

GREATER DANDENONG YOUTH NETWORK 2025

MINUTES

Meeting Theme: Digital Safety: Young People and Social Media

Wednesday 18 June, 9:30am – 11:00am
Meeting Format: Face to Face
Greater Dandenong City Council, Level 2 Meeting Rooms
225 Lonsdale St, Dandenong VIC 3175

Acknowledgement of Country	9.30am
<p>Background</p> <p>The GDYN meeting on Digital Safety focused on opening a window into young people's experiences on social media, which might normally be closed to us as workers.</p> <p>The GENERATION Australian youth survey conducted in 2023 found that around 98% of Australian 15-year-olds use social media.¹ Teens spend an average of 14.4 hours a week online.² Young people may be unsafe alone online in their bedroom. It is important that we learn to build safe online habits in young people by taking an active role in their technology use.</p> <p><small>¹ Edwards, Ben; Doery, Kate; Arnup, Jessica; Chowdhury, Intifar; Edwards, Daniel; Kylie Hillman, 2023, "GENERATION Survey: Young People, Release 2 (Wave 1-2)", https://doi.org/10.26193/YMMO4L, ADA Dataverse, V5</small></p> <p><small>² https://www.esafety.gov.au/research/digital-lives-of-aussie-teens#:~:text=Online%20lives,played%20games%20online%20with%20others.</small></p>	9.35-9.40am
<p>Keynote Presentation</p> <p>Dan Donahoo – Head of Projects, PROJECT ROCKIT.</p> <p>His life in digital started in 1984 with a Commodore 64 and an addiction to pitfall. His career in digital started with a Creative Writing Honours thesis in 1998 called "Love Online: a series of hypertext poems exploring online relationships". Daniel's work is built on more than 20 years of practice-based research, innovative projects and youth-centred approaches. He works at the intersection of play, technology and learning and has designed alternate reality games, worked with top educational app designers and supported education and learning teams at LEGO, Disney and Apple. His two books "Idolising Children" and "Adproofing Your Kids" are available these days on eBay for \$2. In his spare time Daniel can be found growing fruit and vegetables or rolling a d20 hoping for a critical hit.</p> <p>PROJECT ROCKIT started as a small community workshop and now reaches over 800 people. Providing online safety education, often being delivered in a vlogging style with young people and their experience at the forefront. Recently released with Young and Resilient a co-designed research report which focuses on the face that we learn about extreme risks or harm like grooming, cyberbullying etc, but the real dangers are the everyday issues – friendships, relationships. The organisation are working to combat assumptions that YP don't know how to protect themselves in the online space, and that there is often victim blaming in online safety. PROJECT ROCKIT recent projects:</p> <p>Intimate Images</p> <p>A series of episodes where young people open up about the realities behind sharing intimate images. They explore the reasons why it happens, the pressure they face, and the emotional and social consequences—especially when those images are leaked.</p> <p>Resource page - https://www.projectrockit.com.au/intimate-images/</p> <p>Shaping Our Feeds</p> <p>An honest look at how young people experience the algorithm. This segment dives into how content is curated for them, how it influences their behaviour, and how much control they really have over what they see.</p> <p>Report - https://www.projectrockit.com.au/shaping-our-feeds/</p> <p>Video Resources - (available on instagram) https://www.instagram.com/stories/highlights/18102689386460111/</p>	9.40-10.05am

<p>Our Online Realities</p> <p>An exploration of life on social media for 13–15-year-olds. Through a two-week diary project, young people share their lived experiences—highlighting both the highs and the challenges. It’s a reminder that their lives are rich and complex, far beyond what’s shown online. Not formally launched at this stage.</p> <p>In Real Life</p> <p>Research Report - https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1976503/Reimagining_Online_Safety_Education.pdf</p> <p>Video Resource - https://www.projectrockit.com.au/irl/</p>	
<p>Case Study Table Discussions</p> <p>Introduce two case studies and questions/ prompts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Movember case study – Will¹ 2. eSafety Commissioner case study – Carla² <p>Tables read through both case studies, then discussed: their name, organisation and role. Any current understanding of how young people use social media, and whether these case studies align to the experiences seen. Then referring back to the case studies, discussed the underlying factors contributing to Carla and Will’s experience, and how services in Greater Dandenong can support them.</p> <p>¹ Young Men’s Health in a Digital World - Movember</p> <p>² Real stories eSafety Commissioner</p>	<p>10.05- 10.20am</p>
<p>Local Expert Panel</p> <p>Local professionals answering questions from table discussions.</p> <p>Monique Joyce - Deputy Managing Lawyer in the Childrens Law Team at Victoria Legal Aids Dandenong Office</p> <p>Monique has specialist knowledge and extensive advocacy experience across both the Criminal and Family Divisions of the Children’s Court. Monique has a strong understanding of the intersecting issues that impact young people and is passionate and committed to advocating for young people in what is a dynamic and ever evolving legal landscape.</p> <p>Mitch Groenewald - Youth Engagement Specialist & Program Designer at Alannah & Madeline Foundation</p> <p>Mitch is a passionate youth engagement specialist with close to a decade of experience working alongside young people. They hold a Bachelor of Professional Communication from RMIT University and a Graduate Diploma in Psychology from the University of Melbourne. Mitch has designed and delivered programs that centre young people’s voices and lived experiences, reaching thousands of participants across Australia. Driven by the principle of “nothing about us without us,” Mitch creates opportunities for young people to contribute meaningfully, build confidence and develop real-world skills through hands-on involvement.</p> <p>Mika Former - Team Leader at headspace Dandenong</p> <p>Working with young people at headspace Dandenong since 2016, Mika leads a team of youth mental health clinicians that engage with young people and families, supporting their first steps into the service. Mika has collaborated with countless services and families that are navigating mental health support for young people and their online safety and technology use.</p> <p>Recent spikes or changes the panel are seeing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mika: Past 4-5 years concerns with parents/guardians and the algorithm – parents becoming radicalised and how this affects families and YP. - Monique: The media and youth crime – social media is a place for community and comfort when the media pushes youth crime issues. - Mitch: no separation between online and offline – it’s one ecosystem. Kids are engaging with companies and use a lot of their data. Put more pressure on tech companies than the YP. 	<p>10.20- 10.35am</p>
<p>Direction – what do we as a network want to learn?</p> <p>Answering questions from table discussions, determining if there is appetite for further PD on digital safety. This was voted on in the mentimeter at the end of the session.</p>	<p>10.35- 10.45am</p>

<p>Network Information Sharing An opportunity for network members to introduce themselves and share a brief program / service update.</p> <p>Mission Australia Survey Greater Dandenong City Council are looking to organisations' support in promoting this year's Mission Australia Youth survey to young people. As you likely know, the survey is the largest annual youth survey in the country, open annually to young people aged 14 – 19, and explores the most important issues facing young people including mental health, education, employment and more. The survey takes approximately 20 minutes to complete.</p> <p>In 2025, our team has arranged for Mission Australia to produce a tailored report for young people living in the City of Greater Dandenong. Any young person who completes the survey with a postcode within the CGD area will have their responses included anonymously in this report, as long as a minimum of 100 local young people complete the survey. This data will provide an important snapshot of the needs of young people in our community. The survey can be accessed via Mission Australia's website. You can also access the Organisations Toolkit for more information and promotional materials.</p> <p>We are motivated to see as many responses as possible from young people across the community, to make sure that the report we receive reflects an accurate picture of young people in the area. To support you in promoting the survey, our staff are available to attend group activities or other events, where we can speak about youth voice and support the young people to complete the survey (if time permits). Please let me know if there is a time that might suit!</p>	10.45-10.55am
<p>Evaluation Quick feedback on today's meeting and voting on future PD Forum preferences.</p> <p>Thank you to those who completed the evaluation form. The results were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>I was satisfied with today's meeting: 9.1</i> <i>I would attend another GDYN meeting in the future: 9.4</i> <i>I would recommend the GDYN to other local professionals: 9.4</i> <i>I learnt something new today: 96%</i> <i>I made a new connection during the meeting that will assist with my work with young people: 87%</i> <i>We will host a professional development forum for GDYN members later this year and are considering focusing on social media/digital safety.: Would you be interested in attending a PD forum on the topic of social media/digital safety? 96% said yes.</i> <p>Forum topic and session preferences, in order from most preferred to least:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Social media and mental health (17) AI (14) Sextortion and online sexual abuse (14) Navigating the upcoming social media age restrictions for under 16s (13) Manosphere, masculinity and young men's experiences online (13) Digital literacy, understanding algorithms (13) Cyberbullying (12) Social media and/or gaming addiction (11) Children and tech-based abuse (10) Keeping children safe online (8) Using social media to reach youth audiences (8) Other: The practicality of solutions to the issues – how the eSafety Commission removes content, etc <p>Key takeaways from the June GDYN meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social media can be positive as well as negative. Just stopping young people from using social media isn't a solution to the problem – it can perpetuate the problem. Teach a child how to be online just like you teach them how to ride a bike. PROJECT ROCKIT do incredible work. Being online and offline is one interwoven ecosystem for young people. 	10.55-11.00am

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The perspectives of young people on esafety is very important. • Focus should be shifted from extreme dangers to supporting young people's wellbeing online. • Young people don't just sit and scroll on their phones all day, they have full active lives. <p>Other topics you'd like to see covered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Racism and young people's experience online b. Supporting school engagement in young people showing signs of school withdrawal c. Mental health d. Supporting CALD families further e. Creating conditions for young people to be interested and active in finding credible health information f. Youth trends in AOD use. <p>For those who attended but haven't yet completed the evaluation form, you are still welcome to respond here.</p>	
Meeting formally closed	11.00am
Time and space to network for those who can stay a little longer	11.00- 11:30am
<p>Next meeting</p> <p>Youth Health and Wellbeing</p> <p>Tuesday 19th August 2025</p> <p>Meeting Format: Online via Zoom, see link – https://greaterdandenong.zoom.us/j/87803840190?pwd=JSsBlp46UkVZ6M5tndqk8am34ZPneC.1 Meeting ID: 878 0384 0190, Passcode: @Kzt!1j&3Z</p>	

**For submissions to the GDYN eNewsletter, provide a brief update to: jim.moynihan@cgd.vic.gov.au.
Deadline for August: 23 July**