



PROJECT SCOPE OUT

BENALLA YOUTH SPACE FEASIBILITY STUDY



Central Hume
Primary Care Partnership



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“Youth Clubs have a unique role and one that should be valued and supported as they can make a big difference in the lives of many young people and their communities. Club based work can provide the warm, safe, friendly space for young people that they say they want, it can give them real power and ownership. It can be a place where they develop new skills, try out new things, where they are seen and judged differently from the school or home, where their talents and idiosyncrasies are appreciated and where they can have fun.”

SUMMARY

In 2018, Benalla Rural City Council was successful in an application for funding from the Central Hume Primary Care Partnership to research the possibility and feasibility of a youth space being developed in Benalla.

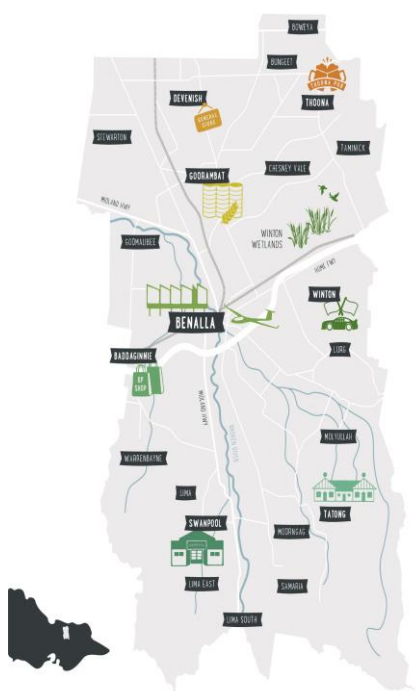
This project involved a youth led approach, with young people researching, exploring and investigating possible locations in Benalla, creating a realistic budget and also exploring youth spaces to gain an understanding for themselves about what having a youth space could involve.

The project aimed to:

- Develop recommendations for a sustainable, functional, accessible, inclusive, safe and youth friendly space for young people which is youth driven and youth led.
- Enhance community connections by raising awareness, empowering young people through youth participation and supporting the voice of young people in Benalla Rural City.
- Strengthen relationships with local youth service providers and community services.
- Create and promote positive media opportunities for young people in Benalla and showcase their achievements.
- Provide transferrable skill development and training opportunities including budgeting, social media, advertising and promotion.
- Create volunteering opportunities, develop career pathways and encourage youth entrepreneurship through asset based community development.
- Ensure community resources are co designed and youth driven.
- Create a diverse range of communication options to share information with young people and the broader community.
- Ensure young people are empowered and have a voice in their community's development

This project aimed to upskill and educate young people aged 12-24 about governance, team work, budgeting, facility and event management including the development of a broad range of skills such as researching, social media, public speaking and/or event management and sound and light training.

BENALLA RURAL CITY



Benalla Rural City has an estimated population of 14,024, of which it is estimated 2188 are young people aged between 10 -24 years of age.

Currently it is estimated that one in every 7 people fall under the “youth” age bracket.

Benalla has the largest population within the Benalla Rural City LGA, with an estimated population of 10,331. Benalla Rural City has a number of small rural townships within its LGA

Benalla Rural City has four schools that cater to the 12 – 18 year old age group:

- Benalla P-12 College
- Benalla FCJ College
- Benalla Flexible Learning Centre
- Ed Space

All schools are located within Benalla.



BACKGROUND

In 2016 the Youth Action Committee (YAC) made a presentation to the Benalla Rural City Council seeking the Council's support to use the Benalla Drill Hall Community Activity Centre as a youth space. Benalla YAC made this request based on survey results that found over 80 per cent of 2019 young people aged 12 -25 felt that setting up a youth space is important and could support the well-being of local young people.

Similar to this report and consultations with young people, the YAC in 2016 explained that young people were seeking a place to chill out with friends, play and see music performances, access free Wi-Fi and computers, play games, get help with homework, get information about jobs and careers, and get access to support for their well-being without having to be seen as a 'patient' or a 'client.'

As stated in the 2016 report prepared by then Youth Development Coordinator Amanda Aldous –

“Setting the Centre as a dedicated youth friendly space would enable young people in Benalla Rural City to connect socially, participate in a range of activities and get informal access to services and information to support their wellbeing.”

Unfortunately the idea to use the Benalla Drill Hall did not move forward due to interest in the space from various other community organisations. Currently this space is now being used full time by the Benalla Gymnastics Club and is no longer a viable option for a space.

YOUTH SURVEY RESULTS 2018 - 2019

A total of 661 people shared their thoughts and ideas with 544 young people aged 12 – 24 years of age completing the survey online or participating in focus groups.

117 parents, community members and service providers completed the survey online or participated in a focus group.

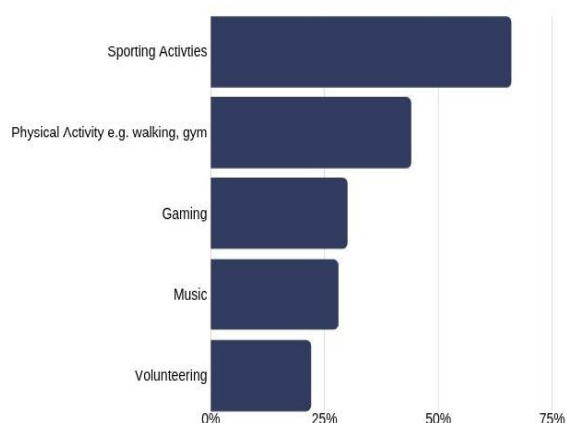
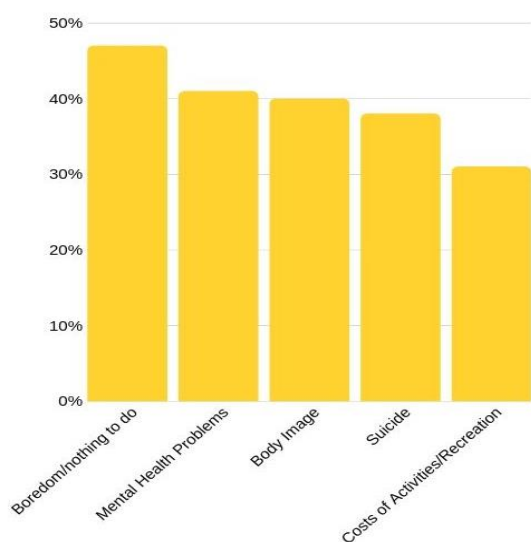
The results collected reflect a good understanding of who the young people of Benalla Rural City are, what their concerns are and what they would like to happen within their community.

42% of the survey participants identify as male, 55% identify as female and 3% identify as non-binary/gender fluid.

8% of participants identify as Aboriginal, 1% Torres Strait Islander, 3% were born overseas and 9% have a parent who was born overseas.

The majority of participants live within Benalla at 70%, with the remaining 30% either living within the LGA or a different LGA but attending school in Benalla Rural City.

The survey indicated that amongst the highest responses for extracurricular engagement 66% of young people are engaging in sporting activities, 44% are engaging in some sort of physical activity e.g. walking, gym, 30% are gaming, 28% participate in music, 22% are volunteering.



The Youth Survey identified that young people identify with a variety of issues and concerns in their life. The top five issues/concerns that young people identify with are boredom/nothing to do at 47%, mental health problems at 41%, suicide 38%, cost of activities/recreation at 31% and verbal bullying at 28%. While overall these were the top five issues and concerns for young people, when separated into age groups the top five issues and concerns generally altered. For example the top concern for 12 – 14 year olds was boredom, with 15 -17 identifying body image at their highest concern.

Outside of the Youth Survey results are national and statewide statistics that tell us that Benalla Rural City young people can face extreme hardship in regards to family violence, mental illness, teenage pregnancy and dis-engagement from education.

According to the Victorian Government crime statistics, Benalla has more criminal incidents per 100,000 residents than many of its neighboring shires and LGA's. According to the statistics, Benalla Rural City has nearly double the number of criminal incidents in comparison to neighbouring Alpine Shire, Indigo Shire and Strathbogie Shire who all have similar populations in their LGA.

According to the Victoria Government's Health Department, in 2015 Benalla Rural City statistics told us –

- The teenage fertility rate was above the state measure.
- The rate of family violence incidents per 1,000 population is well above average.
- The percentage of 19 years olds having completed year 12 is among the lowest in the state.
- The rate of Child Protection investigations completed, Child Protection substantiations and the Child FIRST assessments per 1,000 are among the highest in the state.
- A higher than average percentage of people consider Benalla to be an active community.
- Affordable rental is above the average of state measure.

Many organisations, services, schools, individuals and community groups are working hard and cohesively to improve the current statistics.

Benalla has a number of mental health programs currently underway, such as the Live4Life initiative and the Benalla Community Suicide Prevention Placed Based Trial Project. Organisations such as NESAY, Family Services, and Uniting Goulburn North East are working with our most vulnerable members of the community aiming to change the current trend in statistics for our whole community.

With the whole of community working together, Benalla Rural City aims to improve the current issues that community members face to make Benalla Rural City a safe, inclusive and progressive place to live for all of community.

RESEARCH AT A GLANCE

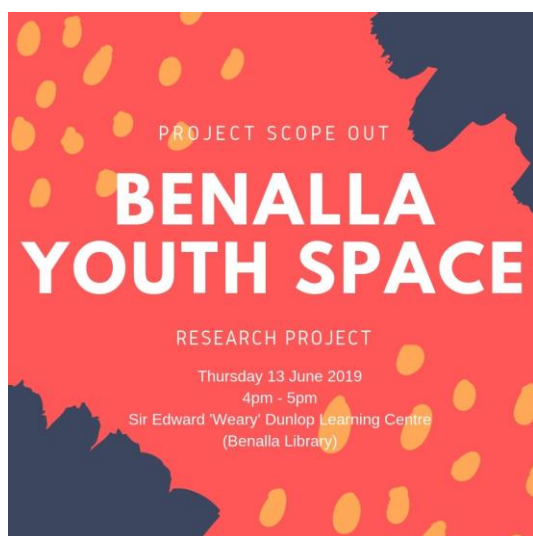
Project Scope Out was a project that allowed young people to explore possible locations for a youth space in Benalla Rural City, investigate youth spaces in other towns, develop ideas and concepts for a youth space, create and work on budgets, plan and coordinate community information sessions and also explore events and activities where the youth space would be used.

The group of young people who helmed the project and research - who are referred to as the youth space crew or the crew – travelled to Mansfield and Albury to see two very different ideas of a youth space. On these visits the crew recorded their ideas and opinions on feedback forms.

A spreadsheet was created that listed available spaces that could suit the purpose of a youth space in Benalla Rural City Council and was updated throughout the project when properties became available. The crew and the Youth Development team explored a diverse range of properties and assessed their suitability to be a youth space.

Two community open sessions were held aimed at community members who had an interest in establishing a youth space e.g. young people, teachers, youth aimed organisations/services. These open sessions were an opportunity for the community to have a say and to gain more community input into the project.

The crew also joined the Benalla FReeZA and Live4Life crews in training and upskilling in event management through an external trainer. This training included event applications, risk management forms, funding application and budget proposals.



EXPLORING MANSFIELD AND ALBURY YOUTH SPACES

In March 2019, the Youth Development team accompanied the crew to visit the Mansfield Youth Centre. Mansfield's Youth Centre operates four afternoons a week, 3 pm – 6 pm is staffed by two Youth Development Officer's (employed by the Mansfield Shire Council) at all times. Mansfield's Youth Centre includes:

Eleven computers compatible for gamers	Air Hockey Table
Fully functioning kitchen	Pool Table
Two homework rooms	Television
A conference area with projector	PlayStation
Half a basketball court	Purpose built sound proof music room

While there with the ideas and feedback fresh on their minds, the crew completed feedback forms, some of the feedback included:

"Things of interest in the space for all."

"So much art and a great atmosphere."

"Move it to Benalla."

"Lots and lots of opportunities for youth."

This space was great for the young people to see, as the crew had limited understanding of what a youth space could actually be. While they understood the concept of a youth space, it was good for them to see the possibilities of what a youth space can be and to see it actually being used by young people very similar to themselves.

In May 2019, the same group of young people travelled to the Albury Youth Retro Lane Café, which allowed the crew to experience two very different spaces and support in creating a clear idea of the possibilities of a Youth Space in Benalla Rural City.

The Retro Lane Café is open six days a week Monday to Saturday, 10 AM to 5 PM most days except Saturday when it closes at 3 PM.

The Retro Lane Café is a purpose built youth space that operates as a café open to all members of the public and is not an exclusive space for young people. Within the space is a café style eating area, iPads, one computer, a pool table and access to a small selection of library material. The Retro Lane Café also holds gigs and live events on a monthly basis which are aimed at young people 12 – 25 years of age.

The Retro Lane Café is staffed by the café employees but also a Youth Programs Officer and Youth Café Coordinator employed by Albury City Council. The Youth Programs Officer is the on ground support for young people who come into the café and also works with the committee to coordinate events.



Some of the feedback from the crew –

" I don't like how it seems more like a cafe than an actual youth space and is open to the public (older and young than 12-25)."

"The Piano is pretty rad."

"It seemed more like a cafe with a pool table than a youth space."

"The space is open and inviting."

After seeing both Youth Spaces the crew spoke about what space they could imagine in Benalla and the consensus was that the Mansfield model had an idea and platform that would work well for the young people of Benalla Rural City.

While Mansfield had a very similar model to what the crew were thinking of when they themselves imagined a youth space in Benalla, it helped them think of things that they had not thought of. For example the Youth Development officers at Mansfield spoke about how they originally allowed the space to be open for young people aged. 12 – 24 years, but had reviewed this as they believe this led to issues with the large age gap. The youth centre now only targets young people aged 12 – 18 years of age.

This made the crew consider what the needs of the young people in Benalla Rural City are and who the space should be aimed at, with considerations made with whether there would be restrictions on age. Ideas included the idea of modelling after Mansfield Youth Centre and having 12 – 18 years limit, this idea was deemed unsuitable for the Benalla young people as it could alienate young people from their peers. One of the young people in the crew are themselves 18 years of age and in year 11, this would mean that going into year 12 and turning 19 would mean the young person ages out and cannot spend time with their peers in the youth space.

Other considerations around age or year group was being conscious of school leavers and young people in alternative schooling that do not have formal year levels.

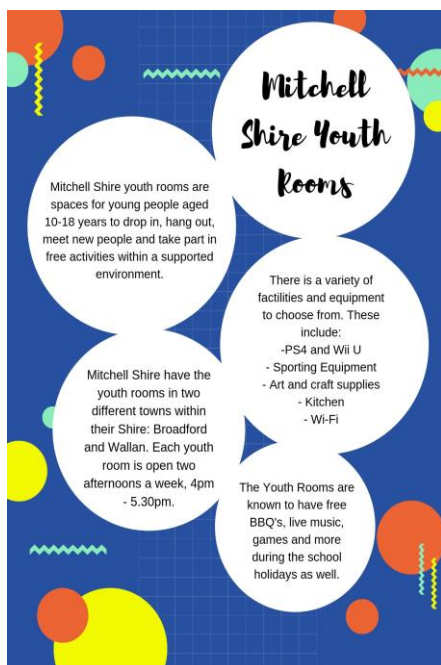
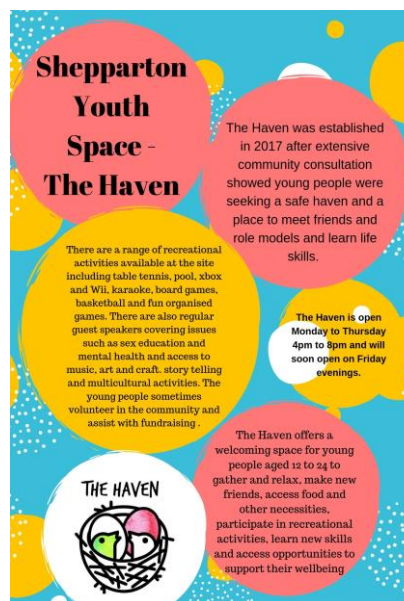
Other ideas and considerations taken from the Mansfield Youth Centre included a sign in/sign out book, a limit on how many young people can be in the space at the one time, and whether the space could be used by other services and organisations outside of the youth space hours.

Please see recommendations in regards to these considerations.

DESKTOP RESEARCH

Youth space visits and on the ground research supported that every youth space has a different vision, aim and use for their spaces, as they are taking the needs of their community into consideration.

The Shepparton youth space 'The Haven' is a space run by The Lighthouse Project. This is a space open to people aged 12 -24 years and has developed into a drop in space for young people. The Haven offers a safe space where young people can relax, have access to potential mentors, access meals and support for their wellbeing. The Haven offers hot meals nights they are open and support young people in crisis or experiencing issues with their home life. The Haven is meeting the needs of their community



Mitchell Shire Council have two youth spaces, one in Broadford and one in Wallan, both are open two days a week 3.30 PM – 5 PM on varying days. Both spaces are open for young people aged 10 – 18 years and offer a safe place to hang out and engage with other young people while enjoying free activities within a supported environment. Mitchell Shire offer two youth spaces due to having multiple large towns within their LGA e.g. Kilmore, Seymour. Mansfield, Shepparton, and the Mitchell Shire offer four very different youth spaces to suit the young people in their community. This research has provided the opportunity for the crew to see that a space needs to meet the needs of the community and what would work best for the young people of that town.

WHAT WAS LEARNT FROM THE COMMUNITY

- COMMUNITY OPEN SESSIONS

The Youth Development team supported the crew to hold two open sessions for community input and to reach a wider range of people.

Both open sessions were widely advertised by the crew, with a poster being distributed as hard copies, advertised on social media and emailed to key stake holders such as BYSPN (Benalla Youth Services Provider Network) and promoted within the Benalla high schools. Sessions were held a fortnight apart at two different times after school. The open sessions were a chance to gain greater community engagement and to share ideas around the expectations of a youth space in Benalla Rural City. The crew played a vital role in the open sessions, as they were on hand to speak about their experiences at the two different youth spaces, the desktop research and ideas around where the youth space could be developed.

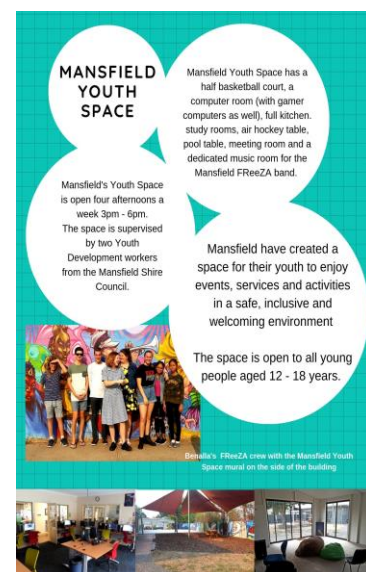
The open sessions were set up with information about other youth space, results from the youth survey and large poster paper inviting participants to write down their ideas e.g. opening hours, location, events etc.

The ideas to come from the open sessions were exiting and innovative. There was a great desire for the space to hold workshops for the young people of Benalla Rural City, some of the ideas for the workshops included:

- How to workshops e.g. how to cook, how to play instruments, how to write poetry
- Creative art based workshops
- Employment workshops, resume writing and mock interviews
- Independent skill building

Other ideas for events for the space included:

- Film nights
- Open mic nights
- Information sessions e.g. mental health awareness, alcohol and drug
- Pool table competitions
- Different social clubs e.g. book clubs, film clubs, story writing clubs



An innovative idea came from a participant in regards to social nights for the young CALD community of Benalla Rural City. This particular participant was currently travelling to Wangaratta for these events and stated how much nicer it would be to build this sort of community within their own town.

Ideas and concerns were also raised at the open sessions in regards to an age range for the space. A concern was expressed that if 24 year olds were to be in the same hang out area as 12 year olds, whether Working with Children's Checks (WWCC) needed be completed. While this was confirmed that there would not have to be WWCC's as the participants over 18 would not be there in a working or volunteer capacity, participants still expressed concerns about such an age gap. An idea was expressed that perhaps there could be a dedicated night for the 18 to 24 year olds, allowing this cohort of young people still a safe and free space to socialize.

There was a general consensus that the space would be best suited to the centre of Benalla, with the space open two afternoons a week 3.00 PM to 5.30 PM to begin with. On top of these normal opening hours there be weekend and or evening events e.g. open mic nights, movie nights.

FOCUS GROUPS

The Youth Development team held focus groups with the Live4Life crew, FReeZA committee, Ed Space students and HOCUS participants. These groups consisted of a range of different voices and opinions as they all had various ages, capabilities, educational engagement and were part of different extracurricular activities. All groups agreed that they wanted more things to do in Benalla, they wanted more activities for their age group and they wanted to make sure that the youth space would be able to cater to different interests and activities. There was a level of frustration within these groups, as they felt a youth space had been spoken about many times in the past but there currently had been no progress. The Youth Development team were able to speak about the current processes of establishing a youth space and current commitment to help support and empower young people to reach the goals they were would like to see in their community.

FINDING A SPACE

Finding a space within Benalla Rural City meant looking at a range of options but ultimately deciding what was the most affordable, sustainable and safe space that would support this as a long term venture for the young people of Benalla Rural City. The Youth Development team supported the crew by supplying information in regards to Benalla Rural City Council run facilities, while the crew explored commercial and residential leasing sites.

The crew also explored the possibility of developing a space from scratch, for example redeveloping a shopping container and placing it on Benalla Rural City Council land. Investigating costing and process for this idea, it was discovered that refurbishing a shipping container can cost upwards of \$10,000. When taking into consideration that a youth space would need at least two to three shipping containers to make it a large enough space to fit a reasonable amount of young people, the ability to have separate spaces and be furnished, this idea did not go further.

Due to limited Council owned facilities that do not suit the needs of a youth space, and a theoretical budget not allowing a space to be developed from scratch, the most viable option was to look at properties for lease. Due to the needs of a youth space and the quick turn over of the residential rental market in Benalla Rural City, the conclusion was to explore commercially leased properties.

As mentioned a spreadsheet of available spaces was created to include, financial costs associated with the space, heating/cooling, outdoor space, toilets/bathroom, and kitchen facilities and whether the owners of the property would be open to modifications to the property.

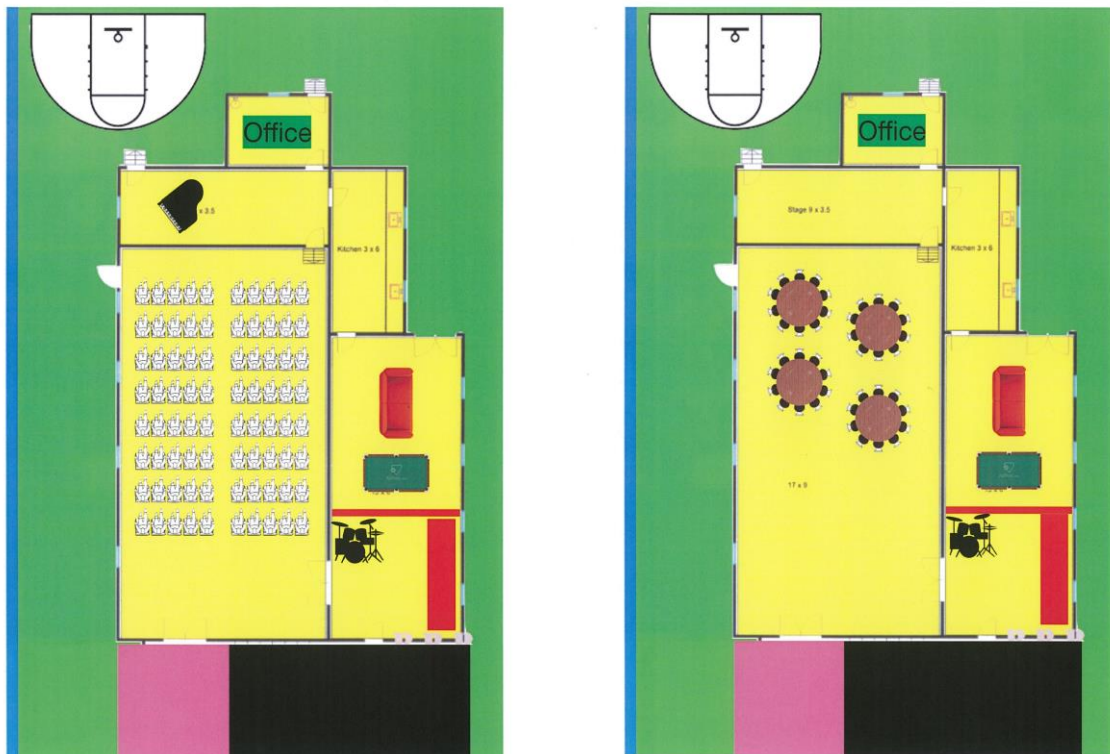
The crew inspected a range of properties to develop a clearer idea of what they would want in a youth space in Benalla.

Building A: Building A was the first building inspected by the crew. This building offered a large outdoor area, a reasonable rental price and was within the Benalla CBD. The crew had concerns for the space as while it was in the CBD, it was not within the main centre of town and the indoor space was quite a lot smaller than the outdoor section raising concerns for the young people on restrictions for how many young people could be in the space for events.

Building B: Building B offered a great location, that would be accessible to all young people. This building also offered a good rental price, large indoor area where it could be divided into different spaces, heating and cooling, kitchenette, toilets and a stage. The crew inspected this space twice due to differing opinions on whether the space would work, one crew member was so excited for building B to be used as the space, that he prepared two different floor plans on how the space could be used. Picture A below displays how the space could be used for music events, movies etc., and picture B is how the space could be used for a general open sessions.

Building C: Desktop research was completed for this property, as it was not available to inspect for quite some time as it was being leased. This building offered a large area, some outdoor space, and was within the Benalla CBD but a bit further to the edges compared with building B. It also offered two toilets and heating and cooling. While a great space, this space was nearly double the price in rent than both building A and B.

Through inspections and investigation, the crew felt Building B would suit the needs of the youth space best. While all the spaces needed some refurbishing, the crew were excited about Building B's location, the size of the space and possibility of the stage (the stage is currently boarded up but owners are happy for it to be taken down). The crew were also shown the space by a member of the group who managed the space and stated they would be fine with refurbishment and were excited about the prospect of the space being used for young people.



WHERE IS BENALLA RURAL CITY COUNCIL HEADING

- BENALLA RURAL CITY COUNCIL PLAN

Young people are our future. Factors such as online communication, digital technology advance, cultural diversity and globalisation will reshape Benalla Rural City's future. Encouraging and empowering young people to build their skills, and knowledge as well as good citizenship will be important to ensure continued youth involvement and participation. Creating a community that is inclusive, socially cohesive and welcoming will build resilience and promote opportunities for young people living in Benalla Rural City.

Benalla Rural City has higher than average rates of disengagement from education and early school leaving. Re-engaging young people through education, employment and training is crucial for a thriving and prosperous community.

Benalla Rural City Council Plan 2017 - 2021

The Council Plan is the key strategic document and incorporates the Municipal Public Health Plan with the commitment to health and wellbeing reflected throughout the entire plan. The plan is structured around five key themes:

- Connected and Vibrant Community
- Engaging and accessible places and spaces
- Sustainable environment
- Thriving and progressive economy
- High performing organisation

During the development of the Council Plan, the Benalla Rural City community were engaged in a variety of ways, including:

- Open house sessions
- Key stakeholder workshop
- Input from Council Advisory Committees
- Online survey
- Facebook posts
- "Have your say" Council Plans postcards

The Council Plan has a strategic objective to offer programs and activities that support and develop young people, encourage and support community-led projects that build the capacity, skills, resilience and leadership capabilities of community members and build community capacity to plan and deliver projects that make a positive difference to the quality of life, social participation, health and wellbeing of our community.

At one of the community participation sessions and printed in the Council Plan is the opinion –

"Offer youth activities, programs and a youth space."

- BENALLA RURAL CITY COMMUNITY PLAN

The 2016 – 2036 Benalla Rural City Council Community Plan outlines how over the next 20 years the community, Benalla Rural City Council and other organisations and groups will work in partnership to achieve maximum health and wellbeing for our community.

Outlined in two objectives **6.1 Community wellbeing and a sense of place** and **6.2 A well-connected and accessible community**, are the following strategic directions:

6.1.12 Ensure that young people have varied opportunities to participate in cultural and community activities and are actively involved in the life of our community

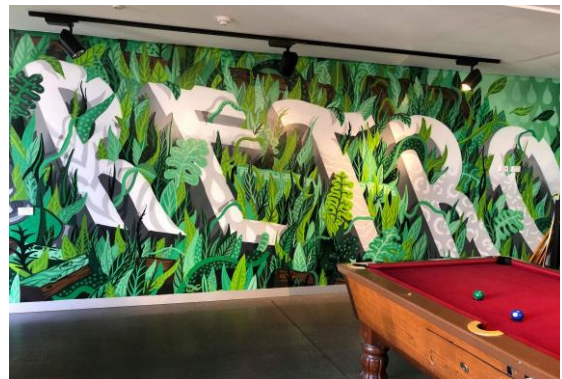
6.1.8 Continue to offer a diverse range of sporting and recreational opportunities with leisure services, programs and events to encourage active lifestyle choices.

6.2.14 Work in partnership with young people to co-design and maintain functional youth friendly spaces

These objectives are a perfect example of Benalla Rural City Council's ongoing commitment to make Benalla a place where young people want to be. It acknowledges that Benalla Rural City have a diverse range of young people who require different spaces and different opportunities to thrive in their community.

Young people are our future. Youth involvement and participation is crucial for a thriving and prosperous community.

Benalla Rural City Council
Plan 2017 -2021



- YOUTH STRATEGY

The Benalla Rural City Youth Strategy is separated into four different categories:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Youth Participation and Leadership
- Education and Employment
- Collaboration, Partnerships and Advocacy

Under Youth Participation and Leadership is a goal aimed at the funding and support of a youth space in Benalla Rural City. This goal consists of co-designing a local model with young people, considering opportunities for youth enterprise/youth training, seeking funding and partnership support, sourcing an appropriate space, activating a space and delivering programs. Effectively, the goal is to take the research completed in this project and bring it to life.

The youth space also correlates with other goals, as this would be a space that could cater to the LGBTQI+ group that is currently supported through the Youth Development team. A goal under Health & Wellbeing is to strengthen connections with LGBTQI+ young people and to help better understand their needs, having a safe space would really encourage this group to grow and would allow the opportunity for LGBTQI+ run events to be held.

Other goals where a youth space may support are:

- Promote activities, events and programs for young people in youth friendly ways.
- Provide intergenerational activities to connect people of different ages.
- Engage young people in a wide range of activities/events including sports, arts and culture, music, festivals and social and recreational activities.
- Consider ways to improve internet access and study spaces and support for young people.
- Increase opportunities for young people to develop leadership skills and build their capacity to be active citizens.

A youth space would help address many of the goals outlined in the Benalla Rural City Council Youth Strategy. A dedicated space for the young people of Benalla Rural City could lead to the development of new youth groups, and increased participation from current youth groups as it would offer a dedicated safe space to meet.

The space could also work to strengthen partnerships with key stake holders, as the youth space offers the opportunity to be used as a co working space with local youth organisations and services e.g. HOCUS (Hang Out and Catch Up Sometimes). Many organisations are located in other larger towns e.g. Wodonga and Wangaratta and struggle finding office space/private rooms to meet with clients when doing out reach work in Benalla Rural City. Benalla Rural City Council could consider offering this space to be let out during nonoperational youth space hours, to fully utilise the building at all times and with the possibility of incoming revenue from letting the space.

COSTS

- SET UP COSTS

Below is an estimate of the initial set up costs of the space and the continued running costs of Building B.

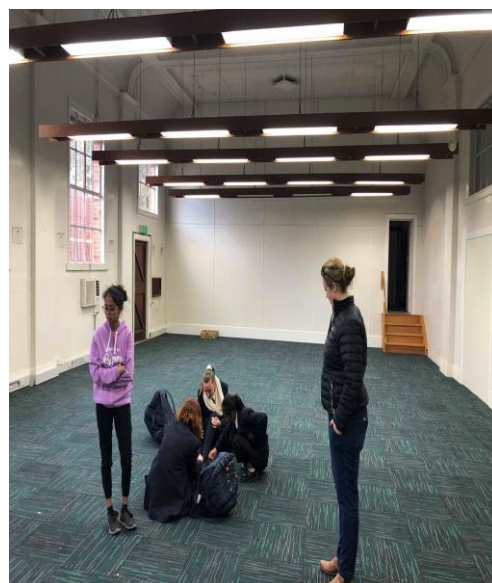
The proposed costs do not include the possibility of donated items, external funding and grants, co-locating or in kind support.

Initial Set Up	Cost
Refurbishment of space (removing old carpets, opening up stage space)	\$5000
Appliances (fridge, microwave)	\$650
Furniture (couches, beanbags, tables, chairs, desks)	\$3500
Activity (Xbox/PlayStation, computers, pool table, TV, DVD player, projector)	\$6500
Musical Equipment	\$1800
TOTAL:	\$17,450



- RUNNING COSTS

Ongoing Costs	Estimates
Rent	\$10,000 PA
Insurance	Public liability covered under Benalla Rural City Council insurance. Contents insurance to be quoted on possible equipment space could have.
Cleaning	\$5,000 PA
Utilities (Electricity, gas and water)	\$8,000 PA
NBN and Wi-Fi	\$1,000 PA
Rates	Exempt from rates
Other e.g. events, food	\$6,000 PA
TOTAL:	\$30,000 PA



The costs are based on a number of sources, including the Mansfield's Youth Centre's running costs, discussions with the owners of the building regarding rent and Benalla Rural City Council's own history leasing the space in the past. Costs associated with past rental history were updated to coincide with current rates for electricity and water costs etc.

Pictured: Back of stage and main area of building B.

BENEFITS OF A YOUTH SPACE

A youth space is a dedicated space for young people where they can feel safe, supported and have fun with friends. Currently Benalla Rural City does not have a dedicated space for young people and spaces where young people feel free to hang out with friends are few and far between.

A youth space aims to offer young people a place to hang out, it would cater for young people wanting to play a game of pool with their friends in the afternoon, it would also cater for those who want to access a private place to study and be able to connect to the internet and it would also cater for the young people who don't have access to a basic meal after school.

A youth space in Benalla Rural City would offer young people a safe and supported environment that young people can go to that will be staffed by experienced youth workers. Not only would the space aim to be a safe and inclusive place where young people can have fun with their peers, it would aim to support young people that present to the youth space with concerns, worries or in crisis. The trained youth workers would be able to support and aim to assist the young person with referrals to organisations that would be able to work one on one with the young person e.g. NESAY, NECAMHS.

A youth space would empower young people to create a space that they can feel proud of and that they can take ownership of.

By giving Benalla kids this opportunity it can create further outreach to kids in the district. One on one interaction can help kids in crisis (home, social, health.)"

"....focusing on youths that will grow up in the area will aid some of the problems Benalla has in the future. For example, tutoring night could help kids stay engaged in learning boosting chances of tertiary education. This in turn could help Benalla businesses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✚ The youth space should be located in the CBD of Benalla Rural City.
- ✚ An age/year level limit should be set for general open afternoons, current recommendation is Year 7 to Year 12 or age equivalent, maximum of 19 years of age.
- ✚ To be initially open two afternoons a week 3pm – 5.30pm, with reviews to take place regularly with possibilities of extended hours and days.
- ✚ At least one staff member to be present during all opening hours and also supported by volunteers.
- ✚ Possibility of the space being used by other services/organization outside of the youth space hours.
- ✚ The space should be used for youth led events, activities, workshops and information sessions outside of the normal opening hours.
- ✚ Access to technology should be provided e.g. computers, gaming, Wi-Fi
- ✚ Basic food/meal supplies to be provided.
- ✚ A maximum capacity should be set for open afternoons and events once a space is decided and leased.
- ✚ All young people should have to sign in and sign out of the youth space.
- ✚ A youth led committee should be created to organize events and workshops etc but to also create rules and guidelines of the space.
- ✚ The space should be an inclusive for all young people and would offer a safe space for LGBTQI+ young people, as well as CALD young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and breast feeding mothers.

CONCLUSION

This project has allowed young people to explore, create and imagine the possibilities of a youth space. While doing do so they have had the opportunity to develop a safe and inclusive youth space concept, raised awareness around the project through open sessions encouraging the voices of all young people, developed skills to promote and advertise their projects, create events and uses for the youth space and explored spaces and costs behind each space.

This project has shown a growing need that the young people of Benalla Rural City require a space to call their own, a space to be proud of and a somewhere that can support with the requests for more activities and event for young people.