The City has a dedicated team of officers involved in youth development within the Community and Cultural Development branch. These officers rely on municipal budget and applications to State Government and private sector for funding:

- Aquarena
- Spalding Revitalisation Stage 2
- Spalding Park cycling facilities.
- Wonthella Skate Park
- Youth Precinct and Stow Garden event space
- Disability Access and Inclusion Programs
  (Passport 2 Employment and All Ability Day)
- Parks and public open spaces
- Late Night Basketball
- Battle of the Bands
- Revolve Skate Festival
- Mullewa Youth Centre
- Bimba Basketball
- School Holiday Program
- Inclusive Sports Participation Program
  (Game On)
- Films on the Foreshore
- Sundays by the Sea
- Sunset Yoga
- Skate Today
- A Day in the Laneway
- Back to Country Camps
- Young People's Services at Geraldton Regional Library
- Library Services
  – Provides access to computers and free internet use, supports educational and recreational needs, and provides a safe space.
- Art Gallery
  – Provides young people opportunities for arts and cultural activities.

Geraldton Youth Centre

In 2022 the City purchased a vacant building at Pass Steet, Wonthella, for the purpose of delivering a multiservice youth hub. The strategic decision was based on community and stakeholder consultation that highlighted the need for a youth hub, and young people's need to have places to go and things to do. The Geraldton Youth Centre project is separated into three stages: short, medium, and long term. The short-term focuses on the activation of the current space. The medium and long-term plans for the centre are dependant on the outcomes of external funding applications and future Budget allocations.

Mullewa Youth Centre

The City operates the Mullewa Youth Centre with funding provided by the Department of Communities. The centre runs diversionary and recreational services and provides ongoing support for young people in the Mullewa community. The centre is well equipped with an outdoor basketball court, skate park and internal recreation space.

Youth Events

The City facilitates key youth events throughout the year. These events are driven by young people, external organisations, availability of funding and other opportunities. Youth events experience a life cycle which often changes in line with young people's interests and current trends. Therefore, event delivery should evolve and respond accordingly. Current events include:

- Battle of the Bands: an intergeneration music competition at the Queens Park Theatre
- Revolve Skate: a youth culture event at the Wonthella Skate Park
- A Day in the Lane Way: a youth market during national youth week highlighting young people and youth entrepreneurship.

Diversionary Program

The City monitors youth crime trends and can develop and implement initiatives that combat factors leading to youth offending. These projects have relied on Department of Justice and/or WA Police funding. Previous successful projects included:

- U-Turn Project
- Tomorrow Starts Today
- Geraldton Intensive Support Program
- Skate Today
- School holiday programs for at-risk young people
- Back to Country and Adventure Camps
- Thursday Late-Night Program (SafeSpace PCYC)
- Late Night Basketball
- Surf to Smile
- Street Art Murals
- Demolition Derby Car program
- Dismantle Bike Rescue.
- Hot Spots Program

Youth Vibrancy

Youth Vibrancy is a collection of initiatives run by the City focused on space activation and creating a liveable city for young people. Projects include:

- Sunset Yoga
- Films on the Foreshore
- Sundays by the Sea
- School Holiday Programs
- National Youth week events

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Strategic Community Plan

Greater Geraldton 2031 Strategic Community Plan (SCP) is a shared vision that draws on the wisdom of our community. It outlines our community's vision and aspirations for the next 10 years. This plan underpins everything we do at the City of Greater Geraldton by informing our actions over the next 10 years .

The SCP represents the highest level of strategic planning undertaken by local governments. It is legislatively required as part of the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework under the Local Government Act 1995 for the purposes of:

- Ensuring the community is involved in the setting of a long-term vision;
- Providing Council with a clear understanding of the community's well-being priorities, aspirations, needs and wants; and
- Guiding the priority setting within the City's Corporate Business Plan.

The diagram below explains where this SCP fits into the Integrated Planning and Reporting Framework.

For more information on integrated planning and reporting in Western Australia go to www.dlgsc.wa.gov.au.

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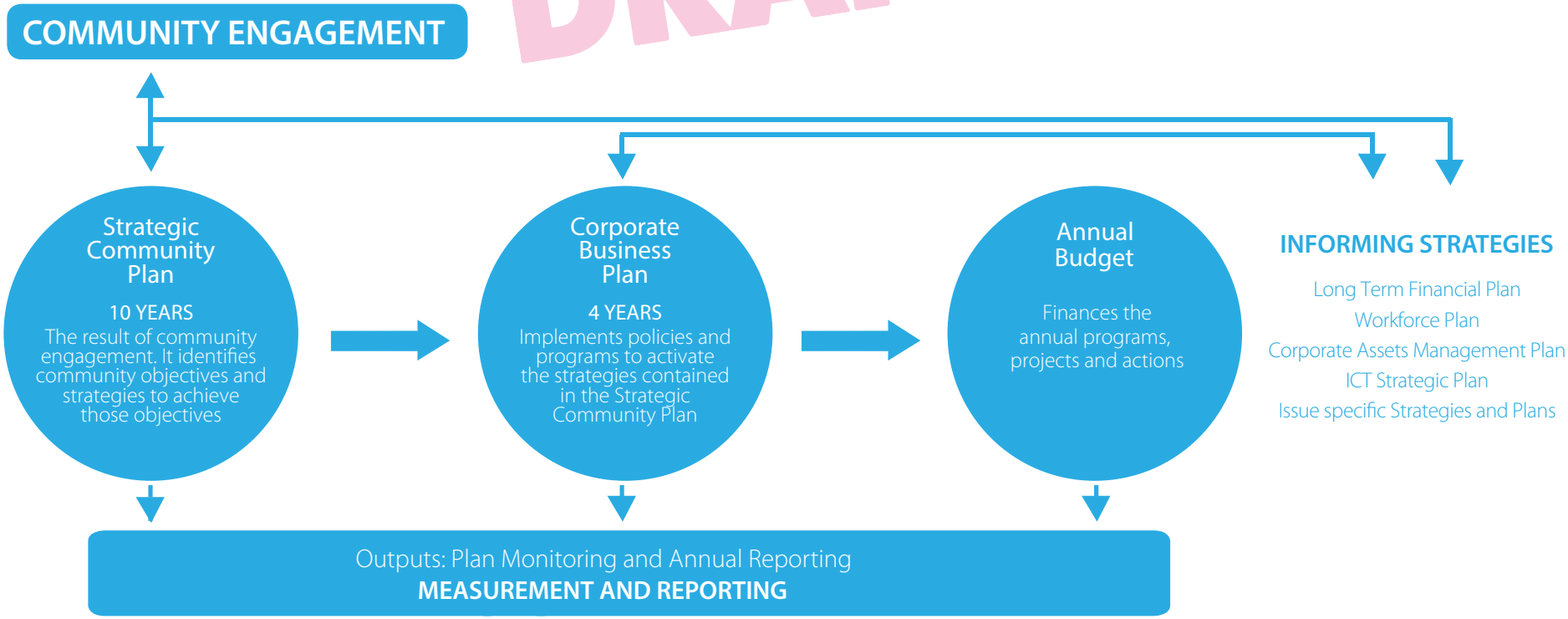

GREATER GERALDTON 2031 ON A PAGE

*See symbol explanations on page 7

Strategic Direction	Aspiration	Outcomes - What Will Happen	Supporting Strategies	City Role*
COMMUNITY	Our culture and heritage is recognised and celebrated. We are creative and resilient. We can all reach our full potential.	1.1 Enhanced lifestyle through spaces, places, programs and services that foster connection and inclusion 1.2 We are a community accountable for our actions 1.3 Pride in place and a sense of belonging is commonplace 1.4 Community safety, health and well-being is paramount 1.5 The opportunity for all to reach their potential exists 1.6 Community capacity, innovation and leadership is encouraged 1.7 Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-indigenous communities is supported 1.8 Active living and recreation is encouraged 1.9 A strong sports culture exists through well-planned facilities 1.10 A place where people have access to, engage in and celebrate arts, culture, education and heritage	Reconciliation Action Plan Disability Access and Inclusion Plan Public Arts Strategy 2020-2025 Heritage Strategy 2017-2022 Community Safety & Crime Prevention Plan Vibrancy Strategy	
ECONOMY	A healthy thriving and resilient economy that provides opportunities for all whilst protecting the environment and enhancing our social and cultural fabric.	2.1 Local business is empowered and supported 2.2 Efficient and accessible intrastate and interstate connectivity 2.3 The voice of the community is heard at regional, state and national forums 2.4 A desirable place to live, work, play, study, invest and visit 2.5 Our competitive advantages are built upon and our business success is celebrated 2.6 A diverse and globally recognised regional capital	Geraldton Jobs and Growth Plan 2019- 2023 City Centre Revitalisation Plan Tourism Destination Management Plan Geraldton Airport Master Plan Events Strategy 2020-2025 Annual Corporate Supply Procurement Plan RV and Caravan Parking Strategies	
ENVIRONMENT	Our natural environment has a voice at the table in all our decisions. We are a leader in environmental sustainability.	3.1 A City that is planned, managed and maintained to provide for environmental and community well being 3.2 Regional leader in adapting to climate change 3.3 A well-maintained, SMART, sustainable, liveable City valued by the community 3.4 A desirable and sustainable built and natural environment responsive to community aspirations 3.5 An integrated emergency and land management approach 3.6 The natural environment is valued, protected and celebrated 3.7 Moving towards a circular economy	Declaration of Climate Emergency Integrated Transport Strategy Strategic Waste Management & Recycling Action Plan Climate Change Adaptation Plan Public Open Space Strategy Residential Development Strategy Local Biodiversity Strategy Geraldton 2050 Cycling Strategy City Centre Transport Planning & Car Park Strategy Local Planning Strategy Coastal Hazard Risk Management & Adaptation Plan Groundwater Licence Operations Strategy	
LEADERSHIP	A strong local democracy with an engaged community, effective partnerships, visionary leadership and well informed decision-making.	4.1 Meaningful customer experiences created for the people we serve 4.2 Decision making is ethical, informed and inclusive 4.3 Accountable leadership supported by a skilled and professional workforce 4.4 Healthy financial sustainability that provides capacity to respond to changes in economic conditions and community priorities 4.5 A culture of safety, innovation and embracing change 4.6 A community that is genuinely engaged and informed in a timely and appropriate manner 4.7 Council understands its roles and responsibilities and leads by example 4.8 Deliver secured technology that supports sustainability, the environment, service delivery and the community 4.9 Collaboration and strategic alliances with Local Government partners delivers results for common aspirations	Corporate Business Plan Customer Service Plan Community Engagement Framework ICT Strategic Plan 2020-2024 Long Term Financial Management Plan Workforce Development Plan Risk Management Framework Business Continuity Management Plan Fraud & Corruption Control Plan Strategic Asset Management Plan Compliance Management Plan Safety Management Plan Strategic Internal Audit Plan Recordkeeping Plan Code of Conduct Local Government Act	

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Strategic areas

STRATEGY ONE Empowerment and Participation

The City understands the importance of young people participating in decision making processes. The City will support organisations to establish and run youth advisory groups and understands that this opportunity supports the development of future community leaders. As part of this the City will continue to support the delivery of youth leadership training and provide opportunities for young people to engage with the City. The City will continue to play a mentoring role with young people to develop their leadership skills within its two youth centres in Mullewa and Geraldton.

STRATEGY TWO Spaces and Places

A city vibrant with events and activities was a common theme throughout the engagement, and at a national level concern for the natural environment and conservation is important to young people. The City will commit to engaging with young people on environmental concerns and commit to a leadership role in environmental conservation projects. Whilst the City is not able to directly deliver commercial ventures such as some of those identified for potential delivery at the new youth centre, it has heard the voices of young people in the community. The youth centre in Geraldton demonstrates a commitment by the City to young people. It will provide a hub for young people to meet and participate in activities outside of school. The City will continue delivering youth events and youth celebrations during the year such as Revolve Skate, Battle of the Bands and A Day in the Lane Way. The City has a role to play in ensuring at-risk young people who are street present have places and programs to attend such as Late Night Basketball. The City acknowledges other organisations and service providers may be better placed to deliver programs in this space and will support them in doing so.

STRATEGY THREE Connection and Community

Healthy resilient young people are the hallmark of a diverse, thriving and inclusive community. The City is committed to delivering and supporting community and youth wellbeing programs that focus on social inclusion and participation such as Game On, Sunset Yoga and School Holiday programs. The City has a role to play in the sport and recreational space, providing sporting facilities and public swimming pools. The City also has a role to play in ensuring that young people from all walks of life have the opportunity to reach their full potential therefore cultural celebrations like NAIDOC week and multicultural festivals are supported, aiming to reduce discrimination while promoting harmony within the community.

STRATEGY FOUR Advocacy and Partnerships

The City can amplify its positive impact in the community by supporting stakeholders to improve outcomes for young people. This can be achieved through leadership, collaboration, planning, capacity building, advocacy and by engaging in partnerships with stakeholders. The City has a role to play advocating on behalf of young people and the services that deliver to young people within the community. There are numerous complex issues and challenges facing young people that sit outside the core function of a local government authority. The role of the City in these areas is to give voice to and advocate on behalf of young people. These issues may include employment, education, homelessness, health, transportation, and safety.

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STRATEGY ONE - EMPOWERMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Strategic Area	Objective	Actions
EMPOWERMENT & PARTICIPATION	Increase youth engagement and participation in decision-making processes and community affairs. Improved training opportunities in Greater Geraldton	• Encourage and support external organisations to establish programs providing opportunities for youth engagement. • Support youth leadership training programs. • Support, facilitate and deliver programs that promote youth leadership and community participation. • Operate youth centres in Geraldton and Mullewa • Engage with young people for development and planning of infrastructure, facilities, programs and opportunities for young people. • Contribute to the education and development of the community's future workforce by offering work placement opportunities across a variety of departments to students enrolled in vocation training. • Ensure compliance with current child safety standards are met for City facilities and programs.

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STRATEGY TWO - SPACES AND PLACES

Strategic Area	Objective	Actions
SPACES AND PLACES	Foster and support opportunities for youth participation in conserving our natural environment. Provide accessible places and spaces for young people to interact and belong. Create a safe and secure community.	• Support and promote environmental conservation projects and initiatives. • Capture youth voices in conservation and environmental programs • Provide youth specific places, resources and initiatives at City events and venues. • Support and initiatives that increase retention of young people in school. • Ensure opportunities for access to sport and recreation including aquatics, facilities, and programs for young people. • Support, facilitate and deliver youth events. • Support, facilitate and deliver diversionary programs for at-risk youth. • Support, facilitate and deliver youth crime prevention initiatives.

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STRATEGY THREE - CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY

Strategic Area	Objective	Actions
CONNECTION AND COMMUNITY	Promote physical and mental wellbeing among young people. Encourage social cohesion and promote youth participation in the community.	• Support, facilitate and deliver health and wellbeing programs. • Encourage and promote healthy lifestyle options. • Ensure opportunities for access to sport and recreation including aquatics, facilities, and programs for young people. • Support facilitate and deliver youth events. • Support facilitate and deliver inclusive, cultural and diversity celebrations. • Support facilitate and deliver intergenerational programs and events. • Support, facilitate and deliver youth development programs. • Celebrate young people's achievements in the community and key dates, such as Youth Week and NAIDOC Week.

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STRATEGY TWO - ADVOCACY AND PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic Area	Objective	Actions
ADVOCACY AND PARTNERSHIPS	Support stakeholders to improve outcomes for young people in Greater Geraldton. Engage in partnerships with key stakeholders to increase positive outcomes for young people.	• Advocate for training and future proofed local employment opportunities. • Advocate for improved employment outcomes for young people. • Advocate for improvements and expansion of courses provided by the Geraldton University Centre and Central Regional TAFE. • Advocate for Community Connectors Transportation program to continue supporting young people. • Advocate for improved educational outcomes in Mullewa. • Advocate for, and engage with, relevant stakeholders around key youth issues including homelessness, alcohol and drug misuse, family and domestic violence, incarceration and mental health. • Advocate for youth transportation network improvements.

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Youth Strategy Measure

The City will determine the success of the Youth Strategy through several measures which will be captured in an annual snapshot based on the following:

- an ongoing youth survey,
- successful grant funding applications,
- the quality of events and programs
- attendance numbers at the two youth centres.

Strategic linked documents

Greater Geraldton Strategic Community Plan 2031

YACWA Youth Sector Forum Summary Report 2021

Youth Surveys Report 2023

Midwest Youth Sector Forum Summary Report 2021

City of Greater Geraldton Council Policy 1.2 Youth

City of Greater Geraldton Council Policy 4.17 Child Safe Awareness

Beyond 2020 WA Youth Action Plan 2020-22

At Risk Youth Strategy 2022-27

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City of Greater Geraldton
a vibrant future

Administration Centre
63 Cathedral Avenue
Geraldton Western Australia 6530
Phone: 08 9956 6600

Mullewa Office
Corner of Thomas and Padbury Streets
Mullewa Western Australia 6630
Phone: 08 9956 6643

Email: council@cgg.wa.gov.au
www.cgg.wa.gov.au