

7.2 MONASH YOUNG PERSONS REFERENCE GROUP (MYPRG)

Responsible Committee: Monash Young Persons Reference Group

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- 1) *Endorses the suggested changes to MYPRG Terms of Reference for 2020, as outlined in the report, which includes a change of name of the Monash Young Persons Reference Group to the Monash Youth Committee.*
- 2) *Notes the resignation of Mr Kevin Tse, Ms Rosie Chau, Ms N Evans, Ms Natalia Kelly-Gerreyn, Mr Bowen Lai, Mr Devendra Singh, Ms Cheryl Ou, and Mr Tim Ziguras as members from the Monash Young Persons Reference Group and acknowledges their contributions to the City of Monash.*
- 3) *Endorses the appointment of Ms Shreeya Kalagotla, Ms Vrinda Mahesh, Ms Karthik Murali, Ms Tatyana Wilson, Ms Jazzy Maddie, Mr Wesley Chen and Ms Anna Zhang to the Monash Young Persons Reference Group.*
- 4) *Notes the achievements of the MYPRG for 2019.*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to -

- highlight the current work of the MYPRG
- note the resignation of eight young people from the MYPRG; Mr Kevin Tse, Ms Rosie Chau, Ms N Evans, Ms Natalia Kelly-Gerreyn, Mr Bowen Lai, Mr Devendra Singh, Ms Cheryl Ou and Mr Tim Ziguras; and
- seek Council's appointment of seven new members Ms Shreeya Kalagotla, Ms Vrinda Mahesh, Mr Karthik Murali, Ms Tatyana Wilson, Ms Jazzy Maddie, Mr Wesley Chen and Ms Anna Zhang.

BACKGROUND

In 2006 a proposal was put forward by one of Monash's young people, Sankaran Kasynathan to enhance Council's official recognition of young people's views through the establishment of a Reference Group. On 18 July 2006 Council resolved that it "Establishes a young person's advisory committee, to be called the Young Persons Reference Group." The MYPRG has met monthly since March 2007. The advisory committee has two broad objectives as follows:

- a) To function as a consultation panel of young people that provides input into the development of Council policy and planning frameworks.
- b) To act as a conduit for the positive promotion of young people's ideas and achievements.

DISCUSSION**Recommended Changes for Terms of Reference (ToR) 2020 (attached)**

Monash Youth Committee are proposing a number of changes to its ToR with the primary ones being:

- Name change to Monash Youth Committee
- Extended membership from 21 to 23 (including two Councillors)
- Changes to responsibilities for roles in the group
- Greater accountability with regard to attendance to meetings

The name change from Monash Young Persons Reference Group to Monash Youth Committee resulted from an internal discussion within the group, initiated by the Chairperson, to make the name more youth friendly. The group believes that the name Monash Youth Committee is descriptive and better identifies the group that they belong to, especially when talking to their peers.

MYPRG is seeking an increased membership of two to encourage additional leadership and mentoring opportunities for young people. Increasing the membership may also assist with improved attendance at meetings.

It should be noted that all recommendations have been developed by the Monash Youth Committee's Executive Members (leadership group) and approved by a quorum vote at MYPRG meeting.

Achievements for 2019

The MYPRG met monthly during 2019. This provides both an opportunity for Council and other organisations to consult with the group on various topics as well as an opportunity for the members to develop their skills and have a voice about the issues important to the young people in Monash.

In 2019, the MYPRG has undertaken the following:

- Facilitated an Eastern Region Youth Council dinner inviting young people from other Councils to network and talk about issues impacting young people in different municipal regions. The Mayor of the City of Monash attended the dinner and spoke to the young people about the value of community involvement. Young People attended from Whitehorse, Knox and Maroondah Councils. A follow up meeting is planned for February 2020.
- Developed welcome packs for refugee and newly arrived migrant young people who live in the City of Monash through South East Community Links. MYPRG is exploring partnerships with local Rotary groups to further establish the project. Items in the pack include a Monash Community Directory, school materials, vegemite and a hand written card welcoming each person to the City of Monash.
- Developed a community transport survey where it received 100 responses. Issues identified from the survey were accessibility, punctuality and visibility of bus stops. This information has been used to provide feedback to Public Transport Victoria.

- Attended a dinner with Monash Councillors and the Executive Leadership Team to celebrate the success of Monash being nominated by the Federal Government as future location for *headspace*. MYPRG and Monash Council have been advocating for a *headspace* service for many years. MYPRG had been active in the campaign facilitated through Council during this time. MYPRG has also been active writing numerous letters to Federal Members of Parliament voicing its concerns about young people and mental health in the City of Monash.
- The current chair of MYPRG was recognised for his volunteer work in the Monash Community winning the Sir John Monash Youth Leadership Award for 2019.

The current focus areas for MYPRG are:

- a) Environment and recycling; and
- b) Building better connections with both youth advisory groups in the eastern region and with secondary schools in Monash.

The MYPRG will build on its understanding and knowledge of these focus areas and explore opportunities to raise awareness, support advocacy campaigns and/or partner with organisations to create change in the Monash community.

Members for endorsement or reappointment

At the end of 2019 MYPRG received eight resignations predominately related to committee members increasing work, school or university commitments. There was another instance where the young person moved away from Monash.

To fill vacancies, the MYPRG continually seek membership from young people aged 15 –25 who live, go to school, or work in the City of Monash. Ms Shreeya Kalagotla, Ms Vrinda Mahesh, Mr Karthik Murali, Ms Tatyana Wilson, Ms Jazzy Maddie, Mr Wesley Chen and Ms Anna Zhang were successful in their application for MYPRG membership and are seeking appointment to the group.

As a result of the resignations and appointments contained in this report, the recommendations regarding changes to the Terms of Reference including the increase in membership, the 2020 group will have eighteen endorsed members from the community. The two Councillors who are currently members are Cr Rebecca Paterson and Cr Shane McCluskey increase the total representation to 20 members on the MYC. There will be three places available for new MYC members in 2020 if the proposal to increase membership numbers is endorsed.

CONCLUSION

The MYC continues to represent young people's views and provides an opportunity to include young people in Council's consultation processes. In addition, it enables Council to raise the profile of the positive achievements and contributions made by young people within the Monash community.