



## **YOUTH COUNCIL GUIDELINES FOR BUDDY GROUPS**

### **CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO**

The City of Greater Bendigo's vision is *"Greater Bendigo celebrates our diverse community. We are welcoming, sustainable and prosperous. Walking hand-in-hand with the traditional custodians of this land. Building on our rich heritage for a bright and happy future"*.

The City aspires to deliver this vision by being a values-driven organisation that is guided by six values: *We Lead, We Learn, We Contribute, We Care, We Respond, and We Respect*. These values underpin the way Councillors, staff, volunteers and Youth Councillors conduct themselves.

### **YOUTH COUNCIL PURPOSE**

The City of Greater Bendigo Youth Council is an advisory and advocacy committee whose role is to represent the voice of young people who live, work and/or study in the City of Greater Bendigo (the City). Youth Council achieves this by:

- + Providing advice to the City of Greater Bendigo Council on plans, strategies, policies and projects so that they better align to the needs of young people;
- + Engaging with young people to identify their priorities; and
- + Advocating on issues that directly impact young people.

### **BUDDY GROUPS: PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Youth Council Buddy Groups is to help make new Youth Councillors feel welcome, supported, and safe; and to help new Youth Councillors understand Youth Council's processes and functions.

Youth Council Buddy Groups are essential informal peer to peer mentoring. Peer to peer mentoring is reciprocal; everyone gets something out of each interaction. As a Buddy you don't have to be an expert, but you should be a role model, act with integrity, be honest, reliable, non-judgemental and be approachable. Ultimately, Buddy Groups should create stronger connections between Youth Council members.

### **BUDDY GROUPS: OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Youth Council Buddy Groups are:

- To provide a safe environment for each Youth Councillor without fear of judgment, misunderstanding, or harassment.
- To increase social connectedness and create a sense of belonging within a supportive peer network.



- To provide positive role models, positive peer influences and opportunities which help Youth Councillors develop a positive sense of self-acceptance, high self-esteem, confidence, and professionalism.
- To empower Youth Councillors so that they can participate in and contribute to Youth Council activities.
- To improve each Youth Councillor's understanding of Youth Council's role and purpose.
- To improve debate and collective decision making in Youth Council briefings and meetings.
- To improve each Youth Councillor's overall experience.
- To foster thinking about how each Youth Councillor's experience can positively impact their future careers and opportunities.

## **BUDDY GROUPS: GUIDELINES**

The below guidelines for Buddy Groups are general suggestions. Each group will meet and interact according to their collective circumstances and requirements.

### Buddy Groups - Meetings:

Buddy Groups should meet as often as members think necessary and when it suits all members. Meetings should be in a space that is safe and comfortable for all members, such as a public space (eg Library or café) or YO Bendigo. Meetings can also be online if this suits all members of the group.

Meetings should be arranged by regular communication on an agreed platform such as text or social media. Communications between meetings by Buddy Group members is recommended. It is also recommended (where possible) that Buddy group meetings occur on weeks when there are no Youth Council briefings or meetings, so that Buddy Group meetings provide a touch point between official Youth Council activities.

### Buddy Groups - Discussion Topics:

Discussions between Buddy Group members should be mostly focused on Youth Council related matters. Although discussions on topics outside of Youth Council are encouraged if these topics assist with building rapport between members, assist with building confidence, skills and knowledge; especially if they indirectly assist with being a Youth Councillor.

Youth Council related topics include (but are not limit to):

- Briefing / Meeting agenda items.
- Meeting procedure and etiquette.
- Moving and seconding motions.
- Voting on motions.
- The difference between briefings and meetings.

# CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO Youth Council

- Other Youth Council opportunities such as advisory committees, attending events, etc.
- Youth Council priorities and working groups.
- Youth Council processes and purpose.
- Youth Council Terms of Reference.
- Expectations – reading, attendance, participation in meetings, etc.
- Apologies and Leave of Absence.
- How to balance school/university/TAFE, work, Youth Council, and other commitments.
- How the City of Greater Bendigo works.
- How Council works.
- How Local government works.

Discussions can also include broad topics such as:

- Sharing knowledge and experience.
- Career & professional information.
- Being a role model.
- Modelling of 'how to get something done'.
- Being a sounding board.
- Encouragement, guidance and providing constructive feedback.

Personal discussions can only happen if all members are comfortable and approve these discussions and should respect members' privacy.

## Buddy Groups - Expectations and Behaviours:

All Buddy Group members and Buddy Group meetings are considered Youth Council activities, therefore are subject to City of Greater Bendigo policies, standards, values and behaviours. This means that all Buddy Group activities must be conducted in a manner that is respectful, professional, and safe for all members at all times.

## **REVIEW OF YOUTH COUNCIL GUIDELINES FOR BUDDY GROUPS**

The City of Greater Bendigo Youth Council will review and update its Guidelines for Buddy Groups annually at the beginning of each year.

