



Strategic Plan 2011 – 2014

This new strategic plan comes after 3 years of strong development of the Western Australian Association of Youth Workers. The period of the 2007-2010 Strategic Plan was designed by the committee to be one of 'creation' – developing the base of a coherent driven organisation. And largely this has been successful. This has included the development of the obvious basics: phone number, postal address, website, marketing material but it has also included deeper developments and making some of the hard and sometimes controversial decisions that define the association and to some extent the profession itself. Engaging individual members has been a priority during this time and communication with the sector through forums and agency presentations has also moved the association some way,

The previous three year period has also seen the beginnings of the association providing a service to the sector. The more formal developmental work just described has allowed WAAYW to have its first places at the table of decision making surrounding the profession. WAAYW has had a representative on the AYAC Policy advisory group for the past year, and has received calls from government departments on the development of the youth work roles and to further their understanding of the profession. Whilst these achievements are modest, some of the impact, such as input into the development of the 'Youth Worker' entry in the new Job Guide, may bear more fruit than we realise.

It has also seen the beginnings of the 'product' that WAAYW hopes to provide and be known for. Working in partnership, the creation of the 'Ethics Cards' resource and its presentation at the State Youth Affairs Conference, and the provision of the first Ethics training for WA were very successful and show that the sector still has a hunger to progress this professionalisation agenda.

For this development, all thanks must go to the previous committee, whose tireless work over the past years has converted the professionalisation talk into action. Special thanks goes to Brooke Chapman, our previous chairperson who continues her involvement in this movement.

And yet we continue with some challenges that this strategic plan seeks to address. We acknowledge that now the time of simple 'definition' and 'creation' are done and that the field will be impatient with us should this association not result in more action over the next three years. Much of this strategic plan surrounds three areas – resourcing, communication and the development of products and services. Fundamentally, this is about having the sector 'buy in' to professionalisation in a way that imbeds it into the sectors DNA and this is no small feat.

We hope that you will join us in the next steps to ensuring that the new vision for WAAYW is realised: that Professional Practice is a young person's right.

Jethro Sercombe
Chairperson

Our Purpose:

To promote, develop and regulate the profession of youth work to ensure better service to young people.

Our Vision:

Professional Practice: A young person's right

Our Values:

Aspirational – Ethical Practice, Reflection in Action

Strategic Objective 1

Resourcing

Background:

The ongoing resourcing of WAAYW remains a significant challenge. Currently the association runs solely on the work of its volunteer committee with some support from other volunteers in the sector. As WAAYW is not a public benevolent institution, it can not attract the same kind of funding that other youth sector organisations can. This will remain a challenge into the future and a concentration on efficiency and the use of online technologies hopes to mitigate some of this. Possibilities for outsourcing may also be relevant.

Key tasks:

- Utilise online technologies such as Paypal, Dropbox, Google Docs to provide online organisation systems to be used by those involved.
- Explore options for outsourcing of simple but time consuming administration tasks, either to paid staff or volunteers.
- Tightening internal processes including communication protocols and induction package.
- Utilise online technologies to mobilise interested volunteers.
- Continue collaboration with others in the sector, especially YACWA, including the development of formal MOA's where appropriate.

Strategic Objective 2

Communication for Field Engagement

Background:

There is an acknowledgement that WAAYW up until this point has approached the professionalisation of the youth work sector in a 'build it and they will come' kind of way. In some ways this has provided efficiency in that decisions could be made quickly and action progressed but the downside has been a lack of ownership from the sector. This ownership is necessary for WAAYW to seek legitimacy.

Key tasks:

- Develop a better understanding of the field as it exists through a formal research process – specifically work with others to enact a Youth Work 'Census'.
- Utilise social networking to communicate with the sector
- Explore options to engage youth work employers such as the development of an organisational quality mark.
- Re-examine membership categories, develop alternative membership pathways (eg individual recognition) and formalise membership renewal

Strategic Objective 3

Building Products and Services

Background:

The past 3 years has been characterised by 'creation' as a priority. The next 3 will need to see a development of the 'action' of a professional association. Whilst the 'buy in' of the sector will bear fruit in itself, the sector expects to receive some return for their investment in practical assistance in their day to day work.

Key tasks:

- Provide Ethics Training on a more regular basis, at least twice a year from 2012 onwards.
- Further develop and promote 'Ethics Cards' and their use.
- Create online products available to the whole sector – including a 'youth work blog' and information feed about matters relevant to professional practice.
- Create a guide to qualifications in youth work
- Provide opportunities for targeted networking that include presentations from guest speakers, eg meetings of youth work managers.