

Whittlesea Youth Commitment (WYC)

Celebrating 20 years

The Whittlesea Youth Commitment celebrated 20 years on Wednesday 4th of December 2019 at Plenty Ranges Arts and Convention Centre.

Whittlesea Mayor Cr Emilia Lisa Sterjova acknowledged and commended the time and effort put by those involved, ensuring the success of the Whittlesea Youth Commitment.

Kim Stadtmiller, Executive Officer – Whittlesea, Hume Whittlesea Local Learning and Employment Network informed the audience that over the 20-year period the WYC had seen many changes, but the essence and purpose of the WYC remained unchanged- which was to see young people make a successful completion of year 12 and a seamless transition into post schooling endeavours.

Kim added that the WYC successfully supported a community initiative, instigated to address a need which identified that young people often required extra assistance to ensure their attention at school and engagement with the community. The fact that so many organisations came together to support schools and each other in a collaborative way speaks volumes about the wonderful intent of the WYC to make a difference in the lives of young people.

Kim also acknowledged some of the key people who gave over and above what was required of them to ensure the success of the initiative, including John Fry, founding member and key to the early development and continuation of the organisation. Kim also recognised the many partners and supporters who came onto the journey during those 20 years, some of whom have just started and who together continually look forward and reassess where WYC is and where it is heading.

The WYC is built on a spirit of co-operation agreement and that agreement is re-signed every three years to ensure that there is ongoing commitment from representatives of organisations to be part of WYC, to reignite and revitalize the intent of the organisation. To support the strategic work of the WYC is the 3-year action plan to make certain WYC stays on message and on target of where young people need to be. The WYC Action Plan 2020–2022 was launched on the day by Kerrie Heenan, WYC's Chair and ably assisted by Melbourne Playback theatre.

Kerrie Heenan spoke about the critical role Helen Mecozzi and Kim Stadtmiller played in executing the intent of the WYC. Both Helen and Kim were presented a beautiful bouquet of flowers in appreciation of their amazing work.

Melbourne Playback creatively contextualised the work of the WYC through expressive story-telling. Participants at the celebrations were astounded at the ease with which the actors from Melbourne Playback Theatre were able to conceive and accurately portray Cr Sterjova's story, and those of other members of the audience, in a moving and sensitive way. Equally as astonished they were with students from The Lakes South Morang College who, through their creative expression and dancing, courageously opened their hearts and minds to the pain experienced by those living with mental illness.

The celebrations concluded by cutting a celebratory cake as a symbol of sharing everyone's commitment of taking forward the intent of the WYC into the future.

If you would like to know more about the Whittlesea Youth Commitment please contact: Helen Mecozzi - helen.m@hwlllen.com.au, for the Hume Youth Commitment please contact Jenny Bazzano - jenny.b@hwlllen.com.au

