

# Nambucca Heads Think Tank Forums

Over the past 12 months we have spent time in the community listening, engaging and responding to some key issues affecting our young people. The project then came to a point where themes had started to repeat themselves and a community narrative about young people started to evolve, so it was time to get some very inspirational people together to brainstorm a way forward. Ideas and solutions that could make a long lasting and sustainable impact of young people and the generation coming up behind them.

The way we did this was by hosting five think tank forums with a wide representation from the Nambucca community. Community groups, organisations, government, parents, youth services and young people themselves all came together around a table and white boarded possible solutions, or elements of the solutions, that could be created and co-designed to tackle the hurdles faced by the youth of today and tomorrow.

Here is a rundown of some ideas & thoughts that emerged from each forum -:



## Forum One – Community Leaders

**Recognition & Achievements** – A way for outside school achievements to be recognised and celebrated within the school, community and workplace environment. A program or platform that highlights young people’s skills and successes and builds on them.

**Connection** – Something created that builds positive connection & engagement between young people, parents and employers that is long term and consistent. Help is needed in connecting young people to what drives them, assistance with identifying their passion or next pathway. Something that helps all kids – not just the pointy end or the high-performance end – everyone.

**Empowerment** – A project that has youth involvement & voice in every stage. A project that has youth led initiatives. Giving young people opportunities to gain soft skills, learn resilience and help them to build a foundation of self-value and worth. This could be by having them lead initiatives that make a difference or creating something for them which as a result increases their confidence and power to try new things.



## Forum Two – Young Leaders

**Careers & Different Life Paths** – A way that creates connection to people from different industries, where relationships can build naturally. Something that ex-students can be a part of to show the students of today what is possible even if you come from small town Nambucca. Something showing success in different ways – work, travel, TAFE, University

**New skills & Experiences** – Something with experiences, as it usually has a huge impact on a young person. Different education and career doors opened through community partnerships (example - SANDS partnership between youth workers, TAFE and the schools). New skills taught and more opportunities for young people to try different things and meet different people.

**Mentoring** – Having mentors or role models as part of a project/program that can help you find your passion or help shape who you want to become. Programs that involve community which can create connections for life.



## Forum Three – Uniting Leaders

**Mentoring** – A formal program that links young people with more role models in sporting clubs, Indigenous elders, potential employers, police networks. Businesses mentoring employability skills, connecting young people with business coaches.

**Connection** – A project that can help parents connect and engage with their young people, especially at key times in their lives when they are starting to make key decisions about who they are and what they want to be. Times when the young people are feeling vulnerable and uncertain about the future.

**Foundation** – A part of the project which gives local people and local businesses the ability to financially contribute to the young people’s success in life. Whether this be through sporting, education or leadership opportunities funds enabling hurdles to be removed.



## Forum Four – Youth Service Leaders

**Connection** – A project that can create natural connection – a chance for young people to expand their reach of possibilities and have something to strive for. An early intervention link & whole of community approach, before mental health issues take hold. Something that can share success stories. A connection made possible to those that want to volunteer or explore a career path.

**Peer to Peer Mentoring** – Something that creates connection between young people who are a few steps behind to those young people in front. A way that expands the young person’s positive circle of influence and have exposure to a diverse range of people.

**Life & Employability Skills** – Creative ways to learn more life skills. If we as a community create the environment and window of opportunity the young person may feel empowered to explore new ways of thinking.



## Forum Five – Parents

**Parental Engagement** – Opportunities to bring young people and parents together in an activity or learning a new skill together.

**Employment** – A project that promotes the young people in Nambucca to potential employers. This would help increase the chances of young people being employed. With so many incentives available businesses are still reluctant to employ due to the time it takes to train and being burnt in the past. A project that helps to re-build trust and relationship before they are employed may be an idea. Training on how to be successful in an interview or how to have good work ethics could be part of the project.

**Connection & Mentoring** – Naturally built in throughout the project in small steps (trust building, relationship building, learning a new skill, confidence building & employability preparation). A project where young people work alongside adults to achieve something.



### **So, what’s the next 3 months look like?**

We take all the information from these forums, and the last 12 months, and together we design something special for young people. We have listened and talked a lot and it is now time for action.

We will start to share our idea and look to partner with those that want to be a part of it.

We will have a community leadership advisory group appointed to keep us on track and in line with what we have learnt from you all.

We will include young people at every stage of planning, designing, acting and reflection to ensure that the project that comes to life will launch our young people into reaching their full potential and then continue to thrive for generations to come.