

# Gundagai Youth Plan 2010



## Map of Gundagai Shire



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## Abbreviations/ Acronyms

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| ABS   | Australian Bureau of Statistics                    |
| BEC   | Business Enterprise Centre                         |
| CBD   | Central Business District                          |
| DSRD  | Department of State & Regional Development         |
| EPA   | Environment Protection Authority                   |
| GHS   | Gundagai High School                               |
| GNC   | Gundagai Neighbourhood Centre                      |
| GP    | General Practitioner GSC<br>Gundagai Shire Council |
| GYC   | Gundagai Youth Council                             |
| GSAHS | Greater Southern Area Health Service               |
| IID   | Industry and Investment Department                 |
| TAFE  | Technical and Further Education                    |
| YB    | <i>Youthbeyondblue</i>                             |
| YDO   | Youth Development Officer                          |

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The Gundagai 2010 Youth Plan has been prepared Lisa Faulkner, Consultant.

## Executive Summary

The Gundagai Youth Forum and Survey Project is a joint initiative of the *Gundagai Youth Council* in partnership with *Youthbeyondblue*. *Gundagai Youth Council* wants to improve the health and wellbeing of local youth, and to identify needs so they can plan and put strategies in place to meet these needs. The aim of the project was to develop a Youth Plan to meet ongoing and future youth needs and improve the quality of life, and health and well being of young people in the Gundagai Shire.

The planning process was initiated by the Gundagai Youth Council which is comprised of youth members from across Gundagai Shire. The key principles that underpin the development of the project and plan reflect those set by *Youthbeyondblue* and the *Gundagai Youth Council*:

- Project planned by a group of young people;
- Project must engage young people;
- Project to focus on Depression, Anxiety, and the *Youthbeyondblue* key messages of Look, Listen, talk and Seek help Together!
- Provide safe and secure environments for young people;
- Project to improve the health and wellbeing of youth
- Project to identify the needs of local youth

The project involved consultation with young people of Gundagai Shire through a survey and youth forum. The youth forum was conducted in April 2010 where participants used a set of agreed criteria to prioritise the proposed actions in the Youth Plan. The actions outlined in this plan are grouped into *ten* key themes and priority issues with several actions for implementation.

Ten (10) key themes and priority issues identified are as follows:

- Youth Development Officer
- Youth Council
- Youth Space
- Education and Employment
- Business and Economy
- Health and Wellbeing
- Youth Activities and Events
- Sport and Recreation Facilities
- Transport
- Environment and Heritage

A major challenge for agencies and communities living in the Shire, as with other rural areas, is maintaining and improving the current level of services for young people during the next decade. Setting up a youth space and recreational activities and events continue to be significant community concerns.

Young people, as occurs in many rural communities, have limited access to community events and recreational services, often due to economic, geographical and transport disadvantage. Gundagai youth currently rely on parents or the taxi service. Providing a transport service would enable young people to access local events and activities and also increase participation and social connectedness between youth regionally.

A range of strategies has been highlighted to improve education and training opportunities in Gundagai Shire. Education and training are key components for the

future development of young people in Gundagai. They provide a sound basis for the economic improvement of young people and sustainability of businesses. They help build community capacity and encourage the concept of 'life long learning'.

Young people view the distinctive country lifestyle as attractive. Strategies have been developed with the objective of beautifying the town and businesses, and enhancing the natural environment, would attract tourists, new business and residents to the shire. This type of development has potential employment and economic benefits for the entire community.

Finally, more attention needs to be given to activities that promote good health and wellbeing and reduce problematic alcohol and substance abuse, that impact on the physical and mental health of young people in the Gundagai community.

Participants universally agreed that success will come from all of the community being involved in bringing the Gundagai Youth Plan to reality and that the community needs to work together for the benefit of all.

## **Introduction**

The Gundagai Youth Plan is the product of contributions, and input from a significant proportion of the Shire's youth who participated in the Youth Survey and Youth Forum. This is the first Youth Plan for the Gundagai Local Government Area and is a tool that can be used by Gundagai Youth Council, Gundagai Shire Council, community groups, government and non government agencies, and residents to respond to issues that have been identified.

The plan provides a detailed picture of the local community, and key themes and priority issues have been identified, particularly those affecting young people. Gundagai Shire Council does not have the resources needed to respond to all of the issues identified in the plan. However Council does have an important role in facilitating, lobbying, and coordinating local actions, and driving community building initiatives in partnership with other levels of government. The plan highlights the importance of a whole of community approach to improving the health and well being of young people living in Gundagai Shire.

## **Barriers to Implementation**

There are several reasons why recommendations may not be implemented and in order to remove these barriers they need to be recognised and strategies put in place to minimize them.

There are limited Council funds and competing priorities to upgrade and construct amenities, recreation facilities and employ additional staff. Local agencies are also constrained by a lack of funding, staff time and resources to maintain existing services and need to ensure any new services developed are sustainable.

The lack of integrated planning at a local and regional level is another significant barrier to effective planning. Planning is a shared responsibility and purposeful partnerships are the way forward. Leadership is needed from Council and from other organisations, groups and individuals within Gundagai to achieve social outcomes.

The lack of coordination and collaboration between agencies servicing particular demographic sectors, could hinder the successful implementation of recommendations. While Gundagai Shire has a Youth Council to oversee the planning, coordination and development of youth service and activities, the Youth Council requires a commitment and collaboration from all relevant agencies across the Shire and region to implement recommendations.

# Section 1 - Background and Methodology

## 1.1 Project Origins and Aims

This project was initially identified by the newly formed Gundagai Youth Council in 2009. The Gundagai Youth Council (GYC) and Gundagai Neighbourhood Centre (GNC) actively sought funding to conduct the project. Grant funding was successful in 2010 through a grant from *Youthbeyondblue*.

The aims of the project are to:

- Improve the health and wellbeing of youth
- Identify the specific needs of youth living in Gundagai Shire.
- Identify appropriate strategies to respond to these needs.
- Inform and develop a whole of community approach to responding to youth issues.
- Provide support for advocating for additional resources.

## 1.2 Context /Background

This section of the report establishes the context of Youth issues and needs for Gundagai Shire.

In 1998 the Gundagai Neighbourhood Centre made a successful grant application and received \$45,000 non-recurrent funding from the *Casino Community Benefit Fund* (CCBF) to conduct the *Gundagai Youth and Family Support Project* for a period of two years. The Project funded a part-time Youth Officer and a part-time Counsellor, as well as establishing a youth centre in Gundagai. Youth Week activities were conducted for the first time (April 2000) in Gundagai as part of the Youth Project. It was also in 2000 a youth forum was held. No further youth consultation has been conducted since 2000.

The Youth Centre and associated activities generated some income, however not enough to sustain the Project. The Youth Project was unsuccessful in attracting any further one-off or recurrent funding. The Youth Centre continued to open for a further twelve months with the assistance of volunteers and generosity of a local business, Barton Brothers, who provided the venue free of charge. Youth Week and a few low budget youth activities continue to be conducted in Gundagai Shire with the assistance of Youth Week grants and community fundraising.

In December 2005 a focus group made up of representatives from Tumut Interagency, Gundagai Neighbourhood Centre and Tumbarumba Shire Council began meeting to discuss the need for a Youth Development Officer (YDO). The agencies recognized the difficulty in obtaining adequate funding to employ a full-time worker in each shire or attracting and retaining a qualified part-time worker in each individual shire. The agencies from each town considered and proposed a shared position would be of benefit to the Councils of Gundagai, Tumbarumba and Tumut, on a similar basis to the Road Safety Officer position.

On behalf of the focus group, and with the support of all three Councils, the Tumut and District Women's Support and Housing Centre made a funding submission under the *Local Answers Stronger Families and Communities Strategy* for a Youth Development Officer and Project in December 2006 (Round 4) and again in May 2007 (Round 5). Both funding submissions were unsuccessful. There were almost four hundred applications for funding and FACSIA Advised "the funding round was very competitive and not all project that met the selection criteria could be funded."

In March 2010 Tumut Shire Council received grant funding under the *National Binge Drinking Strategy Community Level Initiative* to employ a Youth Development Officer for Tumut Shire. Tumut Shire's success has highlighted the need for a similar position and youth services in Gundagai Shire.

Gundagai Youth Council was established in May 2009 as an advisory committee to Gundagai Shire Council. The Youth Council recognized the need for consultation and to take a strategic approach to addressing youth issues and needs. With the assistance of the Gundagai Neighbourhood Centre, Gundagai Youth Council successfully applied for funding to conduct a Youth Forum and Survey.

### **1.3 Methodology**

This plan was guided by representatives from:

- Gundagai Youth Council
- Gundagai Neighbourhood Centre
- Gundagai Shire Council

How the plan was developed.

- The compilation of a youth profile to provide an overview of the socio demographic characteristics of the Shire specific to the youth demographic of 12 to 25 years age.
- Development of consultation format and approach in agreement with the Youth Council that would meet the *Youthbeyondblue* funding agreement criteria, including methods of consultation, survey content, and time frame of consultation
- Consultation including surveys and youth forum were conducted in April 2010. Prioritisation of proposed actions by the Youth Forum participants using a set of agreed criteria.
- Identification of themes and actions raised in the survey and forum.
- Youth Plan development
- Further consultation with Youth Council and changes to the draft plan.

#### **Youth Forum**

A youth forum was conducted on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2010. The forum was attended by a small group of school aged young people. The forum was promoted via the Gundagai High School newsletter and student assembly, Gundagai Independent, Mirrabooka News, Gundagai Shire Council website, community radio, posters and information flyers, and *Facebook* discussions.

The forum was used to:

1. Obtain more detail about youth issues and needs
2. Gauge awareness of mental health issues, services and resource, and
3. Gain input into future youth planning strategies and prioritisation.

## **Youth Survey**

The aim was to distribute a significant volume of surveys through business, community and school networks throughout the Gundagai LGA. Over 300 hardcopy surveys were distributed at business and community outlets, Gundagai High School, and students traveling to high school and TAFE in Tumut and Wagga Wagga. An on-line survey was also made available for download from the Gundagai Shire Council website.

The survey was promoted via the Gundagai High School newsletter, Gundagai Independent, Mirrabooka News, Gundagai Shire Council website, community radio, posters and information flyers, and *Facebook* discussions.

Gundagai LGA has a youth population of 572 persons (ABS, 2006), of which 202 (35.3%) young people completed the survey. This allows for a reasonable level of confidence in the accuracy of results.

Data was coded, entered and analysed using statistical techniques. Results are presented in this report with graphs and commentary (section 3.5). A copy of the questionnaire is included in Appendix 1.

## **Development of a Plan**

At the youth forum participants used a set of agreed criteria to prioritise the proposed actions in the Youth Plan.

The draft actions will be further developed and prioritised by the Gundagai Youth Council in consultation with youth, Council and other organisations in the community. The support and involvement of Gundagai Shire Council as well as community organisations and groups is needed to achieve the objectives of the plan and ensure implementation of recommendations.

The final Gundagai Youth Plan will set out a series of actions to guide activities by Gundagai Youth Council, business, community organisations, and all levels of government.

## Section 2 - Youth Demographic Profile

This section of the plan provides general information on the demographic characteristics of Gundagai Shire's youth population including population trends, education, employment, income, and relationships. Comparisons have been made between Gundagai Shire and NSW or Australia as a whole where appropriate. Unless otherwise stated, data specific to the Gundagai LGA area is from the 2006 census.

All census percentages are calculated based on the total youth population (based on census usual residence counts), excluding overseas visitors. Census tables occasionally have different total population figures, even when measuring the same population groups. The occasional difference in totals is due to a combination of random adjustments, processing or respondent errors.

### Population by age and gender

The term *young people* refers to individuals aged from 12 to 24 years, however the *Youthbeyondblue* funding criteria required young people aged 12 to 25 years be engaged. For this reason, census population data has been collated for young people aged 12 to 25 years.

At the time of the 2006 Census, there were 572 young people aged 12 to 25 years living in Gundagai Shire, representing 15.5% of the total Shire population. In the 2006, Census 1.8% of the Gundagai Shire population were Indigenous persons, compared with 2.3% Indigenous persons in Australia.

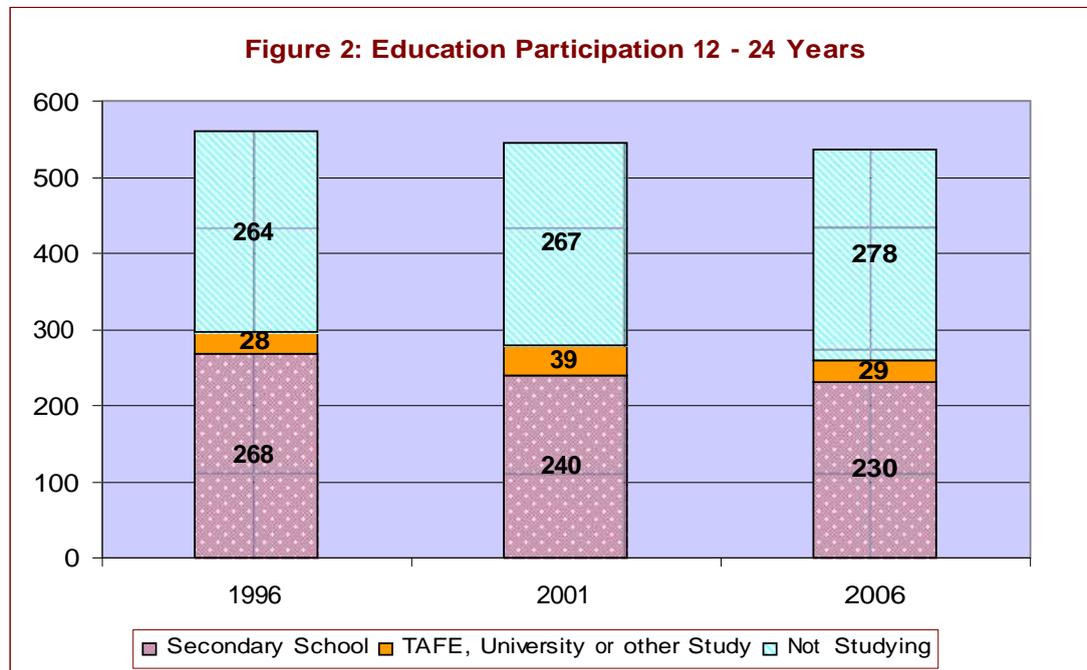
Over the 10 year period from 1996 to 2006, there has been a slight decrease in the number of young people aged 12-25 years living in the Shire. The estimated youth population of the Shire in 2006 was 572 compared with 587 in 2001, and 600 in 1996 (Figure 1). While the female population remained relatively steady, there was a significant decline (36.1 percent) in the male population aged 20 to 25 years, from 119 (2001) to 76 (2006) males. This decline may be attributed to a lack of education, training and employment opportunities.



Source: ABS 2006 Census of Time Series Profile

## Youth Education

As the youth population has decreased over the 10 year period between 1996 and 2006, so too has the number of young people attending secondary school decreased by approximately 4 percent (Figure 2). There has been a 4% increase however in the number of young people not studying.



Source: ABS 2006 Census - Time Series Profile

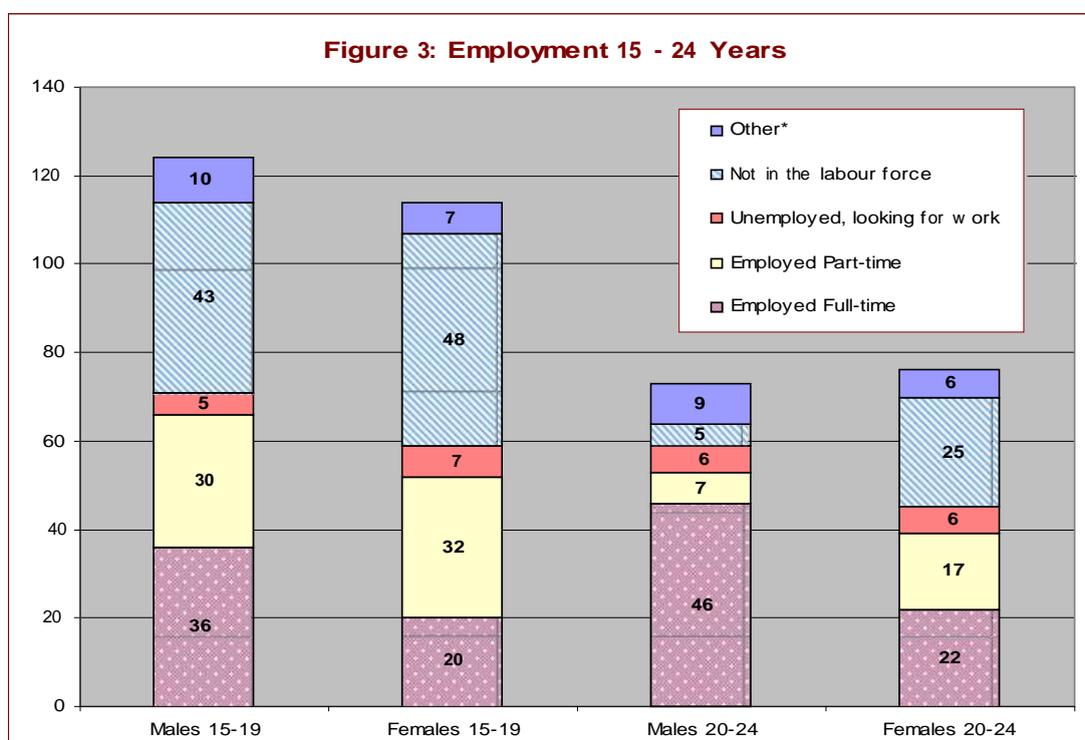
The census would indicate more young people between 15 and 24 years are completing non-school tertiary qualifications (Table 1). In the 10 year period between 1996(14.6%) and 2006 (21.7%) there has been a 7% increase in the number of young people who have completed non-school tertiary qualifications. In particular, males completing qualifications increased from 12.3% in 1996 to 22.3% in 2006.

|  | Male          |               |               | Female        |               |               |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
|  | 1996<br>15-24 | 2001<br>15-24 | 2006<br>15-24 | 1996<br>15-24 | 2001<br>15-24 | 2006<br>15-24 |
| Postgraduate Degree                          | 0             | 0             | 0             | 0             | 0             | 0             |
| Graduate Diploma and<br>Graduate Certificate | 3             | 0             | 0             | 0             | 0             | 0             |
| Bachelor Degree                              | 0             | 3             | 3             | 0             | 3             | 6             |
| Advanced Diploma and<br>Diploma              | 0             | 3             | 3             | 11            | 8             | 4             |
| Certificate:                                 | 0             | 0             | 0             | 0             | 0             | 0             |
| Certificate III & IV                         | 24            | 30            | 32            | 8             | 14            | 20            |
| Certificate I & II                           | 0             | 3             | 3             | 7             | 6             | 9             |
| Total  | 24            | 33            | 38            | 15            | 20            | 29            |
| Level of education<br>inadequately described | 0             | 0             | 0             | 0             | 3             | 0             |
| Level of education not stated                | 13            | 22            | 21            | 22            | 14            | 20            |
| Total  | 40            | 61            | 65            | 48            | 48            | 59            |

Source: ABS 2006 Census - Time Series Profile

## Youth Employment

At the 2006 Census, a total of 216 young people aged 12-24 years were employed on a full or part-time basis. As highlighted in *Figure 3* significantly more young women (53.8%) were employed in part-time jobs than young men (31.1%).



Other\* includes: Labour force status not stated, Employed away from work, employed hours not stated

Source: ABS 2006 Census of Population & Housing

|   | Males     |           | Females   |           | TOTAL      |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
|   | 15-19     | 20-24     | 15-19     | 20-24     |            |
| Agriculture, forestry & fishing               | 12        | 20        | 0         | 0         | 32         |
| Mining  | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Manufacturing                                 | 8         | 11        | 3         | 3         | 25         |
| Electricity, gas, water & waste services      | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Construction                                  | 10        | 6         | 0         | 0         | 16         |
| Wholesale trade                               | 3         | 5         | 0         | 4         | 12         |
| Retail trade                                  | 10        | 7         | 16        | 5         | 38         |
| Accommodation & food services                 | 25        | 0         | 26        | 14        | 65         |
| Transport, postal & warehousing               | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Information media & telecommunications        | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Financial & insurance services                | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Rental, hiring & real estate services         | 0         | 0         | 3         | 0         | 3          |
| Professional, scientific & technical services | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Administrative & support services             | 0         | 0         | 3         | 0         | 3          |
| Public administration & safety                | 3         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 3          |
| Education & training                          | 0         | 0         | 3         | 5         | 8          |
| Health care & social assistance               | 0         | 3         | 4         | 10        | 17         |
| Arts & recreation services                    | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Other services                                | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| Inadequately described/Not stated             | 3         | 4         | 7         | 0         | 14         |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                  | <b>74</b> | <b>56</b> | <b>65</b> | <b>41</b> | <b>236</b> |

Source: ABS 2006 Census of Population & Housing

Young people have limited employment opportunities in Gundagai Shire. As shown in Table 2, the 3 major industries employing young people are accommodation and food services, the retail trade and agriculture, forestry and fishing. Young women are underrepresented in a range of industries including agriculture, forestry and fishing, manufacturing and construction. This group is overrepresented in the retail and accommodation and food services, and health care and social assistance industries which employ 70.8% of young women. 51.5% of young men are employed in the Manufacturing, construction and agriculture, forestry and fishing industries.

### Youth Unemployment

Over the 10 year period from 1996 to 2006, there has been a slight downward trend in the rate unemployment of 15-24 year olds and unemployment has remained relatively steady in the five year period from 2001 to 2006 (Table 3). However, unemployment continues to affect significant numbers of young people in the Shire with a total of 9.6% of the labour force aged 15 – 24 being unemployed, compared to 5.1% unemployment rate for Gundagai Shire and 5.2% unemployment rate for the entire Australian population.

| <b>Males</b>            | <b>1996</b> | <b>2001</b> | <b>2006</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 15-19 years             | 6.9%        | 2.8%        | 2%          |
| 20-24 years             | 6.9%        | 3.2%        | 2.4%        |
| <b>Females</b>          |             |             |             |
| 15-19 years             | 4.6%        | 1.1%        | 2.8%        |
| 20-24 years             | 3.2%        | 2.1%        | 2.4%        |
| <b>Total Persons</b>    |             |             |             |
| 15-19 years             | 11.5%       | 3.9%        | 4.8%        |
| 20-24 years             | 10%         | 5.3%        | 4.8%        |
| <b>Total Unemployed</b> | <b>22%</b>  | <b>9.2%</b> | <b>9.6%</b> |

Source: ABS 2006 Census - Time Series Profile

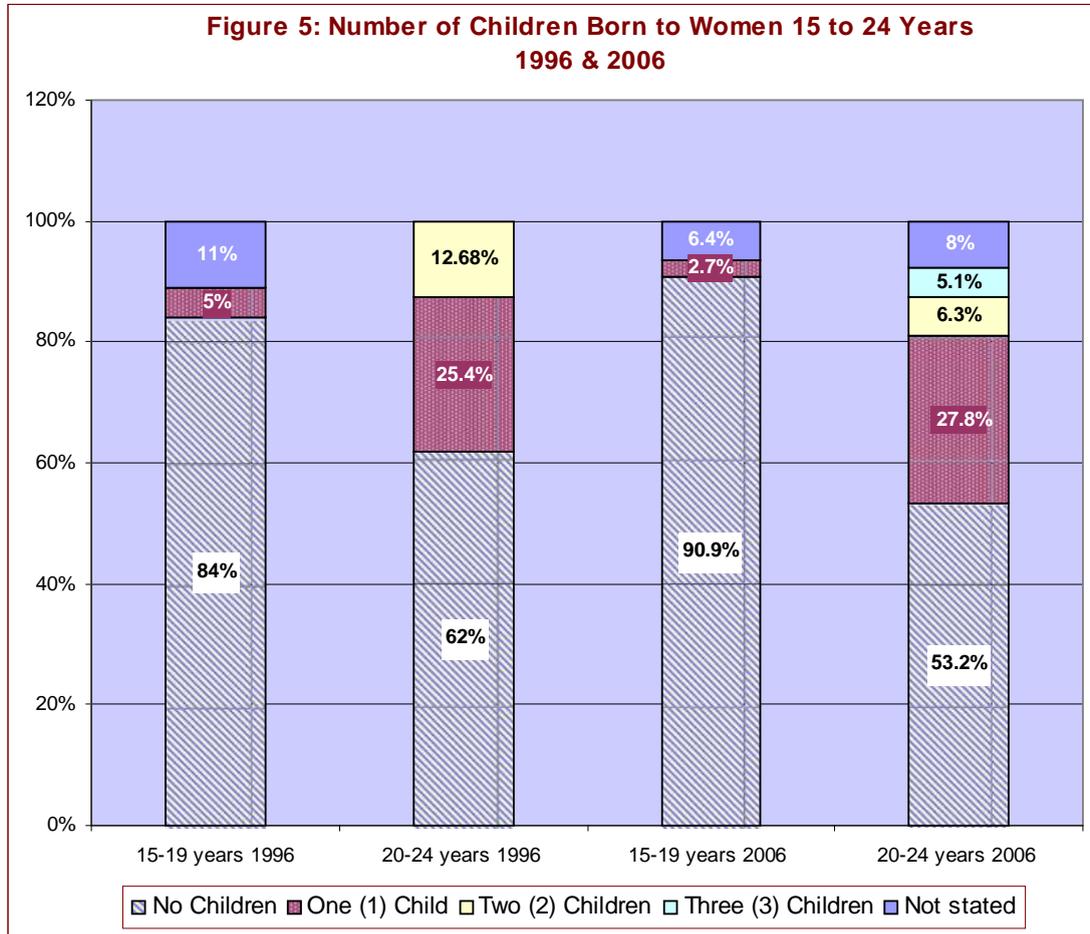
### Relationships and Family

Over the 10 year period from 1996 to 2006, the social marital status of young people in the Gundagai Shire has remained relatively constant, with the exception of female marriages declining from 8.5% (1996) to 3% (2006). The decline in females marrying at the age of 20 to 24 years may be explained by a 7.4% increase in defacto relationships and may also be indicative of women marrying later in life.

|                  | <b>1996</b>    |                |                  | <b>2001</b>    |                |                  | <b>2006</b>    |                |                  |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
|                  | <b>Married</b> | <b>DeFacto</b> | <b>Unmarried</b> | <b>Married</b> | <b>DeFacto</b> | <b>Unmarried</b> | <b>Married</b> | <b>DeFacto</b> | <b>Unmarried</b> |
| <b>Males</b>     |                |                |                  |                |                |                  |                |                |                  |
| 15-19 years      | 0%             | 0%             | 55.4%            | 0%             | 1.5%           | 55.2%            | 0%             | 0%             | 66.1%            |
| 20-24 years      | 2.2%           | 7.5%           | 34.9%            | 1.5%           | 10.0%          | 31.8%            | 2.8%           | 7.3%           | 23.7%            |
| Total of Males   | 2.2%           | 7.5%           | 90.3%            | 1.5%           | 11.4%          | 87.1%            | 2.8%           | 7.3%           | 89.8%            |
| <b>Females</b>   |                |                |                  |                |                |                  |                |                |                  |
| 15-19 years      | 0%             | 2.4%           | 56.7%            | 0%             | 5.6%           | 48.8%            | 0%             | 3.0%           | 59.2%            |
| 20-24 years      | 8.5%           | 7.3%           | 25.0%            | 9.4%           | 11.3%          | 25.0%            | 3.0%           | 14.2%          | 20.7%            |
| Total of Females | 8.5%           | 9.8%           | 81.7%            | 9.4%           | 16.9%          | 74%              | 3.0%           | 17.2%          | 79.9%            |

Source: ABS 2006 Census - Time Series Profile

Young women are having children at a later age. The number of young women aged 15 to 19 years that have one or more children has declined by six percent (6%) over the 10 year period from 1996 to 2006. In contrast, nine percent (9%) more young women aged 20 to 24 years have one or more children in 2006 than in 1996.



Source: ABS 2006 Census - Time Series Profile

## Section 3 – Consultation

### 3.1 Forum Process

Predominantly young people participated in the youth forum, however the forum was open to the broader community and a number of adults (both family members of the young people and interested members of the community) participated in the two hour session.

The following steps were followed:

1. Participants involved in identifying the assets of their community and what they appreciated about living in the shire. The objective of this activity was to identify community assets that can be harnessed and strengthened and that may provide opportunities for young people and their community
2. Participants imagined a preferred future for their community in 2020. They provided a practical set of aspirations for the future of their community.
3. For a range of youth issues and ideas, participants discussed opportunities, challenges and solutions. These were then translated into an action plan.
4. General discussion to identify any other issues relevant to young people
5. Discussion to determine criteria for prioritising actions in plan
6. Draft Action plan developed - to achieve the preferred future

### 3.2 Forum - Key Themes & Priority Issues

#### ASSETS of GUNDAGAI SHIRE

Forum participants were asked what they like most about living in Gundagai Shire. The discussion has been detailed under following key themes:

#### People and Community

Young people identified the people as one of the main assets of their community, particularly friends and family. They liked the small close knit community of friendly people, with a strong community spirit where everyone knows, helps and cares for each other and that “people acknowledge one another in the street”. They liked that the “place is small enough you feel like you can make a difference” and “being able to have a say”. They believe people are generally well behaved and felt safe living in this community.

#### Lifestyle

Young people like their quiet peaceful town, and its laid back and relaxed country lifestyle. They appreciate the convenience of a small town that doesn't have traffic or crowded streets, and is easy to walk to most places. Despite the small size of the town people have access to amenities (shops, library, schools, hospital, sport and recreation facilities) and it “doesn't take all day to shop or find a parking space”. Gundagai is also located not too far from major centres.

### **Sport and Recreation**

Young people recognized and appreciated that their Shire has lots of sporting organisations, infrastructure and facilities such as swimming pool, tennis and squash courts, golf course, and lush green ovals for a variety of sporting activities. Young people have the opportunity to participate in a variety of outdoors activities ranging from Gundagai Pony Club, football,

### **Environment & Heritage**

Young people are proud of being associated with a well known town and its heritage. They feel the town's history is their history. They felt they were lucky to live close to the river and enjoy beautiful scenery and landscape. They appreciate having lots of green parkland and open space.

### **Culture & Activities**

Young people appreciate the numerous cultural and community events (eg Plaza Night), particularly those targeting young people such as Youth Week, and Australia Day at the Pool. They felt their events are strongly supported by the community.

### **Youth opportunities**

Young people felt that there are a lot of employment opportunities for school aged youth, particularly with fast food and retails outlets.

### **PREFERRED FUTURE GUNDAGAI SHIRE IN 2020**

Participants imagined a preferred future for their community in 2020. They considered the various ideas and any opportunities or challenges to achieving their objectives. These were then translated into an action plan (page 35).

### **Youth Development Officer**

Some people wanted to see funding obtained for a Youth Development Officer position that has been recommended for several years. The YDO would be employed to set up a youth centre, prepare funding submissions, develop partnerships, organise youth events and projects

### **Youth Council**

Young people felt that as Youth Council is already established it is the appropriate group for organising youth activities, events, bands etc. They agreed youth council needs to be more active in promoting youth activities, and ensuring the activities are affordable so that more young people will attend and make the events viable.

Youth Council plays an important leadership role in the community. It was noted however that Youth Council has a significant turnover in members and experienced difficulty in attracting new members. A number of explanations were discussed, including; part-time work and study commitments; geographical and transport disadvantage making it difficult for young people living outside of the township to attend; and that young people grow older, leave school, find employment and/or move away from the shire. Young people agreed they would have to find a way of attracting members and discussed the option of changing or alternating meeting dates to enable more young people to participate.

Young people recognized the need for Community support. They want Council and adult assistance, with dedicated people to get projects coordinated. They felt to achieve this they need to overcome the obstacle of a "complacent council" and deal with any negative feedback within the community.

## **Youth Space**

Young people and other community members stated the need for a youth space, specifically an “underage venue for performances and youth to hang out”. Young people described the facility as a *Youth café* or *Youth Centre* with a mix of social, entertainment, learning, and technological activities. Young people proposed the use of a vacant appropriate building or space. They suggested it might be supervised by the YDO. They also saw it as a place where they could access the YDO to source information and referral.

## **Education and Employment**

Young people sought more employment options for youth and the broader community. Often mostly low skill jobs were available locally, such as fast food outlets and retail for young people. They recognize that people who are able to attend higher education have greater employment opportunities but then often did not return to the region. They sought greater employment opportunities for skilled workers.

Young people felt they were disadvantaged by limited training opportunities in the Shire and that they need to travel to other centres (eg Wagga or Tumut) to attend TAFE. The disadvantage is compounded for young people who don't have a licence or other means of transport to attend, especially when the times of the available bus service do not suit many of the trades courses at TAFE.

Young people do see the potential use of information technology in learning to allow them to better access tertiary education locally.

## **Business and Economy**

Young people felt the population is too low and the town was not big enough, and that if the town were bigger it could support more business and provide more varied employment opportunities for young people. They felt Gundagai needs a strong and vital economy to provide opportunities for young people and provide an attractive lifestyle to retain young people in the community. They felt improving the appearance of the business and town and reducing the number of vacant properties would make the town more attractive to new business. They also suggested establishing Gundagai as a convention centre would generate income and attract business.

## Tourism

Young people felt there was great potential for business income to be generated from tourism and that Gundagai is in the perfect position for tourists to come off the highway. They felt a well located “Premier Playground” would attract tourists, particularly families, into the town. Young people felt the need for a *Cold Rock* franchise as it attracts tourists and creates jobs.

## Shopping

Young people sought greater variety of shopping and more goods that suited young people being available in shops. They wanted to see vacant shops filled and produce available locally and the main street upgraded and better parking, and perhaps a shopping mall. Young people are also conscious that more shops and businesses would mean more employment opportunities for young people.

Businesses suggested included:

- Spotlight
- Bunnings
- Restaurants
- DIY Food Bar
- Cold Rock
- Woolworths/ Coles
- Diva
- Jay Jays
- Supre
- ICE
- Skate Shop
- EB Games/ gaming store

## **Health and Wellbeing**

Young people want to be fit and healthy. They felt that their recreational activities have a significant impact on their health and wellbeing. This was most apparent during the discussion around the need for a skate park. They felt a skate park would provide opportunities for sport, social interaction.

Young people felt a “youth space with music, internet, couches, food vending machine, TV, pool table, air hockey, Playstation, near the main street and close to other centres” would provide a safe (underage) environment for young people to participate in activities and interact socially.

Young people were very community conscious and concerned about the needs of the broader community as well as their own social needs, citing community awareness and generosity as important to the well being of their community. They felt there is a need for more mental health workers, specialist doctors, a retirement village, and an extension to the pre-school.

Young people and community member felt the Kid’s Helpline should be promoted more and there should be greater access to Headspace.

## **Youth Activities and Events**

Young people raised the need for a wider range of attractive recreational events and activities that are affordable and accessible. Young people stated there is a strong community focus on sport in Gundagai and there needs to be activities for non-sporting people. They particularly wanted a variety of activities for youth available on holidays and weekends.

Suggested activities include:

- Discos
- Gymnastics
- Art school
- School holiday activities and workshops every week
- Live bands/ music
- Music groups/jam session
- Training on community radio
- Drama school
- Movies

Young people identified a number of obstacles and opportunities.

They felt that it is difficult to lure professional bands to a small town to entertain a relatively small underage group of young people. They recognised that bands and events can be expensive to run and the need to heavily promote events to make them worthwhile. They discussed the potential to source live bands funding and the need to also plan events that don’t require money.

They recognized the difficulty in finding supervision / parent support for discos and bands and other activities, and also expressed a desire for the community to “trust in teens to be responsible”.

The race course was identified as a potential venue for loud bands as it is away from CBD but close enough for young people to access.

They felt cost of drama teachers and tutors to run holiday activities may be prohibitive, however they felt they may be able to source funding to assist them. It was suggested that Scouts, Cubs Guides, and Brownies are linked nationwide and a potential resource particularly for holiday and weekend activities

Participants felt there has been an interest shown by youth to host a spot on FM96.3 community radio. They felt a youth radio spot would assist them to communicate upcoming youth events and activities also make training available for potential DJs.

### **Sport and Recreational Facilities**

Young people sought improved and new sport and recreation facilities. Football was identified as bigger than other sport. There was specific discussion about the need for a skate park, recreational centre/gym and community ownership of the “Old Picture Theatre”.

#### Skate Park

Participants were unanimous in wanting a skate park in Gundagai. Young people felt the skate park needs to be near toilets and sports grounds, and somewhere between north and south Gundagai. Participants felt a skate park would be beneficial to the young people in their community as a place to meet friends, to exercise and maintain health and that other communities have recognized skate parks as good for body mind and social connectedness. They felt there is potential for running skate contests which attract people from other towns, which can generate income for business. Young people felt obtaining funding and council permission their greatest challenge.

#### Recreation Centre

Young people and community members stated the town needs a well equipped recreation/gym/ fitness centre that caters for indoor sports. Participants recognised the cost of building and maintaining a recreation centre and the challenge finding funding. They felt community and sporting groups should cooperate to attract funding. They also suggested the centre should provide for a variety of sports particularly those that can be played all year round, to make it viable.

#### Theatre

Participants felt that as the Old Picture Theatre is on the market for sale, the community should be finding funding to buy old theatre so it is community owned. They felt there needs to be a dedicated committee to run the theatre. Young people felt the theatre would be useful for community events and various youth activities, suggesting they would run movies upstairs and perhaps bowling downstairs.

Other facilities suggested were:

- Public Netball/ Basketball Courts
- Normal non-lap pool
- Safe swimming place in river
- Water slide
- Under 18s dance club
- Bowling alley
- Arcade
- Go karts
- Paint ball
- Water recreational centre

### **Transport**

Participant recognised transport issues are critical for young people, their families and employers, and the future development of Gundagai.

#### Driving School

Young people and community members expressed concerns regarding the recent changes to legislation for Learner Drivers, which now requires Learners to undertake 150 hours of lessons to be eligible for their provisional licence. This places additional pressure on family resources (both time and finances) to assist young people to complete these requirements. For many young people their ability to access education, training (often in regional centres) and employment is dependent on their transport options. Many parents are time limited with their own work, young people

want an alternative way to learn to enable them to get their licence quicker. Young people suggested the need for a qualified instructor and driving school in Gundagai to assist them in obtaining their licence.

### Youth Transport Service

Young people, as occurs in many rural communities, have limited access to community events and recreational services, often due to economic, geographical and transport disadvantage. Gundagai youth rely on parents or the taxi service.

Providing a transport service would enable young people to access local events and activities and also increase participation and social connectedness between youth regionally.

Young people felt there is a need for an innovative public/community transport service using existing buses assets. They also suggested sourcing funding to help discount taxi fares for youth. The provision of transport needs to be accompanied by extensive publicity of the available service and engagement of youth in decision-making.

### **Environment and Heritage**

Young people and other community members felt fortunate that Gundagai has a “beautiful river and creek areas right in the middle of town”. They want the creek and river areas to be appropriately developed and more accessible for locals and tourist. It was recognized that development would need to be appropriate to preserve and manage the natural resource. It was felt that further development would not be too difficult to achieve as there are community groups already actively working to improve Morley’s Creek, and some of the following activities might be the next stage.

Suggestions put forward include:

- Need for safe swimming areas in river, made accessible and sign posted.
- River walk/Creek walk
- Morley’s Creek premier playground opportunity in centre of town for locals and tourists
- Use river for water activities
- Morley’s creek – water park recreation - Family friendly fishing, paddle boats, children’s water play, canoes, mini golf, bike hire
- Old Gundagai walks set out with trees and interpretive signage (mock town)

### 3.3 Youth Survey

The purpose of the *Youth Survey* was to identify perceptions of young people about youth specific issues and needs in their local community. This section of the report details the key findings of this study.

#### Sample

Gundagai Shire has a population of 572 young persons (ABS, 2006), of which 202 (35.3%) young people completed the survey. This allows for a reasonable level of confidence in the accuracy of results. Overall, the sample was broadly representative of youth aged 12 – 19 years in Gundagai LGA. There was very little response from youth aged 20 to 25 years. This may have been due to the method in which the survey was promoted and distributed, or due to lack of interest by youth in that age group. Subsequently, responses are expected to portray a reasonably accurate account of youth perceptions of youth aged 12 to 19 years but not necessarily of youth 20 to 25 years.

**Table 5: Age**

| Age band | Sample Number | Percent of Sample | Percent of Population (12-25 years) |
|----------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 12-14    | 111           | 55%               | 27.1%                               |
| 15-19    | 89            | 44%               | 41.6%                               |
| 20-25    | 2             | 1%                | 31.3%                               |
| Total    | 202           | 100%              | 100%                                |

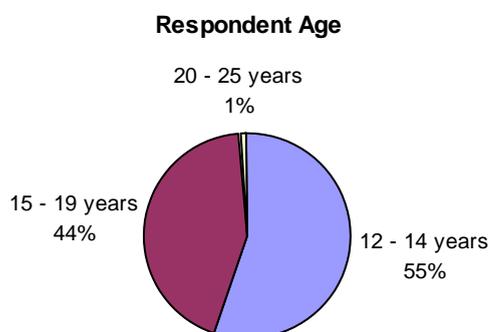
Table 6: Gender

| Gender  | Sample Number | Percent of Sample | Percent of Population (12-25 years) |
|---------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Males   | 109           | 54.95%            | 51%                                 |
| Females | 91            | 46.05%            | 49%                                 |
| Total   | 202           | 100%              | 100%                                |

### 3.4 Survey Results

#### 1. Age

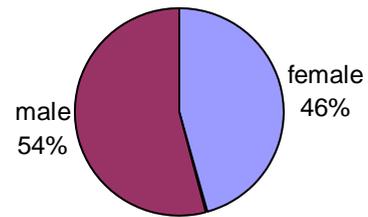
The majority of respondents (55%) were aged 12 to 14 years, followed by young people aged 15 to 19 years (44%) of age. Only 1% of respondents were aged 20 to 25 years.



## 2. Gender

Males made up 54% of respondents while 46% were female. The sample is representative of the population gender composition for young people aged 12 - 19 years in the 2006 Census.

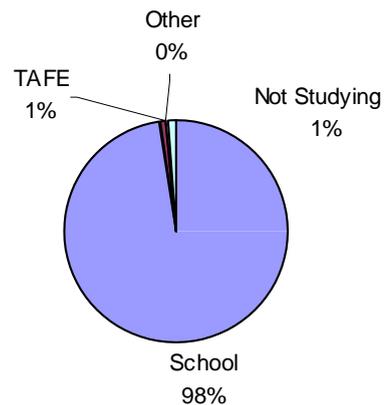
Respondent Gender



## 3. Do you attend school or studying?

The majority of respondents (98%) attend school.

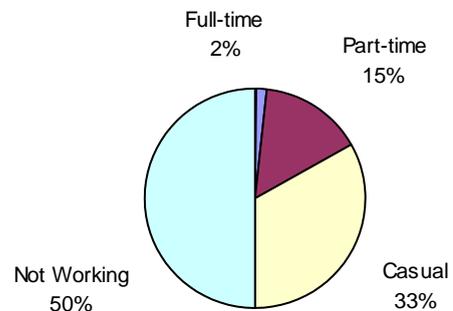
Attending School or Studying



## 4. Work Status

The majority of respondents (50%) do not work, while the remainder have casual (33%) or part-time (15%) work. Only 2% are in full-time work. The proportion of respondents not working is consistent with respondent aged 12 to 14 years.

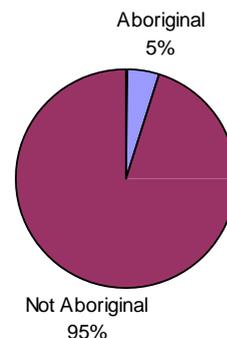
Work Status



## 5. Do you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

4.45% of respondents identified as Aboriginal. The proportion of young people that identify as Aboriginal is higher than that for the broader shire community. In the 2006, Census 1.8% of the Gundagai Shire population were Indigenous persons, compared with 2.3% Indigenous persons in Australia.

Identifies as ATSI



## 6. What are the major issues important to you right now?

Respondents were asked to tick their top 5 issues of concern, ranking them from 1 to 5 with 1 being the most important. Responses were weighted according to ranked importance and an overall rank of importance calculated. This question survey was not correctly completed by 21 (10%) of respondents.

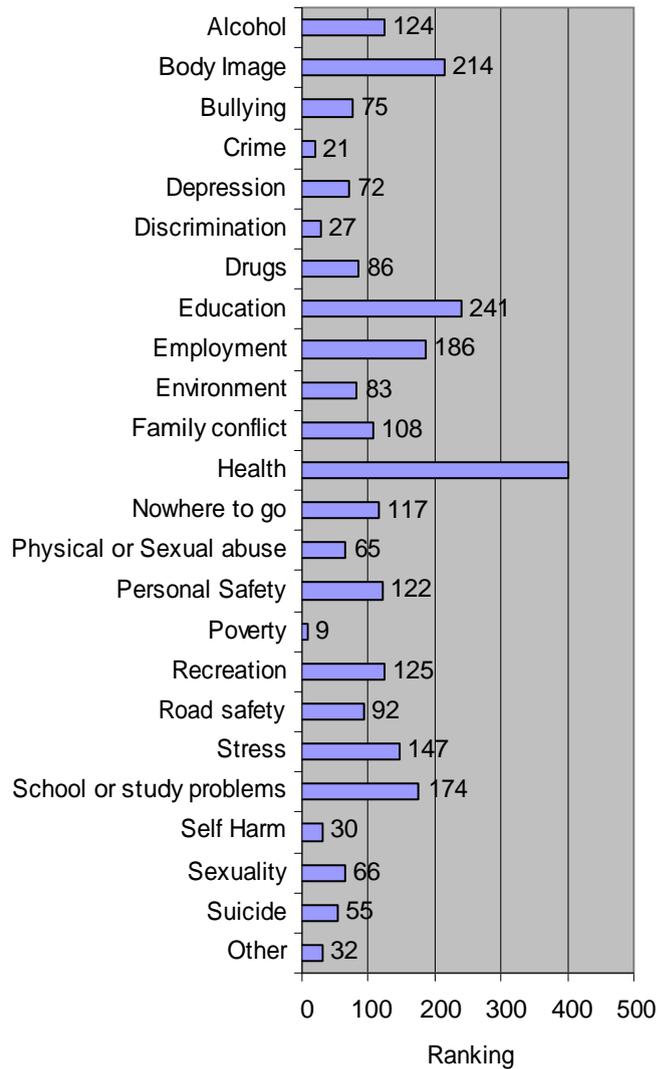
Health was identified by 50 percent of respondents as a major issue, with 26% of respondents ranking health as (1) being most important.

Education and training was the second highest ranked issue, with 34% of respondents as a major issue and 8.4% ranked it as most important.

Body image was the next highest ranked issue with 37.6% of respondents, however only 6% of respondents ranked it as most important.

School and study problems were identified by 27% of respondents as a major issue but only 2.5% of respondents ranking them as most important. This issue and education might be expected to rate highly as 97.5% of respondents are attending school.

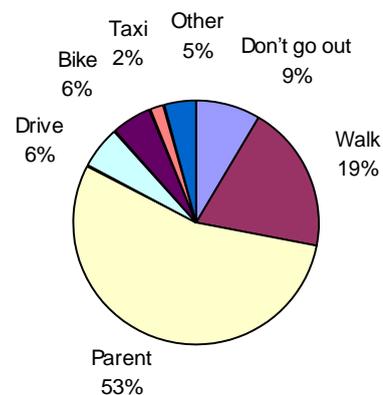
Major Issues of Concern



## 7. When you go out on the weekend, how do you usually get where you want to go?

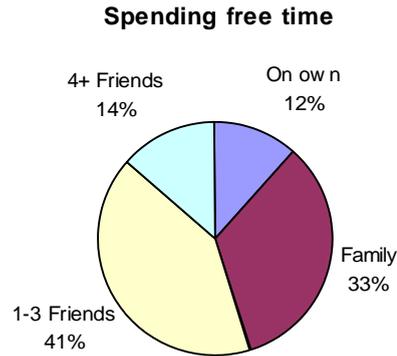
The majority of respondents (53%) rely on a parent to transport them around on the weekend. Respondents that indicated Other (5%) specified friends or mates.

Getting about on the weekend



## 8. With whom do you spend most of your free time?

The majority of respondents spend most of their time with 1 to 3 friends (41%) followed by family (33%).



## 9. How highly do you value the following?

Respondents were asked to tick the top 5 things they value, ranking them from 1 to 5 with 1 being the most important. Responses were weighted according to ranked importance and an overall rank of importance calculated. This question survey was not correctly completed by 4 (2%) of respondents.

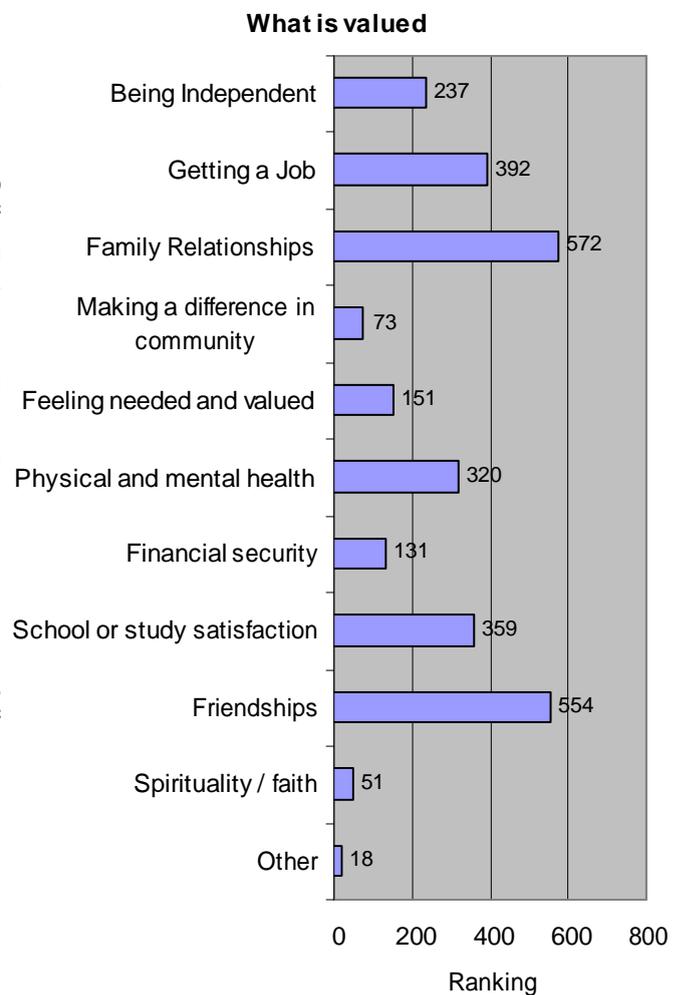
Respondents rated family (79%) and friends (81%) as valued most with 29.7% ranking family most important and 17.8% ranking friends as most important.

Getting a job (61%) followed by and school and study satisfaction (66%)

Physical and mental health was valued by 57% of respondents however it was ranked as most important by 6.4% of respondents.

Being independent was valued by 39.6% of respondents, feeling needed and valued (31.7%) and financial security (25.7%).

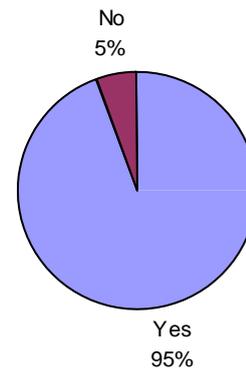
Other was identified by 4% specifying sport as valued.



**10. Do you have a computer at home that you are allowed to use?**

The majority of respondents (95%) indicated they had access to a computer.

**Access to Computer**



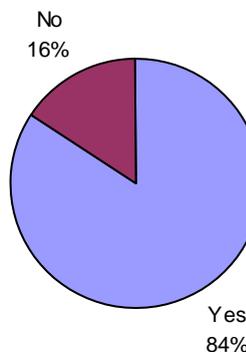
**11. Can you access the internet from your home computer?**

Of the respondents that had access to a computer, 92% (86.6% of all respondents) also had access to the internet. Respondent internet access is much higher than the 2006 Census for the Gundagai Shire where only 45% of households have an internet connection.

**12. Do you own a mobile phone?**

The majority of respondents own a mobile phone. Only 1 respondent did not have computer access or own a mobile phone. A significant proportion (73%) owned a computer, had internet access and own a mobile phone.

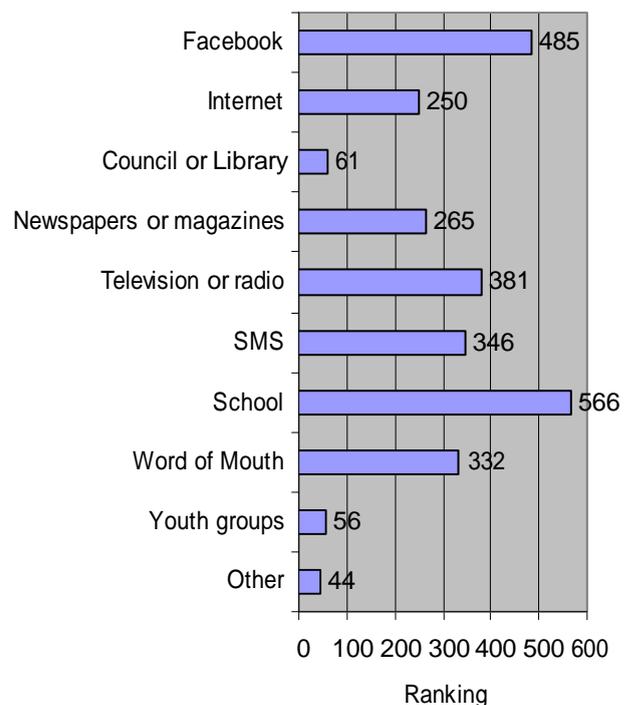
**Mobile Phone Ownership**



**13. How do you find out about events, activities and services?**

Respondents were asked to rank the top 5 methods of communication from 1 to 5 with 1 being the most important. Responses were weighted according to ranked importance and an overall rank of importance calculated. This question survey was not correctly completed by 15 (7.5%) of respondents.

**Finding out about events and activities**



The majority of respondents (80%) identified school with 23% ranking it as most important. Facebook was ranked in the top five by 63% of respondents, with 25% ranking it as most important.

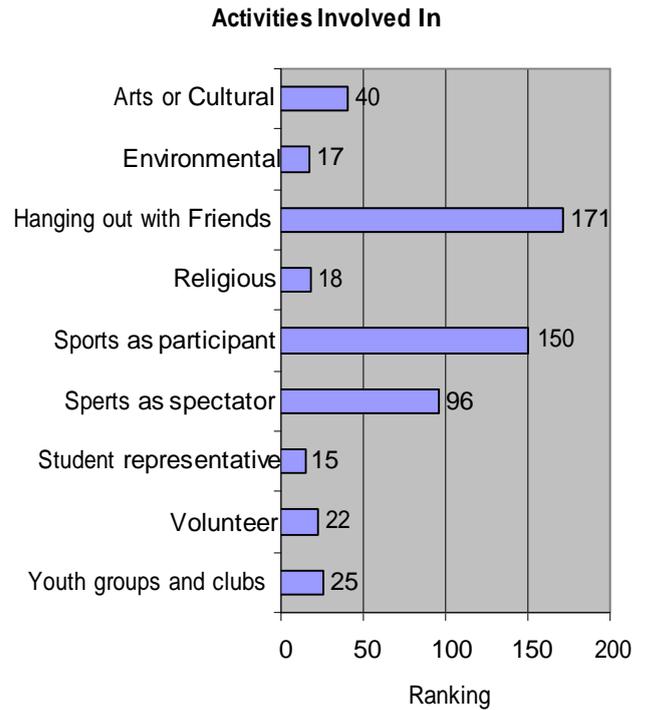
television and radio (66%), Word of mouth (56%), and newspapers and magazines (55%) as well as electronic media, ie Internet (53%) and SMS (55%) ranked considerably higher than Council or Library or Youth groups or clubs.

**14. What activities are you involved in?**

Respondents were asked to tick as many as applies.

Hanging out with friends (85%) and participating in sport (74%) are the main activities the respondents are involved in, followed by sports as a spectator (48%).

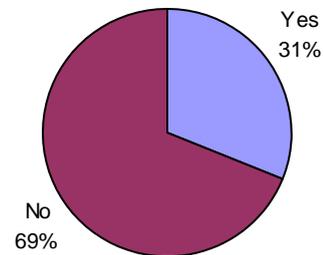
53% of respondents were involved in 3 or more of the activities listed.



**15. During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?**

Almost a third of respondents (31%) indicated they had felt sad or hopeless in the past 12 months.

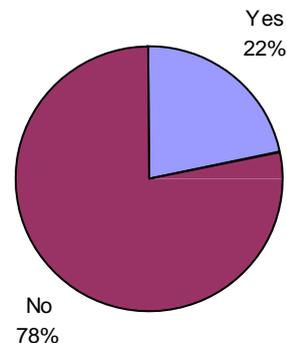
**Have felt sad and helpless in last 12 months**



**16 During the past 12 months, have you ever been electronically bullied, such as through email, chat rooms, instant messaging, web site, or text messaging?**

The majority of respondents (78%) indicated they have not experienced cyberbullying during the past 12 months.

**Experienced Cyberbullying**



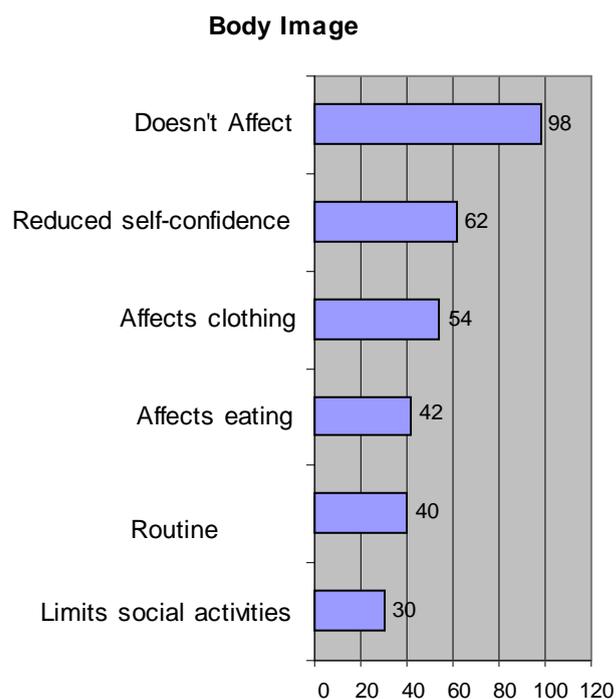
**17. How does your body image effect you?** Respondents were asked to tick as

Almost 50% of respondents stated they those 69% were male.

affected by their body image, with 31% indicating reduced self-confidence.

20% of respondents ticked 3 or more ways in which they were effected, of these

only 3% were male.



**Recipients were asked to tick whether they agree or disagree with the following statements to identify youth perceptions of youth issues in their community. The highest response(s) have been highlighted**

|    |   | Strongly | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly | Respondent |
|----|---|----------|----------|----------|-------|----------|------------|
| 18 | I am positive about my future   | 2%       | 1%       | 20%      | 46%   | 29%      | 2%         |
| 19 | Society values young people   | 3%       | 10%      | 42%      | 35%   | 8%       | 2%         |
| 20 | Leaving school before finishing Year 12 makes it  | 5%       | 6%       | 14%      | 35%   | 39%      | 1%         |
| 21 | It is important to always practice safe sex.  | 3%       | 2%       | 16%      | 37%   | 39%      | 3%         |
| 22 | If I need help with a personal problem, I know where  | 2%       | 2%       | 14%      | 50%   | 30%      | 2%         |
| 23 | I exercise or play sport for at least 4 hours each week   | 4%       | 3%       | 13%      | 33%   | 45%      | 2%         |
| 24 | During the last 4 weeks I have had five or more alcoholic drinks in a row of beer, wine, or hard liquor (for example, vodka, whiskey, or rum) | 50%      | 12%      | 10%      | 10%   | 17%      | 1%         |
| 25 | I have experienced Stress, Anxiety, Depression, Low self-esteem, Diagnosed mental illness, Feeling lost or confused                           | 26%      | 16%      | 18%      | 22%   | 16%      | 2%         |

|    |  | Strongly | Disagree | Not Sure | Agree | Strongly | Respondent |
|----|--|----------|----------|----------|-------|----------|------------|
| 26 | I spend more than 4 hours per day watching TV playing video or computer games or using a computer for something that is not school work? | 16%      | 26%      | 16%      | 26%   | 16%      | 0%         |
| 27 | I have felt peer pressure to drink alcohol , smoke cigarettes, smoke   | 49%      | 21%      | 12%      | 9%    | 7%       | 2%         |
| 28 | I feel safe in my neighbourhood.   | 3%       | 3%       | 15%      | 41%   | 37%      | 1%         |
| 29 | In the last 4 weeks, I have volunteered or helped out without pay eg school, church, community group or neighbours                       | 16%      | 25%      | 21%      | 21%   | 15%      | 2%         |
| 30 | During the last 4 weeks some of my best friends used LSD, cocaine, amphetamines, or other illegal drugs?                                 | 57%      | 9%       | 15%      | 8%    | 9%       | 2%         |
| 31 | Gundagai is a good place for young people to live after leaving school   | 8%       | 11%      | 30%      | 25%   | 23%      | 3%         |
| 32 | My actions can improve the quality of the environment.   | 3%       | 5%       | 39%      | 35%   | 15%      | 3%         |
| 33 | When things don't go well for me, I am good at finding a way to make things  | 4%       | 11%      | 30%      | 38%   | 16%      | 1%         |
| 34 | If I had to move, I would miss my neighbourhood  | 8%       | 6%       | 16%      | 27%   | 41%      | 2%         |
| 35 | I communicate everyday with my friends via the internet or mobile  | 5%       | 10%      | 13%      | 33%   | 35%      | 4%         |
| 36 | I would call a telephone helpline if there was no one else I could talk to about a personal problem. eg Kids Helpline or Access Line     | 26%      | 17%      | 32%      | 12%   | 11%      | 2%         |
| 37 | I can easily access information about issues that concern me.  | 4%       | 3%       | 34%      | 35%   | 19%      | 5%         |

### 38. What do you like about living in Gundagai Shire?

Ten percent (10%) of respondents did not complete this question. The majority of responses to this question were positive. The top 20 issues are shown in the following diagram. Most respondents identified more than one issue.

Overall young people are positive about their community. They like living in the Shire and the town of Gundagai because it is a small, quiet and friendly community, where everyone knows each other and feels safe and where most places are within walking distance.

Young people enjoy socialising with their friends and a variety of sporting and outdoor activities, specifically mentioning football, the pool, pony club, and golf. Activities such as shopping and discos were identified.

*“I know most people who live here. I can’t think of living anywhere else, most people here are friendly the town supports itself with services and sporting events, I feel safe in the streets”*

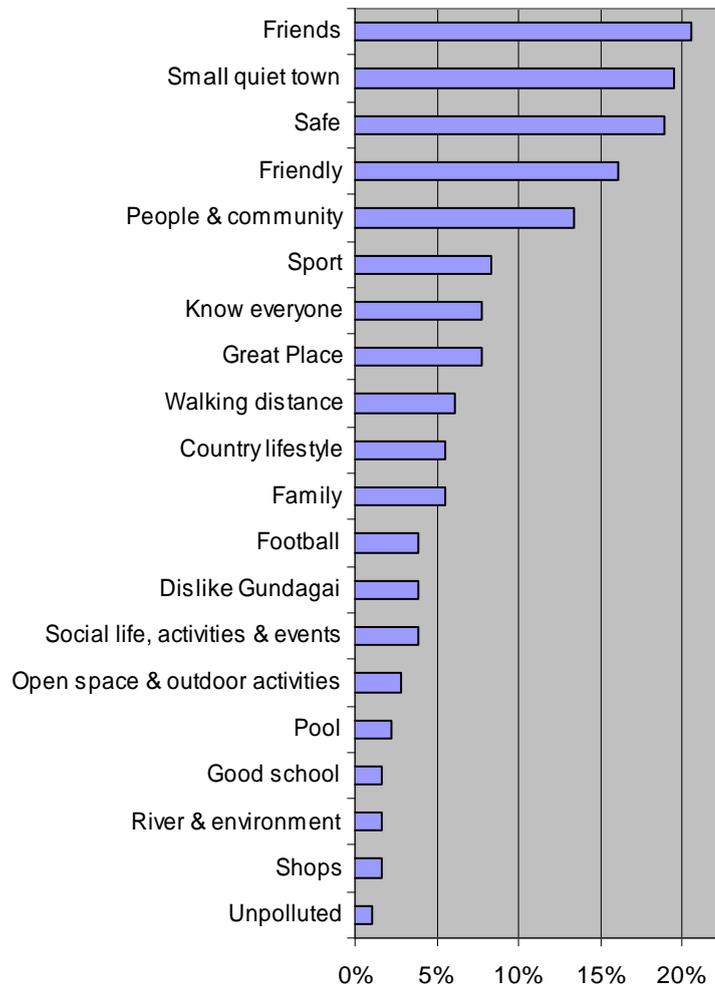
*“Safe place, everyone knows everyone, it’s not completely polluted or dirty like cities”*

*“Plenty of places to go bow-hunting, shooting, motorbike riding, fishing sporting facilities are good for a small town, and there is a heap of jobs for young people”*

Seven percent (7%) of respondents stated they did not like living in Gundagai, while one percent (1%) also expressed concerns about underage drinking and the availability of drugs.

*“Not a lot. There is nothing here if young people are drinking it is because they are bored.”*

**Most liked aspects of Gundagai Shire**



### 39. What are the most important things that need improvement?

Ten percent (10%) did not complete this question and another 3% stated “don’t know”. The top 20 issues are shown in the following diagram. Most respondents identified more than one issue.

“Things to do” and youth activities and facilities such as a skate park, theatre and a youth space/venue were identified as most important or needing improvement.

*“Skate park, mall, youth centre, movie theatre, bowling alley, water recreation park, youth activities, pony/netball clubs, licence school, go-karts”*

Many young people, also identified issues and needs of the broader community such as aged facilities, tourist attractions, shops better roads, bike tracks, footpaths, parks, public toilets, road safety, a recreation centre/ gym, and sporting facilities.

Twelve percent (12%) of survey respondents felt the town’s appearance and main street needs improvement as well as Morley’s Creek within the town area.

*“The streets need to be cleaned up. All the shops need to be painted. If the shire is doing a road up to rip it up and start again.”*

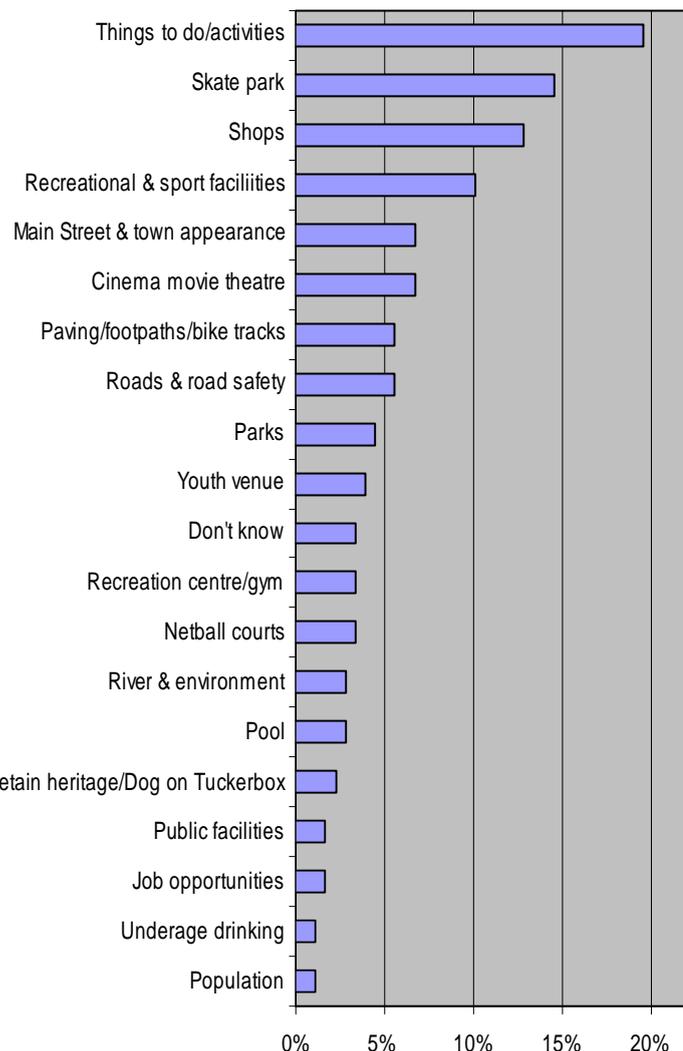
*“The main street and its appearance, things for young people to do, increased support for young people, increased things for tourist to do, available jobs for school students.”*

*“Morley’s Creek needs to be cleaned out so that way it looks good and tourists don’t look down into a dirty old creek.”*

A small percentage of respondents identified the problem of underage drinking and drug use. One respondent offered the following solution to the problem.

*“Youth activities to keep youth from participating in illicit activities such as binge drinking and taking drugs.”*

**What needs improvement**



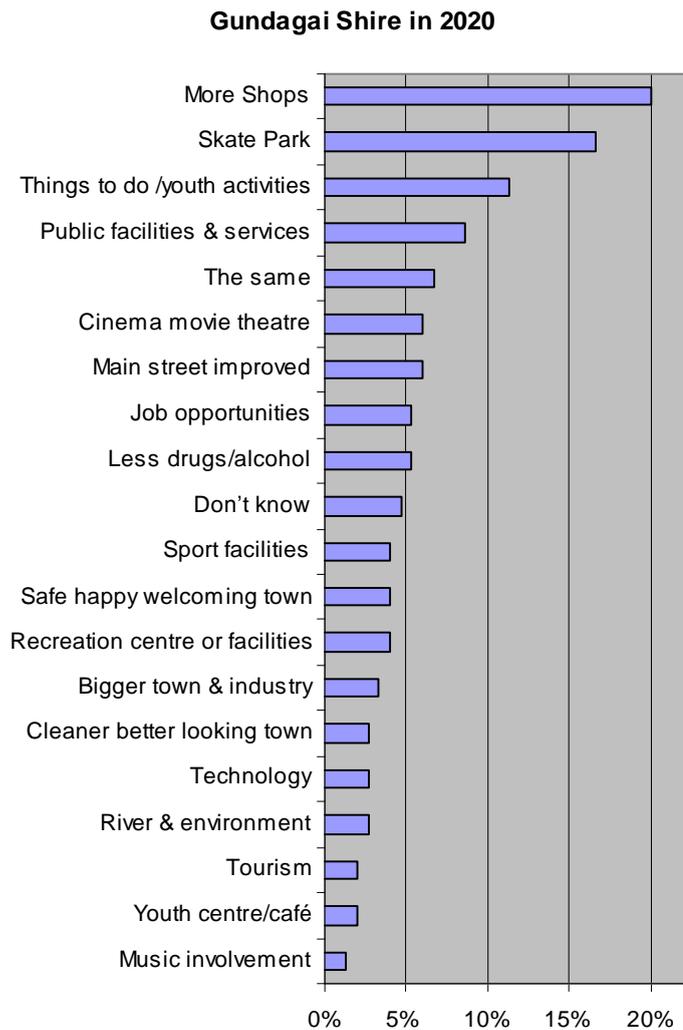
**40. Imagine how you would like Gundagai to be in 2020. Please describe the main things about how the community would be.**

Twenty five percent (25%) of respondents did not complete this question. Five percent (5%) stated “don’t know”.

The majority of responses to this question were positive. Numerous themes that have been identified in the previous two questions were again the focus of young people. Priority and occurrence of these top 20 issues are shown in the following diagram. Most respondents identified more than one issue.

Overall young people imagined their Shire and Gundagai in 2020 to be a happy, safe welcoming town, with a better main street, a tidy community and green environment, and a sense of belonging. The town would be bigger with more industry, shops and tourism providing job opportunities for young people. Seven percent actually want the Shire to remain the same as it is now.

Survey respondents have also identified sporting and recreational facilities and activities, for young people, including a movie theatre (a number specifically referred to the purchase of the “old picture theatre”), basketball and netball courts, go-kart track, bowling alley, youth centre/café and skate park. Recreational activities included discos and more shopping.



The following statements are representative of the issues identified by survey respondents.

*“No drugs, less alcohol, more options for youth in their spare time, eg skate park, youth groups, youth cafes or venues, live events, more for young people not old people”*

*“More jobs, why don’t we have more big industry in town like Visy, less of a drug problem, no young binge drinking”*

*“Better shops, larger population, better main street, tourist friendly”*

*“It would have better things in the town for kids to do, maybe bigger town with more jobs”*

A small percentage of responses felt their town would be:

*“smaller and more run-down, if we don’t do something soon that will be the result”.*

*“I will hate that the main street will be dead, hopefully there will be better council people. We need some fun things to do now so it’s better for the future.”*

## Section 4 - Summary of recommendations

The following recommendations have been drawn from both the forum discussions and the youth survey. The actions from the recommendations have been detailed in the following Action Plan (page 35).

1. Obtain funding for a Youth Development Officer (YDO). The position's main duties would be to plan, facilitate, develop and implement programs and services for the young people in the Gundagai shire with the objective of enhancing social, health and economic opportunities for young people.
2. Link the Gundagai Youth Council and YDO with other Youth Councils and service providers in the region (eg REROC Youth Network) for the purpose of resource sharing and cross fertilisation of ideas, participating in regional events for youth, and professional support to ensure the sustainability of the Youth Council and YDO position.
3. Gundagai Youth Council to develop a method of engaging with all young people in the Shire to identify a variety of appropriate activities, events and entertainment (eg disco or skate competition). Specifically ensuring youth no longer at school are engaged.
4. Developing a regular and appropriate means of communicating the range of activities and services available for young people (newspaper, brochures, website information, electronic media).
5. Young people to be actively involved in organising events and activities and support their peers by participating in these same activities.
6. Engage in discussions between young people and stakeholders to identify an appropriate youth space.
7. To address the problem of declining membership, alternate days and times on which the Gundagai Youth Council meetings are held, to enable those who may not otherwise easily be able to participate in the decision making for youth.
8. Youth Council to engage in discussions with Council and potential funding partners to construct a skate park.
9. Youth Council to take a leadership role in promoting health and wellbeing in youth eg. communicating services available and promoting telephone helplines as apposite resource for youth
10. The trialling of a bus service (eg 3 months) for youth events (eg youth week, discos and Youth Council coordinated activities) to enable regular social outings for young people, throughout the shire. The trial objective of social inclusion of young people who may be economically, geographically and/or transport disadvantaged. The trial to:
  - a. utilise existing bus assets
  - b. have extensive "shire" coverage
  - c. provide on average 1 services per month
  - d. be well advertised

11. Youth Council, families and community agencies to investigate options for attract qualified Driving Instructor to Gundagai. Youth and families to support the business to ensure it is sustainable.
12. Businesses to support young people by considering traineeships and other strategies that will assist young people to stay in Gundagai Shire.
13. Gundagai Shire Council advocate on behalf of young people, and work together with Gundagai Youth Council, other government agencies, services and community organisations to identify and obtain resources to implement actions prioritised by young people for the future of youth and the broader community.
14. A quarterly review and progress report on actions in the Youth Action Plan by the Gundagai Youth Council.
15. Conduct an annual review by Gundagai Youth Council and community stakeholders of the Youth Action Plan to celebrate actions achieved and identify new issues/actions to be included to ensure the Plan's ongoing relevance.

## Section 5 - Action Plan

The Youth Action Plan describes a vision for Gundagai Shire in 10 years time, values to guide youth, organisations providing services for young people and the broader community in making future choices, and future directions and strategic objectives.

All input from both the Youth Forum and the Youth Survey has been considered in preparing this Plan for the future of Gundagai Shire's young people.

Participants at the youth forum discussed the need for setting priorities in the action plan and agreed to the following criteria to determine priorities:

1. Money / funding
2. Resources – people
3. Lots of people want it
4. Lots of people need it
5. Sustainability

### 5.1 Reading the Gundagai Youth Plan

While the Youth Plan aims to improve outcomes for young people, successful implementation of the plan will require involvement from the entire community working together to avoid duplication of services, ensure efficient use of resources and sustainable outcomes.

It is important that the responsible organisation is clearly defined in order that it works effectively in areas where it can have the greatest impact.

(The timeframes and priorities were set by the youth and are open to review. They are reliant on available funding and resources.)

The Gundagai Youth Council will oversee the implementation of the Gundagai Youth Plan.

| Key Theme & Priority Issue | Action   | Priority   | Timeframes   | Responsible organisation  |
|----------------------------|--|--|--|---|
|                            | Actions and strategies identified to meet youth objectives | 1 (highest) to 5 (lowest) based on the importance expressed in community discussions | <b>S</b> Short term (within 12 months)<br><b>M</b> Medium term (12 years)<br><b>L</b> Long term (25 years) | Government agencies, community organisations etc. that need to be involved to achieve the objectives of the plan. |

| Key Theme & Priority Issue             | Action  | Priority 1-5 | Timeframes Sml, Med, Lge | Responsible organisation    |
|--|---|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Youth Development Officer (YDO)</b> | Identify and apply for grant funding to employ a YDO  | 1            | S                        | Youth Council GSC & GNC     |
| <b>Youth Council</b>                   | Advertise to increase membership  | 1            | S                        | Youth Council               |
|  | Alternate meeting days and times to increase membership and participation   | 1            | S                        | Youth Council               |
|  | Seek community and adult support for Youth Council and activities   | 1            | S                        | Youth Council               |
|  | Create a Youth Council <i>Facebook</i> page   | 1            | S                        | Youth Council               |
|  | Develop method to engage with youth no longer at school<br>Eg on-line surveys, <i>Facebook</i> blogs, circulate surveys to TAFE or employers of young people such as fast food outlets. | 1            | S                        | Youth Council               |
| <b>Youth Space</b>                     | Obtain funding to establish youth space   | 1            | M                        | Youth Council GSC Community |
|  | Identify suitable venue for youth space   | 1            | M                        | Youth Council GSC Community |
|  | Organise furnishings and resources  | 3            | M                        | Youth Council               |
|  | Advertise the new Youth Space   | 3            | M                        | Youth Council               |
|  | Organize activities and events  | 3            | M                        | Youth Council               |
| <b>Education and Employment</b>        | Lobby Gundagai businesses to offer traineeships   |              |                          | Youth Council               |
|  | Investigate online training and education options   |              |                          | GNC & CTC GHS               |
| <b>Business and Economy</b>            | Young people support local business and buy local wherever possible   | 1            | S                        | Youth                       |
|  | Lobby business houses to promote Gundagai to attract new business   | 2            | S                        | Youth Council               |
|  | Lobby business houses to beautify shop exteriors and windows  | 2            | S                        | Youth Council               |
|  | Investigate the feasibility   | 3            | M                        | Youth Council               |

| Key Theme & Priority Issue             | Action   | Priority 1-5 | Timeframes Sml, Med, Lge | Responsible organisation                    |
|--|--|--------------|--------------------------|---|
|  | of constructing a "Premier Playground"   |              |                          | GSC<br>Businesses                           |
| <b>Health and Wellbeing</b>            | Youth Council to take a leadership role in promoting health and wellbeing in youth eg. communicating services available and promoting telephone helplines as apposite resource for youth | 1            | M                        | Youth Council<br>Beyondblue<br>GSAHS<br>GNC |
| <b>Youth Activities and Events</b>     | Regularly conduct surveys and consult with youth to identify appropriate events and activities   | 1            | S                        | Youth Council                               |
|  | Young people to be actively involved in organising events and activities and support their peers by participating.   | 1            | S                        | Youth                                       |
|  | Investigate feasibility of youth radio spot, identify mentors & youth Interest   | 5            | S                        | FM96.3<br>Youth Council<br>GHS              |
|  | Organise events and activities throughout the calendar year  | 1            | S                        | Youth Council                               |
|  | Investigate funding to conduct holiday activity workshops for youth  | 1            | M                        | Youth Council<br>GNC GREG                   |
|  | Effectively promote events and activities to ensure good attendance  | 1            | S                        | Youth Council                               |
|  | Participate in regional events and encourage youth from other towns to visit Gundagai events   | 3            | M                        | Youth Council<br>Youth                      |
| <b>Sport and Recreation Facilities</b> | Engage in discussions with Council and potential funding partners to construct a skate park  | 1            | S                        | Youth Council                               |
|  | Obtain funding for design & construction of skate park   | 1            | M                        | Youth Council<br>GSC                        |
|  | Coordinate and conduct fundraising to part fund the skate park   | 1            | M                        | Youth                                       |
|  | Assist the community to raise funds for community purchase of  | 3            | M                        | Youth Council<br>Youth                      |

| Key Theme & Priority Issue      | Action  | Priority 1-5 | Timeframes Sml, Med, Lge | Responsible organisation       |
|---------------------------------|---|--------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
|                                 | the Old Picture Theatre   |              |                          |                                |
|                                 | Support the establishment of a committee to manage Old Theatre          | 3            | M                        | Youth Council                  |
|                                 | Lobby council to conduct feasibility study for a recreation centre      | 2            | S                        | Youth Council                  |
|                                 | Investigate funding opportunities for a Recreation Centre               | 3            | M                        | Dept Sport & Recreation GSC    |
|                                 | Investigate community support for establishing a Recreation Centre      | 3            | M                        | GSC Sporting Groups            |
| <b>Transport</b>                | Investigate funding to subsidise taxi transport for youth               | 3            | M                        | Youth Council                  |
|                                 | Conduct a 3 month trial bus service for youth events                    | 3            | S                        | Youth Council                  |
|                                 | Attract qualified Driving Instructor to Gundagai                        | 3            | M                        | Youth Council GHS & GNC        |
| <b>Environment and Heritage</b> | Identify partners and participate in River/ Creek Development Committee | 2            | S                        | Youth Council Youth GREG       |
|                                 | Develop Plan for River and Creek  | 3            | M                        | Committee                      |
|                                 | Obtain Funding for River or Creek Walk                                  | 3            | M                        | Council GREG                   |
|                                 | Identify & signpost safe swimming areas in river                        | 2            | S                        | GSC                            |
|                                 | Attract businesses to operate water activities                          | 3            | M                        | Business Houses Tourist Office |

# YOUTH SURVEY

## A project to complete an update on our Youth Plan Gundagai Youth Council.

### CONFIDENTIAL WHEN COMPLETED

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. These questions ask your opinion about a number of things concerning you and your community. There are NO RIGHT or WRONG ANSWERS.

This survey is anonymous. No individually identifying information will be collected.

**DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE SURVEY**

1. Age: 12-14  15-19  20-25
2. Gender: Female  Male
3. Do you attend school or studying? School  TAFE  Other Study  Not Studying
4. Work Status: Full-time  Part-time  Casual  Not working
5. Do you identify as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander? Yes  No

6. What are the major issues important to you right now? Tick your top 5 issues of concern

Please rank from 1 to 5 using each number only once. 1 being the most important

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Environment              | <input type="checkbox"/> Stress                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Body image               | <input type="checkbox"/> Family conflict/problems | <input type="checkbox"/> School or study problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bullying/emotional abuse | <input type="checkbox"/> Health                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Self harm                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Crime                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Nowhere to go / boredom  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sexuality                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Depression               | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical/sexual abuse    | (health/ relationships/identity)                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Discrimination           | <input type="checkbox"/> Personal safety          | <input type="checkbox"/> Suicide                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drugs                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Poverty                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education & Training     | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation               | specify _____                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment / jobs        | <input type="checkbox"/> Road safety              |   |

7. When you go out on the weekend, how do you usually get where you want to go?

(Mark one only)

- I don't go out during the weekend  I walk  My father/ mother gives me a ride
- I drive myself  Take my bike  Taxi  Other – Specify \_\_\_\_\_

8. With whom do you spend most of your free time? (Mark one only)

- On my own  My family  One to three friends  A larger group of friends (four +)

**9. How highly do you value the following?**

Please rank from 1 to 5 using each number only once - 1 being the most highly valued & 5 the least

- Being independent
- Financial security
- Getting a job
- School or study satisfaction
- Family relationships
- Friendships (other than family)
- Making a difference in the community
- Spirituality / faith
- Feeling needed and valued
- Other (please specify)
- Physical and mental health

**10. Do you have a computer at home that you are allowed to use?** Yes  No  go to Q12

**11. Can you access the internet from your home computer?** Yes  No

**12. Do you own a mobile phone?** Yes  No

**13. How do you find out about events, activities and services?**

Please rank from 1 to 5 using each number only once - 1 being the most used & 5 the least

- Facebook
- Television and Radio
- Youth Groups
- Internet
- SMS
- Other, Please Specify \_\_\_\_\_
- Local Council or Library
- School
- Newspapers or magazines
- Word of mouth

**14. What activities are you involved in? (tick as many as apply)**

- Arts/cultural (drama Music dance)
- Religious
- Student representative council
- Environmental
- Sports (as participant)
- Volunteer
- Hanging out with friends
- Sports (as spectator)
- Youth groups and club

**15. During the past 12 months, did you ever feel so sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more in a row that you stopped doing some usual activities?** Yes  No

**16. During the past 12 months, have you ever been electronically bullied, such as through e-mail,**

chat rooms, instant messaging, Web sites, or text messaging?

Yes

No

17. How does your body image affect you? (tick as many as apply)

It doesn't affect me

Reduces my self-confidence

Affects the clothes I wear

Affects what I eat

Determines my exercise routine

Limits my social activities

**Please tick whether you agree or disagree with the following statements**  
(These questions ask your opinion. There are NO RIGHT or WRONG ANSWERS.)

|    |  | Strongly Disagree        | Disagree                 | Not Sure                 | Agree                    | Strongly agree           |
|----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 18 | I am positive about my future  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 19 | Society values young people  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20 | Leaving school before finishing Year 12 makes it harder to get a job   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 21 | It is important to always practice safe sex.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 22 | If I need help with a personal problem, I know where to turn for advice and support?   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 23 | I exercise or play sport for at least 4 hours each week  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 24 | During the last 4 weeks I have had five or more alcoholic drinks in a row of beer, wine, or hard liquor (for example, vodka, whiskey, or rum)      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 25 | I have experienced Stress, Anxiety, Depression, Low self-esteem, Diagnosed mental illness, Feeling lost or confused                                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 26 | I spend more than 4 hours per day watching TV playing video or computer games or using a computer for something that is not school work?           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 27 | I have felt peer pressure to drink alcohol , smoke cigarettes, smoke marijuana, or take other illicit drugs  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 28 | I feel safe in my neighbourhood.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 29 | In the last 4 weeks, I have volunteered or helped out without pay eg <i>school, church, community group or neighbours</i>                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 30 | During the last 4 weeks some of my best friends used LSD, cocaine, amphetamines, or other illegal drugs?   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 31 | Gundagai is a good place for young people to live after leaving school   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 32 | My actions can improve the quality of the environment.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 33 | When things don't go well for me, I am good at finding a way to make things better.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 34 | If I had to move, I would miss my neighbourhood  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 35 | I communicate everyday with my friends via the internet or mobile phone.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 36 | I would call a telephone helpline if there was no one else I could talk to about a personal problem. eg <i>Kids Helpline</i> or <i>Access Line</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 37 | I can easily access information about issues that concern me.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |

|  |
|--|
| <b>38. What do you like most about living in Gundagai Shire?</b> |
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| <b>39. What are the most important things that need improvement?</b> |
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|---|
| <b>40. Imagine how you would like Gundagai to be in 2020. Please describe the main things about how the community would be.</b> |
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|   |
|   |
|   |
|   |
|   |
|   |

*Thank You for Your Participation*  
**Please Return by Wednesday, April 28, 2010**

Please return this Survey to any of the following:-

- Gundagai High School
- Mirrabooka
- Gundagai Newsagency
- or email to lrfaulkner@hotmail.com

**For more information, please contact  
 Lisa Faulkner, Telephone: 69453248 or  
 Email: lrfaulkner@hotmail.com**