

STRATEGIC PLAN **2020 ▶ 2025**



Breakaway
Youth

BREAKAWAY YOUTH STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

This Strategic Plan clearly shares our story, and is an exploration of who we are, and what we are doing. We have marked down our aspirational directions, and this is the beginning of a usable action plan to see those directions come to pass. This work moves us toward connecting with each young person with more impact, and toward impacting more young people.

- Rachel Wilson, President

Contents

About us	1
Vision, mission & values	2
Primary focus	3
Aims & objectives	4
Our participants	6
Program	7
Facilities	9
Plant & equipment	9
Governance	10
Aspirations for 2025	11
Implement, establish & grow	13
Strategic intentions	15
Focus suburbs	18

HOPE FOR LIFE

ABOUT US

Breakaway Youth exists to break the cycle of poverty, despair and hopelessness which for many “at risk” young people leads to drug and alcohol addictions, crime, unemployment and homelessness.

Most young people develop their destructive lifestyles by the time they are 14 years old. Early intervention through an ongoing, long-term support program offers a more positive future for these young people – and this is the Breakaway difference.

Breakaway Youth (Originally Breakaway Camps) was founded in 1989 by Merv Landy. Merv worked as a prison officer for 7 years, and during this time he had many conversations with inmates, asking them about what might have prevented them from ending up in prison. The most common answers he received were: “had someone really loved me,” and, “had someone taken me out of the environment I was in, like going camping”. Merv then spent another 7 years working for a drug and alcohol rehabilitation program. It was here he realised, in his own words, “I was still working at the wrong end of the stick”. At this point and after some in-depth research Merv was convinced that prevention and early intervention was the key.

Breakaway Youth was born.

Breakaway Youth is an early intervention, long-term support and prevention program for ‘at-risk’ and disadvantaged young people, primarily 10 to 16-year olds. Our dedicated leaders build long-

term transformational relationships with young people through the medium of monthly camps and other activities, and with a focus on youth development. Breakaway Youth’s purpose is to use the transformational relationships with young people within an adventure-based activities program, to build and support the young people with life skills and give them hope for a better future, so they can make life choices that will move them towards thriving as individuals and by doing so prevent them from ending up involved in destructive behaviours like drugs or alcohol abuse, early pregnancy, criminal activity and homelessness.

At Breakaway we have brought together evidence based and good youth work practice that provides a strong model for supporting troubled young people and providing better opportunities for their future. The core of the model stems from what Merv discovered from the prison inmates, “had someone really loved me”. Love is at the heart of what we do.

At Breakaway Youth we seek to put love into action by aiming to bring hope to these young people through providing a place to belong, and being committed to providing an environment that is full of challenges and encouragement while being Christ-like in everything we do.

***Hope for Life -
We offer young people hope by demonstrating that there are more positive ways to live.***

VISION

HOPE FOR LIFE

We offer young people hope by demonstrating that there are more positive ways to live and be.



MISSION

Breakaway Youth will provide an outstanding program of intervention and challenge that provides hope and opportunity for disadvantaged young people, in Melbourne, Victoria and across Australia.

- » To build long-term, consistent relationships with young people that provide care, trust and respect.
- » To actively care for and guide young people through the transition from being a teen to a young adult through creating spaces to belong

- » To use adventure-based activities and intentional learning spaces to build confident, skilled and resilient young people who can cope with the challenges of life.
- » To operate safely and effectively and promote the well-being of each young person and their families or carers.
- » To encourage and support young people to be able to make critical life choices that will assist them in becoming responsible contributing citizens who are positively engaged in life and community.

- » To endeavour to be Christ-like in all we do and in how we act, putting love into action.
- » To explore replicating the program into new locations, with new teams of permanent and volunteer staff.

VALUES

- » We value the fundamental right of every young person to grow up being loved and cared for by a responsible adult and we value the positive relationship between a significant adult mentor and a young person.
- » We value that each and every young person should have a supportive community around them that encourages and guides them through the teenage developmental period.
- » We value and model good working family relationships, including open

- and honest communication.
- » We seek to demonstrate core Christian values through leading by example and showing respect to everyone.

PRIMARY FOCUS

The primary focus of the work of Breakaway Youth is on young people in the 10-16 age group, intervening before they become entrenched in destructive behaviours. The Breakaway Youth program is underpinned by the belief that transformational relationships with consistent, encouraging and available leaders over the long term offers the opportunity to change. In Breakaway Youth this process takes place within an encouraging and loving atmosphere in which the leaders model positive lifestyles, demonstrate healthy lifestyle choices, encourage and affirm the participants, and foster positive and respectful attitudes towards authority figures.

These relationships are complemented by each group regularly spending time together away from their normal living situations, where the young people learn different lifestyle skills as well as disciplines in group living – such as caring for each other, sharing, self-sufficiency, social skills, and responding to the modelling of the leaders.

Additionally, challenging outdoor adventure activities produce significant improvements in self-esteem, confidence and sociability in young people at risk. These improvements are realised as participants face personal and group challenges, profit from the experience of being outdoors, and enjoy the benefit of improved physical fitness. Within all of the fun and adventure, Breakaway operates from an intentional learning viewpoint, where the focus is on the growth and development of each young person.

While we do not offer skilled counselling or therapy for participants, our program does facilitate transformational growth through positive relationships and group processes and we refer participants to other agencies if they require more specialized support.

Breakaway works towards creating a family-like environment for the young people, where each young person has the opportunity to become part of the 'Breakaway Family', a regular space in their lives where they can find a place to belong and grow positively.



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

We aim to improve the lives of young people by providing healthy alternatives that give them a sense of belonging, achievement, and self-esteem, changing the trajectory of their lives for them to 'break away' from the cycle of welfare dependency and destructive behaviours. We achieve these aims in an atmosphere of support, within a non-threatening environment, that is full of challenges and encouragement through positive and caring leadership. We do this in the following ways:

EARLY INTERVENTION

Provide intervention at a vulnerable and influential period of their lives, starting at age 10 and continuing the support through to the age of 16.

LONG-TERM SUPPORT

Work with each young person for six years or more by providing them support throughout major developmental periods and provide post program support and development options.

REGULAR SUPPORT

Provide monthly activities for each young person in the program, and maintain contact in-between through phone/internet/home visits.

SMALL GROUPS

Keep groups small with a high volunteer leader-to-young people ratio, because some of our participants lack the social skills required for larger groups.

TRANSFORMATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Provide 'significant other' relationships around the young people for the key formative years with regular contact and consistency.

ADVENTURE-BASED ACTIVITIES

Activities and events are planned to be both challenging for each young persons' individual skill levels but are also adventure-based and fun.

BEING CHRIST-LIKE

Breakaway leaders model positive lifestyles, demonstrate healthy lifestyle choices, encourage and affirm the participants, and foster positive and respectful attitudes towards authority figures.

ANOTHER FAMILY

Create a family-like environment in how we operate our programs, so that young people can see and observe a family and learn alternative ways of living in their future.

'BREAK AWAY'

Create a space away from their often negative environments that is a place of safety and belonging, so they can explore their identity and purpose in a positive way.





OUR PARTICIPANTS

BACKGROUND & SELECTION CRITERIA FOR BREAKAWAY PARTICIPANTS

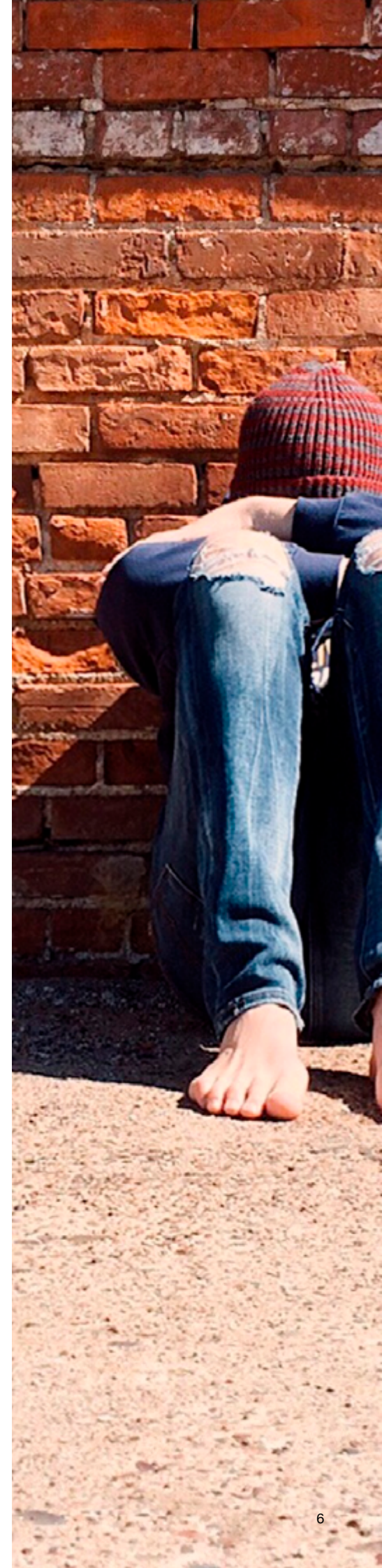
The young people who are invited to be a part of Breakaway Youth's program have observable social, emotional or economic needs. This will be apparent in a few or most of the following situations:

- » Family breakdown to the point where the family is severely dysfunctional or separated, and placing their young person or young people at risk.
- » Young person is socially awkward, isolated or ostracised within school and local community for various reasons and situations.
- » A family member's behaviour has a negative effect on the rest of the family and is destructive to all involved. This could include serious mental health issues by a caregiver that impacts the family functioning, or criminal or anti-social behaviours.
- » Addictions within the family or household take precedence over the young person's daily needs, and impact family functioning.
- » Financial pressures restrict family members participation socially (e.g. afterschool activities, school camps, sports teams etc.), leading to isolation and poor social skills.

» Serious trauma or death within the family leaving members emotionally detached and isolated from one another, unable to deal with or communicate strong feelings. This may lead to depression and/or anxiety.

» Young person who has been rejected or inadequately cared for by their parents and therefore become wards of the state where they may or may not find long-term, supportive foster parents.

Breakaway currently focuses on the northern suburbs of Melbourne including Preston, Heidelberg through to Lalor and Epping.





PROGRAMS

THE 5 - 6 YEAR LONG-TERM SUPPORT PROGRAM

Breakaway Youth offers a long-term program of support, challenge and life-skills and values development.

Participants are selected through a process of identification, assessment and interview and, ideally, introduced to the program at age 10 (Grade 5). Participants are typically referred by schools, police, church groups or community organisations.

Participants are grouped in cohorts of 10, led by a Group Leader supported by up to four volunteers, who will journey with the group over the subsequent 5-6 years.

Each year of the program offers a range of activities and experiences that are age-appropriate and designed to build on previous experiences and skills. Typically, each group will participate in one activity/event per month. These activities or events are engaging, enjoyable and provide a context for building relationships and practical interpersonal skills.

Activities include:

- » Regular monthly weekend camp or activity for each group
- » Annual Summer and Winter camps with all groups in January and July
- » Annual Swimming or Beach day in December
- » School Holiday Program in April and September school holidays
- » Annual Family dinner with participant recognition and awards
- » Central Australia 16-day trip for graduating group

Indicators of Success

1. Retention of Breakaway Youth participants and volunteers across the years of support.
2. High levels of attendance at monthly activities and bonding as a group
3. Improved attendance, behaviour and academic performance at school
4. Ongoing relationship after graduation, e.g. participants becoming junior volunteer leaders, remaining in touch
5. Confidence, responsibility, maturity demonstrated at school, home and in employment.
6. Non-involvement with Youth Justice and absence of drug and alcohol dependency.

Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

1. All participants and volunteers are tracked using updated data management applications, that record: introduction to Breakaway, attendance at events and withdrawal or completion of the 6-year program. Retention and attendance rates for individuals and cohorts can be easily generated from this database software.
2. Breakaway team establish contact with participants' schools soon after induction. Program Coordinator regularly check with schools to monitor changes in patterns of school attendance, behaviour and performance.
3. Past participants are automatically placed on the contact list for the electronic newsletter, Breakaway Facebook and emails.
4. Regular surveys including exit surveys will be established to add weight to the observed development of participants. We will include survey/ interview with direct family members or caregivers as to development or growth of participants over the length of the program.
5. Past Breakaway young people requesting to come back as Junior Leaders is powerful evidence of both maturation and goodwill.
6. Past participants' retrospective views of their experience within the Breakaway Youth program – some many years after concluding. These are important testimonials of significant positive impact in young peoples' lives.

FACILITIES

We value having suitable spaces and facilities that allow us to deliver a level of care, protection and suitability that matches our participants' needs and desired program outcomes. Breakaway is blessed by the provision of property and facilities strategically located and well-equipped to support the programs.

The 'Glendale' Property

» The Glendale site is a 45-acre site in Glendale Lane, Taggerty, about 1.5 hours' drive from central Melbourne.

» The property, 70% natural bush and 30% cleared, is fully owned by Breakaway.

» Glendale has three permanent buildings: Miller's Lodge (accommodating up to 20 guests);

Merv's Cabin (small groups); and a large storage shed.

» The site buildings provide a range of camping options, allowing flexibility according to the weather.

» Several areas for lightweight camping have been developed; several others are planned for future development. The property thus provides a range of accommodation options for Breakaway Youth or for groups who hire the venue.

» The property has been significantly improved since the 2009 Black Saturday fires. Improvements include replacement of the Miller's Lodge roof, upgrade to the kitchen, installation of solar power supplementation, vastly increased water storage and fire safety infrastructure, as well as new and improved vehicle access and parking.

The Preston Hall and Office

» Breakaway Youth currently has the use of a hall and enclosed property in Preston that is in the ownership of Victrack. This facility is used as our office space to organise, plan and carry out administration.

» The hall has ample space to store and manage our array of camping equipment and trailers.

» The hall also provides us with a large indoor area for sports games and other metro-based programs.



PLANT & EQUIPMENT

» Toyota 14-seater mini bus for picking up and transporting participants for local or interstate programs.

» A combination of specialist trailers to transport items ranging from participants' luggage to special equipment like canoes and bikes. A purpose-built kitchen trailer provides Breakaway with the ability to run extended long distance programs with

full kitchen, gas cooking, refrigeration, water and storage facilities.

» A four-wheel-drive Toyota Land Cruiser troop carrier provides programs with a backup support vehicle, increasing safety and lowering program risks.

» A fleet of mountain bikes and canoes (including kayaks for

volunteers) equips Breakaway to run a range of exciting adventure activities.

» Camping equipment like tents, sleeping bags, hiking packs and wet weather clothing are available for participants, to ensure safe and efficient lightweight camping.





GOVERNANCE

Legal Entity

Breakaway Camps Inc. (trading as Breakaway Youth), is an incorporated association as defined under the Consumer Affairs Victoria Association Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

As an incorporated association, Breakaway Youth is subject to Incorporated Association Rules. These rules identify that the affairs of the Association shall be managed by a committee of management or COM. For the purposes of recognising the importance of this body from a corporate management point of view, this body will be called the Board.

The Board has four office bearers:

- » a President;
- » a Vice President;
- » a Treasurer; and
- » a Secretary

There may be up to 4 other ordinary members. The Executive Director is an ex officio member of the Board.

The organisation is endorsed by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) as a deductible gift recipient.

Breakaway Youth is also a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) within the requirements of the ACNC Act.

The Board is responsible for six main areas of governance:

1. Policy - development, review and approval.
2. Legal Compliance – ensuring the company is compliant with all relevant legislation and operates safely.
3. Risk Mitigation and Management – ensuring rigorous risk assessment of all activities and programs is undertaken prior to delivery, and that all personnel are trained and competent to implement emergency and other response procedures.
4. Financial Viability and Accountability – financial health indicators are kept positive and financial reports are accurate, transparent and account for all income and expenditure; especially of charitable grants.
5. Stewardship – sound management of property, resources, personnel and relationships with supporters.
6. Sub-committees - these may be permanent (e.g Finance, Property) or temporary.

Non-Board people may be seconded to work on sub-committees.

ASPIRATIONS FOR 2025

Breakaway Youth has maintained operating its unique model that brings hope for the young people we connect with. Over this time the model has been thoroughly researched and evaluated and has been continually developed within the core principles. The model has been clearly articulated into a practice framework that is embedded into the organisation's operations and is used to guide future improvements and standards.

Breakaway Youth has in place an organisational management and operational structure that provides a strong foundation for future growth opportunities, including developing the Executive Director to having greater oversight and leadership responsibilities, and large general and administrative management tasks being the responsibility of other management.

Breakaway Youth Glendale facility has continued to be developed in accordance with its long-term development plan, and assets and program resources are continually assessed and upgraded as required, including uptake of emerging technologies to support efficient and effective program and service delivery to our participants and general operations.



Breakaway Youth provides an employment and volunteer experience based on respect, reward and recognition that builds and maintains a team of skilled staff and volunteers enabling effective and efficient delivery of programs to our participants.



Breakaway Youth has prayer support options and structures functioning to provide strong spiritual covering for all aspects of the organisation's operations.

Breakaway Youth has developed an accommodation strategy that determines criteria and specifications of the most suitable facility or facilities to provide quality office and administrative space for our staff and volunteers, effective operational spaces for our program delivery, and allows room for potential future growth and development. This blueprint is used for seeking suitable options, and processes are undertaken to secure the best option and establish it as a future long-term facility for the organisation.

Breakaway Youth has new and improved revenue and income streams, developed around a thoroughly researched and structured marketing and communication plan that provides consistent and sufficient levels of funding to cover our current and future staffing and operational requirements.

Breakaway Youth Board has ensured all government compliance requirements are fully met that it is fully functional in accordance with good governance principles; has appropriated requisite skills and knowledge to support the organisation's directions and future developments; while maintaining and supporting the heart of the organisation's shared values and vision.



Breakaway Youth has a strong continuous improvement culture that maintains us at the forefront of industry standards, improves program delivery for participants in accordance with changing needs and emerging research, and improves systems and processes as required. Additionally, options that align with our mission and provide increased support and connections to our participants and families, have been explored and developed as appropriate.

ESTABLISH

1 - 2 Years

The focus is to plan for the new structures and processes to support future growth.

Projects undertaken include: – Facility specification developed, Management structure review, New and Improved Revenue Stream options explored, Marketing and Communications Plan commenced, Continuous Improvement Processes designed, Glendale and Assets Management Plans developed.

Current number of participants remain about the same during this phase.

IMPLEMENT

2 - 4 Years

Focus on developing and establishing the various plans and directions determined from previous focus

Projects: Facility options explored and actioned; Revenue stream options actioned in line with Marketing Plan; Management structure established; Research Project undertaken; Continuous Improvement Processes implemented; Marketing and Communications Plan completed and incrementally implemented.

Some growth in our current catchment.

GROW

In 3 - 5 years from plan start

Focus is on using the foundations established to grow and expand the influence and impact of Breakaway

New catchment areas explored and developed.



STRATEGIC INTENTIONS

The Strategic Planning Team in 2015, in consultation with facilitator and consultant, Max Caruso, identified key “strategic intentions” for Breakaway Youth. Each of these describes elements of the Vision and Mission Statements, and is an expression of the values that have been drawn from and defined by our Biblical Christian ethos. This strategic plan will continue to work toward achieving these “strategic intentions”

A TALENTED TEAM

ADEQUATELY FUNDED

RUN A PROVEN CLIENT-FOCUSED PROGRAM

EXCELLENT EQUIPMENT & FACILITIES

WELL GOVERNED & SUPPORTED

ACHIEVING RESULTS

Strategy:

The team are skilled, competent and engaged and the staff and volunteer numbers allow us to deliver our programs effectively and efficiently.

Breakaway is adequately funded to deliver its programs and evolve the organisation as determined.

Breakaway operates safe and effective programs and activities that are compliant with all regulations and standards and meet the needs of participants.

Breakaway maintains and maximises the value of our facilities and equipment, and operations are adequately supported in delivering the current programs and evolving the organisations as required.

Breakaway Board offers quality vision, support and governance to staff, volunteers & participants to ensure the organisation complies with all regulations and compliance requirements.

Breakaway achieves outcomes for participants and has communication and other processes for reporting and demonstrating the outcomes and their impact.

Actions:

- » Review the staffing structure
- » Review support roles
- » Ensure compliance with awards and industry standards
- » Training and development plan
- » Staff performance and growth processes implemented and evaluated
- » HR policy implemented
- » Volunteer recruitment and volunteer experience develop.

- » Continue processing and applying for grants, and donation options
- » Develop a marketing and promotion plan
- » Branding fully developed
- » Build supporter base and develop IT to support
- » Continue the annual Breakaway Youth Fundraising Auction
- » Consider and plan other income options
- » Seek specific funding for growth

- » Operations Manual implemented
- » Practice Framework developed and put in place
- » Risk management fully operational
- » Client/Project IT systems in place
- » Continuous improvement processes in place
- » Beyond Breakaway options explored
- » Family Support
- » Activity standards fully applied
- » Replication options explored and developed

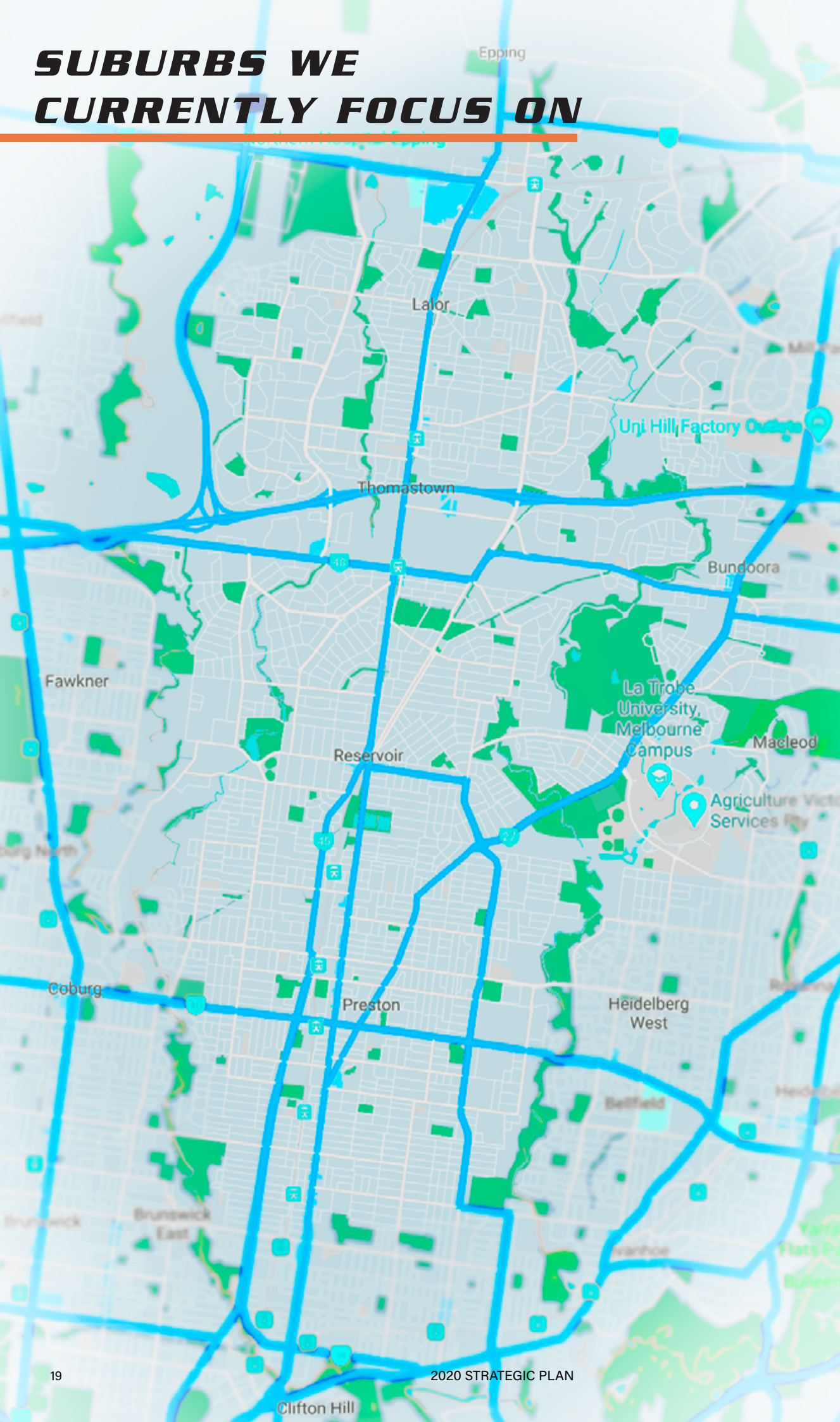
- » Develop a plan for current and future facilities
- » Glendale Development plan for the next 5 years
- » Asset & equipment management plan
- » IT system development and implementation

- » Governance Manual fully approved and reviewed for function
- » Board fully operational and diversified
- » Board properly trained with skills to meet responsibilities
- » Board sub-committees explored and implemented
- » Incorporation rules and constitution reviewed, modified and ratified
- » Risk Management Plan
- » Board calendar developed
- » Prayer support functional

- » 30th Anniversary event held and followed up
- » Communications plan developed and implemented
- » Stories and language project completed
- » Continuous improvement, performance, monitoring and evaluation processes in place
- » Social impact research project
- » Recognition programs continued and improved



SUBURBS WE CURRENTLY FOCUS ON



Resources

Abbott, C. (1989). "The wilderness experience as personal development." In *Drug Education Journal of Australia*, 3:3, pp 159-165

McLaughlin, M. W. (2000) Community counts: How youth organizations matter for youth development. [on-line] At: www.publiceducation.org/pdf/Publications/support-services/communitycounts.pdf

Werner, E. E., & Smith, R.S. (2001). *Journeys from young personhood to midlife: Risk, resilience and recovery*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.



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