**Green Flags Episode 2: All About Youth Advisory Councils**

**Audio transcript**

**♪ Upbeat inspirational rock plays ♪**

**Narrator:** Green Flags: tips by and for regional young people. Episode 2: All About Youth Advisory Councils. In this episode, we’re talking to Regional Sports Victoria, a state-wide organisation supporting the sports and active recreation of young people. During lockdown they started a Youth Advisory Council, or YAC, to consult for their work. Let’s hear from YAC member Louise Janssen in Leongatha, on Bun Wurrung land And Youth Engagement Coordinator Kellie Tait in Ballarat on Dja Dja Wurrung land.

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**Kellie:** Currently our Youth Advisory Council are providing feedback and assistance with the development of a youth strategy for RSV, as well as a youth engagement toolkit for our regional sports assemblies. They’ve also provided feedback and support into the development of a youth charter for our regional sports assemblies to sign onto.

It’s been really successful so far. We’re getting some amazing feedback from the young people about the way they see clubs and what we could do better to be able to support young people’s participation.

**Louise:** I think that a lot of the projects in the YAC were really useful, especially some where it was really looking at, how could your club improve and how could we improve, like as Regional Sports Victoria. And it broads into these much bigger discussions, so you get a lot more voice than if we were just talking about like one specific thing, which we do sometimes.

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**Kellie:** We’ve had some really great fun activities to keep the young people engaged. So we’ve done some sport and active recreation life maps where the young people have used pictures to describe their sport journeys.

**Louise:** They’ve been really useful probably to get to know each other and to like, really get Regional Sports Victoria having a view on who they’re talking to and what issues they’ve come by.

We were using a website called Menti, where we could all put our answers in and it wouldn’t be like we have to have a discussion about it, but our answers would be read, and known by Regional Sports Victoria. Like, so there was quieter kids that didn’t really want to say anything in the group because they weren’t confident enough to do that, but they could still have a voice because all they had to do was type an answer into a survey thing. It’s a really good thing to have in the YAC because everybody gets a voice no matter what.

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**Kellie:** I think during COVID it’s been really important for our young people to have an outlet to express themselves and to feel like they have a say. We all felt a little bit out of control, and I think for young people that was probably even more evident because there was adults making decisions for them during that time.

**Louise:** It’s just shown me that kids should really be getting more involved into these leadership positions like committees and everything. We can have SO much of an impact here and we’re just not getting the chance to have it. Why is that? And why can’t we have an impact.

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**Kellie:** We remunerate the young people in our Youth Advisory Council, because their input is so vital to what we’re trying to achieve here. We value their expertise. Honestly the feedback that we’re getting from them is invaluable.

**Louise:** They really tried really hard to get people involved. Like there was the option, ‘I need hearing help,’ or ‘I need speaking help,’ or ‘I just need help in general.’ That was an option on the actual application – like that was how early they started putting those things in, and that was offered to everyone. And then to also be like, ‘oh, but you don’t even have to speak,’ or like, ‘oh, you don’t even have to show your face.’ Like it’s really inclusive and everything and anybody of any skill could’ve joined it. They were accepting of everybody and it’s really really good to see something like that.

The resources have been incredible because I’ve gotten like, booklets on how to start a YAC, and I wouldn’t have had that. But now I can be like, hey Kellie, how’d you do it?

But it also just generally gave me more confidence to make these kind of groups. Like, I wouldn’t have had the confidence or even the knowledge and experience to do that. But it has given me those things, so now I can do it.

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**Kellie:** If you’re considering being a part of a Youth Advisory Council, get in touch with the organisation, make sure you ask as many questions as are necessary. I know RSV as an organisation are happy to speak with families, to speak with carers, to speak with young people directly about any concerns that they're having. So I think the really clear and open communication between the young people, their families and the organisation is really important.

**Louise:** It was really good to be a part of in general, it’s been such a good experience. Like I’ve made so many friendships out of it and I have so much experience. It’s given me all of these pathways that I didn’t even know about. It’s given me all of these questions and answers and thinks that I want to do, like extra committees and things like that.

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**Kellie:** I think for Regional Sport Victoria going forward what’s going to be most important is that we take the opportunity in our planning to include the voice of young people.

I think they want to be a part of not just the decision-making process but also the implementing of the idea and the project. So I think we need, as organisations, to be able to offer them a seat at every step of the process, not just at the consultation stage, but seeing the projects right through to the end.

**Louise:** Young people offer their communities broader perspective, because communities run by adults only get the perspective of adults. And communities with more kid involvement will of course get their perspective as well.

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**Narrator:** Green Flags is part of YACVic’s [Learning From COVID-19 Series](https://www.yacvic.org.au/training-and-resources/covid-youth-work/). To see more stories like this, visit [YACVic.org.au/Green-Flags](http://yacvic.org.au/Green-Flags)