

TO: INVERCARGILL CITY COUNCIL
FROM: CHIEF EXECUTIVE
MEETING DATE: TUESDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2016

INVERCARGILL YOUTH COUNCIL

Report Prepared by: Mary Napper, Community Development Manager

SUMMARY

The Invercargill Youth Council has completed a very successful year. A copy of their annual report is attached. The Co-Chairpersons will attend the Council meeting to speak their report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the report be received.

IMPLICATIONS

1.	<i>Has this been provided for in the Long Term Plan/Annual Plan?</i> N/A
2.	<i>Is a budget amendment required?</i> N/A
3.	<i>Is this matter significant in terms of Council's Policy on Significance?</i> N/A
4.	<i>Implications in terms of other Council Strategic Documents or Council Policy?</i> N/A
5.	<i>Have the views of affected or interested persons been obtained and is any further public consultation required?</i> N/A
6.	<i>Has the Child, Youth and Family Friendly Policy been considered?</i> Yes

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A.

YOUTH COUNCIL 2016

The Annual Report was drafted by Ollie Mortenson, Community Development Officer responsible for the Youth Council following direction of members. The members then critiqued the report and provided comments for inclusion. The report provides an excellent overview of the breadth of involvement and the achievements of the 2016 Youth Council.



2016 Invercargill City Youth Council Report

The 2016 Invercargill City Youth Council (ICYC) has had a successful year. An unprecedented number of applications for the 2016 ICYC were received. In total thirty-three applications were received and accepted. Due to the large numbers accepted the 2016 ICYC trialed a new model of Youth Council structure. This saw two Youth Councils operate. The two Youth Councils were made from student's year 11 and under and student's year 12 and over. The two Youth Councils were named respectively the Unders' and the Overs' for short.

The Overs' Youth Council had 19 members and the Unders' had 14 members. The Overs' Youth Council lost two members over the year who pursued employment opportunities. Each Youth Council had a mixture of gender, age, and experience. They would meet separately and discuss issues before coming together to report on the key findings and to discuss some topics as one group. Though the trial has definitely provided the opportunity for some of the younger ICYC members to find a civic voice it has not been without challenges. Often the two Youth Councils would come to different opinions about the same matter. This created an environment for healthy debate over the year and resulted in two submissions being prepared on several topics. It also demonstrates that we should never assume one voice speaks for all youth.

Committees were open to members from both Youth Councils and were seen as a good way for peer leadership opportunities, with the older and more experienced members imparting their knowledge and experience to the younger members. The 2016 Youth Council has had a few members involved for approaching four years and their experience, drive and passion for youth civic participation has inspired the younger members to wish to return to the youth council. This has become a real strength of the ICYC and can be seen through the continuation of projects and ideas over a couple of years. For example, Smoke Free Committee and the Brighter Invers Committee.

Another great achievement of the 2016 ICYC has been the rise in public profile. This has provided some answers to questions like, 'What does the Youth Council actually do?' This has seen the ICYC make headlines for the following topics; Smoke free Esk Street, New Entrance signs and the Candidates forum. Though this has at times been somewhat divisive, it has created conversation and civic participation. If civic participation is something that the Youth Council can offer then this can only be seen as a positive attribute in a time of declining civic participation. The youth have an opinion and wish for it to be heard.

The following is a description of some of the projects, achievements and activities that the 2016 ICYC have been involved in this year.

Smoke Free Esk Street

The Smokefree Esk Street Committee has been a long standing project of the ICYC. The committee was originally formed 2 years ago and each year new members have joined and carried on the work from previous years. 2016 saw the culmination of all of 2015's activities, including the delivery to Council of the survey results conducted on Esk Street in 2015. This survey found that there was real public interest in making Esk Street smoke free. The outcome was that staff would draft a Smoke Free Public Places Policy for presentation to the Council in early 2017.

"The ability to be able to discuss a well-known problem with the Invercargill City Council has been a great experience for all the members of the Smokefree Esk Street Committee. It was very eye-opening to see what the councillors agreed and disagreed with."

William Mason

Painting Your Future - Candidates forum

The Youth Council decided to run a candidate's forum for the 2016 candidates of the Invercargill City local government election. This was held in September and had a reasonably good turn-out. Although the media reported that Youth Councillors felt "belittled" by some of the comments of the candidates, overall Youth Councillors said they enjoyed the experience and it was interesting to be a part of a democratic process.

"Painting Your Future in my eyes was successful, however controversial. The learning experience was very rewarding."
Meg O'Connell

Youth Week

The 2016 Youth Week theme was "Giving Back is Giving Forward". In recognition of the Youth Week theme the Youth Week Committee teamed up with Innov8 Invercargill and ran a youth focussed Pecha Kucha evening. Speakers at the event included the Invercargill City Youth Council, Number 10, NRG Invercargill and the Makervengers.

"We organised and facilitated an event for Youth Week. The theme was 'Giving back is giving forward'. We teamed up with Innov8 Invercargill and ran a youth focussed short presentation event. My favourite speaker was the Makervengers."
Ashley Shearer

Leadership Workshop

The Leadership committee organised a workshop for youth around leadership. The event was held at the Ascot Hotel function centre. The committee organised two speakers, Anna Goble (ICC & Aotearoa Youth Leadership Institute) and Torrone Smith (Westpac), who spoke about their personal stories of being a young leader and offered advice for other aspiring young leaders. Forty youth from around the local community attended and the feedback received was very positive.

"This was a good event with fantastic speakers. I thought it was well organised and helped me realise what is needed to be a great leader."
Hayden Scott-Chambers

Southland Cancer Society - Smokefree Cars

The Southland Cancer Society asked the Youth Council to assist in organising an event to promote smoke free motoring. This saw the ICYC members hold events at James Hargest College, Verdon College and Aurora College. ICYC members tried to get as many students as they could into a smoke free car provided by GWD Toyota. Aurora College took the title with 34 students getting into the car, followed by Verdon with 26 students, and then James Hargest with 19 students. The ICYC were nominated for a Southland Trust Power award for their participation in this event.

"It was such a great opportunity for everyone who was involved, from the Cancer Society to GWD. The event went well. It was so good it got nominated for the Trust Power Awards. It would be good to do it again."
Calvin Jenkins

Youth Parliamentarians

Two ICYC members; Danielle Carson and Stephen Jones attended the 2016 Youth Parliament. The Youth Parliament happens every three years. Local politicians each select a youth representative to represent them at parliament. Over two days they get the opportunity to get a first-hand look at how parliament works. Danielle had a focus on local government and environment, while Stephen had a focus on transport. Danielle and Stephen ran a youth focused workshop as part of Youth Week to help canvas attitudes and opinions from local youth in preparation for the trip to Wellington.

“The Youth Parliament was one of the single most humbling experiences of my life. Youth Parliament is one of those opportunities that in a few single moments shaped and mould the person I am and my future goals. From sitting in our national house of leadership and justice, to working under the genuine passion of MP Ria Bond, Youth Parliament will be an experience I shall always hold dear.” **Danielle Carson**

Committee for a Brighter Invers – New Entrance signs

The Committee for a Brighter Invers is another committee that has carried on from 2015. The focus of this committee for 2016 has been the development of the idea of better signage at the entrances to the city. The committee created a project plan that identified how this project could move forward. This was presented to Council in July where the Council voted to continue with this project. This will be project will be progressed by the 2017 Committee for a Brighter Invers.

“A good and successful year in which our ideas (entrance signs) were approved by the Council, showing we must have done a good job!” **Joe Pritchard**

Gore Youth Council Interchange

Six Youth Council members: Aidan Murdoch, Ashley Shearer, Calvin Jenkins, Caitlin Smith, TJ Smith, & Quinn Holland attended the Gore Youth Councils Battle of the Youth Councils event. This competition saw each Youth Council compete in a number of different challenges. Unfortunately, IYCY were pipped at the post.

“The battle of the Youth Councils was a great experience and allowed both Councils to be involved in team building activities.” **TJ Smith**

South Island Youth Council Forum - # Activate

In April, four ICYC members; Danielle Carson, Georgia Purdue, Hamish Muhl, and Quinn Holland attended the inaugural South Island Youth Council forum in Christchurch. The forum had members from every South Island Youth Council. The morning session saw every youth council present what they did and projects they were involved in. The afternoon session had participants attend two workshops, one about how to use media effectively and the second on how to use social media effectively. Overall it was a very useful forum and members came away with some useful information and good ideas of possible future projects.

“It was a very enjoyable event. I learnt heaps from the two guest speakers and the play-ground was brilliant. Overall I had an amazing time and if I got the opportunity to go again I would.” **Quinn Holland**

UN Youth Dunedin

In June, four ICYC members; Keiren Perkins, Madison Flannery, Molly Haywood and Tully Paterson, attended the Otago Model United Nations event in Dunedin. The leadership event ran over two days and saw Youth Council members get involved in a mock UN debate. All members reported that it was a worthwhile experience for them.

“We were lucky enough to be given the opportunity to attend the UN Youth Dunedin event. This was a very beneficial event as we learnt all about Sustainable Development Goals and their impact on today’s society. We gained valuable skills and knowledge that we were able to bring back to Youth Council and the wider community.” **Molly Haywood & Madison Flannery**

UN Youth Declaration Auckland

Two Youth Council members, Aidan Murdoch and Elisapeta Kuresa attended the UN Youth Declaration in Auckland in April. Both found this was an invaluable experience and really enjoyed the opportunity to attend. The youth declaration is an annual event and results in a document which is presented to parliament providing youth views on key public policy.

“I was selected as one of only two youth councillors to attend the UN Youth Declaration of 2016 representing Invercargill. Youth Declaration gathered high school students from throughout the nation to collaborate in the creation of a declaration to be presented before parliament which indicates the political stance of New Zealand's youth. Along the way students are able to partake in politically educational seminars and activities which serve to enliven the cooperative, and leadership attributes participants and ranged from interviews with veteran MPs and experts in the field, to team bonding exercises. Attendees are separated into one of many different focus groups varying across a multitude of areas of government, mine being the Foreign Affairs group which encompassed issues of relations between New Zealand and foreign nations and our involvement in the UN. This was a group that, although vastly differed in their political views, we all gradually came to a consensus and were able to formulate a series of policies which were added to the final declaration with very little change being made in the final stages. Ultimately a strong bond was formed between me and my fellow 13 members of this group and this bond was one the most defining aspects of my Youth Declaration Journey. Through Youth Declaration I was able to witness a sampling of true politics at the government level. It was a monumental opportunity to gain experience in parliamentary politics and engage with fellow avid debaters and aspiring politicians.” **Aidan Murdoch**

Youth Week Awards

The Invercargill City Youth Council was proud to have 2 members receive national youth Week awards. Stephen Jones and Hayden Scott-Chambers received a Youth Week award for their contributions to youth leadership. In addition to the two individual awards the Youth Council in general also received a nomination for a Youth Week award.

“I thought this experience was really good and it was great to represent the Invercargill City Youth Council.” **Hayden Scott-Chambers**

“Both Hayden and I were very fortunate to be invited to Parliament to receive our National Youth Week awards. It was a fantastic experience with many inspirational youth from all parts of New Zealand attending.” **Stephen Jones**

Disc Golf

Unders' Youth Council Member Calvin Jenkins assisted in bringing the Disc Golf concept to the Youth Council's attention. Over the year the ICYC has heard from Disc Golf South and Healthy Families about the introduction of Disc Golf courses around Invercargill. The most favoured position is in Queens Park. The result of this consultation is that a committee will be formed to progress this project and assist Disc Golf South in the creation of a Disc Golf course.

“Disc Golf is a good idea. There was a lot of communication between the team bringing disc golf to Invercargill and the Youth Council. Hopefully we get it soon.” **Joe Pritchard**

Ministry of Youth Development funding

In May 2016 the ICYC were selected to be recipients of a grant of \$5000 to pursue a project that encouraged Youth Council members to engage in leadership, volunteering and mentoring opportunities. A committee group of existing members has recently been created to further develop this project for completion in 2017.

Submissions and Consultations

The Youth Council also made submissions and were consulted on their view points over a number of different topics including the following;

- Changes to the Invercargill Library
- SoRDs
- Healthy Families
- 2016/17 ICC Annual Plan
- Disc Golf
- Equity and Access for people with a Disability Policy

IYCC Members' Evaluation of the 2016 Year

Of the 30 remaining members 26 completed an evaluation form. The evaluation collected a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data about members' experience of the 2016 ICYC. The results of the evaluation showed that ICYC members rated their experience highly, with 70% of members surveyed rating their experience as 9 and above out of 10, with 7% rating their experience at the lowest rating of 7 out of 10. ICYC members felt they had an opportunity to express their opinions with 96% feeling they were listened to at Youth Council meetings. Furthermore, 88% of members' surveyed believed that the Invercargill City Council listened to the IYCC. Participation was improved on from previous years with 88% of surveyed members participating in a project team or on a committee. Comments about the mixing of the two groups (unders and overs) were mixed with some saying it was a great idea and others finding it cumbersome and fragmented. ICYC members said that they gained a whole lot of skills from attending ICYC including, public speaking, leadership, understanding local government, and gaining confidence.

Looking Forward

The 2016 ICYC amended their Terms of Reference on the lessons they learnt over the year and unanimously decided to set a limit of 25 members for the 2017 intake. There is the usual natural attrition of some members leaving to pursue further education and employment goals outside the region. There is still however a group of young people keen to remain on the Youth Council for 2017. Though it will be a smaller group it is promising to see that there remains a keen interest from members to return. This has undoubtedly been a strength of the ICYC over the past few years with ability to continue projects and themes from previous years. The 2017 ICYC is set to be busy again, especially with the Ministry of Youth Development grant and continuation of projects such as the entrance signage.

Unders' Chairpersons Comments

I have thoroughly enjoyed being a member of the Youth Council this year. Being a member has given me the chance to learn from the older members in order to develop and acquire new skills which I have been able to use at school and in my other extra-curricular activities. From the older members some of the things I have learnt are how to communicate ideas effectively, work as a team, encourage other members and build on my leadership skills. From being a chairperson of the 'unders' I have become more confident in sharing my opinion and encouraging others to have their say. I think that as a Youth Council we have been very successful this year. From Smoke Free Esk Street to the Youth Week Awards we have been able to fully involve ourselves in making the Invercargill area a better place for youth. Being a member last year I have been able to see the way that the splitting of the Youth Council had a positive impact on the amount of ideas that were being shared. For the 'unders' group in particular, being in a smaller group allowed everyone to feel more confident in contributing to discussions and therefore there was a greater variety and of ideas that we were able to bring forward when we meet as a full Youth Council.

Molly Haywood

My time being a chairperson on the Invercargill City Youth Council has been both exciting and knowledgeable. From planning events to include and interest youth, to travelling to places such as Dunedin, Christchurch and Auckland, the opportunities that came with being in the youth council are endless. I have learnt what it's like to be involved in politics, community groups and being a school rep. Youth council has been an amazing experience and I am sincerely grateful for the opportunity to make a difference in Invercargill.

Meg Laker

Being chairperson of the 2016 Unders' Youth Council has been a blast. I've met new people, learnt and discovered many new things about Invercargill, but most of all, I hope that I have made an impact on the ICYC. I have had an amazing opportunity to share my ideas with the youth council, a tradition that I hope will continue. The Invercargill City Youth Council has truly made me a better person, and given more opportunities than ever before. Thank you.

Hamish Muhl

Overs' Chairpersons Comments

Being a chairperson of the Youth Council this year has been a very rewarding experience and has been the pinnacle of my 4 years on the council. This year we have had one of the most active and motivated groups ever, each member encompassed their own skills which they all brought to every meeting. This year we have managed to successfully organize many events for youth involving; Youth Week, Leadership Workshop, a Youth Parliamentarian event and many more. Our hard work has been recognized through gaining a National Youth Week award nomination from the Ministry of Youth Development along with a \$5000 donation. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time on the Youth Council, it has given me many experiences that I will cherish forever. I would like to give a massive thank you to the Invercargill City Council, Mary and Ollie who have put in many hours to make sure the council is functioning and everyone who has helped us along our journey.

Stephen Jones

My year on the Youth Council has been a good experience and being elected as one of the three chairpersons half way through the year was a wonderful surprise. Being privileged enough to be the M.C for the Leadership Seminar was also an interesting experience. This year on the Youth Council I feel has been a very productive one, with many submissions put forward to the council on various policies. On top of that we have achieved, other successes such as a couple of our councillors starting to get the ball rolling on the smoke free Esk Street project. Whilst on the Youth Council this year I had the opportunity to attend the Otago U.N Youth event in Dunedin, this was a fantastic event to test out your debating, research skills and knowledge on world politics; I encourage anyone interested in pursuing the opportunity if it arises next year. Overall I feel my year on the Youth Council has been a great time and would be thrilled to be a councillor next year, if I am lucky enough to be chosen.

Keiren Perkins

In summary, this years' youth council was a rich and rewarding group to be a part of. The eagerness of almost all involved to join project teams, sub-committees, and present to council was unparalleled. In my 3 years of experience in the Youth Council, never has there been such change-making, such enthusiasm, and such team work. Many younger members were able to speak up and feel equal and confident amongst senior company, which I believe was a direct result of the success of the 'unders' and 'overs'. Everyone of all ages was immersed all year round in events and meetings outside of our formal fortnightly meetings, which was fantastic to see. If these trends continue to grow, we will see even more positive benefits of having an Invercargill City Youth Council, and begin to make even more change for not only youth, but for Invercargill as a whole.

Jack Shaw

Conclusions

This report outlines the key successes and projects completed over 2016 by the ICYC. It highlights an extremely successful year with including the trial of a new strategy employed to include the high number of applications for membership. ICYC members have gained some valuable learning from their experiences whether this be positively or through making mistakes. As staff supporting ICYC it is positive to see the growth within the individual members, as well as the excitement and passion that the young people have in trying to make Invercargill a truly better place. The ICYC provides a forum for Invercargill's Youth to become civically engaged in their city as well as providing an environment for positive youth development. The 2017 year again looks promising with many projects continuing.
