

FUTURE *Ready* YOUTH



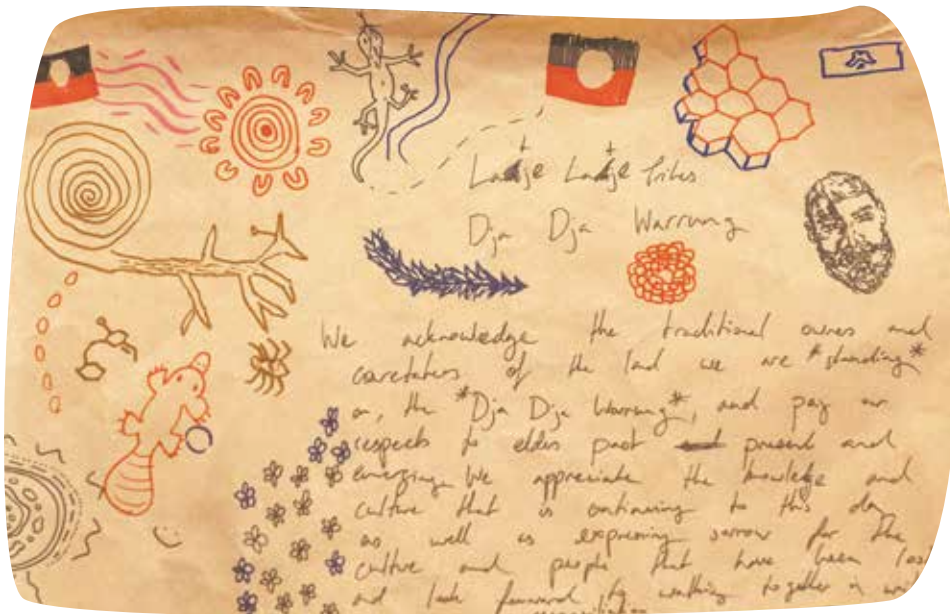
AN ADAPT YOUTH CLIMATE NETWORK
Retreat



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT *of Country*

We acknowledge and respect Victorian Traditional Owners as the original custodians of Victoria's land and waters, their unique ability to care for Country and deep spiritual connection to it. We honour Elders past and present whose knowledge and wisdom have ensured the continuation of culture and traditional practices.

We would like to specifically acknowledge the Dja Dja Wurrung people, the Traditional Owners of the land and water where the Future Ready Youth event was held, and express our gratitude to Uncle Rick Nelson for welcoming us to Djaara Country.



Thank you **YOUTH LEADERS AND YOUTH PARTICIPANTS!**

This event would not have been possible without the incredible commitment, creativity and generous contributions of the Youth Leaders who led the design and facilitation of the retreat and the open and enthusiastic participation of the young people who attended.

The story SO FAR

ADAPT Loddon Mallee is working towards climate justice for our region by prioritising actions that centre the needs and voices of people most disproportionately impacted by climate change, including young people.

In January 2020, at the height of the Black Summer fires, ADAPT held a Youth Climate Retreat in Bendigo. The retreat brought together young people interested in climate change from the Loddon Mallee region to design and develop ideas on how the region can adapt to climate change.

We heard that young people want to be part of a peer support network and to see more youth focused climate adaptation events. In response to these recommendations the ADAPT Youth Climate Network was established and Future Ready Youth is the first event delivered by the network.

FUTURE READY YOUTH

Co-designing with young people

In May 2022 members of the Youth Climate Network were invited to be part of a design team who, with the support of ADAPT Loddon Mallee would work together to co-design a youth focused climate adaptation event.

A group of four young leaders met regularly online over a four-month period to participate in creative activities, discussions and decision making to design an exciting program of activities and speakers for 'Future Ready Youth' a two day youth climate retreat.

Meet the team

YOUTH CLIMATE NETWORK LEADERS



Jemima Lotika

Hi, I'm Jemima. Originally from Johannesburg, South Africa, I now live in Mildura where I work as a freelance visual artist and study public health full-time. I joined the Youth Climate Network to learn about climate change and raise awareness.



Mhairi Cornford

Hi, I'm Mhairi. I'm a year 10 student from Bendigo who enjoys bushwalking, music, writing, and loves being involved in community events and my local youth group. I joined the Youth Climate Network when I became a Youth Climate Advisory Board member for the Loddon Mallee Region.



Jemille McKenzie

Hi, I'm Jemille. I'm from Bendigo and I'm currently working in Community Service at Anglicare, studying a Diploma of Counseling at UTAS, and volunteering with Canteen. I joined the Youth Climate Network because I want to make change in climate action and work with like-minded people in the process.



Kelsey Macdonald

Hi I'm Kelsey, an artist from Bendigo. I spend my time painting, making, looking for inspiration, and reading. I joined the Youth Climate Network because I believe the thoughts and perspectives of young people, as the inheritors of the earth, are crucial if we are going to create positive change.

Below is an overview of the process the Youth Leaders went through to design Future Ready Youth.



1 *Imagine*

Reflected on feedback from young people and their personal experiences and hopes for the future.

From these insights, mood boards were created to represent what they want to see, do and feel at the retreat.



2 *Define*

Identified key themes from the mood boards to guide the design of an event, to create an engaging and inclusive space for young people and to explore what climate adaptation in Loddon Mallee means to them.



3 *Develop*

Themes were transformed into an exciting program of speakers, activities and workshops.



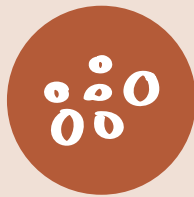
4 *Deliver*

The design team led the delivery of the event by welcoming and supporting participants, facilitating workshops and reviewing participant feedback.



Sharing local knowledge

- Understanding the impacts of climate change at a local level
- Learning from Traditional Owners about the impacts of climate change on Country and Culture
- Hearing from other local climate adaptation projects and youth-led movements



Storytelling

- 🗣️ Learning about climate change impacts through personal storytelling
- 🗣️ Capturing and sharing stories for impact



Hands on action focused

- 👏 Action focused – less talking, let's do something
- 👏 Learning through hands-on activities
- 👏 Leave with a sense of achievement



Connection and wellbeing

- 👏 Connecting to the land we are on
- 👏 Opportunities to connect with each other
- 👏 Diversity of young people attending
- 👏 Activities and spaces that support connection and wellbeing



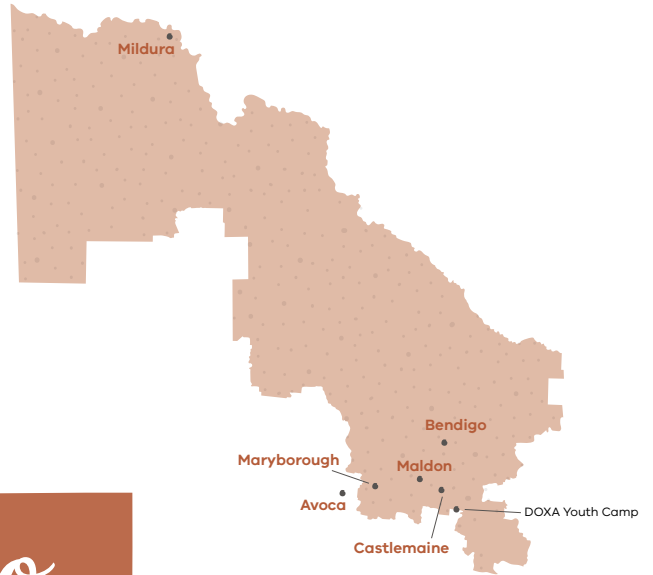
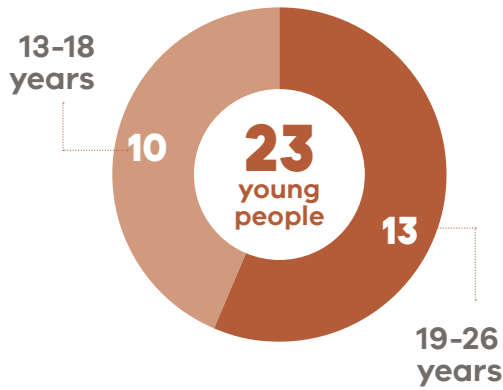
Leadership

- ★ Connecting young people with local leadership opportunities
- ★ Identifying and developing local projects and actions
- ★ Engaging with community

Above are the themes identified by the Youth Leaders that guided the design of Future Ready Youth.

What HAPPENED?

Future Ready Youth was held at the DOXA Youth Camp on Djaara Country outside Malmsbury. The event attracted an enthusiastic and diverse group of young people, who over two days, participated in an exciting program of speakers, activities, workshops and fun.

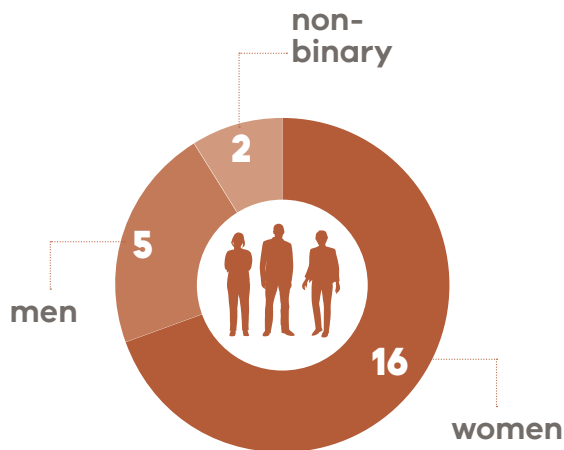


5 
people who speak a language other than English as home

Who CAME TO FUTURE READY YOUTH?

1 
First Nations young person

3 
people living with disability



5 
people from the LGBTQI+ community

FUTURE Ready YOUTH PROGRAM



What DID WE DO?

The themes identified through the design process were brought to life through a program of speakers, activities and workshops:



Sharing *local* knowledge

Participants connected with Traditional Owners and learned about First Nations' perspectives on caring for Country and Culture in a changing climate.

Participants were welcomed to Dja Dja Wurrung Country by Djaara elder Uncle Rick Nelson.



Aunty Marilyn Nicholls guided the group on a river walk and weaving workshop while sharing the enduring role of Traditional Owners in caring for and healing the waterways and Country from the impacts of colonization and climate change.



Proud Yorta Yorta woman Morgan Rudd facilitated a session on making acknowledgement of Country personal and meaningful.



Participants learned what the latest climate science is telling us about how climate change is likely to impact the Loddon Mallee with John Clarke from CSIRO.



Storytelling

Participants explored how to craft a personal story in a way that can influence others and create impact while learning from the personal stories of others.



Leadership

Participants looked at their own leadership skills and styles, and explored leadership opportunities for young people.

Comedian and journalist Issy Phillips worked with participants to identify their strengths and passions and explore how they can contribute to climate action.

“We need the artists and writers to work with scientists to communicate the data because the arts can move people in a way that statistics can’t. Something I’ve learnt through making climate comedy is that activism can take many forms and doesn’t always look like going to protests or signing petitions.**”**

”
Issy Phillips, Win Win Mag



Participants heard from a panel of young leaders who spoke about what motivates them, how they found their path and how they have overcome challenges.



Local stakeholders were invited to join participants for lunch to connect and consider how the voice of young people can be centred in climate adaptation planning and decision making.

Hands on *action focused*

Participants chose from three hands on workshops.



Growing food in a changing climate - Ashay Frances from Peppergreen Farm worked with participants to strengthen their understanding of food security in a changing climate through building a wicking bed from scratch.



Restoring the natural environment – Sophie Bickford from Biolinks Alliance shared with participants how to make sense of what the natural environment is telling us, about how to respond to a changing climate and how we can support its restoration.



Storytelling for impact – Youth Leader Jemille McKenzie and documentarian Kyla Brettle worked with participants to craft impactful stories and test out their skills by recording a radio interview.

Connection and wellbeing

Spending two days together in person was a powerful opportunity for connection after two years of social distancing and isolation. The weekend was full of games, shared meals, discussion and fun.

Wayapa Wurruk led us in a mindful walk and meditation informed by First Nations' concepts of wellbeing.



What DID YOUNG PEOPLE SAY

Collective vision for a climate ready future in Loddon Mallee

In small place-based groups, participants we invited to imagine a climate ready future in Loddon Mallee and what it will take to get there. Each place-based group created visual representations of what a climate ready future could look like in their community.





**A CLIMATE
READY
FUTURE FOR
BENDIGO
LOOKS LIKE...**



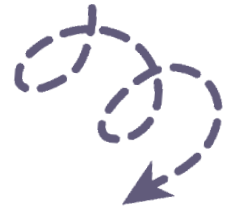
**A CLIMATE
READY
FUTURE FOR
MILDURA
LOOKS LIKE...**



**A CLIMATE
READY
FUTURE FOR
SMALL TOWNS
IN LODDON
MALLEE LOOKS
LIKE...**



PARTICIPANTS DISCUSSED WHAT THEY VALUE MOST IN THEIR COMMUNITIES AND WHAT TO PROTECT FROM THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE...



Community spaces

- Splash Park
- Gardens
- Bushlands
- Galleries



Events

- Youth events
- Farmers market



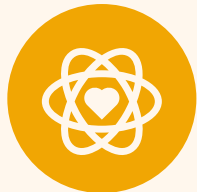
Natural environment

- Habitats for native animals
- Close to nature and wildlife
- Beautiful views and open spaces



Community groups

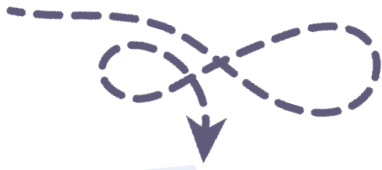
- Country Fire Authority
- Country Women's Association
- Sporting groups
- Parent advisory groups



Community values

- Inclusiveness
- Everyone knows each other and says g'day
- Willingness to help each other
- Community pride

PARTICIPANTS ALSO DISCUSSED HOW TO BECOME CLIMATE READY



Reduce waste

- 🔄 Improve systems to reduce, reuse and recycle
- 🔄 Share knowledge across the region



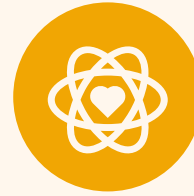
Improve transport options

- 🚲 More bike tracks
- 🚲 Better public transport
- 🚲 More tracks for bushwalks



Resilient natural environment

- 🌳 More native trees
- 🌳 Greening busy streets
- 🌳 Research into river algae



Community values

- 🌐 A city more balanced with nature, more teamwork and community involvement



Equity and diversity

- 👤 Age friendly and inclusive community groups
- 👤 Less racism





Improve housing

- Safe, accessible and affordable housing for all



Improve Services

- Accessible and targeted mental health services



Secure Employment

- Secure jobs for young people with better work conditions



Collaborative and community led decision making

- Include young people, consider environmental impacts
- Welcome progressive ideas in decision making



Sustainable food systems

- Irrigation and sustainable farming practices
- Celebrate the food and cultures of our region



Thriving community

- Attract new and young people to regional communities
- Offer more clubs, activities, spaces and events where people can connect

Feedback FROM PARTICIPANTS

14 of the 23 participants completed the retreat feedback form

enjoyed the retreat as a whole!

feel more connected to likeminded people in the region.



had improved their knowledge of climate change and how it will impact their community.

feel more confident to get involved in climate adaptation activities.



Average participant rating for the workshop sessions was 4.6/5.

It was interestingly different in a good way. One of the best weekends!

Very inspiring and engaging from a young persons perspective.



Future Ready Youth gave me... social connections, skills, confidence, knowledge, reassurance.

Participating in Future Ready Youth made me feel... valued, supported, empowered, comforted, excited for the future, anxious.

Participant highlights from the retreat were...

Meeting new people and making connections



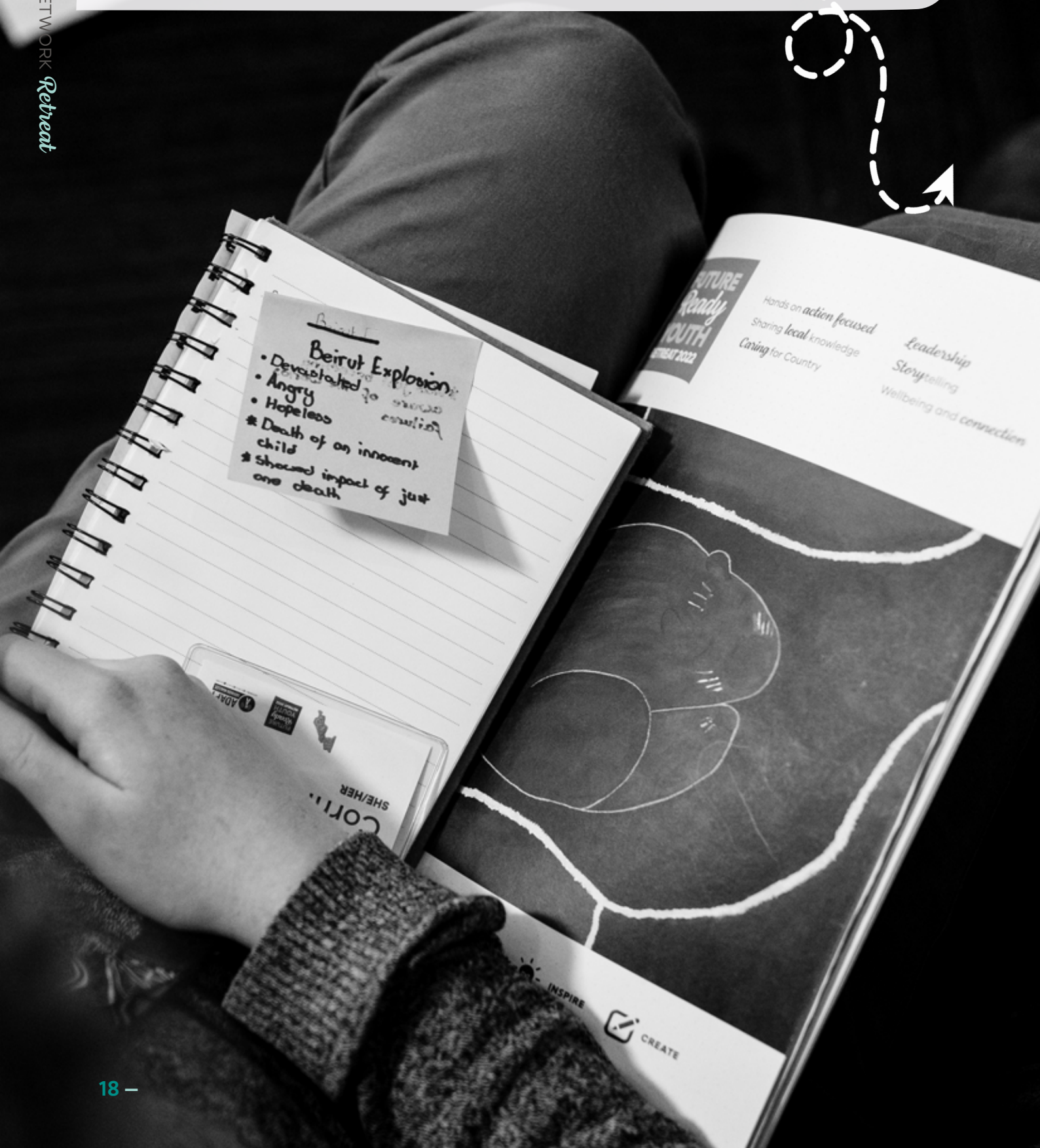
Hands on workshops

Gaining knowledge

Learning from and connecting with Traditional Owners

Where TO FROM HERE?

The Youth Climate Network are keen to continue their collective and individual action, they have identified the following priority actions and projects...



Beirut
Beirut Explosion:
• Devastated
• Angry
• Hopeless
* Death of an innocent child
* Showed impact of just one death

FUTURE Ready YOUTH
2021-2022

Hands on action focused
Sharing local knowledge
Caring for Country

Leadership
Storytelling
Wellbeing and connections

ADAPT YOUTH CLIMATE NETWORK
SHE/HER
CORP.

INSPIRE
CREATE

Action



↻ Actively participate in enhancing youth engagement with ADAPT Loddon Mallee and other local community organisations through advising on strategies, communications, and activities.

↻ Leading climate adaptation projects for young people in the region.

↻ Participating in advocacy and environmental volunteering opportunities.

↻ More frequent opportunities to connect as a network through social media, events and action.

↻ Strengthen capacity in key skills and capabilities required to be future ready. Suggestions include workshop series facilitated by subject matter experts on topics such as: public speaking and presentation, facilitation, project management, grant writing and pitching, goal setting and government 101.

↻ Building partnerships between the Youth Climate Network and community organisations through events, volunteering, mentorships and facilitated workshops.

Project IDEAS



Outdoor Art Exhibition

With the help of local artists both young and older, this event is designed to promote community involvement and climate action in the Loddon Mallee area.

Life Skills Forum

This project is designed as a series of workshops led by young people that aim to strengthen general life skills so they are able to participate in decision making that impacts them combined with opportunities for climate action and adaptation. The workshops would be based around skills that are not taught at school such as cooking and food security, gardening and supporting biodiversity, communication and advocacy.

Pitch It! Competition

This project is designed as a competition that would allow secondary-aged students from across the Loddon Mallee region to pitch a solution to an environmental issue, and win the opportunity to further develop their solution with skilled professionals and organisations.

