




Youth Health Forum

SUMMIT

CALL TO ACTION



“We have seen time and time again that health policy makers struggle to engage with young people in meaningful ways, be it in the use of existing health services or involving young people in authentic co-design.”

This is a sentiment that has been echoed throughout the 2021 CHF Youth Health Forum National Summit, our one-day online forum for youth health consumers.

The YHF National Summit brought together hundreds of youth advocates and young people from across Australia into a day of virtual discussions and solution finding, the aim of which were to discuss the health system as experienced by people aged 18 to 30.

This age group has been identified in our **“Life Transitions and Youth Pathways to Health services”** report as a “missing middle” in healthcare, with limited engagement in the health sector and worsening outcomes. Changes need to be made to the health system to ensure that young people are able to live their healthiest lives. For these changes to be effective and sustainable, we are directly engaging and listening to young health consumers who are most impacted by the system. To that end, the YHF national summit had some amazing discussions by young people on the issues they face in using Australia’s health systems. These discussions and the issues they raised were then used to fuel our open youth forum and develop the summit’s calls to action.

We identified some clear values that the young people in attendance held as key aspects of improving youth health. These values are the guiding principles of this call to action and the Youth Health Forums work.

The values the forum identified were:

- Equity
- Person focused care
- Sustainability
- Inclusivity
- Active Participation

Throughout the entire YHF summit, we discussed the concept of co-design, participation and what it entails. We identified that consumer participation and co-design were important aspects of service delivery, policy development and health research.

In particular, we elaborated on how co-design can be more accurately understood and differentiated its meaning to other forms of collaboration. The YHF has agreed to a working definition of co-design as: “Giving an equal role in all steps of a service design process, including defining the issues, solutions and methods to young health consumers who use those services”.

This definition is not definitive, but it is the working definition we use to ensure that when we say “co-design”, it will have a clear understanding.

Throughout the summit we discussed the future of youth healthcare and identified areas that needed to be improved, we then collaboratively developed headline and secondary recommendations that could be made to improve youth health outcomes.

You can find these 5 recommendations below:

HEALTH SERVICE NAVIGATION

Theme/Area of Focus	Headline Recommendation	Who can enact this
Health Service Navigation	The Youth Health Forum (YHF) is calling for the creation of a secular education role to teach school age young people about health systems navigation and use.	Federal Government State and Local Governments
	Secondary Recommendations	
	The YHF is calling for the introduction of novel ways of improving service navigation and holistic wellbeing with nurse navigators and peer social prescribing.	Federal Government State and Local Governments Primary Health Networks

RATIONALE

The Youth Health Forum is calling for the creation of a secular education role to teach school age young people about the navigation and usage of health systems. It is clear that young people struggle to navigate and use the health system in its current form.

In addressing this issue, it was agreed that instilling a functional understanding of the health system in an educational context would be an effective means for young people to be native users of Australia's health systems.

The Victorian state government recently announced that it would ensure that mental health services and support were available in all schools. This is very commendable, it makes the difficult task of getting help easier and we would like to see other jurisdictions use this model but include other aspects of health systems use.

We would also like to reiterate our call from the previous YHF report to introduce a nurse navigator program and call on the wider implementation of peer social prescribing as novel ways of improving health service navigation and holistic wellbeing.

The role of a nurse navigator would be effective in acting as a systems advisor and advocate for young people with long term chronic conditions. Particularly, this would be of great help in improving health outcomes of young people who lack the support from their family or community as they make their health transitions.

YOUTH VOICES IN GOVERNANCE

Theme/Area of Focus	Headline Recommendation	Who can enact this
Youth Voices in Governance	The YHF is calling for the creation of a National Youth commissioner.	Federal Government

Secondary Recommendations

In line with our previous report, YHF is calling for changes to the subsidisation of mental health services and the introduction of a youth healthcare card.

Federal Government
State and Local Governments

RATIONALE

One of the strongest concerns that came out of the 2021 YHF summit was the lack of youth voices in parliament and federal bodies, particularly on youth relevant issues.

The concern is that young people are not able to effectively be represented in the halls of power. With this, there is a need for a clear, experienced, and non-partisan advocate to champion the needs of young people at the parliamentary and federal level.

The creation of a full-time youth and future generations commissioner would go a long way to addressing this concern. It is recommended that the commissioner be based on the AHRC commissioners or use the example of the **Wellbeing in Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**. It would be a separate role from the AHRC Childs Commissioner in that it would focus on the ages of 18 to 30 to address the missing middle in representation.

This should also be supported with the embedding of young people with lived experience into the policy making teams of health and youth adjacent state and federal departments. It is also important to ensure that the development of frameworks for these organisations consult with young people.

The Youth Health Forum is placed to provide the young people and input, the challenge has been ensuring that it is whole of department engagement. This can be addressed by the development of governmental frameworks for engaging with young people in authentic collaboration.

We encourage the Department of Health and Health Ministers to engage with the Youth Health Forum as a pool of co-designers and youth leaders for this effort.

IMPROVING ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION

Theme/Area of Focus	Headline Recommendation	Who can enact this
Economic Participation	The YHF is backing the Raise the Rate campaign and calling on the federal government to raise the level of income support for young people.	Federal Government
	Secondary Recommendations In line with our previous report, YHF is calling for changes to the subsidisation of mental health services and the introduction of a youth healthcare card.	Federal Government

RATIONALE

The youth health forum is backing the Australian Council of Social Services' "Raise the Rate" campaign. This is to increase the base rate of Jobseeker and other income support streams to at least \$65 a day and index these payments in line with a living wage.

One of the most pressing struggles for the vast majority of young health consumers is the cost of healthcare and the limitations it imposes on economic participation. Young people have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 ;they have faced the most job losses and the slowest economic recovery. Raising the rate will ensure that the most disadvantaged young people are still able to access healthcare when they need it.

We encourage other organisations to back the "Raise the Rate" campaign and call on the government to listen to this timely callout.

We would also like to reiterate our previous calls for improving the affordability of healthcare.

The introduction of a healthcare concession card for young people will improve access to bulk billed services and ensure that people under 22 are included in thresholds and safety nets. This will improve the access to services for economically disadvantaged young people who would otherwise struggle.

We are also calling for adjustments to the psychology sessions available with the Medicare rebate. We recommend allowing young people the autonomy to determine whether they are receiving 10 fully-funded sessions (no gap), compared to the nationally-allocated 20 partly-reimbursed sessions. This will have no change in cost to the Government and its currently allocated model, but will increase access and flexibility for young people who cannot afford co-payments.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Theme/Area of Focus	Headline Recommendation	Who can enact this
Diversity and Inclusion	<p>The YHF is calling on the medical training colleges, peak medical and allied health bodies, and the Australian Medical Council to work with health consumers to establish accreditation standards for working with diverse communities.</p> <p>Secondary Recommendations</p> <p>The YHF is calling for the Introduction of LGBTQI+ questions on the census and other data capturing initiatives.</p> <p>We are also calling for the universal service guarantee to include mobile coverage across Australia and for the federal government to ensure that these obligations are fulfilled.</p>	<p>Medical training colleges, Allied health and medical bodies</p> <p>Federal Government</p>

RATIONALE

The Youth Health Forum is calling on the medical training colleges, peak medical and allied health bodies, and the Australian Medical Council to work with health consumers to establish accreditation standards for working with diverse communities.

At the YHF summit, it was acknowledged by the young people and service providers in attendance that more needs to be done to ensure that LGBTQI+, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse and, Disabled communities are represented in training. This is particularly relevant for young people within these communities as they will often have distinct needs when compared to other age cohorts.

We are calling on the relevant bodies to work with the Youth Health Forum and other youth and diversity focused organisations to ensure that there is a minimum standard for accreditation for primary and tertiary service providers who work in communities that have diverse populations.

We are also calling for the inclusion questions to accurately record the sexual orientation, gender diversity and variations of sex characteristics within the census and other record capturing data. This will mean that no-one is left behind in the planning of Australia's future as the current lack of data impacts the ability to plan inclusive health services.

The Youth Health Forum is endorsing Equality Australia's "Count Us In" campaign and calls on the federal government to make the changes requested before the next census.

We are also calling for the expansion of the Universal Service Guarantee to include mobile coverage across Australia and to ensure that telecommunications companies are fulfilling their obligations in the USG. As it currently stands, rural and remote communities can struggle when accessing healthcare without functional internet connections.

ACTING ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Theme/Area of Focus	Headline Recommendation	Who can enact this
Climate Change	The YHF is calling on the federal government to address the duty of care on climate change with a national strategy on climate, health and well-being for Australia.	Federal Government
	Secondary Recommendations	Federal Government State and Local Governments Primary Health Networks
	The YHF is calling for a strengthening of health systems in rural and regional communities in preparation for climate change impacts	

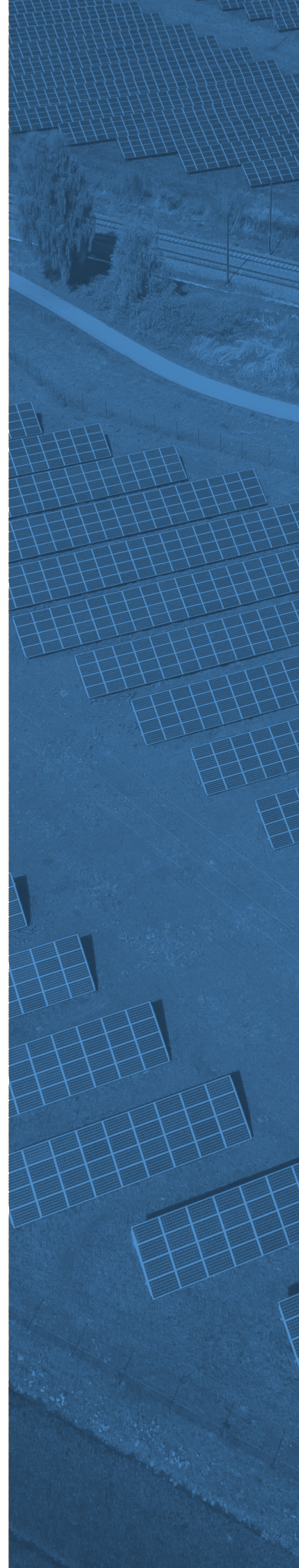
RATIONALE

Climate change is undeniably one of the greatest threats to health that our generation faces. It has caused significant mental health issues on top of the health impacts of physical climate change. We are calling on the Federal Government to address the duty of care it owes young Australians and develop a national strategy on climate, health and wellbeing for all Australians.

We know that there are going to be more climate disasters and we need to be prepared, especially in rural and regional communities where the impacts will be some of the worst felt.

We are calling on the federal and state governments to commit to ensuring that the rural, regional and remote community health systems are adequately prepared for the impacts of climate change.

We would encourage policy makers to collaborate with health organisations and the Climate and Health Alliance (CAHA) to ensure that health experts are guiding the Australian responses to climate change.





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