



Central Coast Council
**Draft Central Coast
Youth Strategy**

2026-2031 Summary

Central
Coast
Council

Central Coast Youth Strategy Summary

Young people on the Central Coast are navigating increasing pressures related to mental health, education, employment, housing affordability and rising costs of living. At the same time young people told us they want to feel heard, included and supported to build positive futures in the place they call home.

The Central Coast Youth Strategy 2026-2031 provides a clear, coordinated direction for Council and partners to work alongside young people. It centres youth voices, strengthens equity and wellbeing and supports positive outcomes now and into the future.

This Strategy places young people at the heart of community life, recognising their strengths, aspirations and potential as key to the region’s future.



Our vision for young people on the Central Coast

A Central Coast where every young person feels valued, supported and empowered to thrive.

Young people shared a vision of a region where they experience belonging, wellbeing, opportunity, connection, a strong voice and sense of pride.

- **Belonging** – inclusive, respectful communities where identity and diversity are embraced.
- **Wellbeing** – safe places and accessible supports that strengthen mental, physical and emotional health.
- **Opportunity** – clear pathways to education, training, jobs, creativity and leadership.
- **Connection** – vibrant spaces and experiences that foster friendships and community.
- **Voice** – genuine influence in decisions, programs and spaces that affect their lives.
- **Pride** – a strong sense of identity and confidence in calling the Central Coast home.

Our vision places young people at the centre of community life, recognising their strengths and potential as key to the region’s future.



Why this strategy matters

Young people are experiencing rapid social, economic and environmental change. Without intentional planning and collaboration, these pressures risk limiting opportunities and wellbeing.

This Strategy responds directly to what young people told us matters most. It provides a shared framework for Council, partners and the community to work together to improve outcomes for young people and ensure their voices contribute to shape decisions that affect their lives.

Developed with young people

The Youth Strategy has been shaped through extensive engagement with young people across the Central Coast alongside local data, evidence and collaboration with community partners and service providers.

Young people shared their lived experiences, priorities and aspirations through surveys, workshops and targeted engagement activities. Their voices sit at the centre of this Strategy and inform its vision, focus areas and goals.

Guiding principles

Our work is grounded in a set of guiding principles that reflect what young people told us matters most. These principles shape how we plan, make decisions and work alongside young people across the Central Coast.



Youth Voice at the Centre

Young people's voices, ideas, lived experiences and leadership are central to our decisions, programs and advocacy for youth-related initiatives.



Equity, Inclusion and Diversity

Every young person regardless of background, identity, ability, gender or circumstance has the right to feel safe, respected, valued and able to participate fully in community life.



Connection, Belonging and Wellbeing

Strong relationships, cultural safety and community connection are essential to building resilience, emotional wellbeing and fosters positive youth development.



Opportunity and Growth

Young people should have equitable access to learning, creativity, employment and pathways that support a positive future.



Partnership and Collaboration

Council, community organisations, the youth services sector, schools, local industry, tertiary education providers and young people work together to create meaningful and lasting change.



Accountability and Transparency

We commit to clear actions, shared responsibility and ongoing improvement, ensuring young people can see the impact of our work.

Our focus areas

The six focus areas capture what matters most to young people on the Central Coast and sets the direction for this Strategy. They reflect the lived experiences, priorities and aspirations shared by young people.



Belonging, inclusion and voice

Young people belong, are heard and influence change

Young people feel welcome and included in their community and have genuine opportunities to speak-up, be heard and influence decisions and issues that affect their lives.



Wellbeing, safety and respect

Young people feel safe, respected and valued in everyday life

Young people feel safe and respected at home, online and in the community, and can access spaces, services and information that support positive mental, physical and emotional wellbeing.



Opportunities, skills and secure futures

Young people are ready for work, life and what comes next

Young people can build skills and access education, training and employment pathways that support independence, financial wellbeing and long-term security.



Active, connected and affordable living

Young people can live well locally and stay connected

Young people can access transport, housing, activities and services that make it easier to connect with others, participate in community life and maintain an active lifestyle.



Sustainable and green futures

Young people lead a sustainable future

Young people are empowered to care for the environment, respond to climate challenges and play an active role in shaping a sustainable future for their community.



Strong partnerships and sector leadership

Young people are supported by a vibrant, connected and well-led youth sector

Young people benefit from coordinated services, collaborative partnerships and shared learning across the Central Coast, with Council playing a leadership role in strengthening connections and sector capacity.

Our goals

What success looks like

Over the next five years, the Central Coast Youth Strategy aims to achieve the following outcomes for young people across the region. These outcomes reflect what young people told us matters most and guide Council's actions, partnerships and decision-making.



Belonging, inclusion and voice

Outcome

Young people experience genuine inclusion and influence in their communities.

We will know this is happening when:

- young people feel welcomed, valued and able to participate fully in community life
- diversity is actively supported, and inclusive environments are strengthened
- youth voice and co-design shape decisions, programs and places that affect young people.



Wellbeing, Safety and Respect

Outcome

Young people experience improved wellbeing and feel safe and respected in everyday life.

We will know this is happening when:

- young people feel safe, respected and supported across home, online and community settings
- services, spaces and information respond to young people's wellbeing needs
- young people help shape approaches to safety, wellbeing and respect.



Opportunities, skills and secure futures

Outcome

Young people are supported to build skills, confidence and pathways to the future.

We will know this is happening when:

- education, training, and employment pathways are visible and accessible
- young people are better equipped with practical life skills and career readiness
- young people are supported toward financial security and independence.



Active, connected and affordable living

Outcome

Young people can participate fully in community life and afford to live locally.

We will know this is happening when:

- young people can access affordable activities, spaces and opportunities
- transport and travel options support young people's mobility and independence
- housing and cost-of-living pressures for young people are better supported.



Sustainable and green futures

Outcome

Young people are active contributors to a sustainable and resilient future.

We will know this is happening when:

- young people are involved in environmental action and sustainability initiatives
- access to nature and green space is supported
- young people are climate-aware and equipped to respond to future challenges.

Together these focus areas and goals turn what young people have told us matters most into shared commitments that drive action and lasting change across the Central Coast.

Council's role

Council plays a role in creating the conditions that support young people to thrive. This includes:

- advocating for young people's needs and priorities
- embedding youth voice in decision-making across Council
- designing inclusive spaces, services and programs
- working in partnership with community organisations, government and the youth sector.

This Strategy sets Council's clear direction for how we prioritise, invest and work with partners to improve outcomes for young people over time.

Looking ahead

The Central Coast Youth Strategy 2026-2031 sets Council's direction over the next five years, guiding priorities, decision-making and investment to support young people across the region.

Progress will be monitored over time with ongoing engagement helping to ensure the Strategy remains responsive, informs Council's work and delivers meaningful, measurable outcomes for young people on the Central Coast.





Central Coast Council

2 Hely St / PO Box 20 Wyong NSW 2259

P 02 4306 7900

W centralcoast.nsw.gov.au

ABN 73 149 644 003

April 2026