

Actions targeting health issues relevant to young people.

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Key Messages

- Young people alone cannot improve their own health.
- Young people can establish their own social action through the development of youth based events and working groups to target health concerns.
- Health promotion actions and initiatives targeting young people aim to develop the skills and actions necessary for them to make positive health choices and achieve good health now and in the future.

Social Action

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Social actions targeting health issues relevant to young people include the development of appropriate health services, creation of supportive interventions and programs and development of effective policies and initiatives to improve health and well being.

Strategies to improve the health of young people include creating supportive environments and strengthening personal actions. Examples of this social action include:

- the implementation of education programs related to health issues
- youth week events that encourage participation in the community and recognition of the talents and achievements of young people.

Key points for successful social action:

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- Change almost always stems from small beginnings. Social action cannot be achieved without the willingness to go through that hard labour of small, incremental change.
- A collective group effort and mass action are needed for stronger, more effective and long term social changes.
- The process of social actions is as important as the outcome. The values developed and skill learned during the process of social action are valuable for all members involved.
- Although the outcome of social action is not always assured in the short term, sustained social action will provide the settings for future social change.

Legislation and public policy

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The health of young Australians is protected and promoted through the implementation of a number of laws and policies. For example, in schools the anti-bullying policy prevents exposure to violence and abuse for young people and encourages supportive environments that promote positive self esteem and connectedness.

The government has implemented specific health related legislation to promote good health for young people. Examples of this legislation include:

- age restrictions for alcohol and tobacco consumption and sexual intercourse
- zero blood alcohol limits for young drivers
- compulsory PDHPE lessons, physical activity in schools and restrictions on the age at which young people can leave school.

Helping young people reach their full potential is a high priority for the NSW Government. They recognise that young people need support to maintain good health and well being, access to education and strong community networks. The NSW Youth Action Plan builds on the NSW Youth Policy 2011-2016, Working Together, Healthy bodies, healthy minds, vibrant futures and sets out the NSW Government's plans to support young people.



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The *Youth Action Plan* aims to:

- deliver a wide range of education and training services in schools and TAFE to assist young people in making a smooth transition from school to work or further study
- provide community services offices across NSW to protect young people at risk of harm and provide care for those unable to live with their families
- provide free and concessional travel entitlements and subsidies to students, jobseekers, apprentices and trainees and young people with disabilities
- provide youth-specific sport, recreational and artistic programs and services
- provide opportunities for young people to participate in Government policy, programs and services that affect them
- recognise young people's different situations and backgrounds, particularly those from Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Island and culturally diverse backgrounds, as well as young people with disabilities and in out-of-home care.



Adapted from: www.youth.nsw.gov.au/

Activity:

Research and evaluate a range of strategies that have been implemented by government and non-government agencies that target the TWO major health issues that you have studied that impact on the health of young people.

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Health promotion initiatives

Interventions at a number of levels are required in order to improve the health of young people. Health promotion initiatives can be created by governments and non-government organisations at a National, State and local level to meet the needs and improve the health of young people.

Health promotion initiatives are a series of actions and approaches aimed at increasing awareness about current health issues. Health promotion initiatives may involve social marketing to increase awareness and develop personal skills such as the Quitline advertising campaign. Initiatives may also involve strategies to create supportive environments such as legislation to prevent smoking in public places, resulting in reduced exposure to passive smoking.

Health promotion initiatives advocate healthy behaviours such as **Dark side of tanning** or empower young people to take responsibility for their own health such as the **Speeding. No one thinks big of you campaign.**

Health promotion initiatives may also encourage community participation for health benefits such as **Clean up Australia Day**

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