



# Youth Services Forum Minutes

**Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May 2019  
10am to 11:30am  
Woollahra Council**

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# Youth Services Forum

held on

**Tuesday 21 May at 10:00am**

**Woollahra Municipal Council Chambers**

**536 New South Head Road**

**Woollahra NSW 2028**

## 1. PRESENT & APOLOGIES

Present:

|                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Michelle Plant         | Woollahra Libraries   |
| Michal Shoham Polonsky | WAYS Youth and Family |
| Judith Schulz          | Circles of Learning   |
| Dani Saric             | NSW Police ESPAC      |
| James Bowles           | Scotts College        |
| Loren Maddams          | WAYS Youth and Family |
| Laura Dimento          | Carers NSW            |
| Katie Fallows          | Centre 360            |

Staff: Leah Haydon Community Development Officer

Apologies: Councillor Megan McEwen, Councillor Nick Maxwell, Andi Smith, Kids Giving Back, Julie MacColl, Ascham School, Tania Krasinski (Randwick Council), Leisl Homes, headspace

## 2. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

None.

## 3. GUEST SPEAKER – Benko Ure (Executive Producer of short film, Leaving home)

[https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=i\\_hmIRSFOcQ](https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=i_hmIRSFOcQ)

- Leaving Home highlights the subject of mental health and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD).
- A short film about the effects of OCD on its sufferers. The story is based on Benko's real-life experience and was created in order to give the audience a glimpse into a moment in the life of a person living with the extremely debilitating condition.
- The film is a black comedy that explores how simple things like walking out the door can become a major obstacle for people with OCD.
- The film was successfully short listed for Tropfest 2018 and received a place in the Cannes Short Corner Film Festival.

#### 4. DISCUSSION FOLLOWING SHORT FILM

- Benko suffered with the symptoms of OCD from the age of 7yrs old but due to the lack of awareness and similarities to other child related conditions the disorder was misdiagnosed and treated as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD).
- During school, Benko's symptoms came across to teachers as not paying attention. School councilors also did not pick up on the symptoms.
- As a young adult, the disorder significantly impacted Benko's daily life and relationships. By the time of diagnosis and treatment Benko had been to see 16 different psychologists and undergone a significant amount of treatments for conditions which were ineffective.
- As an adult Benko was able to channel his OCD into getting better with an unstoppable drive to find the correct help and medication.
- With the constant help of a wonderful family, Benko found a doctor who referred him to Exposure Therapy. This therapy, along with diet, exercise and pet therapy helped Benko overcome and live with his OCD.
- Benko's experience with OCD created major setbacks, at the same time giving him the ability to channel huge amounts of success.
- Benko hopes that by sharing his story and raising awareness around OCD, more young people suffering from OCD will gain access to the resources and help that they need.
- If the correct interventions happen early, young people can lead a normal, healthy life.

#### 5. INFORMATION SHARE AND SERVICE UPDATES

Laura Dimento (Carer's NSW)

- Funded by the Department of Social Services, the Carer Achievement Pathway Project is a new initiative providing support for young carers to receive information, referrals and advice to programs or services that are local to them and could increase their readiness to participate in employment and education and support them in their caring role.
- Visit [www.ycachieve.org.au](http://www.ycachieve.org.au) for more information or to make a referral.

Loren Maddams (WAYS)

- Currently running Skating workshops and competitions for skaters 9-24yrs.
- After School Care Program developing more programs to run in the afternoon.

Katie Fallows (Centre 360)

- Long term therapy and counselling for young people and families. Case management, mentoring and scholarship programs for young people.
- Currently running "Tuning into Teens" Program which runs for 6 weeks from 2<sup>nd</sup> May – 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

Michal Shoham Polonsky (WAYS)

- WAYS are partnering with Woollahra Council to host a schools forum on 30<sup>th</sup> May at Woollahra Council. Students from schools across Waverley, Woollahra and Randwick have been invited to attend and are expecting over 100 students. The topic is “Resilience and Happiness”.

Dani Saric (NSW Police ESPAC)

- Boost Program is underway and running educational sessions once a month to young people on topics such as drugs/alcohol etc
- Currently taking referrals for the next intake for work experience which will commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> July.

Judith Schulz (Circles of Learning)

- Program focusing on the wellbeing of young children.
- Community gardens, therapeutic gardening, arts and crafts, outdoors and recognising nature.
- Recently celebrated Bee Day on 20<sup>th</sup> May.

Michelle Plant (Woollahra Libraries)

- Partnering with Randwick and Waverley Council Libraries to host “Ride the Wave” on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019. A study support seminar to assist students with subject selection and study strategies to achieve their best for senior years.

Liesl Homes (headspace)

- Have a variety of services at headspace in addition to counselling – including GPs Tuesday to Thursday, Yoga on Thursdays 4-5pm, free dentist 2-4.30pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month, and Tuning into Teens each term on a Monday afternoon.
- Headspace are experiencing a high volume of intake enquiries (1500 last year) and so it can be a couple of months before someone is able to be booked into a psychologist for regular appointments. headspace have structures in place to support young people in the meantime, and while not ideal, this time-frame is in keeping with being an early intervention service supporting mild to moderate mental health issues, not a crisis service. It’s also an indication of the need for support in our area.

Nicole Fairley (Waverley Council)

- Creative Careers Youth Forum will take place on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> June from 930am – 1230pm at the Mill Hill Community Centre.
- The forum will involve: Presentations from inspirational young people, an overview of the project, an opportunity for young people to voice their concerns about work experience and more.

**6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- Councillor Megan McEwin can unfortunately no longer attend the forum meetings on a Tuesday due to work commitments.
- The possibility of moving meetings to a Friday was discussed however majority of the network believed this to be a difficult day to get to external meetings due to staff working part time and internal meetings falling on Fridays.

**7. NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2019