

Shire of Goomalling

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MEDIA RELEASE

YOUTH ZONE SUSPENDED FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE

Goomalling Youth Zone is a Council initiative to foster a sense of place and belonging for young people in the community. The service sees the facilitation of programs for youth aged preprimary to year six in a 3.15pm session and year seven to twelve in a second session from 4.15pm, every Thursday.

Shire staff have run this popular program which had been requested by our youth and was identified in the Our Youth Our Future, Youth Friendly Community Plan with the sincere desire to create an inclusive space for young people to learn, play, and relax in an environment they helped create and was viewed as a safe place by both our youth and their parents.

The 2019 year started positively with programs defined by participants to ensure they were relevant and created a sound relationship between our staff and youth. Over the year the participants have created slime, artwork on canvas, worked with polymer clay, cooked delicious meals, learned about Mabo Day and Reconciliation Week, created artworks and signs for the community garden, created a social space and made chocolate and ecofriendly bath bombs.

Recently, there have been a number of incidents including vandalism of the town hall and verbal abuse of Council staff. The events that occurred at the most recent youth session on 15 August this year have escalated to a point where Council's CEO is now concerned for the safety and welfare of our staff. Therefore, it is with regret that we announce the suspension of youth zone services **indefinitely**.

Whilst the current youth zone initiative has been suspended, youth remain a high priority for Council and we will continue to work on local solutions including implementation of community created spaces and programs and investigating possible partnerships with other agencies to enhance staff safety while delivering youth activities and services.

Media Contact	Tahnee Bird, Community Development Officer
Authorising Officer	Peter Bentley, Chief Executive Officer
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