

## **Eurobodalla Shire Council Public Access presentation 07/05/2024**

### **Programs**

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed supporters of youth empowerment, I'm honoured to address you today to shed light on the transformative work carried out by PCYC. Firstly, I'd like to tell you about a variety of mission-driven programs that are leaving a profound imprint on our youth. These initiatives embody the ethos of resilience, empowerment, and cultural celebration, resonating deeply with young individuals across our nation.

Firstly, let me introduce **Nations of Origin**, a dynamic program that involves sports, culture, education, and leadership. Annually, during NAIDOC week, over 1,500 Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth come together to represent their Aboriginal Nations in sports like Rugby League, Football fives, Basketball, Netball, and Gymnastics. This year, the event is held in Western Sydney, where young athletes will showcase their talents, fostering reconciliation and celebrating Australia's diverse Indigenous culture. To ensure the participation of our youth, we seek your support through grant funding and fundraising endeavours to take our Yuin teams to this year's event.

Additionally, our commitment to crime prevention is paramount. Through close collaboration with NSW Police, we deploy proactive measures to keep our communities safe. By offering programs that actively engage youth and provide constructive outlets for their energy and talents, we aim to deter involvement in criminal activities, ultimately reducing crime rates and fostering safer neighbourhoods for everyone. Together, with the support of our dedicated partners and stakeholders, we continue to invest in the well-being and future success of our youth, ensuring that they have every opportunity to thrive and contribute positively to society.

**Fit For Life** steps in as an early intervention program, targeting at-risk youth aged 10 to 17. Through a focus on physical fitness, nutrition, and social engagement, this program strives to enhance overall well-being and steer youth away from negative behaviours, fostering healthier choices and lifestyles.

**Fit For Work**, on the other hand, offers a transformative experience for 16 to 17-year-olds, spanning 10 weeks and focusing on life skills development and qualifications attainment. By addressing disengagement from education and employment, Fit For Work equips young people with the resilience and skills necessary for meaningful employment and positive life trajectories.

**Fit For Service** emerges as a beacon for young individuals aspiring to careers in the Police, defence force or emergency services. With mentorship and career pathways, this program not only cultivates interest but also provides tangible steps towards fulfilling careers in these vital sectors.

Our **Blue Star** Leadership programs stand out as a testament to nurturing leadership qualities in young people across NSW. Through camps, challenges, workshops, and community service, participants embark on a journey of self-discovery and skill-building, emerging as empowered leaders within their communities.

Recently, we had the **Wolf Camp Program**, a local innovative collaboration between PCYC and Mystery Bay Cottages. By integrating survival skills, storytelling, and land stewardship, this program equips youth with invaluable life skills, fostering resilience, empathy, and a profound connection to themselves and country.

In conclusion, these programs represent the pinnacle of youth empowerment, cultural celebration, and community engagement. As we continue to support and champion these initiatives, we pave the way for a brighter, more inclusive future for our young generation.

**Allow me to shed light on where PCYC Far South Coast stands today:**

We find ourselves amidst a transition period, navigating uncharted waters as we bid farewell to a reliance on major grant funding that has sustained us for years.

While we express gratitude for the successful applications securing smaller and local grants, which uphold our mission work, the reality of transitioning to a fee-for-service model presents its own set of challenges, particularly in the absence of a dedicated Club facility.

Yet, despite these hurdles, we persist. We continue to forge partnerships with local services, pooling resources to offer a diverse range of activities and programs. Our collaboration with sporting groups further enriches our offerings, ensuring that the community remains at the heart of all we do.

However, it's undeniable that the absence of major funding makes it necessary for us to adjust. We find ourselves with reduced staffing, a narrower scope of activities, and a period of contemplation. It's a time for us to test the waters, to discern which programs and activities resonate most with our community while maintaining economic responsibility.

This transition, though challenging, presents an opportunity for growth and evolution. It compels us to innovate, to adapt, and to reaffirm our commitment to serving the needs of our community, even in the face of adversity.

As we embark on this journey, I invite each of you to join us in our endeavours. Together, let us navigate these waters with resilience, determination, and an unwavering dedication to the well-being of our community.

**Finally, I must address the crucial topic of a Fit For Purpose venue.**

For years, the aspiration for a "fit for purpose" venue has been a persistent dream within our organisation. It's been a topic of discussion, a vision on the horizon, but until now, it's remained just that—talk. I stand before you with a renewed determination, a commitment to transform this dream into a reality. It's worth noting that among the 66 PCYC Clubs across NSW, the Far South Coast stands out as the only region without a Club of its own.

I am wholeheartedly dedicated to securing a safe and purpose-suited venue, or even two, for PCYC. It's imperative that we move beyond mere discussions and take tangible steps towards providing our programs with the environment they need to thrive. Without a dedicated Club, we find ourselves navigating through various venues and locations, searching for spaces that are not only suitable but also available to accommodate our programs.

But let me emphasise this: we need more than just spaces; we need a Club—a home for our community, a hub where our programs can flourish, and our members can truly feel connected. It's not just about finding a place; it's about creating a sense of belonging, a place where opportunities abound, and potentials are realised.

So today, I urge each one of you to join me in this pursuit. Let's channel our collective energies, resources, and determination towards finding and establishing our much-needed Club. Together, we can turn our long-held dream into a tangible reality, ensuring that PCYC fulfills its mission to empower our youth and community to reach their full potential.

As we conclude, I wish to express sincere appreciation for your enduring support and dedication to the well-being of our youth. Our shared purpose is to positively shape lives across generations, offering young people safe and empowering environments to thrive. With our collective efforts, we can forge a lasting impact and empower the leaders of tomorrow. Let us unite in this endeavour, for together, we are agents of profound transformation for all.