



Annual Report

2020

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Introduction

Richard Wallwork

2020 was a year like no other causing unprecedented change and disruption to our lives and the world we live. The Whitehorse Youth Representative Committee was no different. With schools closed, businesses shut down, in person gatherings banned, and Victorians forced to stay home, the COVID-19 pandemic forced significant changes on the committee in delivering its key commitments. But this only made the work the committee does evermore important in serving young people in our community.

WYRC Members 2020



Natasha Mulay



Joshua Lau



Alan Wang



Edward Winkler



Richard Wallwork



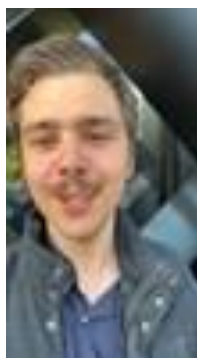
Yvonne Liu



Roan Nair



Ally Wong



Kyle Italiano



Lavinia Tjangdjaja



Omisha Gill

WYRC Background

Natasha Mulay

The Whitehorse Youth Representative Committee (WYRC) is a group of young volunteers aged 12 – 25 who act as a collective voice for all young people across the municipality contributing to Whitehorse City Council's discussion and decisions around youth issues. The group meets fortnightly at Youth ConneXions in Box Hill.

Aim

The WYRC main purpose is to provide a link between young people and Council affectively being the voice for all young people and representing them.

The primary aims include;

- Advocating important youth issues raised by young people in the community to Council.
- Developing and hosting events for young people.
- Educating the community on important youth issues.
- Opening new doors to young people so they can easily get involved in the community
- Representing the young people of Whitehorse

Benefits

Many benefits come with being a part of the WYRC including many opportunities, experiences and development of new skills including;

- Public speaking
- Leadership qualities
- Problem solving
- Communication skills
- Extracurricular certificates are offered such as Cultural Awareness Training and First Aid courses
- Event management experience
- Deeper knowledge of the community and how to have a positive impact
- A chance to meet, work with and develop friendships with a variety of like-minded people

Recruitment

Young people aged 12-25 who have a connection to the City of Whitehorse through residence, education, work or other significant links may apply for the committee. Recruitment is advertised widely in the community annually from November to January through avenues such as: clubs, newspapers, schools, display boards and other local media. Potential committee members then attend an agreed time where goals, expectations and responsibilities of being a member are discussed via formal interview process designed to provide an experience of the real world employment process.

Induction and meeting the Mayor

Richard Wallwork

The year's Induction Meeting was like any other with the eleven of us meeting for the first time on Wednesday the 5th of February at Youth Connexions in the Suite above Box Hill Central – there was no hint of the unprecedented disruption that would occur in the following months. We grabbed our complimentary WYRC hoodies and t-shirts and sat around a table for the first time where we were formally inducted, signing our commitment document as WYRC members. One the key first tasks was to brainstorm our Group Agreement that would contain the values, responsibilities, and commitments we wanted to make to each other and to the committee given our standing as representatives of young people within the Whitehorse community. We then had some fun with icebreaker activities like *'Getting to know each other Jenga'* that allowed us to get to know one another and made some preliminary plans of the activities and events for the year.

A fortnight later was our first meeting at the Nunawading Civic Centre with Frank Perrone (Youth Services Team Leader) and Mayor Sharon Ellis. Frank formally explained how the committee's work fitted into the broader context within Youth Services at Whitehorse City Council and how it benefited young people across Whitehorse. We were then given an extensive tour through the Civic Centre and Council Chambers with Mayor Ellis to understand the role of the Council and the work they do for the community, and how our role as volunteers served the Council and local community.



WYRC Training

Richard Wallwork

A core component of the WYRC are training sessions that cover a wide range of skills and topics as they serve as representatives and leaders of young people in the community. Training opportunities can be suggested by WYRC members where they believe it is the committee's interest and for their development. Due to COVID-19, we had the opportunity to focus more on our training opportunities. Most sessions were forced to be virtual but members have all given positive feedback for each session and gained valuable knowledge throughout.

Event Management Training - Ash King

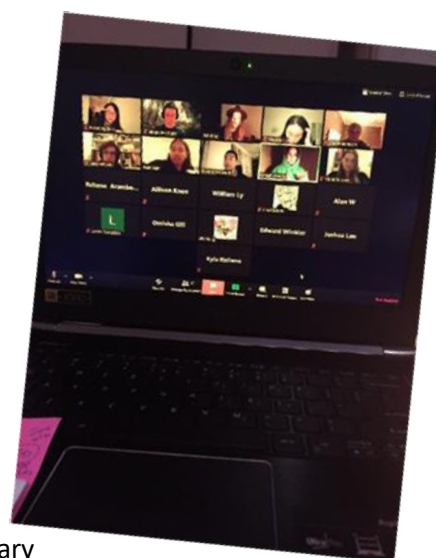
Richard Wallwork

Our first training session in conjunction with Council's other youth committee the FReeZA Flying Pig Events and was on March 4 with Ash King. Ash is an educator and part time Blues musician and has an impressive amount of knowledge and experience in the area of event management. This training was essential to help us with planning our major event, the annual Youth Forum. We discussed how event management responsibilities can be broken down into teams such as Logistics, Promotions and Marketing, Performing and Activities; with each team having their own unique roles and responsibilities. We discussed the order of steps to take on planning a major event and the numerous considerations we would have to make on aspects such as budget, venue, promotion, scheduling, and much more. Ash used his experiences as performer and musician to take us through how he organised gigs with his band. To conclude, Ash showed us a documentary of the legendary Woodstock festival in 1969. Ash's approachable, down to earth personality, and experience as a musician made him a perfect candidate to lead our first Training session on Event Management.

Promotions and Marketing Training - Ash King

Richard Wallwork

A couple of months later, Ash returned to hold a Promotions and Marketing training session on May 5. This aspect may be the most important in any event, but during the COVID pandemic where all events would have to be virtual, it was absolutely essential to get right. With the Youth Forum on the horizon, we brainstormed various strategies to best promote the event and agreed that a social media presence was absolutely essential supplemented by communication with schools, community groups, and local council. Given Ash's experience in using social media to promote his band and music, he went into significant detail to demonstrate to us how to use Facebook's advertising service to reach the widest audience. We concluded by watching a documentary on the failed Fyre festival and discussed the lessons we could learn.



SYN Radio Basics Training – RMIT

Natasha Mulay

As a member of the WYRC 2020, I had the amazing opportunity to undergo radio basics training with Danny Hickey and Hayley Foster from the Student Youth Network Radio on the 28th of April. This experience encompassed indicative hand gestures commonly used in the radio industry, the planning undertaken before broadcasting, and various insights into a source of entertainment and information that Australians frequently encounter – the radio. The Student Youth Network's Radio Basics Training was directed towards young individuals, and the WYRC and Freeza committee delved into youth issues in an honest and engaging way. Moreover, we had the chance to evaluate how we as young people, would like to see these concerns discussed and interpreted in all forms of media.

By hosting virtual mock radio sessions in groups of four, I realized how teams of enthusiastic young people could support their cohort, simply by talking about aspects of their own lives.

Of course, there was a plethora of insightful information that was provided in this virtual training session. Despite the *'you-know-what'*, this session is one of the many WYRC experiences that I cherish from the year 2020, for the mentorship and warm camaraderie with the SYN Radio Station, and my fellow members from WYRC and Freeza. It taught me the importance of teamwork, openness and enthusiasm in improving parts of my own life, as well as the lives of those around me.

Social Movements and Campaigns Training - Young Workers Centre

Alan Wang

Throughout the latter half of 2020, culminating in an online webinar in November, the WYRC undertook training in relation to workplace rights and campaigning for change from the Young Workers Centre.

The Young Workers Centre is a community legal centre which seeks to empower young people working in Victoria with the knowledge and skills needed to end workplace exploitation and insecurity. They do this through assisting young people in Victoria (i.e. people 30 and under) with resolving their workplace issues and with helping them learn more about their rights at work. They work to achieve the latter through producing resources aimed at assisting young people to understand their rights at work, such as fact sheets, as well as running training days and social events for young people.

The Young Workers Centre provided the WYRC with the following modules:

- **YOUR RIGHTS AT WORK**
This module aims to develop one's knowledge of employment relations, workplace rights and minimum standards.
- **SAFE AT WORK**
This module aims to provide students with a practical understanding of Occupational Health & Safety procedures and how to keep safe at work.
- **BULLYING & DISCRIMINATION AT WORK**
This module gives students an understanding of what constitutes workplace bullying & discrimination, and provides information about how to respond to these issues when they arise.
- **SOCIAL MOVEMENTS & CAMPAIGNS**
This module covers various strategies for creating change in communities.

The first three topics were covered through self-directed e-learning modules, while the Social Movements & Campaigns module was covered through a Zoom webinar with one of the Young Workers Centre's organisers. Using the case study of the 2017 Marriage Equality postal survey, which resulted in the success of the "Yes" vote, the WYRC learned about how the campaign was designed and implemented.

The WYRC's engagement with the Young Workers Centre's training modules illustrates the beneficial value of the WYRC engaging with youth-centred organisations – this is something that future WYRC committees should continue to do. The Young Workers Centre's training has been of significant to the WYRC's committee members – the WYRC's committee members are now equipped with a greater understanding of their rights and responsibilities in the workplace, as well as being equipped with the tools to drive positive change. This has in turn, placed them in a position where upon leaving the program, they can continue to effectuate positive leadership and change in their communities.



Council Event Training - Hannah Milne

Alan Wang

In May, the WYRC underwent event training. During this training, the WYRC learned about the various events run by the Whitehorse City Council, as well as the aims and purposes of these events. The committee also learned about the multiple steps that were involved in planning events. Council events discussed included Spring Festival and Global Fiesta. Hannah took us through an extensive training session exploring the various aspect of event management including risk assessments.

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the WYRC were ultimately unable to host in-person events in 2020. Nevertheless, the knowledge obtained from the training will be valuable for the WYRC members as they embark on future work, study or leadership activities.

Leadership Consultation and Advocacy – Tyson McNamara

Richard Wallwork

On 29 April we had our Leadership and Advocacy Training with Tyson McNamara from Box Hill Institute of TAFE. Tyson is a passionate educator with teaching experience in high school, TAFE, and University and brings unique insight into education and leadership. Tyson spoke about various topics such as how we could empower others, future workplaces and employment trends, and communication skills. In the second half of the session, Tyson invited us to share more about ourselves, to identify and discuss our personal situations as he provided tailored guidance on how we can serve as effective leaders in schools, workplaces, and in community.

Cultural Awareness Training - Centre for Multicultural Youth

Lavinia Tjangdjaja

The Whitehorse community is well known for its multiculturalism and diversity which makes our community so unique and distinctive from other communities. However, we must acknowledge that the Whitehorse community was built on the Wurundjeri land of the Kulin Nation. Thus, in order to gain a deeper understanding of how we can respect the Traditional Custodians of the land we stand on, participating in the virtual Cultural Awareness Webinar gave the WYRC the opportunity to hear from Community Elders, acknowledge the history and the people of the country that we stand on, whilst also understanding how to recognise and tackle unconscious bias and racism. Coming from different cultures and backgrounds, this training allowed us to learn from each other and gave us an opportunity to reflect on Indigenous core values and traditions that need to be salvaged and protected. Overall, the Cultural Awareness Training was definitely one out of the many training sessions that left a lasting impression on the committee.

First Aid Training – St Johns

Richard Wallwork

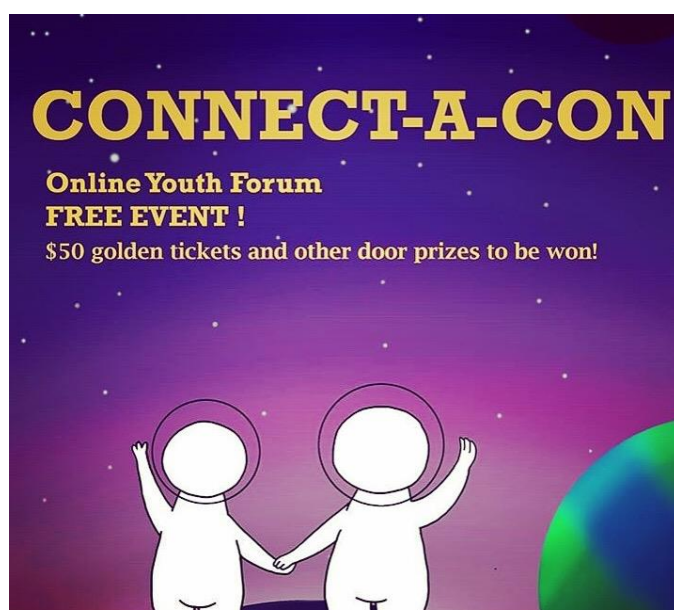
Towards the end of the year on 28 November with COVID restrictions largely lifted, we were able to host St John to conduct Level 2 First Aid training with the WYRC and FReeZA Committees. First Aid is a vital skill for our members as they go onto participate in various conferences, activities, events, or in any environment, and can possibly mean the difference between life and death in an emergency situation. I believe it is the most important training session we would do, which is why it was a shame that we could not do it earlier. The event lasted the whole day with our trainer; it was deep and thorough course into learning how to deal with numerous first aid emergency situations. It was perfect for those wanting a refresher or earning their certificate for the first time with a mix of theory using modern technology and practical activities to learn CPR and treating injuries. Upon completion, everyone earned their Provide First Aid certificate which included CPR.

'CONNECT-A-CON' WYRC Annual Youth Forum

Lavinia Tjangdjaja

Due to the unprecedented times, we were unable to proceed with face to face Youth Forum as in previous years thus, the WYRC decided to hold a free virtual youth forum under the theme 'CONNECT-A-CON' on the 4th of December in which we aimed to virtually connect young individuals in our community, helping them overcome the feeling of isolation during the lockdown whilst educating them on certain youth issues, providing them a helping hand during such obscure times.

The WYRC decided to focus on four main youth issues; international students, mental health, healthy relationships and future careers and employment pathways. The WYRC worked alongside several other organisations such as Black Dog, Headspace, Relationships Australia, Deakin University and the Centre for International Students Australia (CISA) in order to deliver a panel discussion. Our Panel also included a young international student sourced through CISA. This panel discussion invited young individuals to reach out to professionals whilst receiving comprehensive insight on certain youth issues and services that young individuals can utilise. Furthermore, we, as a committee, were able to learn valuable knowledge that we were not taught in school or university from this panel discussion. The experience of International Students was one of the high lights helping us to understand that this particular youth issue needs more focus and attention.



Although we would have loved to have our forum onsite as usual, the online Panel Discussion definitely challenged us as a committee and allowed us to develop new skills such as learning how to use technology and also how to organise an engaging online panel discussion. The online format also allowed us to reach out to more young individuals that could watch the recorded panel discussion or attend the virtual webinar regardless of their location.

Overall, the Panel Discussion was a great way to end the year and we are sure that all that attended went away with new knowledge and interesting thoughts.

Young Person of the Month

Richard Wallwork

The Whitehorse City Council's Young Person of the Month award recognises young people under the age of 27 for their personal achievements and for making outstanding contributions to the Whitehorse Community. This may be in the area of Arts & Culture, Music, Sport, Education, or any form of community participation. Young people may be nominated by an adult or peer who has witnessed the efforts, achievements, and contributions of the young person in the aforementioned areas.

Winners receive an JB-HI-FI gift voucher, a feature article in Whitehorse News and possible appearances on the council's social media pages, and nomination for Whitehorse Young Citizen of the Year who is chosen by the Council at its Australia Day Civic Awards ceremony.

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, schools, community programs, co-curricular and recreational activities were shut down for much of the year. This resulted in an understandable drop the number of the nominations sent in for half of the year. However, it was heartening to see a surge in nominations towards the end of the year as restrictions eased. We strongly believe in the award in recognising young people for their efforts and achievements and intend to continue promotion of the award on our social media channels.

Increasing the awareness of the award and encouraging more people to send in nominations have been long running goals of the WYRC and amidst the pandemic, we made a couple of small but significant changes. The first was allowing young people to nominate themselves (while still listing a referee) to hopefully increase the number of nominations. Additionally, because of COVID-19 making it difficult for community participation, we allowed for personal achievements to have more weight in the adjudication process.

Selecting the nominee is a great responsibility and an honour to reward a young person who has made substantial contributions and achievements. Once all nominations have been received for the month, and after some discussion, the committee votes to decide the recipient. We usually get multiple nominations each month and we would like to acknowledge the many fine young people in our community.

WYRC Community 'Our Say' COVID Survey

Lavinia Tjangdjaja

In response to the COVID-19 crisis, the WYRC decided to conduct a survey reaching out to individuals within the Whitehorse area in order to gain an understanding of how they were coping during the lockdown and how the crisis has affected their lives. The survey was targeted towards young people, community workers, parents and teachers, including questions regarding drug and alcohol, relationships, safety and several other important issue areas. We were aware that individuals may not be inclined to complete surveys, thus as an incentive, we used a \$50 voucher in order to persuade young people to complete the survey. The idea was to use the results of this survey to gain a deeper understanding of a variety of youth issues that are affecting the Whitehorse community and in turn, allowing us to reconsider how we should support young people in our community during lockdown and also in recovery. Despite our best efforts to promote and share with the local community we were not overwhelmed with responses unfortunately. The results that we did receive back indicated that generally across the board young people and the community were affected by Covid. For young people in particular Covid did have a negative effect on their mental health, relationships and employment opportunities. International students in particular were hit hard by the impact of the pandemic.

Conclusion

Alan Wang

2020 was an unusual and extraordinary year, a year like no other. Whilst the year was at times difficult, the year was valuable in improving the resilience of all the members of the committee and showcased the versatility and adaptability of the Committee and its events. With young people being a demographic that was markedly affected by the year's events, the WYRC played a valuable and important role in ensuring that the needs of young people were acknowledged and heard throughout the year.

The 2020 WYRC committee would like to thank Jac and Zoey, our facilitators for the year, for the guidance and support they provided throughout the year. Additionally, the committee would like to acknowledge the continued and generous support of the Whitehorse Council, whose generosity enable the valuable work of the WYRC to continue.

We wish the 2021 WYRC the best of luck for the upcoming year.

