

STRATEGIC PLAN

2021 - 2023



UN
youth
australia



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UN Youth Australia acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as Australia's First People and Custodians of the lands on which we operate. We acknowledge that this land was stolen, sovereignty was never ceded, and that colonialism continues to pervade our collective present. We respect and honour Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present, as they are a part of the oldest continuing culture in the world. UN Youth Australia reaffirms its commitment to Reconciliation and First Nations justice, and recognises we have much to learn from the lived experiences and expertise of First Nations Peoples.

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Part 1: How did we get here?

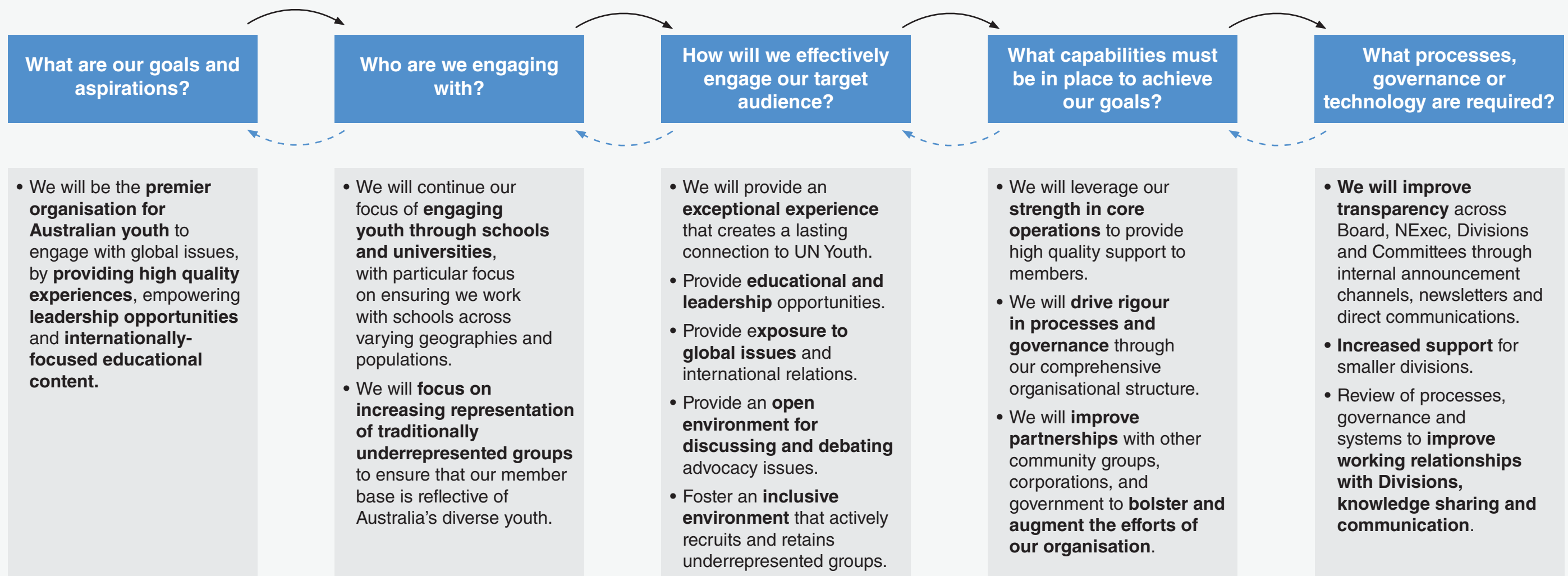


Throughout 2019 UN Youth engaged in a strategic articulation process to determine the organisation's goals, aspirations and key strategic focus areas. The final strategic articulation was adopted at National Council 45.

What are our goals and aspirations?

Our aspirations summarise our intent to provide superior and unique opportunities for our members.

We will be the premier organisation for Australian youth to engage with global issues, by providing high quality experiences, empowering leadership opportunities and internationally-focused educational content

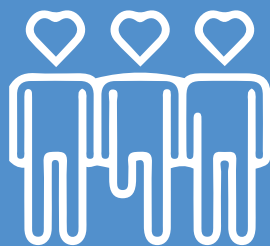


For the 2021 to 2023 period, UN Youth will focus on strengthening core operations, increasing diversity and representation within the organisation, and improving our ways of working.



Strengthening our core

- Maintaining our focus on core operations: finance, human resources, communications and welfare.
- Aligning our functions to drive results in key outcomes, such as education, advocacy and leadership development.



Increasing diversity

- Encouraging the recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups - particularly low SES and Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islanders.
- Tackling the primary barriers to entry for underrepresented groups through bursaries (costs, recognition amongst public/regional/rural schools).



Improving ways of working

- Increasing support for smaller divisions.
- Improving our processes, governance and technology systems to improve the working relationship between Board, NExec and Divisions.

For the 2021 to 2023 period, UN Youth will continue to be a non-partisan educational organisation and recognise our unique and valuable place in the youth sector.

Our approach to advocacy

Over the course of the strategy setting process, our members and volunteers highlighted that they wanted a clearer stance on advocacy and advocacy issues. After much discussion and consultation, we have prepared the following statement to summarise our stance on advocacy.

We see our role as facilitators for discussions surrounding advocacy issues, rather than publicly driving advocacy issues in society or across our organisation. We will prioritise diversity of thought, opinion and debate, and aim to create open spaces that allow us to understand issues and one another better.

Our strength as an organisation lies in **providing young Australians with a global education that gives them a deep knowledge of the social and political problems confronting the world and the skills to address them.** Our strength isn't only that we deliver educational content, it's that we create space for respectful discussion and foster critical thinking skills. Our programs are underpinned by the principles of the United Nations and thrive on the sharing of diverse opinions among young people. We know that partisanship has no place in the way we deliver our programs, because every young person has something valuable to say, and every young person is worthy of being empowered and educated about the world around them.

UN Youth recognises its unique position in the youth sector. **We believe our resources are most effectively utilised in the education and empowerment of young people to become their own agents of change rather than in the running of our own advocacy campaigns.** UN Youth showcases opinions from the diverse range of young people we engage with and provides a platform to amplify their perspectives on a national and international stage. We will never advocate in a politically partisan manner and we will continue to take pride in our status as an educational organisation in the eyes of young people, schools, partners and the community.

Part 2: Strategic initiatives

A strategic initiative is an investment of resources dedicated to accomplish an organisational objective. Unlike strategic priorities or pillars, which tend to be phrased as broad goals, strategic initiatives are projects that include a scope and are assigned to initiative owners.

These initiatives have been designed and put in place to ensure actionable steps are taken to achieve our strategy. As part of the process, we have interviewed volunteers from the national and divisions to identify strategic initiatives that best align with our strategic priorities and gap analysis. The viability and overall impact on the organisation has been strongly considered in prioritising initiatives.

Disclaimers:

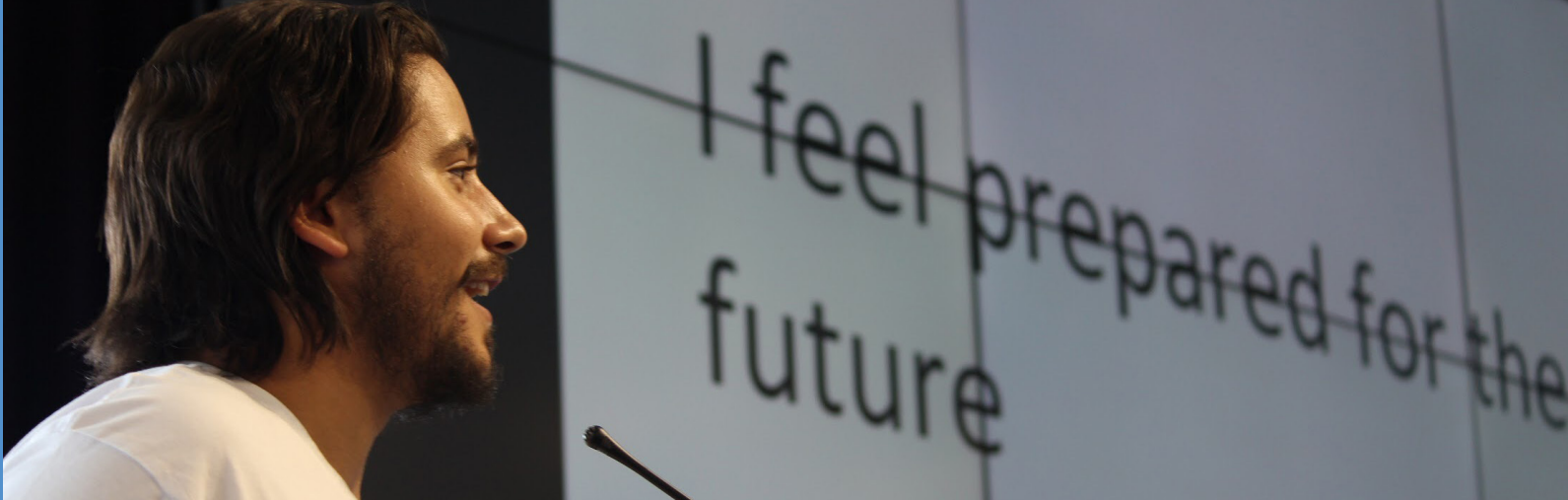
- a. These are intended to act as guidelines for how we can move towards our strategic priorities. Implementation of initiatives does not necessarily mean we have achieved our strategy, and vice versa.
- b. We acknowledge and invite changes to the strategic initiatives over the course of the next three years. It is ultimately the Board's responsibility to continually assess whether these initiatives are still applicable and make changes accordingly.

	Strengthening our core	Increasing diversity	Improving our ways of working
Revising risk management	✓		✓
Reviewing UN Youth's organisational structure		✓	✓
Developing the Development Portfolio	✓	✓	✓
Establishing a mentoring program	✓	✓	✓
Building a proactive approach to ethics			✓
Investing long-term in online spaces	✓	✓	✓
Committing to meaningful acts of reconciliation		✓	✓
Elevating minority voices		✓	✓
Making operations accessible		✓	



Part 3: Implementation of Strategic Plan

Below is an outline of how we intend to implement the Strategic Plan



	DESCRIPTION	BOARD	NATIONAL EXECUTIVE	DIVISIONS
Beginning of each year	Annual review of Strategic Plan, Initiatives and Task-forces.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the Strategic Plan, pillars and initiatives• Assess progress on initiatives• Identify any key projects or task-forces• Assign sponsors and owners to initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some National Executive members will be assigned as owners to initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encouraged to run a Strategic Plan session on gap analysis with their executives (e.g. at executive retreat).• Encouraged to draft a Divisional Operational plan in line with the National Strategic Plan.• Engaged in consultations as part of developing the operational plan.
March of each year	Annual Operational Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaged in consultations as part of developing the operational plan.• Approve the Operational Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Produce a yearly Operational Plan on how the initiatives and pillars will be implemented in each portfolio.• Consult all levels of the organisation as part of this process.	
Each quarter end	Quarterly reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For each strategic initiative, sponsors will meet regularly with owners.• Report progress on initiatives to the Board.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage in ad-hoc consultations as part of implementing strategic initiatives.
Each half year	National Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Submit a Strategic Plan Progress Report to each National Council.• In general, National Council Reports should report on how their work that year has aligned with the three Strategic Pillars, and any work done in their portfolio on the Strategic Initiatives.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Report on how their operations have aligned with the Strategic Pillars and whether they have contributed to any advancement of the Strategic Initiatives. <p>Note: This is regardless of whether a division has a formal Operational Plan.</p>
2023	Develop next strategic plan			

Appendix A: Initiatives



Revising risk management

Risk management is at the core of all UN Youth's operations. We have historically embedded responsibilities related to risk in all positions, without highlighting its performance within any particular portfolio or team. This initiative aims to ensure that we are shifting the organisation to take on a more preventative, rather than reactive, approach and attitude towards risk. It will involve establishing a risk management framework, managing an internal audit team, potentially restructuring Board committees to improve our risk management workflows, and investigating the possibility of creating a Chief Risk Officer on the National Executive.

The primary strategic rationales for this initiative are strengthening our core and improving our ways of working. By highlighting risk management, including by separating risk as its own function, more time can be invested in developing risk management capabilities and creating a more consistent organisational approach towards risk.

Reviewing UN Youth's organisational structure

UN Youth's structure has developed in a piecemeal fashion over decades and strategic review is now needed. Some volunteer roles require significant time commitment and there is a lack of human resources in key strategic/high value areas such as partnerships.

This initiative will involve mapping out a detailed organisational chart and analysing how existing structures can be made more efficient by engaging external consultants.

The strategic rationale for this initiative is based on improving our ways of working (updating and optimising our organisational structure to be more efficient and provide better support) and increasing diversity (reducing volunteer workload allows for a more diverse volunteer base with different amounts of disposable time).





Developing the Development Portfolio

Development is one of the newest portfolios on the National Executive. This initiative aims to create more structure and consistency within the Development portfolio, from both a human resources and process perspective.

The primary components of this initiative are forming a National Development Committee to support the Chief Development Officer (CDO) and developing mechanisms to better support divisions in their strategy and partnerships projects.

The strategic rationale for this initiative is primarily in improving our ways of working, as greater support for the CDO will allow them to be more efficient and to spend more time on high-level strategic planning. This initiative also helps with strengthening our core through providing more volunteer hours focused on engaging with alumni and seeking sponsorship, and with increasing diversity as greater support for the CDO in finding alternative sources of income for the organisation (such as grants) will assist in making our events more financially accessible for delegates.

Establishing a mentoring program

This initiative aims to find a pool of potential mentors who will provide advice for Board members, National Executive members, and the Australian Youth Representative to the United Nations. Ideally, mentors will have professional experience relevant to the mentee's portfolio, live in the same city as them, be a UN Youth alumnus or otherwise have experience with youth-focused, and be ineligible for membership of UN Youth Australia.

The strategic rationale for this initiative is strengthening our core. UN Youth provides our volunteers with phenomenal professional development opportunities. Mentorship will add another facet to these opportunities, providing volunteers with technical assistance, a professional contact, and even personal career advice.

Building a proactive approach to ethics

Through strong ethical review and approval processes, this initiative aims to ensure UN Youth Australia is regarded as a leader in ethical business practices among Australian non-for-profits. Currently, the Ethics Committee on the Board provides guidance to the national organisation and divisions regarding ethical sponsorship and partnerships.

The strategic rationale for this initiative is primarily in improving our ways of working. This initiative endeavours to restructure aspects of the Ethics Committee in order for the committee to take a more proactive approach to ethics. Potential projects for the Ethics Committee include creating a partnership approval decision tree, an advocacy framework, and a Social Impact Framework.

Investing long-term in online spaces

Online events should continue to be regularly run, beyond COVID-19 restrictions requiring them, at both a National and Divisional level. Nationally, this will look like online international activities and collaborative summits such as the ones run in partnership with UN Women Australia and UN Youth New Zealand in 2020. In divisions, this will look like running select rounds of competitions online and having certain programs like summits or Crisis Point held online. The Youth Representative Program will also investigate alternative ways of engaging with young people such as online consultations.

The strategic rationales for this initiative are strengthening our core and increasing diversity. Online events greatly increase access for rural and regional students to engage with our events. They also allow smaller divisions to have assistance from facilitators in other divisions, increasing their human resources capacity. Online events are significantly cheaper to run which results in reduced registration fees, breaking down many of the financial barriers that prevent delegates from attending our events.





Committing to meaningful acts of reconciliation

Through Reconciliation, UN Youth Australia aims to create a safe, inclusive and valuable place for First Nations People to participate and share. This will be achieved firstly through increasing First Nations People's voices and agency at all levels of our organisation, primarily through the work of the Reconciliation Working Group and the creation of a First Nations Advisory Group. Secondly, UN Youth will equip volunteers with the skills, knowledge and competency to effectively listen and participate in conversations about First Nations affairs through increased training and cultural awareness practices for non-First Nations volunteers and increased educational content for delegates that includes First Nations topics and firsthand perspectives.

The strategic rationale for this initiative is increasing diversity through tackling the primary barriers to entry and engagement for First Nations people in UN Youth, improving our ways of working through increasing the range of perspectives included in our strategic and decision-making processes at every level of the organisation, and strengthening our core through fulfilling our organisation's commitment to providing inclusive and effective education on issues relevant to Australia's youth and the United Nations.

Elevating minority voices

Elevating minority voices within the organisation is pivotal to accurately and meaningfully representing the myriad of experiences that shape our distinctive, vibrant ethos. This initiative involves developing and investing in our Wom*n, People of Colour (POC), and Queer caucuses. These caucuses should be active throughout the year, provide support to our volunteers, and should be consulted on activities in their portfolios that are relevant to members of each caucus. Another focus of this initiative is developing the roles of national Wom*n and POC officers to coordinate the caucuses and work on promoting minority voices within the organisation throughout each year.

The strategic rationales for this initiative are increasing diversity, by ensuring safe spaces and support for diverse volunteers are easily accessible within the organisation, and improving our ways of working through ensuring there are clear pathways through which action can be taken to tackle the concerns of the caucuses.

Making operations accessible

The National Accessibility Panel (NAP) is bringing a proactive approach to making UN Youth's events, operations and processes more accessible to the diverse needs of our current and potential delegates and facilitators. The NAP will work to develop and implement policies, resources and procedures, develop partnerships, and otherwise promote accessibility within UN Youth.

The strategic rationales for this initiative are strengthening our core and increasing diversity. Improving our events, operations, and processes from an accessibility angle will allow for increased engagement with volunteers and delegates that have accessibility needs at all levels of the organisation, helping us fulfill our vision of engaging all young Australians.





**Opening young eyes to
the world**

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