FREE RESOURCE FOR COUNCIL YOUTH OFFICERS

Youth Consultation Planner

A 15 minute traffic light check for your next youth consultation. See whether it breaks before you ask, while you ask or after you ask, and what to fix first.

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YOUTH LEADERSHIP ACADEMY AUSTRALIA
INSPIRING YOUNG LEADERS, IGNITING CHANGE

Built from conversations with council youth teams across Australia. Use it, copy it, share it.

Consultation breaks at three points.

The survey goes out through schools and socials. A few dozen responses come back, mostly from the same young people who answered last time. The report gets written anyway, and everyone knows it is thin.

When we talk with council youth officers about consultation, the problems show up at one of three stages. Most councils are solid at one and quietly losing young people at another.

Before you ask

Nobody has said what decision the input feeds, who will act on it, or what is off the table. Young people can tell, and give little.

While you ask

Long written surveys, council language, sessions at times and places that suit staff. The confident few answer and everyone else stays quiet.

After you ask

Young people never hear what happened to their input. They remember, and so do their friends the next time council asks.

How to use this check

- Think about your last consultation, or the one you are planning.
- For each sign on page 3, colour one light: **green** if it is true every time, **amber** if it is true some of the time, **red** if it is not happening yet.
- Give each stage an overall colour in the summary at the bottom of page 3.
- Then ask a manager or two or three young people to do the same. Where your colours differ is where the conversation is.

This check works for youth strategies, youth plans, Youth Week input, facility and space planning, and any project where council wants to hear from people aged 12 to 25.

The traffic light check

○ True every time ○ Some of the time ○ Not yet

Sign	G	A	R
Before you ask purpose and planning			
You can name the decision this input will feed, and when it will be made.	○	○	○
Someone with authority has agreed to respond to what young people say.	○	○	○
Young people are told up front what council can and can't change.	○	○	○
You know which young people you didn't hear from last time.	○	○	○
While you ask reach and method			
Most input comes from in-person sessions, not a long written survey.	○	○	○
Sessions happen where young people already are, at times that suit them.	○	○	○
At least half of participants are not student leaders or already involved with council.	○	○	○
Young people get something back for their time: a skill, food, a certificate or paid time.	○	○	○
After you ask report back and follow-through			
Every participant hears what happened within two weeks of the last session.	○	○	○
Young people helped make sense of the results before they were written up.	○	○	○
Your report to council uses young people's own words.	○	○	○
Past participants could name one thing that changed because they took part.	○	○	○

Before you ask
○○○

While you ask
○○○

After you ask
○○○

What your colours mean

Your overall picture tells you how much your consultation will give you. Your reddest stage tells you where to start.

Mostly green
STRONG

Young people can see why they are being asked and what comes back. Your job now is depth and reach: test whether the voices you're missing are being heard, and keep the report-back habit as staff change.

Mixed
PATCHY

Most councils sit here. Responses come in, but they lean towards the same young people and the same answers. Fix your reddest stage first and leave the rest for now.

Mostly red
RETHINK

Another survey is unlikely to give you what you need. Step back, tie the work to one decision, and plan to meet young people in person. Page 5 shows how councils usually get there.

If one stage is reddest

Reddest stage	What it usually means	Start with
Before you ask	Young people can tell nothing much hangs on their answers, so they don't give much.	One decision, one date, said out loud before you ask anything.
While you ask	Low response, short answers and the same confident few speaking for everyone.	Face to face sessions where young people already are, with something to take away.
After you ask	Young people gave their views last time and heard nothing, so this time they pass.	A report back within two weeks, every time.

Compare your colours with young people's

If you coloured a sign green and young people coloured it red, believe them. The gap between what staff think happens and what young people experience is the most useful thing this check will show you.

Your colours are the start. Here's the next step.

If any stage came up red, you are in good company. The gaps are usually the same: unclear purpose, the same few voices, and nothing coming back to young people. They are hard to fix from behind a survey, which is why many councils bring young facilitators in to run the consultation with them.

Youth-led consultation

Sessions in schools and the community, designed and delivered by young facilitators. Every participant leaves with a skill, and you get the findings, the quotes and a report you can take to council. For councils red on While you ask or After you ask.

Youth Summit

One day, 100 to 200 young people from every school in your area, pitching ideas to the mayor. It doubles as consultation for a youth strategy. For councils that need breadth fast.

Book a free consultation review

Send us your colours and we'll talk them through with you: what's driving them, what has worked at councils in a similar spot, and which option fits your timeline and budget. No obligation, and you keep the advice either way.

BOOK YOUR REVIEW AT YLAAUS.COM/PROGRAMS/ENQUIRY

97%

of young people in our programs feel more empowered to create change in their community

91%

reported a deeper sense of purpose and responsibility in the University of Melbourne framework pilot

Writing a youth strategy? Consultation sessions in schools book out by term, so get in touch early.

Email **info@ylaaus.com** or visit **ylaaus.com/programs/community**. If you need anything else, reach out.