

Program Principles

Key elements:

- Strengths approach
- Acknowledgement of individual abilities
- Building interpersonal relationships
- Collaboration
- Cultural safety
- Transparency

Cohort	Program components	Democratic resilience focus
Young people– up to 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School based programs • Political engagement curriculum • Curriculum includes civics education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political structures, systems and processes • Political participation rights and responsibilities
Female Youth – 18 – 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple session training programs • Co-production to solving problems • Encourage volunteerism toward advocacy • Exposure to community leaders and decision makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building trust in people and institutions • Opening channels to have a voice
Male Youth – 18 - 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate building networks • Peer-led interventions to solve problems • Encourage visualisations of visions and solutions • Build expertise in decision making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building trust in people and institutions • Opening channels to have a voice
Adults – 30 - 55	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address community issues • Enable the ability to mobilise community assets • Foster digital transformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering respect and collaboration

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participation in Advisory Committees • Use volunteering to foster innovative strategies • Build linkages across sectors, groups, geographies etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpersonal relationships and linkages • Active participation in community programs
Adults – 55 +	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage public comment participation • Centre those affected/impacted in deliberations • Focus on the resolution of power imbalances • Build awareness of inclusion, language and collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarity with all segments of society • Improvement of civic processes • Opening networks • Accountability of democratic processes

Description

Program Components

These components apply to programs that want to strengthen and improve social cohesion including building democratic resilience:

School-based programs	Deliver programs in school settings in conjunction with the school programming or curriculum.
Political engagement curriculum	Develop a training curriculum that provides guidance on how to engage effectively with the Australian political system.
Curriculum includes civics education	Encourage the integration of educational training into civil and political systems, structures and processes.
Multiple session training programs	Ensure all training programs are undertaken over multiple sessions. One off sessions are inadequate for embedding knowledge and building experience.
Co-production to solving problems	Focus sessions on the identification of issues and finding solutions
Encourage volunteerism toward advocacy	With a broad understanding of formal and informal volunteerism, provide guidance as to how these activities can be used to encourage positive action to build democratic participation.
Exposure to community leaders and decision makers	Create programs that introduce individuals to community leaders and decision makers to build networks and to express their opinions.
Facilitate building networks	Assist, guide and actively support the development of personal and group networks.
Peer-led interventions to solve problems	Programs that bring citizens/residents/individuals together to create interventions and solutions to local or systemic issues
Encourage visualisations of visions and solutions	Facilitate the ability of individuals/citizens/residents to articulate a future for them and their community and the steps that would be required to realise it.
Build expertise in decision making	Introduce programs that enable effective, efficient and constructive decision making.
Address community issues	Always encourage a focus on issues and concerns and build a view that communities can create change.

Enable the ability to mobilise community assets	Councils and other local organisations should engage and facilitate the voice of the community in future plans for community assets eg. libraries, public spaces, parks and gardens, facilities, services etc.
Foster digital transformation	Programs that support the active and comprehensive development of digital skills from fundamental to advanced with focus on social media functioning and maximising use for networking, employment and professional skills.
Encourage participation in advisory committees	Support, and build expertise for applying and participating in local committees, government, political parties and other governance bodies.
Use volunteering to foster innovative strategies	Volunteering, formal and informal, provides an opportunity to engage with individuals to conceive, create and pilot innovative approaches to solving problems.
Build linkages across sectors, groups, geographies etc.	Design programs that engage across multiple dimensions demographic, geographic, sociological, economic and capabilities.
Encourage public comment participation	Design, engage, introduce mechanisms that maximise public comment related to issues that experience the day to day life and future for individuals and families.
Centre those affected/impacted in deliberations	Programs need to be built with and around individuals/families/groups who are most closely involved in the issue from all sides.
Focus on the resolution of power imbalances	In designing and structuring a program, endeavour to address any existing or future power imbalances throughout the program and build awareness of how to manage them.
Build awareness of inclusion, language, and collaboration	Program designs need to remove hurdles for anyone to participate if they want to, avoid labelling in language and develop skills in collaboration and joint decision making.

Democratic resilience focus

If the program is primarily to have a positive impact on democratic resilience then they should focus on these elements:

Political structures, systems, and processes	Improving understanding of how government works at all levels including the history, elections, parliament, parties, how laws and regulations are made, local, State and Federal constitutions and responsibilities, local, state and Federal representation.
Political participation – rights and responsibilities	Personal rights as articulated in policies etc eg EOHRC etc., the range of means by which to participate in democracy. Personal responsibilities including the legal system and how it works.

Building trust in people and institutions	Trust is supported through familiarity, respect and reciprocity. Programs should model these but also encourage these behaviours through the design and delivery of the program.
Opening channels to have a voice	Programs that introduce participants to opportunities to express their opinions, ideas, solutions, etc.
Fostering respect and collaboration	Key to democratic resilience is the ability to understand, negotiate, debate and resolve disputes respectfully. Programs should be designed to build the skills of collaboration and compromise.
Interpersonal relationships and linkages	An individual's interpersonal skills are a significant asset. Programs that develop and strengthen these skills build capacity within the community. It enables individuals to build connections to pursue their goals and economic circumstances.
Active participation in community programs	Fostering participation from across the population in programs that create civic opportunities is essential to building democratic resilience. Finding and supporting individuals who would not normally participate to join a program or designing a program specifically for those 'hard-to-reach' audiences is important.
Familiarity with all segments of society	Community organisations that are seeking to build democratic resilience must understand the drivers and fears across the population. Ideally, programs will be available to strengthen all segments of the community by bringing them together.
Improvement of civic processes	Programs should be developed to seek input into processes, channels and methods that would improve civic participation.
Opening networks	Many individuals can feel isolated and unable to participate, finding ways to open networks can significantly reduce this sense of isolation.
Accountability of democratic processes	Building trust in people and institutions requires transparency and openness. Programs should be in place to ensure the community understands the processes, systems and how the outcomes are achieved.