Good Practice in Youth Development

A Framework of Principles
A Discussion Document

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GOOD PRACTICE
IN
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

A FRAMEWORK OF PRINCIPLES
– A DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

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A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH MINISTER FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS

To become fully rounded adults, our young people need the opportunity to develop personal qualities and skills, such as leadership, teamwork, self confidence, and a sense of their place in the community.

In October 1999 I announced that the Commonwealth would fund a number of initiatives focused on promoting and expanding youth development activities in Australia. Since then we have come a long way. Governments, community organisations, and young people have engaged in an active dialogue about the benefits of youth development, and the way in which we should shape youth development activities.

I have deep admiration for many of our young people, for the things they achieve, and the contributions they make to the Australian community. But to reach their full potential, most young people need some support and guidance. In many cases, this support can be as simple as allowing young people to try new things, and acknowledging their successes.

Youth development projects provide an environment specifically focused on giving young people a chance at participating in a range of challenging activities. In many cases, these projects also give young people an opportunity to make a contribution to their community through some form of voluntary community service. These projects celebrate young people's achievements, through community recognition and progress to higher levels of skill or challenge.

The good practice principles contained in this document are not exhaustive; nor are they meant to be prescriptive. However, they provide ways of improving the opportunities we offer to our young people. They may also prompt discussion, and other ideas to enhance youth development activities.

I commend this framework to you as a significant step forward in conceptualising youth development in Australia, and as a useful means to think about and improve youth development activities.

DR DAVID KEMP
Minister for Education, Training and Youth Affairs
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INTRODUCTION

This ‘good practice guide’ is a contribution to the advancement of youth development in Australia.

The identification of good practice is critical for quality outcomes in youth development to be achieved. It is also fundamental to the development of a shared understanding of the purpose and outcomes for young people of youth development activity. By engaging in a process of continuous improvement and reflection on good practice, youth development in Australia will be enhanced.

The framework of principles for good practice in youth development presented in the following pages is aspirational. It has not been devised as a set of standards. The framework is likely to confirm some current practices and challenge others. It is intended for the consideration and use of policy makers, organisations and communities currently involved in youth development or with an interest in becoming involved in youth development.

Professional development, strategic planning, policy development, program planning and review activities all provide opportunities for considering good practice and this guide provides a focus for these discussions. It is envisaged that there will be numerous ways that this good practice guide can be utilised to reflect on and enhance practice in youth development.
Youth Development

One of the most important undertakings in Australia is supporting the development of young Australians. The concept of youth development provides a positive framework for this.

Youth development is about providing all young people with positive experiences and opportunities which enhance their strengths and capacity and which affirm them as contributors to their communities and shapers of their own future. Through youth development, communities are able to recognise, value, support and encourage young people’s contribution.
Youth development is a process which benefits all young people, whatever their starting points or circumstances. Youth development concentrates on building the personal strengths that create positive attributes in young people, rather than focusing on deficits – whether real or assumed – which need to be prevented or remedied to enable successful transition to adulthood. The youth development process recognises that young people move progressively through positive developmental experiences which can be strengthened and made more influential by the sustained and integrated application of good practice principles.

Youth development is premised on the conviction that the personal growth and advancement of all young people in our society is too important to be left to chance. Many communities are looking for ways to engage with and address these issues. Young people are an integral part of our community with a valuable contribution to make. It is in the community’s interest to consciously assist young people to reach their potential by providing positive opportunities which enable them to develop the skills and competencies to support them not only through adolescence, but throughout adult life. This goes beyond giving young people a sound educational grounding. A range of structured opportunities and broader relationships is needed to complement formal educational processes in promoting a healthy lifestyle, developing a sense of personal pride, responsibility and purpose, fostering positive social relationships, and consolidating the position of young people as members of the broader community. The focus is on developing the whole person and involves a comprehensive ‘whole of community’ response. Both young people and their communities benefit from youth development.

A sustainable, inclusive, and robust youth development framework, which is a recognisable and characteristic institution of Australian society in the 21st century, will be realised when all young people are valued for their contribution to society and are able to participate in opportunities for their positive and holistic development through:

- a rich variety of quality developmental and structured activities which provide scope for learning and are delivered through a diverse infrastructure of program and service-based settings;

- supportive social networks which enhance interconnection between young people and their communities.

In this guide ‘youth development’ is used specifically to encapsulate the concepts and applications described here. It is not used in the generic sense which refers to the developmental processes that all young people experience between childhood and adulthood. The term ‘positive youth development’ is used to reinforce the strengths based and community benefit focus of youth development.
Good practice in youth development

The focus on good practice in youth development provides a means of articulating the key features of youth development. It provides a framework for

- reflecting on policies and practices;
- contributing to increased consistency and coherence in youth development practices; and
- providing a common foundation for potential collaboration in considering improved practice.

The principles and indicators outlined in this publication provide a basis for ongoing discussion about good practice in youth development. It is intended that the indicators in particular will continue to be refined and evolve as they are applied and that other indicators may be developed.
The notion of implementing quality frameworks and continuous improvement cycles is well recognised as important in achieving more effective and efficient outcomes and in providing more responsive services. Identifying best practice and benchmarking provides a basis for measuring quality and directing efforts for improvement.

To achieve best practice requires a convergence of direction, resources and energy which are not always available or obtainable. Aspiring to best practice is often a more realistic goal with good and better practices providing the guide. Good practices are often innovative, they generally make a difference, they have a sustainable effect and allow the potential for replication.

Youth development demands the creative, enterprising best of all who contribute to it. The following discussion outlines a framework of principles for good practice in youth development. Good practice in youth development calls for a commitment to the two overarching principles of empowerment and conscious enterprise. These are embedded in a set of fourteen underpinning principles for good practice in youth development.

The underpinning principles are interrelated and aspirational. They provide a positive starting point for consideration and action relating to youth development. The underpinning principles may confirm or challenge existing arrangements and encourage reflection on current practices. The interrelationship between principles allows scope for diversity and innovation in implementation.

As well, indicators for three key environments for youth development (policy, organisation and program) are provided as a guide to the commitments and actions that can be taken to realise the principles. The indicators are not intended to be prescriptive, static or exhaustive. It is anticipated that the indicators will continue to evolve as they are further informed by practice. An active feedback loop between practice and indicators is particularly important to ensure that this resource for good practice remains relevant and continues to reflect advances in thinking about youth development in Australia. Indicators for other youth development environments may also be developed as the Australian body of knowledge about youth development grows.
**Good practice in youth development**

As the foundation for the development of the principles for good practice in youth development and the indicators, Ausyouth has drawn upon three primary sources:

- Extensive review of and reflection on Australian and international literature pertaining to youth development, youth work, community development and community service. The concept of youth development is well developed in the overseas literature, particularly from the United States of America. The literature offers many references to, and examples of, good practices in youth development from a variety of environments and contexts. A number of common themes can be found across the literature, in particular relating to the participation of young people in decision making, skill development and the involvement of the community.

- The wide-ranging discussions and workshops organised by Ausyouth with representatives from key organisations currently involved in specifically identified youth development programs. These discussions have occurred on an individual, program and organisational basis. A number of key stakeholders have engaged in an ongoing dialogue with Ausyouth about good practice in youth development, sharing their knowledge and expertise about how they see youth development in the Australian context, and often referring to or providing organisational documentation to further expand or support their comments.

- Participant discussion and comments made at the Ausyouth forums held during the latter half of 2000 in eleven locations around Australia, where discussion of youth development, and good practice in particular, was a feature of the program. Participants came from a wide range of organisations, ranging from organisations with a long history in providing youth development programs to organisations with a tentative interest in youth development. Participants also came from across sectors and often the commonality of interest had not been recognised previously. In the forums, participants generously shared their ideas, knowledge and experiences in exploring the notion of good practice in youth development programs. As well, through group discussions, participants identified characteristics or elements they considered demonstrated good practice in youth development programs in relation to six specified areas: the participation of young people; the promotion of program/s; partnerships with local communities; program structures and activities; adult leadership; and evaluation.
FRAMEWORK OF
PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD PRACTICE IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Good practice in youth development calls

for a COMMITMENT to the

OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

of

EMPOWERMENT and CONSCIOUS ENTERPRISE

which are embedded in the

UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES of

1. Strengths based, positive youth development as the foundation for policy and program development.

2. Participation of young people in all levels of planning and decision making.

3. An inclusive ethos.

4. An experiential model of learning that builds on capabilities and skills while maximising opportunities for fun and recognising age and developmental phases.

5. Respecting community voice and identity.

6. Encouraging communities to value and engage young people.

7. Partnerships.

8. Quality outcomes.


10. Recognising the contribution of all stakeholders.

11. Promotion that is ethical, honest and non-patronising.

12. Providing opportunities for service to the community that are meaningful for both young people and the community.


Three key environments

Three environments (policy, organisation and program) provide an important focus for further strategic work in youth development. These contexts provide different youth development opportunities and experiences for young Australians. Jurisdictions, organisations and communities may place different emphasis on these environments. Young people will benefit most where there is sustained attention to all three.

Youth development initiatives need to respect the diversity of communities and young people and recognise community voice at all stages. Youth development initiatives which are characterised by effective partnerships and recognition of the multiple stakeholders are most likely to achieve sustained success and community support. If young people are to play decisive roles in

- shaping the development of the communities in which they live;
- the organisation in which they are involved; and
- directing their own personal growth,

then youth development initiatives also need to embody the processes for democratic decision making. They will model and enable active citizenship for the young people who participate.

It is important that these environments are not considered in isolation and that the interrelationship of the environments provides opportunities to advance and enhance good practice in youth development.
Youth development and policy

Youth development in Australia is as much an issue for public policy as it is for program provision. The development of youth development policy necessarily involves stakeholders from a range of sectors. Young people's involvement in policy formation is critical if young people are to be involved in shaping their own development, their communities' development and their futures. Young people's involvement adds to the diversity of voices contributing to public policy across portfolios in government, as well as in the youth area. Young people too offer a diversity of views. Initiatives to integrate a youth development approach across government portfolios and at all levels of government are desirable in that they provide a framework for whole-of-government approaches to policy development and service delivery.

Youth development and organisations

Consideration of the means of enhancing youth development opportunities for young Australians involves consideration of the means to strengthen communities and community organisations. Many youth development experiences will be provided through institutions and organisations in a community context. Organisations may have a focus on youth development as their core business or as a specific area of business within a broader field of activity. The interest and involvement in youth development by organisations does require intentional consideration of the commitments being made and how this is being expressed and enacted by the organisations. Organisations embracing the principles of good practice in youth development may have their strengths confirmed, as well as identifying new challenges. A commitment to empowerment necessarily involves a facilitating, enabling role for organisations beyond that of provision of services or programs. The pursuit of youth development will consciously call upon the resourcefulness and creativity of individuals and organisations. A strengths based approach to community capacity building is a part of the evolving Australian approach to youth development.

Youth development programs

Youth development programs are an important element of any comprehensive approach to community capacity building. The term program includes a wide range of local projects and small scale initiatives in which young people are involved, as well as the better known activities of major youth focused organisations. Youth development programs incorporate a creative range of activities and experiences. Youth development programs build individual capacity through the imaginatively structured development of skills, self-worth and identity. These programs involve young people in activities that challenge and stretch them in an organised and supportive environment.
Scope of youth development

The inclusion of an activity within the scope of youth development is based upon three defining criteria. Youth development activities are defined by an intentional outcomes focus on:

- personal/individual development, including teamwork and leadership skills;

and

- skill development through activities that are structured and sequential in their learning outcomes;

and

- strengthened connection with community through relationships, participation and contribution to the community.

It is in the offering of these three defining criteria in an integrated way over a sustained period through an experiential approach to learning that the most significant youth development outcomes will be realised, the positive impact on the community enhanced and the empowerment of young people maximised.
Youth development activities foster creativity and innovation through the engagement of successive groups of active young participants. Many activities for or by young people feature one or two of the three defining criteria and they have value in their own right. However, youth development activities require the combination of all three defining criteria and the activities need to be offered over a substantial period of time. Many models meet these criteria and no one model dominates. These three defining criteria provide a way of linking youth development activities by focusing on intentions, structures and outcomes rather than the less significant aspects of activity / program methodology.

Youth development is characterised by activities that explicitly foster the empowerment of young people and where the achievement of specific youth development outcomes is intentional. Ausyouth has identified a wide variety of activities across Australia which can be seen as contributing to youth development. This diversity needs to be encouraged and supported. There is, however, a need for coherence and coordination to ensure that quality outcomes for youth development are sustained.

Youth development outcomes are grounded in the development of a range of personal skills as well as situation specific or specialist skills. Specific activities that are designed to focus on the enhancement of personal attributes, such as self-confidence, self-reliance and self-management skills, are integral to youth development. So are activities designed to enhance the development of interpersonal skills in areas such as planning, conflict resolution, teamwork and leadership.

Youth development activities need to feature opportunities for the development of skills in specific technical or specialist areas if youth development outcomes are to be realised. This learning is not incidental but intentional, requiring structured approaches that build and expand learning and competencies sequentially. Emphasis is placed on experiential learning that incorporates significant elements of challenge and fun and recognises the range of achievements. The diversity of young people’s interests can be reflected in the specific technical or specialist skills offered by various youth development activities. Efforts to link competencies achieved with recognition through formal systems will provide young people with tangible evidence of their accomplishments.

An important feature of youth development activities is that young people are provided with opportunities and experiences that strengthen and enhance their connections within their communities. By offering young people opportunities to engage in meaningful community activity, young people develop awareness of individual and community responsibility and benefit through voluntary action. Community recognition of young people as valued contributors in their communities encourages active citizenship and social inclusion.
Outcomes for young people

For every young person who participates in the process, youth development provides enhanced opportunities for
• active, empowered citizenship;
• enhanced self identity and self efficacy;
• commitment to voluntary action and the responsibilities of choice;
• enhanced self esteem, self reliance and self confidence;
• acknowledgment and acceptance of differing views and ways of doing things;
• effective membership and leadership of team and group;
• enhanced skill development;
• participation in different and challenging activities and experiences;
and
• connection and contribution to the community.

These outcomes focus on enhancing young people’s existing capacities and capabilities. They reflect the individual growth and development that young people can anticipate from involvement in youth development activities, contributing to the enrichment of young people’s lives, as well as increasing the likelihood of improved well being in adulthood.
The outcomes for young people are premised on increased opportunities for young people to take an active role in a variety of decision making processes from program design and implementation to participation in policy decision making bodies. Young people learn to advocate for themselves and on behalf of others. Willingness to be involved in decision making processes provides a basis for contributing to active citizenship and participation in political processes.

Many factors affect young people’s lives. The influence of a rapidly changing society and environment presents challenges for young people in attaining a clear sense of self and a sense of future that features hope and optimism. For young people, believing in and having the confidence in themselves and in their ability to influence and take some control over the future will assist in their vision for a positive future. Setting and working towards goals, being motivated and able to take voluntary action are another part of this process. Making choices involves assessing alternative options and considering real and potential consequences. Young people’s ability to take responsibility for their own choices and actions and to understand how these actions impact on others is critical in developing self-efficacy (the belief that people are capable of effecting change in life).

Young people need a sense of belonging; they need to feel safe and to know that the community cares about them. Youth development activities offer the chance for adults, communities and young people to work together with a shared purpose and enterprise. Young people are encouraged to embrace new ideas and different ways of doing things; to develop flexibility and adaptability. They can see the immediate impact of their desire to contribute to their communities and their commitment to being involved in efforts that contribute to the broader good.

Young people are forming their own life values and views, building on their family and cultural values. Respecting difference and listening to and understanding others’ points of view are important in this process, as is the development of cultural and community identity. Youth development offers the chance to form an extended range of relationships that include peers and caring adults other than the family and immediate social circle.

Youth development activities offer the opportunity for young people to broaden their range of experiences, increasing access and exposure to activities that they may not have otherwise. Young people gain confidence in their ability to cope with varied and challenging situations or experiences. There is a sense of additional accomplishment that is experienced, particularly when tasks are challenging or different from everyday experiences. Community recognition of accomplishments reinforces the sense of achievement and offers tangible benefits for the young person if this is acknowledged in other spheres of their lives, for example employers’ recognition of the transferability of learned leadership and teamwork skills to the work environment. The enhancement of young people’s competencies in both personal skills and technical/specialist skills has the potential to increase life opportunities and well being.
OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

Fundamental to good practice in youth development are two overarching principles. These overarching principles are empowerment and conscious enterprise. They provide the foundation for the framework of principles of good practice in youth development.

These overarching principles are embedded in the underpinning principles for good practice. They are also implicit in the indicators outlined.
OVERARCHING PRINCIPLE ONE

Empowerment

Empowerment is both a goal and a process for youth development. Empowerment is supported by participatory approaches, by the development of skills and understandings, by diversity of experience and by progressive opportunities for personal development and leadership. The empowerment of young people and their communities is critical to the approach for Australia.
Empowerment - overarching principles

Processes and actions contributing to youth development outcomes should be empowering for those involved. Empowerment is based on the premise that all individuals and communities have capabilities and strengths that can be utilised and enhanced to gain greater influence and control over life situations. In particular, individuals and communities need to participate in and have influence over decisions or actions that affect them.

Processes and actions which are empowering are characterised by respect for the contribution of others and a focus on working together to identify issues and find solutions. The processes used are flexible enough to accommodate the diversity of involvement and contribution rather than just the most streamlined or efficient. Consideration and support for peers is encouraged. Those involved feel that their contribution is recognised and valued. They also experience increased confidence in taking action and in self-efficacy.

Through empowering processes and actions, young people are able to act on their own behalf, and as part of a group, and make choices and decisions that are right for them. This requires a variety of opportunities for young people to develop the necessary knowledge and skills to be able to practice and make informed choices and decisions. This includes consideration of age and developmentally relevant levels of responsibility and self-development.
OVERARCHING PRINCIPLE TWO

Conscious enterprise

Youth development is a conscious enterprise: a deliberate means of pursuing positive outcomes for young people through processes and activities which are structured and intentional. Conscious enterprise is based on the premise that specific outcomes must be actively pursued and that the achievement of the outcomes is too important to be left to chance.
Youth development is an undertaking that demands resourcefulness, imagination, and energy in the active process of intervention and opportunity creation.

Youth development is a purposeful enterprise in which the purpose of each process or action should be clearly defined and understood by those involved. It requires reflection on what is being done, how it is being done and why. Processes and actions need to be sequentially structured in ways that increase the likelihood that the desired outcome will be achieved. Multiple opportunities for young people to participate need to be provided to accommodate the diversity of developmental stages and the realities of young people’s lives. Where possible, processes and actions also need to include action documentation about what was done and how, the rationale and outcomes so that they can be reflected upon and replicated.

This consciousness does not imply rigidity in processes and actions, nor does it preclude spontaneity and innovation. It does require that consideration be given to the potential impact and consequences (including hidden and unintended consequences) of processes and actions so that the key elements and outcomes are not compromised.
UNDERPINNING PRINCIPLES AND INDICATORS

The fourteen underpinning principles listed on the following left hand pages are the building blocks of the framework of principles for good practice in youth development. They are interrelated and aspirational. It is expected that their implementation in practice will reflect the diversity and innovation in youth development. They may confirm or challenge existing arrangements.

On the right hand pages are the relevant table of indicators for each underpinning principle. The indicators are clustered around the three key environments of policy, organisations and programs. The indicators provided here may be adapted for other environments.

The indicators are not intended to be prescriptive, static or exhaustive. It is anticipated that the indicators will evolve over time as the feedback loop between practice and indicators is activated.
A commitment to:

1. Strengths based, positive youth development as the foundation for policy and program development.

Strengths based positive youth development taps into the strengths of young people and their communities. It focuses on enhancing these strengths through increased opportunities, experiences and commitments to the holistic development of all young people. Specific youth policies, organisations and programs using positive youth development as the starting point will reflect and build on these strengths.
### INDICATORS FOR THE THREE KEY INTERRELATED ENVIRONMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1.1  The concept of positive youth development underpins policy development.</td>
<td>1.2.1 Organisation’s vision/mission statement includes specific reference to commitment to positive youth development.</td>
<td>1.3.1 The goals of the program reflect the outcomes associated with a positive youth development approach.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2 Aspects of the framework of positive youth development are further researched and the findings disseminated.</td>
<td>1.2.2 Staff and volunteers are able to articulate the relationship between the concept of positive youth development and the values and beliefs of the organisation.</td>
<td>1.3.2 Program leaders and participants have a good understanding of the concept of positive youth development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.3 The positive youth development approach is contextualised for local communities, organisations and young people who participate.</td>
<td>1.2.3 The demonstration of positive youth development is included in organisational evaluations.</td>
<td>1.3.3 Positive youth development is used as the starting point for program evaluations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A commitment to:

2. **Participation of young people in all levels of planning and decision making.**

The active engagement of young people as equal partners with other decision makers in all levels of planning and decision making processes provides an important dimension to these processes that could otherwise be said to be incomplete. Young people have a valuable contribution to make that will better ensure that policies, organisations and programs are responsive to young people's needs and aspirations.
### Participation in planning and decision making - indicators

#### Indicators for the Three Key Interrelated Environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1</td>
<td>2.2.1</td>
<td>2.3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people are acknowledged as key stakeholders in policy development processes.</td>
<td>An objective of the organisation is to ensure young people are involved in its planning and decision making processes.</td>
<td>Young people are actively involved in program design and implementation, including the establishment of guidelines and 'rules'.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2</td>
<td>2.2.2</td>
<td>2.3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people's participation is recognised as an integral part of policy development.</td>
<td>Young people's 'voice' is respected and taken into account in all organisational planning and decision making.</td>
<td>Young people's 'voice' is listened to and acted upon where possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3</td>
<td>2.2.3</td>
<td>2.3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young people are provided with multiple opportunities to participate in policy development processes at all levels, through a variety of mechanisms.</td>
<td>Organisational advisory and decision making structures explicitly include young people.</td>
<td>Young people are provided with opportunities to participate in other planning and decision making processes associated with program implementation, such as special events and joint activities across organisations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.4</td>
<td>2.2.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structures are set in place (such as advisory councils, boards and committees) to provide young people with the means to participate in policy development processes on an ongoing basis and to be treated equally with other stakeholders.</td>
<td>Specific resources are dedicated to young people's participation in planning and decision making processes eg training and reimbursement for costs.</td>
<td></td>
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*aussouth* ▪ Page 25
A commitment to:

3. An inclusive ethos.

The diversity within communities is mirrored in young people. Strategies for inclusivity ensure the mix of the broader population is represented in policies, organisations and programs. By recognising and acknowledging this diversity and consciously implementing a range of actions, an inclusive ethos becomes more than a statement of principle made to reveal good intentions, it becomes the means for ensuring that the advantages of youth development are accessible for all young Australians.
## Indicators for the Three Key Interrelated Environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1.1 An inclusive ethos is reflected in the development of access and equity policies.</td>
<td>3.2.1 Well developed access and equity policies are in place and these are understood by all paid and volunteer staff and participants.</td>
<td>3.3.1 There is sufficient flexibility in program design and implementation to accommodate the varying requirements of young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.2 Community profiles are 'mapped' to inform planning, including the identification of access and equity considerations.</td>
<td>3.2.2 There are clear public statements about these policies.</td>
<td>3.3.2 Program design occurs in consultation with representatives from diverse groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1.3 Barriers to participation are identified and strategies to overcome these are implemented.</td>
<td>3.2.3 All paid and volunteer staff receive appropriate training about equity issues eg cross cultural communication, challenging stereotyping.</td>
<td>3.3.3 Cultural awareness and pride are fostered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2.4 Specific strategies that are monitored and evaluated are in place to address barriers that may unintentionally exclude groups.</td>
<td>3.3.4 Culturally appropriate and non-discriminatory language is used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2.5 Special efforts are made to recruit volunteers and paid staff from the diversity of Australian communities.</td>
<td>3.3.5 The program provides a safe environment where racism and / or harassment is not tolerated and there are clear processes for dealing with such issues, including public statements of these processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.2.6 The organisation is able to demonstrate inclusivity by maintaining demographic data sets about its members and participants.</td>
<td>3.3.6 There is consistent application of enforcement of rules and expulsion is only used as a mechanism of last resort for handling problems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A commitment to:

4. An experiential model of learning that builds on capabilities and skills while maximising opportunities for fun and recognising age and developmental phases.

Learning through doing invites a different learning experience by linking the practical application with theoretical knowledge through a tangible and visible means. Existing skills and capabilities are tried and expanded at a pace appropriate for each individual, whatever their age or abilities, so that the sense of accomplishment can be experienced by all. The pleasure of learning is reinforced and enhanced by experiences and activities that are fun.
### Experiential learning that is challenging and fun - indicators

#### Indicators for the three key interrelated environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
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<th>Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1.1</td>
<td>4.2.1 The ability to relate to and work with young people is an essential requirement for all program leaders.</td>
<td>4.3.1 The organisation of activities is structured sequentially to build and maintain learning outcomes and to recognise increasing responsibility for self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.2</td>
<td>4.2.2 Staff are trained in an awareness of the developmental tasks of adolescence and early adulthood, youth culture and issues, such as literacy and numeracy.</td>
<td>4.3.2 Young people take ownership of their participation and are able to identify the benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1.3</td>
<td>4.2.3 Mentoring and support is offered to new leaders.</td>
<td>4.3.3 Activities are interesting and meaningful, reflecting young people’s needs and wishes, and not rigid replications of adult instructional regimes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.2.4 Well developed risk management policies and procedures are in place that are well understood by leaders.</td>
<td>4.3.4 Realistic high expectations are set and young people are challenged to extend themselves in a safe environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.3.5 Young people have the opportunity to try activities they may not have access to otherwise.</td>
<td>4.3.6 Integrated approaches to develop self esteem, confidence, leadership and team membership as skills (rather than only personal attributes) are provided through activity, instruction, service and reflection.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A commitment to:

5. Respecting community voice and identity.

Young people's families and communities are instrumental to their wellbeing. Families and communities have aspirations for their young people that can be enhanced from a youth development perspective. Community values and beliefs play an integral part in shaping young people's own values and beliefs. For those involved in youth development understanding and respecting the values and identities of young people's families and communities is crucial for young people to be able to take an active role as community members.
Respecting community voice and identity - indicators

### Indicators for the Three Key Interrelated Environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1.1  Key communities are engaged in policy development processes.</td>
<td>5.2.1 The structures for the involvement of local and broader communities in organisational advisory and decision making processes are made explicit.</td>
<td>5.3.1 Local programs are developed in consultation with the relevant local communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.2 Policy reflects community voice and identity and community values and beliefs are respected.</td>
<td>5.2.2 Advice and support from the community are actively sought out, and in particular about access and equity issues.</td>
<td>5.3.2 The values and beliefs of specific communities are actively accommodated in program design and implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1.3 Existing community knowledge and expertise are sought out as an integral part of policy development processes.</td>
<td>5.2.3 Community voice and identity are incorporated in organisational activity.</td>
<td>5.3.3 Community identity is reflected in program design where possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.4 Communities are asked how the organisation can enhance the community.</td>
<td>5.2.5 Links to existing community networks and structures are made.</td>
<td>5.3.4 Program leaders contribute to and help sustain robust local community networks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A commitment to:

6. Encouraging communities to value and engage young people.

The contribution of young people in their communities is sometimes overlooked and marginalised, while 'youth problems' are sensationalised. Young people are necessarily an integral part of their communities. The importance of engaging young people in their communities in their capacity as young people, rather than as adults in training, is a vital and necessary condition for the ongoing evolution and advancement of society. The focus on young people as active participants in the development of their communities gives young people a stake in their communities now, as well as fostering an optimistic outlook for their future.

Youth development provides opportunities for young people and adults to develop positive relationships, that might not otherwise exist, as they get to know, respect and learn from each other through their common interest.
### INDICATORS FOR THE THREE KEY INTERRELATED ENVIRONMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1.1</td>
<td>6.2.1 Development of relationships with caring, competent adults beyond the family is a feature of the organisation's programs and activities.</td>
<td>6.3.1 Young people's participation in the program is visible to the local community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.2</td>
<td>6.2.2 The organisation provides opportunities for young people to engage with and contribute to their community through the organisation's programs and activities.</td>
<td>6.3.2 Community members are encouraged to take on leadership roles in program implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1.3</td>
<td>6.2.3 The meaning and significance of organisational specific awards are promoted to the corporate sector and the community.</td>
<td>6.3.3 There is mutual respect and reciprocity between adult leaders and younger participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.2.4 Opportunities for community involvement in and support for the organisation's programs and activities are identified and promoted.</td>
<td>6.3.4 Young people are encouraged and supported in taking on leadership roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.3.5 The adult leader's role is primarily facilitative as well as involving transferring of skills.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A commitment to:

7. Partnerships.

Partnerships provide the mechanism for expanding, diversifying and enhancing processes and opportunities. They help avoid unnecessary duplication and offer the potential to maximise benefits for all partners. Partnerships can provide new and alternative ways of viewing and doing things by drawing upon the knowledge, expertise and resources held by the various partners. Quality processes are a feature of sustainable partnerships which are most likely to maximise outcomes.
## Partnerships - indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1.1</td>
<td>7.2.1 Opportunities for collaborative initiatives with other organisations and communities are actively pursued on an ongoing basis.</td>
<td>7.3.1 Partnership arrangements are used to enhance program delivery and the diversity of activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.2</td>
<td>7.2.2 The unique objectives, values and expertise of each organisation are acknowledged and respected in the partnership.</td>
<td>7.3.2 The roles and responsibilities of the various partners in program implementation are clearly defined.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1.3</td>
<td>7.2.3 Partnership arrangements between organisations are formalised by memorandums of understanding or service agreements.</td>
<td>7.3.3 There is sharing of knowledge and skills between partners and the contribution of all partners is acknowledged and respected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.2.4 Partnership structural and operational arrangements are regularly reviewed and evaluated to improve and strengthen the partnership.</td>
<td>7.3.4 Communication strategies are devised and implemented to ensure that all program partners are fully informed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.2.5 There is an explicitly stated process for resolving issues and disagreements between partner organisations.</td>
<td>7.3.5 Together, all program partners regularly review and evaluate programs and determine future directions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.2.6 Partnerships that are informal and work well are also recognised.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A commitment to:

8. Quality outcomes.

Quality youth development initiatives encourage young people to develop and apply creative and innovative ideas and solutions, negotiate resolutions to real issues and achieve consensus in decision making about things that matter to them. Achieving quality outcomes requires an active commitment to continuous improvement by all those involved.
# Indicators for the Three Key Interrelated Environments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1.1 Policy objectives and intended outcomes are clearly stated, systematically monitored and evaluated.</td>
<td>8.2.1 The organisational goals and objectives include a commitment to continuous improvement.</td>
<td>8.3.1 Programs can be replicated and are sustainable through clear documentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.2.2 There are well developed processes for maintaining quality across the organisation and in the delivery of programs across multiple locations.</td>
<td>8.3.2 Evaluation is embedded in program design and implementation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1.2 Consultative processes are used to identify benchmarks and standards.</td>
<td>8.2.3 The outcomes of organisational programs and activities are clearly defined.</td>
<td>8.3.3 Program record keeping processes are formalised and provide reliable information that can be used in program evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.2.4 There are processes in place to regularly seek direct feedback (using a variety of methods) from young people (and their families/carers where relevant) about all aspects of programs and activities.</td>
<td>8.3.4 Program reviews use information gathered in a variety of ways and from a range of participants and stakeholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1.3 The intended outcomes from policy implementation are influenced by baseline data and relevant international research wherever possible.</td>
<td>8.2.5 All organisational members participate in organisational self-assessment and/or continuous improvement processes.</td>
<td>8.3.5 Improvement through reflecting on practice is an integral part of the program delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.1.4 The plan and methods for monitoring and reviewing outcomes are established prior to policy implementation.</td>
<td>8.2.6 Using humorous organisational self-reflection is encouraged as one means of identifying improvements.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.2.7 A code of conduct is developed for both staff and volunteers, including a clear and public statement about acceptable behaviours.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A commitment to:


What is of interest or a challenge to one young person or a group of young people will not be to others. The diversity of interests amongst young people provides the means for the enrichment of society. Learning to understand and respect difference encourages cooperation and goodwill. Learning to make choices involves learning how to assess the implications and consequences of choices made from the perspectives of the individual, family and community. Making choices as a member and/or leader of a group requires developing skills in consultation, negotiation and compromise. The skills form the basis of growing harmonious relationships between individuals, groups and communities.
### Encouraging and respecting choice - indicators

#### INDICATORS FOR THE THREE KEY INTERRELATED ENVIRONMENTS

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.1.1 The diversity of young people's wants and needs is recognised in</td>
<td>9.2.1 The values and beliefs that underpin the organisation’s programs and</td>
<td>9.3.1 Participation in programs is voluntary and non-coercive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>policy that is expansive rather than restrictive.</td>
<td>activities are defined.</td>
<td>9.3.2 The design of the program is such that there are multiple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1.2 The value of alternative options are explored and articulated.</td>
<td>9.2.2 The organisation is open to new ideas.</td>
<td>opportunities for young people to learn to make choices as individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.3.3 There is flexibility within the organisational framework to accommodate</td>
<td>and as part of a group/team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>diversity.</td>
<td>9.3.3 Withdrawal from participation in programs does not incur a penalty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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A commitment to:

10. Recognising the contribution of all stakeholders.

Regardless of the environment, the very nature of youth development involves a wide range of stakeholders with differing knowledge, skills, expertise, interests and needs. Listening to the diversity of stakeholder perspectives has the potential to increase the responsiveness of policy, organisations and programs. While the capacity of stakeholders to contribute may vary, all contributions need to be recognised and acknowledged for the part they play.
### Indicators for the Three Key Interrelated Environments

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.1.1 There is recognition that stakeholders (groups and individuals) contribute in a variety of ways.</td>
<td>10.2.1 Organisational processes model teamwork and respect for the contribution of paid and voluntary staff and participants.</td>
<td>10.3.1 The contribution of leaders and participants in program implementation is recognised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.2 The contribution of all stakeholders is acknowledged.</td>
<td>10.2.2 Innovative ways for people to become involved as volunteers are identified.</td>
<td>10.3.2 Leaders and participants are provided with opportunities to maximise their individual capacity to contribute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.3 The changing patterns and trends in the way volunteer effort is contributed are considered and accommodated.</td>
<td>10.2.3 There are documented job descriptions for all paid and volunteer positions.</td>
<td>10.3.3 Reimbursement for significant recurring out-of-pocket expenses incurred by volunteer adult leaders is available.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A commitment to:

11. Promotion that is ethical, honest and non-patronising.

Young people invest time and energy when participating in youth development programs and activities. If young people are to make informed decisions about their participation, they need to be assured that what is promoted accurately reflects what is delivered by the youth development programs and activities. They can then make decisions that are best suited to their own particular situations with confidence. As well, promoters and sponsors of youth development programs and activities need to use promotional strategies that are respectful and non-patronising of young people. Sponsorship of youth development should exclude sponsors who are involved in promoting activities and products that are potentially harmful to young people.
## Indicators for the Three Key Interrelated Environments

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11.1.1 The diversity of the community is recognised and reflected in promotional strategies.</td>
<td>11.2.1 There is an explicit rationale for programs and activities involving young people provided by the organisation.</td>
<td>11.3.1 A strategy, including rationale, for the promotion of programs is articulated and documented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.2 Young people are involved in the development and design of promotional material.</td>
<td>11.2.2 The programs and activities to be delivered by organisations are accurately promoted.</td>
<td>11.3.2 Program design and implementation arrangements have a clearly articulated rationale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.3 Sponsorship guidelines are developed that ensure the use of respectful and non-patronising promotional strategies by sponsors and that exclude sponsors who are involved in promoting activities and products that are potentially harmful to young people.</td>
<td>11.2.3 Sponsorship guidelines are developed for the organisation that exclude sponsors who are involved in promoting activities and products that are potentially harmful to young people.</td>
<td>11.3.3 Programs are documented to ensure their objectives are shared among contributors and that they deliver what they promise to young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.3.4 The sustainability and long term direction of the program is considered from the outset.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A commitment to:

12. Providing opportunities for service to the community that are meaningful for both young people and the community.

Many young people seek out opportunities to become involved in their communities through service to their community. Sometimes, community responsiveness to young people looking for service opportunities underestimates the extent of the contribution young people are willing and able to make. The effectiveness of the contribution of young people is enhanced when the true value of their contribution is recognised and when the reciprocal nature of the benefits to both communities and young people is articulated.
### INDICATORS FOR THE THREE KEY INTERRELATED ENVIRONMENTS

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.1.1 The value of service to the community is identified and promoted.</td>
<td>12.2.1 Commitment to service to the community is recognised in the organisation’s objectives.</td>
<td>12.3.1 A variety of ways of providing service to the community are offered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.1.2 The concept of service learning is explored and utilised.</td>
<td>12.2.2 Community links are established which increase opportunities for non-exploitative service.</td>
<td>12.3.2 Service is sustained over a significant time and is subject to explicit reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.1.3 Policies which encourage and support service to the community are developed.</td>
<td>12.2.3 Innovative ways to provide service to the community are explored and utilised.</td>
<td>12.3.3 The outcomes of the service for the community and for young people are made explicit and celebrated in formal and informal ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.2.4 Develop service partnerships where the service activity is defined and desired outcomes agreed.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A commitment to:


A key feature of youth development programs is the emphasis on skill development through activities that are structured and sequential in their learning outcomes. Maximising the opportunities for recognising learning outcomes requires the development of a range of recognition options, including options that dovetail into the major existing formal recognition systems of education and vocational education and training. The attributes, knowledge and skills associated with the achievement of organisation specific awards should be made explicit and publicised. Formal and informal recognition of both personal and group achievements is a significant incentive for ongoing learning and development.
Maximising recognition of learning outcomes - indicators

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.1.1 The notion of non-formal education is further explored and researched.</td>
<td>13.2.1 Opportunities for accreditation and recognition of the organisation’s programs and activities are actively explored.</td>
<td>13.3.1 The achievements of young people are recognised and celebrated using formal and informal mechanisms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.1.2 A range of recognition options is developed to accommodate the diversity of organisations and programs.</td>
<td>13.2.2 Accredited induction and ongoing training are offered to paid and voluntary staff.</td>
<td>13.3.2 Achievement is rewarded for all participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.1.3 Strategies to support the implementation of a range of recognition options are considered, developed, publicised and encouraged.</td>
<td>13.2.3 The professional development of paid and voluntary staff is a high priority and formally accredited where possible.</td>
<td>13.3.3 Programs work together to provide multiple recognition opportunities for young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.1.4 Portability of accredited outcomes across programs, organisations and jurisdictions is facilitated and promoted.</td>
<td>13.2.4 The key competencies needed by adult leaders are identified and provide the basis for leader training.</td>
<td>13.3.4 Programs develop mechanisms for recognising young people’s existing skills and achievements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.2.5 Arrangements are made to seek formal recognition for the existing knowledge and skills of staff and volunteers.</td>
<td>13.3.5 Prior achievements and skills of young people are acknowledged and cross-credited where appropriate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A commitment:

14. **Strengthening the interconnectedness of social networks.**

Youth development desirably involves the whole community. The interconnections between social networks, both formal and informal, provide the means for maximising opportunities for cooperative and collaborative initiatives. The natural development of interconnections between various networks cannot be taken for granted and effort needs to be focused on fostering and nurturing connections that encourage robust dialogue amongst individuals, groups and communities. Interconnections between networks with diverse interests are particularly important to engaging the wider community in youth development.

Opportunities for forming supportive and caring relationships with other young people and adults provide young people with social networks that go further than their family and immediate social circle.
## INDICATORS FOR THE THREE KEY INTERRELATED ENVIRONMENTS

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14.1.1 The interconnection of social networks is a fundamental premise of positive youth development.</td>
<td>14.2.1 The place of the organisation within the broader community environment is established.</td>
<td>14.3.1 Opportunities for increasing social networks are included in program activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.1.2 Interconnectedness is characterised by a commitment to the identification, mapping and exploration of existing pathways and beyond.</td>
<td>14.2.2 Potential connections with other organisations with a commonality of interest are identified and explored.</td>
<td>14.3.2 Young people are able to form supportive relationships in safety and confidence with adults and peers beyond their immediate family and social circle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.1.3 Acknowledgment and recognition that robust interconnections between social networks require nurturing and resourcing.</td>
<td>14.2.3 Networks with other organisations and local communities are fostered and utilised to enhance the diversity of youth development opportunities.</td>
<td>14.3.3 The program is open to contact with and involvement from families and significant others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.1.4 Recognition that an impact on any part of a social network will impact on the whole network and may have unintended or hidden consequences.</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.3.4 The importance of social connections and obligations is recognised in program planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14.3.5 Appropriate referral of young people to other organisations and programs is made.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUSION

There is a new interest in youth development in Australia because it offers a holistic and strengths based approach to the support and engagement of young people in their own development and in the development of their communities. Youth development affirms the value of young people as young people, as valued participants in their community and as contributors to their communities. The reciprocal focus in youth development on young people and their communities means that both benefit.

The framework of principles outlined in this publication provides a common starting point and focus for reflection and discussions about good practice in youth development in Australia. It is an invitation to take up the challenge of good practice in youth development – to consider, explore, try, experiment and innovate so that youth development in Australia is at the leading edge of good practice.

This is only the first step in the building and sharing of knowledge about good practice. There is much more to be done to ensure quality outcomes for youth development.

Strategies for implementing the principles and indicators need to be explored and tried. The principles are interrelated and cumulative in effect. Work might focus on different principles at different times and in different locations but the maintenance of a holistic perspective that pursues these principles in relation to each other (and the monitoring of progress across them) is most likely to yield the greatest benefits for government, organisations and young people who are involved. The application of the principles to specific environments or specific groups of young people also needs further exploration. For example, youth development and Indigenous young people or the school environment.

The feedback loop between implementation in practice and the evolving nature of the indicators, in particular, needs to be vigorous and strong. A number of the indicators need further expansion and discussion. For example, what does it mean to provide a safe environment and at the same time offer activities that challenge? It is intended that a series of companion implementation or ‘how to’ guides, focussing on specific principles, indicators or environments, will be developed over the next year.

Australian young people deserve the best from youth development. Embracing good practice in youth development by all who are involved will ensure that young people and their communities gain the maximum advantage from youth development.
Good practice in youth development will continue to evolve. Ausyouth welcomes feedback on this document as a contribution to that evolution.

Comments may be forwarded to Ausyouth via
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