**MINUTES**

**GREATER DANDENONG YOUTH NETWORK**

***How COVID-19 is Shaping The Youth Sector***

**Wednesday 16 September 2020**

9.30am – 11.00am

ONLINE MEETING

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| **ITEMS** | **NOTES** |
| **Welcome**  | All welcomed and Traditional Owners acknowledged. |
| **Guest Speaker**Emily Greco,Virtual Y Content Development ManagerYMC Victoria | Emily provided an overview of the Virtual Y initiative and re-orientation of services to be delivered in an online format.*Project Timelines** March – service had to pivot; 90% of operations shut down including central Youth Services team. Staff were stood down, but continued to engage youth volunteers online ‘off their own bat’.
* June – first design sprint
* July – virtual camp launched; commenced build of Youth Voice
* September – launch of Youth Voice
* October – launch staff wide Youth Groups

*Scope** Project has now ‘stood up’ 45 staff including all of Youth Services
* Virtual Y content hub – mix of ‘live’, ‘static’ and ‘interactive’ content
* 80% of content created by young people for young people
* Y-Challenge on social media; reoriented to support online learning due to take up by schools (not individuals)
* Youth Support resources – partnerships with other organisations who are specialists in their field (eg: headspace)

*Wellbeing Framework*Online work is based on a wellbeing framework, consisting of the following elements to support both users, as well as facilitators/moderators:* Live Moderation
* Code of Conduct
* Wellbeing Corner
* Mental Health training for facilitators
* Facilitator support (ongoing)

*Strengths of the work to date** True cross-sector approach
* Continual work in progress; didn’t wait for it to be perfect to start
* True agility of the team has been crucial
* Feedback mechanisms support and inform the design and content
* Partnerships with organisations including headspace, BeyondBlue, Australian Drug Foundation
* Wellbeing and support framework, and Safeguarding Children and Young People policies and procedures

*Challenges encountered** Understanding where we fit in a crowded marker
* Trying to be something we’re not
* Some things haven’t worked (this is where agility and being able to pivot is essential)
* Young people are fatigued and sometimes don’t want to engage
* High engagement from young people with an existing connection; harder to draw in ‘new’ young people
* Some challenges with working cross-sector
* Time in the first lockdown was limited (longer time frames in second lockdown)

*Pivot** Play to your strengths
* Continue to adapt to feedback
* Not losing sight of who we are and what we do well
* Take time to build fully before launching
* Focus on youth participation and co-design
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| **Youth Presentations***Vithusan, International Student**and**Saduni, university student* | Vithusan and Saduni shared their experiences as young people navigating COVID-19.Vithusan (International student studying Biomedical Science at Deakin University)* Challenge for international students is being separated for family
* Vithusan lost his job in retail; then found casual work in a bakery. However he also lost this job when another staff member contracted COVID. Vithusan is now not working and his Visa status limits work opportunities
* This creates a high level of financial pressure with university fees due, as well as ongoing living expenses (i.e. rent and food)
* Has account blocked at university due to not being able to pay fees; reliant on family to send money however they have lost their business as well.
* Finding it difficult to study online – nature of the course requires ‘hands on’ time in the lab
* Feelings of depression due to the situation, also make it difficult to study and stay motivated

Saduni, final year student Bachelor of Physiotherapy, Monash University* Major impact has been on completing placement opportunities which are required to complete the degree
* Undertook placement in a respiratory ward at a hospital this year; fear and stress about contracting COVID and possible exposure to the virus
* Had a placement cancelled in May as elective surgery was on hold and they were not accepting students on placement
* In June undertook a placement via telehealth (very limiting for physiotherapy)
* Was due to complete a placement in Alice Springs in November, unable to proceed due to travel restrictions and state border closures. Waiting to hear about an alternative placement.

Future GDYN meetings continue to highlight the voice of young people and draw attention to their experiences, as well as their immediate and ongoing needs resulting from COVID-19. |
| **Break Out Rooms** | Meeting attendees participated in small group discussions using breakout rooms. Key themes from the discussion are summarised as follows:1. **What are the most pressing challenges you are seeing amongst the clients who you work with?**

The most frequently cited challenges were:1. Adapting to online service delivery/effective online engagement
2. Technology use and access (for clients)
3. Loss of routine and motivation
4. Employment/work
5. Education and learning

Other issues included mental health, family relationships (including family violence), lack of social connection, legal issues and increased substance use (alcohol and other drugs).1. **Has demand for services changed since COVID-19?**

A variety of feedback/responses were shared in group discussions:* Demand has varied depending on the type of service.
* A number of attendees expressed concerns that demand has increased, but that current restriction levels (and associated barriers around online engagement) have reduced the ability to respond effectively.
* Parents and young people have competing priorities (eg: home learning, supporting families etc) which makes it difficult to sustain engagement (clients tending to ‘come and go’ with greater frequency).
* Not only is demand increasing, but the level of support required is greater (more acute needs presenting to services).
* Some reports of clients waiting for services to open up before seeking support, as they prefer to have face to face contact or find it hard to reach out to new people in the current environment.
1. **What do you anticipate to be the key needs of young people we move into the recovery phase?**

**What role could the GDYN play in addressing these needs and challenges?**The most frequently mentioned key needs included:* Social reconnection – safe spaces to meet with others; reassurance that it is safe to socialise/resume normal activities; providing a mix of formal activities vs drop in activities; reaching out to young people who have not engaged in recent months
* Mental health – impacting both young people and professionals; anxiety about future opportunities; managing ongoing uncertainty about risk
* Employment (opportunities for young people will be limited
* Re-engagement in schools/education

Members feedback indicated that they would like the network to focus on:* Information sharing / promotion of available programs and services for young people
* Connecting services to collaborate and improve referral pathways
* Hearing young people’s voice
* Sharing statistics/data to understand the trends
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| **Information Sharing***All attendees were encouraged to share an update via the meeting ‘chat’ or through email to the network convenor.*  | **Bridget Hansen, Victoria Legal Aid**VLA community engagement programs being facilitated online; flexibility with session delivery.Topics - Sexting, cyberbullying, sexual consent, family violence, family, how to access services, police powers and young people's rights.Contact bridget.hansen@vla.vic.gov.au **Jess McKenna, CGD Youth and Family Services**Holiday activities will be delivered online, featuring a range of at home workshops and activities for young people to do.There will also be three interactive sessions on Zoom facilitated by Youth and Family Services staff.For program details visitContact: 9793 2155 or Kylie.Wilmot@cgd.vic.gov.au **Engy Abdelsalam, Wellsprings for Women**Looking at supporting access to physical activity by connecting people within 5km of one another to walk together.The group aims to connect multicultural young women who live within 5 kms of each other to go for a walk to overcome isolation, engage in exercise and enhance their wellbeing.More information: [https://www.facebook.com/groups/794749407951202/?ref=share](https://protect-au.mimecast.com/s/TKYxCgZ0X8SDVj0TNcbDK?domain=facebook.com)Contact: engy@wellspringsforwomen.com **Neysa Charlton, CMY**CMY (My Education) has a new program starting in the September school holidays and running until the end of exam period. A free VCE Study Support Program for students in VCE, VCAL, or grade 10 students studying VCE subjects. Running Tuesday and Thursdays 4-6pm, online.Contact: ncharlton@cmy.net.au **Junior Melo, South East Community Links**Partnering with SMRC to deliver workshops online during the school holidays – including Know Your Rights, and Lifesaving Victoria session. Please contact Junior directly to link young people to activities.Contact: junior@secl.org.au or call 0435 916 339**Andrea Savarin, Mission Australia**Mission Australia provides employment support with compassion and perseverance for young people and adults going through personal challenges, such as Mental Illness (e.g. Depression, Anxiety, PTSD), physical limitations and any addictions (e.g. Gaming, Drug and Alcohol), to get their life back on track through education, case management, financial assistance, job opportunities and ongoing support. (Age 14 to retirement age).Contact: 0490 889 404 or SavarinA@missionaustralia.com.au **Introductions and brief updates submitted via the meeting ‘chat’*** Good morning, Denise Sadique from SEDA College
* Hi, I am Engy I am one of the Community Engagement Officers at Wellsprings for Women.
* Hello! I'm Jasmine from the Chisholm Reconnect Program.
* Morning everyone. Neysa from the MY Education Team at the Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY). Two big updates from us.
* Hi I'm Ally Lamb from EACH. I'm team leader for the new Partners in Wellbeing program.
* Mel Yoffa from Gleneagles Secondary College
* Good morning, I'm Yohana from City of Greater Dandenong, Young Engagement and Participation team :)
* Harlin Gandhok from Hampton Park secondary - student wellbeing
* Morning All, Steve Roberts from Mas National (Australian Apprenticeship Support Network Provider - AASN). Offering free career counselling sessions for anyone who is looking for advice :-)
* Hi all Tracey from Monash Health - Youth Drug & Alcohol Service (YDAS) :)
* Bridget Hansen, Community Engagement Coordinator from Victoria Legal Aid
* Good morning everyone, Kim from MOIRA Youth, Disability, Family. I am the Community Connector for the Southern Metropolitan and Bayside Peninsula Regions. Hope everyone is well :)
* Hi, Crystal here from the Southern Migrant & Refugee Centre
* Good morning everyone, Andrea from the Mission Australia Employment program. Still “operating” and accepting referrals to support with compassion and perseverance young people and adults with mental illness, disability, physical limitations and any addiction (drug, alcohol, gaming) with suitable and sustainable employment. Andrea Savarin - Community Engagement Coordinator - 0490 889 404. SavarinA@missionaustralia.com.au - missionaustralia.com.au/des

 * Hi Petra Davies-D’Cruz here from Alfred Health Carer Services –Young carer Program
* I am a family worker from non-profit organisation Family Life, an early intervention program called Shine for children aged 0-17 with early signs of mental health issues. Please email me on gkavarnos@familylife.com.au for more information on our program. (Greg)
* Good Morning All. Vicky Petinarias Family Support Case Manager City of Greater Dandenong
* Hi everyone! Jess here from SMRC, I am a program worker in Community Leadership Development. I work primarily with Afghan, South Sudanese, Royhinga and Burmese community leaders
* Morning, I’m Jasmine from Monash Health. I’m the Youth Justice Mental Health Clinician with the Youth Consultation and Treatment Team :)
* Hi everyone, Rachael from Anglicare Victoria here- TCP Team Leader for youth services. Happy to be here!
* Good morning, Im Nikki - Career development coach - Jobacitve - WISE Employment south east Melbourne :) thanks for having me :)
* We have some places still for a (online) group mentoring program starting next month for young men aged 14-17. It combines group mentoring and one to one mentoring with big brother big sister. https://ritementoring.org.au/whatwedo/community jeff@ritementoring.org.au
* Hi everyone! CMY is recruiting young volunteers (18-25) to support newly arrived young people in the South East. Volunteers will facilitate information sessions and co-plan & co-deliver group workshops

Temur from CMY. trezaie@cmy.net.au/0419 779 553* Peta de Burgh : SECASA (South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault) is still taking referrals and providing phone and telehealth counselling. 9928 8741
* Jonathan Sugumar - Hand Brake Turn: Hand Brake Turn are running an online Automotive Simulated training every Wednesday for young people enrolled in our course and also open to anyone interested in Automotive. if you know of any young person who would be interested. Please reach out. Ph: 0406 456 599 E: jonathan.sugumar@concernaustralia.org.au
* Bec - CREATE : Good morning everyone, Bec from CREATE Foundation. Part of my role is delivering the CREATE Your Future program, which is a program that supports young people aged 14 –25 on their transition from care to independent living. Workshops for this program are being delivered online for all young people across Vic to attend. If you would like some more info on this program or other ways CYP can get involved with CREATE, please reach out :) Rebecca.cole@create.org.au
* Tracey Montagnat: Monash Health - Youth Drug & Alcohol Services (YDAS), catchment is Greater Dandenong, City of Casey and Cardinia. Ages 12-25 Please email: YDAS@monashhealth.org
* Jack Simcoe: Hi everyone. Jack Simcoe from Reclink Australia. We're offering tailored online fitness sessions for agencies that have groups looking to stay active and socially connected. Please email jack.simcoe@reclink.org for more information.
* Whilst PCLC offices are closed to the public our telephone services are open. Our lawyers/advocates are available to advise, advocate and attend Court/VCAT hearings. (Sokha)
* Hello! The Reconnect program is an engagement program for disadvantaged and disengaged individuals to return to education. The Reconnect program provides clients with links and referrals into community organisations to support any identified barriers. If you or your organisation have any clients who are potentially looking at education/training as a pathway into employment, and they meet all of the eligibility criteria please contact me on 0438 733 167 or jasmine.graham@chisholm.edu.au
* Ally from EACH – Partners in Wellbeing: new program running across the state for people who have been struggling due to COVID and their sense of wellbeing has been impacted. Open for people aged 16 years and above. My email is ally.lamb@each.com.au for further information and for a referral form to be sent out to you.
* Steve Roberts: HI Everyone - Steve From MAS. My team of qualified Career Counsellors provide free one on one career Career Advice sessions as well as groups presentations about apprenticeships and traineeships. We work with schools, community groups and anyone who is looking for career advice. Steven.roberts@masnational.com.au 0498 011 003 :-)
* Hi Petra Davies-D’Cruz here from Alfred Health Carer Services –Young carer Program: We work with Young carers in a significant caring role for a person with a Disability, Frail Aged, AOD and Mental Health Issue who are at risk of disengaging from education due to their caring role responsibilities. Young Carers can register via the Carer Gateway 1800 422 737 they will then be referred to our service for assessment around their caring role. Identified need’s may be around educational support and social respite time out from caring role through online YC events on school hols.
* Chisholm offers General Education to school students who, for one reason or another, are not coping with their schooling in the traditional way. We offer Certificates I, II & III in literacy and numeracy including Foundation VCAL for early school leavers (14yrs 9mths onwards) and adults. Our courses consist of self-paced, individualised certificate learning programs that range from an alternative to Year 9 through to preparation for Year 11 and 12. Classes are flexible, casual and supportive with teachers giving individualised support to students. Currently due to COVID 19 our courses are delivered remotely by Zoom. Our students usually pathway from completing certificates to apprenticeships, further certificates within Chisholm or employment options. 9212 5221 Silvia Koslow – Email: silvia.koslow@chisholm.edu.au

**Reminder to network members: for promotion of programs/services in the monthly eNewsletter please send a short blurb to** **kylie.wilmot@cgd.vic.gov.au**  |
| **Next Meeting** | **Extended Half-Day Meeting“Reflecting on COVID-19”****Date:** Thursday 22 October**Time:** 9.30am – 12.00pm**Venue:** Online/Zoom meeting (link to be sent closer to the date)**Guest Speaker – Dr Denise Goodwin, Behaviour Works at Monash University**Dr Goodwin will be outlining the principles of effective behaviour change, and to what extend these have been utilised in responding to COVID-19.Full agenda to be shared closer to the date.For further information or to RSVP please contact Kylie Wilmot, Youth Development and Community Engagement Officer on 9793 2155 or email kylie.wilmot@cgd.vic.gov.au  |