GREATER
DANDENONG
City of Opportunity

# Youth Summit 2018: *Better Together*

## SUMMARY OF YOUTH CONSULTATION FINDINGS

# INTRODUCTION

The City of Greater Dandenong's Youth Summit is a biennial event which provides young people from across the municipality with the opportunity to voice their opinions regarding a range of contemporary youth issues. This year's theme, 'Better Together' focused on topics of community connectedness, identity and belonging, resilience and self-care.

A total of 180 Year 10 students representing eleven secondary schools participated in this year's Youth Summit. Through a complement of structured activities and small group discussions, participants had the chance to shed some light on the needs and challenges experienced by young people in Greater Dandenong, and identify opportunities and solutions to help address these issues and promote the health and wellbeing of young people.

More specifically, young people were required to reflect on what they believed to be the most pressing and immediate challenges for young people in Greater Dandenong. Group discussions were structured to delve further into the findings from last year's Resilience Survey (2017). Students shared their insight into the key themes to emerge from the survey, and identified a range of supports and strategies that our community can utilise to help young people in addressing these barriers.

The feedback elicited from young people during the summit will assist with the development of Council's next Youth Strategy, highlighting key focus areas and actions to address the pressing needs of young people. This report summarises the main findings reported by students throughout the Youth Summit, and identifies opportunities for improvement in our community. Key issues highlighted by young people include mental health; perceptions of crime and safety; bullying and discrimination; and community belonging.

# TOP 3 ISSUES: OVERVIEW

At the beginning of the Youth Summit, young people were asked to reflect on what they believed to be the top three issues for young people in Greater Dandenong. They had the opportunity to write and display these on post-it notes, which were later categorised and counted to determine the overall Top 3 Issues reported by young people. A total of 509 responses were collected.

*Figure 1* below shows the key issues that emerged during this activity. Mental health was the most frequently identified issue for young people in Greater Dandenong, accounting for 17.5% of responses. Bullying and discrimination was the next greatest category, accounting for 12% of responses. Crime and safety was the third largest category, accounting for 11.5% of responses. Other commonly mentioned issues include school-related stresses (8.1%); employment and financial problems (7.7%); social issues* (7.1%); and transportation (6.9%).
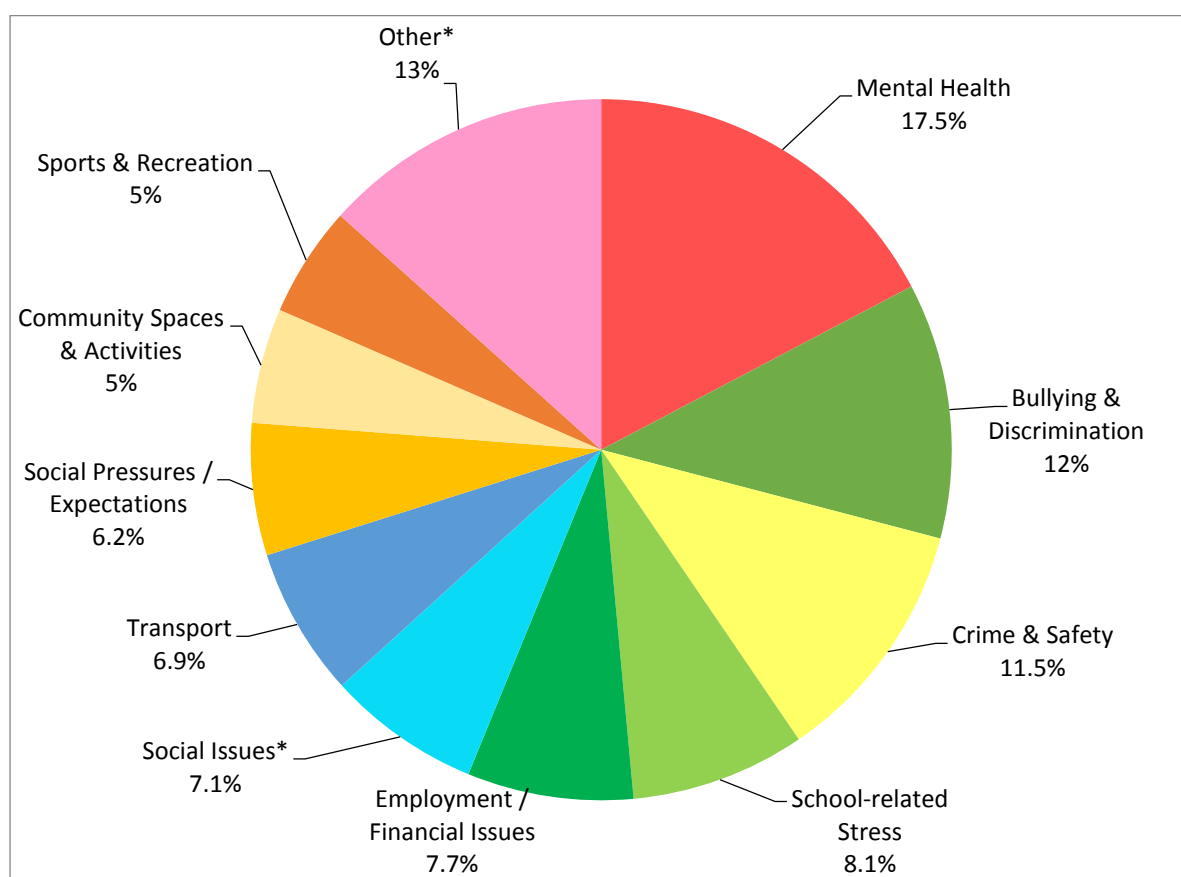


**Figure 1: Top issues reported by young people**

* The 'social issues' category includes a range of challenges reported by young people including homelessness, community connectedness and friendship issues.

The 'other' category encompasses issues such as littering, environmental sustainability, and access to technology.

## 1. MENTAL HEALTH

In terms of mental health, young people identified a variety of issues ranging from specific mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression, to topics such as stress and worry, lack of sleep, body image and self-esteem. Several young people mentioned that there was a general lack of awareness of mental health in our community, as well as significant stigma associated with mental illness. Students highlighted that more information was required to increase people's understanding of this topic.
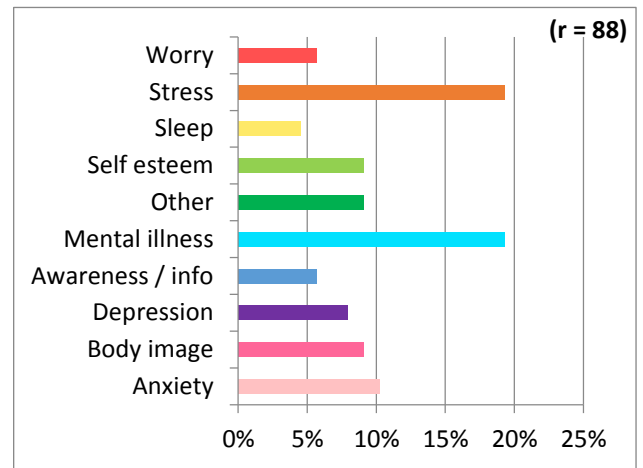


**Figure 2: Mental health issues reported by young people**

## 2. BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION

Young people identified discrimination in various forms as an issue for our community, including racism, gender inequality, as well as homophobic and transphobic discrimination. Young people also reported bullying, stereotyping and discrimination in general are major issues affecting young people in Greater Dandenong.
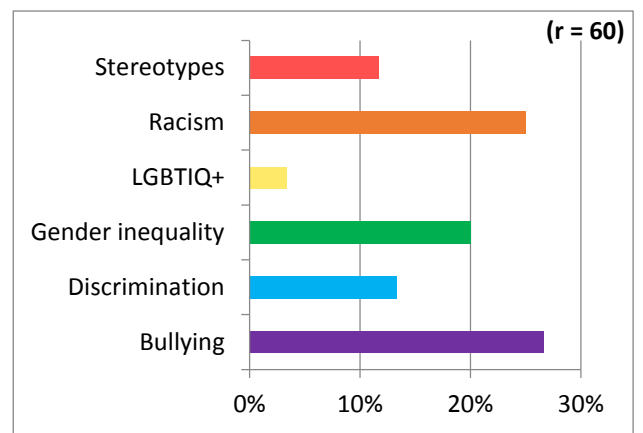


**Figure 3: Issues relating to bullying and discrimination, as identified by young people**

## 3. CRIME AND SAFETY

Young people identified a range of issues under the umbrella of crime and safety. Most frequently reported were concerns around illegal substance use and drug and alcohol related violence. Higher than average crime rates in Dandenong were mentioned more generally, but young people also identified specific issues such as theft and violence. Some young people reported that they don't feel safe using public transport, and others commented that there's a lack of, or poor quality of, lighting in areas around Greater Dandenong which impedes their sense of safety.
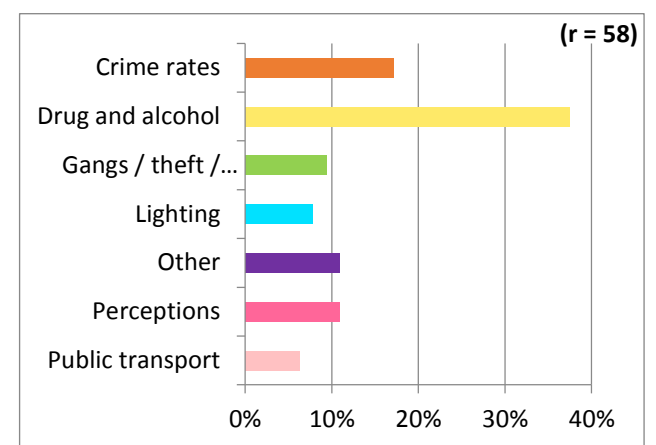


**Figure 4: Crime & safety issues reported by young people**

# TOP 3 ISSUES: UNPACKED

During Phase 2 of the Youth Summit, young people had the opportunity to further discuss their thoughts about the Top 3 Issues that they'd identified: mental health, bullying and discrimination, and crime and safety.

In table groups of around 8-10 young people, participants were asked to explore each issue in greater depth, providing ideas and suggestions for the community to better support young people who are facing these issues.

The following section provides a summary of young people's responses during this discussion. For each issue, there are key areas where young people would like to see improvements, and suggested actions which may be taken.

## MENTAL HEALTH

When exploring the concept of mental health, young people reported that they were not surprised that it ranked #1 of the Top 3 Issues. They explained that young people endure a lot of stresses and personal challenges, and that this is reflected in the high prevalence of mental health problems in our community.

One of the primary reasons attributed to the growing rates of mental health problems among Greater Dandenong's youth is the surmounting social pressures and expectations that they experience. Students reported that these expectations may include having to look "perfect", succeed academically in school, and acquire the "perfect" job, house, friends, and so on. Some students mentioned that this notion of "perfection" is heavily influenced by social media, as this is a platform on which people often portray an idealistic (and inaccurate) image of themselves, setting an unrealistic standard which young people then compare themselves to. Participants mentioned that social media can have a damaging effect on a young person's body image and self-esteem in particular. However, social media wasn't the only influence reported by participants. Young people cited experiencing pressures on multiple fronts. Students identified their parents and peers as significant contributors to the social pressures which they experience, and explained that as young people grow older, the pressure to be successful typically increases.

### AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

When discussing the awareness of mental health problems among youth, responses were split. Some students believed that these topics have "been covered well" in schools, communities and the media, and that "most students know about it". However, there was still a strong emphasis on the need for "more awareness and education", not only for young people but also the adult influences in their lives. In terms of raising awareness among young people, students suggested that children need to be educated about mental health earlier in life, with an emphasis on increasing their understanding of self-care strategies such as regular exercise and good nutrition from primary school. Participants mentioned that, while schools provide them with a basic understanding of mental health, it would be beneficial if they adopted a more comprehensive and holistic teaching approach, covering topics such as: identifying the signs of poor mental health; how to support *others*

experiencing mental health problems; and service literacy (i.e. what services and supports are available to people with mental health problems, and how to access them).

When it comes to educating adults about mental health, young people identified two major groups who they'd like increase to awareness among: parents and teachers. Some participants commented that there's a stereotype attached to teenagers that they're "moody" or "just going through a phase" and, because of this, adults often don't understand or recognise when a young person is experiencing mental health problems. They recommended that we increase awareness of mental health among parents and teachers, and build their capacity to recognise signs of mental health problems, so that they are better equipped to understand and support their children/students experiencing mental illness. Young people also reported that their parents are often unaware of the stress-inducing effects that their high expectations may cause. They suggested that there should be educational support available to families so that parents can understand the harmful effects that parental expectations may have on a child, and learn new strategies to assist children to thrive without placing unrealistic pressures on them.

## ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Lastly, students commented that mental health services in Greater Dandenong need to be more accessible and youth friendly. It was mentioned that, a lot of the time, young people aren't aware of what supports and services are available to them, and that there needs to be an increase in both youth outreach and effective promotion so that mental health services are more accessible to young people. They also discussed how mental illness remains a stigmatised condition, which can be a significant barrier when seeking support. Young people commented that we need to "make it okay for people to come forward" by challenging this stigma, particularly for males who are less inclined to seek help. One factor identified by young people that may help to make mental health services more appealing is the protection of anonymity.  Some suggested that *online* counselling would be appealing to many young people because this method ensures you don't have to reveal your identity, and it can be easier to disclose personal information when you're not in a face-to-face setting.

# BULLYING AND DISCRIMINATION

Young people discussed discrimination in a range of forms including: racism, sexism, ageism, ableism and homophobia. There was a general consensus among participants that these forms of discrimination mostly take place outside of school, and stem from the beliefs of older generations rather than young people. Furthermore, while discrimination perpetrated by older generations was perceived as targeted and hurtful, discrimination by young people was taken less seriously, described by students as "not too personal" and a form of "joking around" or "dark humour". Participants acknowledged that, to prevent the casualization of discrimination in its many forms, action needs to be taken by young people to stop masking discrimination with humour.

Young people were hopeful that discrimination was on the decline in Greater Dandenong and beyond, stating that "society has improved over the years, [although] we still have gaps". Participants attributed improvements to our community's increasing diversity, explaining that as our population grows and becomes more diverse, so too does our understanding and acceptance of people from different backgrounds.

## SCHOOLS

Perceptions of discrimination in schools were varied. Many students described schools as "very diverse and respectful" environments, and explained that, in their experience, most instances of discrimination occur outside of school. It was observed that the prevalence of discrimination may increase with the size of the school (i.e. "more discrimination in bigger schools"), and that certain forms of discrimination are more evident than others. Racism, for instance, was described as "not really present in school", however sexism was as issue that frequently arose. In particular, students perceived that there was differential expectations and treatment of students depending on their gender. Some young people felt that "girls are more trusted" in school, and that boys are highly "monitored" and receive "harsher punishment". Furthermore, participants felt that school dress codes could be sexist at times, as well as non-inclusive of LGBTIQ+ students.

Within the context of school, participants didn't consider young people to be major perpetrators of discrimination, but rather viewed themselves to be the subject of prejudiced views held by adults. The only exception to this was instances of homophobia and transphobia, which were described by participants as persisting issues among both school staff *and* students. Young people observed that homophobic slurs such as "that's so gay" were common within their school, and suggested that students needed to be educated on the negative impacts of these words. Additionally, it was suggested that schools should normalise LGBTIQ+ activities so that people belonging to this community feel safe and accepted in school.

## GENERATIONAL BELIEFS

As mentioned above, students held very different perceptions of discrimination perpetrated by adults compared to that of young people. While discrimination by older generations was seen as targeted and hurtful, it was mentioned that when young people use similar discriminatory slurs, they are just "joking around". Furthermore, young people often perceive themselves to be the subject of discrimination by adults, commenting:

*"I don't think we're discriminated [against] by our own generation… mostly it's the older generations."*

Several students commented that "discrimination comes from parents" and that young people may adopt these attitudes and behaviours from their family. In light of this, participants said that young people have the opportunity to "break the cycle" by putting an end to the prejudiced beliefs being passed down through generations. They suggested that young people should call to action and increase awareness among their parents and other adults in the community. However, they expressed concerns that discriminatory attitudes become more deep-set and enduring with age, observing that it's "hard to change the values of the elderly".

Participants believe that a whole-of-community approach is required to combat discrimination, with an emphasis on education of all generations. Young people recommended educational methods that "put people in their shoes" to increase empathy and understanding of the experiences of people affected by discrimination. Students advised that a strengths-based approach was needed to encourage diversity and help people to view differences as positive. Furthermore, they would like to see more community interaction, between different generations and people from diverse backgrounds, in order to break down stereotypes and foster an inclusive and accepting community.

## CRIME AND SAFETY

Young peoples' views on crime and safety were split. Many felt like this was an issue disproportionately affecting our community, commenting that "all local reports in the media are negative", and they hear bad news about incidents in Greater Dandenong "all the time". Young people observed that the media tend to focus on crime in one area, and selectively choose not to cover issues in other communities, thereby portraying Greater Dandenong as less safe. By contrast, some young people felt that crime and safety were not issues unique to our community, stating that: *"crime is everywhere in all communities, [it's] a big issue in the world in general."* Participants maintained a positive outlook, believing that despite all these crimes occurring, there's "still a lot of good in the world."

In terms of the types of crime identified by students, responses ranged from minor offences such as graffiti, to more serious incidents such as robbery and assault. Most notably, students placed great emphasis on drug and alcohol-related crimes, stating that they've observed "drug and alcohol affected people starting trouble" which can "compromise safety".

Young people explained that time and place determines their perceptions of safety. In terms of time, some students described how they feel unsafe at night and consequently won't go out "later than 9pm". As for place, students identified train stations as unsafe, stating that there's a "lack of protection". Dandenong Station in particular was associated with the selling and use of drugs. Some other factors identified which may impede young people's sense of safety include a lack of trust in others, particularly law enforcement (described as "not reliable"), as well as dim lighting and the general maintenance of an area (e.g. "the presence of graffiti feels unsafe").

## CRIME PREVENTION

Young people placed significant emphasis on addressing the determinants of crime in order to prevent criminal behaviour. They said that there needs to be a "focus on WHY people commit crime in the first place" – investigating the motivators for crime and then working to prevent these. Some young people were doubtful, however, that a crime-free community was achievable, stating that "crime cannot be stopped [as it's] affected by social standing and financial pressures" which are not easily amenable to change.

Students recommended a range of strategies to prevent youth crime in Greater Dandenong including:

- Developing more effective alcohol and drug education to raise awareness of the risks of substance use (emphasis antisocial or risk-taking behaviours) and its legal consequences
- Employing more PSO and police officers; building trust with the police through relationship building – establishing a "more positive presence"
- Appointing security *on* public transport, not just at stations
- Engaging at-risk young people in more youth services and programs

## CRIME RESPONSES

Although young people focused on the need to prevent crimes before they occur, they did suggest a range of responses to increase young peoples' sense of safety and their ability to respond appropriately when faced with a dangerous situation. Students suggested that they would benefit from education on the following topics:

- What to do if you encounter certain criminal acts, including information on how to report a crime (anonymously if possible)
- How an individual should respond if approached by a dangerous or threatening person, including self-defence methods
- Young people's legal rights and responsibilities with law enforcement

Students also recommended a range of environmental design principles that would foster a sense of safety in the community. These include improving visibility at night time by increasing the number and brightness of lighting on streets and footpaths; increasing CCTV coverage; and keeping public areas well-maintained (e.g. no graffiti or damaged property).

# UNDERSTANDING THE RESILIENCE SURVEY

Resilience is the ability to flexibly cope with the demands of life and bounce back after times of adversity. In partnership with local schools and Resilient Youth Australia, the City of Greater Dandenong has conducted the Resilience Survey in 2015 and 2017. With more than 5300 responses captured in 2017 (across students in grade 3 to year 12), the survey provides a comprehensive picture of the resilience of young people in the City of Greater Dandenong.

The Survey provides feedback on the qualities, opportunities and conditions that characterise high levels of resilience. Through analysis of the 2017 Resilience Survey reports for Greater Dandenong, a number of key challenges were highlighted.

Young people were presented with key questions which were discussed in small groups, with the aim of gaining greater insight into the underlying causes, as well as to explore ideas for addressing these challenges. This section presents the key insights and recommendations identified by young people during the group discussion.

## 3 IN 10 YEAR 10 STUDENTS FEEL A STRONG SENSE OF COMMUNITY BELONGING

| Why have young people reported a low sense of community belonging? | How can we increase young people's community belonging? |
|---|---|
| Responses indicated that low levels of community belonging may be due to:<br><br>• <u>Isolation</u> - including having only one friendship group or being newly arrived.<br>• <u>Internet</u> - the impact of media, technology and the online environment *("people do not go out to community because they are behind screens").*<br>• <u>Barriers to accessing activities</u> - including activities not being affordable, not knowing how to find them or not being suitable for young people.<br>• <u>Perceptions of safety</u> - concerns for personal safety impacting on young people's confidence to move throughout the community *("[I am]afraid to go on the late bus, put bins out").*<br>• <u>Discrimination</u> - with specific mention of religious discrimination, racism and sexism. | Young people suggested a number of ways to increase community belonging:<br><br>• Providing more low cost programs, events and activities for young people.<br>• Challenging stereotypes to reduce stigma and discrimination; promoting acceptance of different people.<br>• Building young people's confidence to try new things without fear of failure; more strength-based programs.<br>• Better promotion of youth services and programs, via schools, sport clubs and social media. |

| Why do young people have concerns for their future? | What would help young people feel better about their future? |
|---|---|
| Young people highlighted a range of pressures contributing to their lack of optimism for the future. These include both immediate pressures, relating to their current situation, as well as general concerns about their future prospects.<br><br>• Family – meeting the expectations of parents, fear of letting down their families and feeling that parents don't understand the challenges facing young people.<br>• School – pressure to choose the 'right' subjects at school, VCE and exam pressure, and understanding and choosing a career path.<br>• Employment – trouble finding (stable) work; workplace rights; pressure to earn money; knowing there is high unemployment can be a disincentive to try.<br>• Future uncertainty – general sense of uncertainty and lack of control over the future *("technology progressing so quickly we don't know what jobs are out there")*<br>• Finance – housing affordability; cost of living; superannuation.<br>• Competition – increasing sense of competition in school and work *("getting harder to be successful")*.<br>• Political – not feeling that young people have a voice in politics; lacking confidence in current leaders; not identifying with the values of existing political parties. | Young people had a range of suggestions for alleviating the pressures that contribute to their concern for the future. Overwhelming young people said that they want to be recognised for their strengths, and encouraged to pursue their interests.<br><br>Specific suggestions included:<br><br>• More education for families to increase their understanding of different career pathways and how to support young people.<br>• Reduced focus on ATAR scores, with more emphasis on alternative pathways.<br>• Introducing relaxation and stress management for younger students, recognising that young people become worried about school before reaching VCE.<br>• New approaches to work including practical tests (instead of interviews) for jobs to assess skills, more opportunities for work experience, and employers being willing to employ those with less experience.<br>• Life skills programs/workshops which address topics such as tax, budgeting, study skills, etc.<br>• Mentoring activities that provide young people with positive role models, and stories from those who've experienced and overcome challenges previously. |

| What makes young people feel valued and appreciated? | How can we help young people feel more valued and included? |
|---|---|
| Young people attributed the following factors to feeling valued and appreciated.<br>Their reflections included being valued and appreciated in a range of settings including within the family home, at school, and the general community<br><br>Decision making<br>• To be heard, noticed and involved, notably on matters of direct impact | Decision making<br>• Genuine opportunities to mobilise youth participation and promote a youth voice on community matters i.e. more youth summits/forums<br>• Adults appreciating and respecting a youth perspective and promoting opportunities for young people to share their views<br>• Greater respect for young people, often a |

|  |  |
|---|---|
| • Included and listened to both as a demographic and on a personal level<br>• Feeling included in decision making processes<br><br>Feeling Valued<br>• Valuing young people's experience and unique perspective<br>• Acknowledgement and recognition of young people's contribution<br>• Encouragement and positive reinforcement<br>• Adults taking young people seriously<br>• Respect and validation from adults<br>• Support of peers<br><br>Belonging<br>• When you feel you belong or are part of something bigger than yourself | barrier with adults dismissing young people's viewpoint/perspective<br>• Avoid age discrimination<br>• Establishing youth councils<br>• Greater opportunity amongst school communities to encourage a broader student voice e.g. outside of student council, direct input on school policy<br><br>Feeling Valued<br>• Increased positive acknowledgement<br>• Bolster opportunities for showcasing young people's achievements / talents<br>• Community events which bring people together to celebrate unity in diversity (including age) |

| Do young people have enough opportunities for their voices to be heard? | How can we encourage young people's voices to heard and included in Council? |
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| Responses to this question were divided.<br><br>Smaller numbers of young people reported that overall, they do feel there are opportunities provided to young people to put forward their views and opinions on key issues.<br><br>Conversely larger numbers of young people cited that adults dominate community debate and discussion; and that adults don't prioritise what young people say. Schools were frequently reported as being conservative in encouraging a student voice and that if students do offer an opposing view it is seen as a negative.<br><br>The general theme of feedback relating this question, overwhelming reported that the opinions of young people are too often overlooked and undervalued. | Encouraging a youth voice - community<br>• Hosting more youth forums /summits – where young people can come together to express their opinions and be heard<br>• Expanding on-line engagement activities, including distributing surveys<br>• Greater awareness raising and promotion of youth engagement and consultation activities to young people<br>• Opportunities to share feedback anonymously<br>• Increased leadership opportunities of young people in the community<br>• Create environments conducive to the needs of young people, i.e. accessible and safe to share thoughts/opinions<br>School<br>• More opportunity for SRC's to have input<br>• Increased collaboration with schools, in school time to encourage students to provide input and advice on pertinent community issues<br>• Broadening youth network meetings to involve schools<br>• More school-based consultations<br>• More engagement with students in schools by youth organisations/services |

# YOUR SAY WORKSHOP

One of the workshop options available at the Youth Summit was 'Your Say'. This session engaged students in a range of interactive consultation activities to explore perceptions of community, community belonging and community safety. A total of 83 students participated across four workshop sessions.

## DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY

Students were asked to work in small groups to explore 'what community means to them'. The common themes have been presented below.

## WHAT MAKES A 'YOUTH-FRIENDLY' COMMUNITY?

As a designated Child-Friendly City, Greater Dandenong Council is committed to providing opportunities for children and young people (0-18 years) to develop their potential, have access to services, and to have opportunities to connect with their peers, family and community.

Young people were asked to share their ideas around what makes a community 'youth-friendly'. Importantly, young people were asked to imagine that they were designing a new community, in order to encourage thinking without 'real-world' limitations. A series of prompt questions were posed to participants, who then contributed ideas and answers.

A snapshot of the results is shared below.

| *"If we were designing a brand new community, how could we make it the best community for young people to live in?"* | |
|---|---|
| **What would the community look like?** | Young people's responses reflected an appreciation for cultural diversity, as well as a desire to feel safe and included. Values such as 'equality', 'caring', 'welcoming' and 'positive' were raised to describe the feeling of a youth-friendly community.<br><br>In terms of the physical environment, young people mentioned green spaces, plants and cleanliness ('not a lot of litter') as important to them.<br><br>*"An understanding family of many cultural people"*<br><br>*"A place where you feel safe and you are supported"*<br><br>*"Places where anyone of all age groups can hang out"* |
| **What would the community think of young people?** | The key theme to emerge was that young people would ideally be recognised for their potential, and valued as 'the future'. Young people's use of technology would be seen as a strength, and the community would appreciate young people's desire to learn.<br><br>*"Young people have a good life and education"*<br><br>*"Young people have the best opportunity"*<br><br>*"Valued members of the community"*<br><br>*"If they succeed, then the future succeeds"* |
| **How would young people get involved in the community?** | Young people identified a range of opportunities for them to get involved in the community. These include sports, church, clubs, and volunteering, amongst others. Young people further suggested the role of the internet, and particularly social media, in helping young people to get involved in their communities, highlighting the prevalence of technology in their lives.<br><br>Community events and festivals were also specifically mentioned as a means of facilitating young people's involvement in the community.<br><br>*"Join teams and groups"*<br><br>*"Trying new things"* |

| How would young people have their say? | The responses provided by young people related to both the mechanism through which they can have their say, as well as to how the process is facilitated. Proposed avenues for young people's voice to be captured, included social media, community forums, student councils, voting, debates and surveys or polls. In terms of process, young people mentioned anonymity, fairness and respect as enablers for them to feel confident in having their say.<br><br>*"In an environment where everyone's opinion is heard and considered."*<br><br>*"In a respectful manner that is unbiased and fair"* |
|---|---|
| What happens when young people need support? | Trust, safe spaces, supportive adults and help that 'comes to them' were the key themes to emerge from this question.<br><br>Young people also identified a substantial list of possible supports, including headspace, parents (or other family members), counsellors, helplines, friends, teachers, lawyers and police. |
| How should it feel when you talk to adults? | Overwhelmingly, young people expressed a desire for adults to be able to communicate with young people as their equal. They stated that talking to adults should feel 'normal', 'natural' and 'not intimidating'. Young people also spoke of how they value the experience that adults can bring in supporting young people to face challenges.<br><br>*"It feels like a sense of relief as you've got someone with more experience to help you through difficult times."*<br><br>*"When you talk to adults, you feel better because they always have something to say"* |

## COMMUNITY SAFETY

The results of the 2017 Greater Dandenong Resilience Survey highlighted that 72% of year 10 students feel safe in their neighbourhood, compared to 80% of year 10 students nation-wide. Two activities were conducted to understand young people's perceptions of safety.

**Safe Places and Spaces**

Young people were asked to nominate whether or not they felt 'safe' or 'unsafe' in a range of community spaces frequently visited by young people.

The three spaces where the most young people nominated as feeling 'safe' were:

1. Library (100%)
2. School (97%)
3. Shops (93%)

The three spaces where the most young people nominated as feeling 'unsafe' were:

1. Public toilets (79%)
2. Car parks (40%)
3. Parks (34%)

**Enablers and Barriers to Community Safety**

The final workshop activity presented young people with a range of factors that could either positively or negatively influence perceptions of safety when using public spaces.

The factors which were determined to be the most impactful in enhancing perceptions of safety for the largest numbers of young people were signage (70%) and good lighting (65%). Those factors which most detracted from feeling safe were poorly maintained areas with graffiti, rubbish or long grass (60%) and poor lighting (59%).

Significant gender differences were noted with the presence of police and security guards. 26% of male students reported feeling safer with police present, compared to 38% of female students. This pattern was amplified with the presence of security guards, with only 14% of male students feeling safer, compared to 42% of female students.

The full outcomes are presented below.

| | Total (t = 83) | | | Males (t = 35) | | | Females (t = 48) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | More safe | Less safe | No change | More safe | Less safe | No change | More safe | Less safe | No change |
| **Good lighting** | 65% | 2% | 33% | 51% | 3% | 46% | 75% | 2% | 23% |
| **Poor lighting** | 8% | 59% | 33% | 3% | 40% | 53% | 13% | 73% | 14% |
| **Other young people being around (that you don't know)** | 17% | 24% | 59% | 17% | 29% | 54% | 17% | 21% | 63% |
| **Having adults around (that you don't know)** | 31% | 7% | 61% | 23% | 14% | 63% | 38% | 2% | 60% |
| **Areas that look poorly maintained (graffiti, rubbish, long grass)** | 2% | 60% | 37% | 6% | 46% | 49% | 0% | 71% | 29% |
| **Signage telling you where you are** | 70% | 0% | 30% | 66% | 0% | 34% | 73% | 0% | 27% |
| **Police being present** | 33% | 20% | 47% | 26% | 20% | 54% | 38% | 21% | 42% |
| **Security guards being present** | 30% | 2% | 67% | 14% | 3% | 83% | 42% | 2% | 56% |
| **Areas which are closed off or have an obstructed view** | 8% | 36% | 55% | 3% | 26% | 71% | 13% | 44% | 44% |

# CONCLUSION

Through a variety of consultation activities, the City of Greater Dandenong's *Youth Summit 2018: Better Together* provided valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities for young people in our community. Mental health, bullying and discrimination, and crime and safety emerged as the most prominent issues identified by young people. Students' experiences of these issues were diverse and complex, and hence require a multifaceted response. Young people suggested a holistic solution – comprising educational, social, political and environmental changes.

Honing in on findings from the 2017 Resilience Survey, consultation also elicited a range of feedback around the barriers and enablers to building resilience in young people. Students commented that in order to strengthen young people's sense of community belonging, the community needs to provide more low cost activities, programs and events for youth, and bolster promotional efforts to raise awareness of these initiatives, as many young people currently don't know what's available to them. Furthermore, efforts are required across generations to challenge stereotypes and reduce the prevalence of discrimination – supporting the establishment of a more inclusive and harmonious community.

Further strategies to foster resilience in young people include supporting individuals to recognise their strengths and interests, and increasing their understanding of different education and employment pathways, so that young people don't feel overwhelmed by pressure to excel in school and pursue a single career. A key component of this involves positive acknowledgement and support of young people by adults – providing greater opportunities for youth to showcase their achievements and talents, as well as opportunities to share their views and have their voice heard.

The insights gained from this year's Youth Summit will assist Council to develop local policies, programs and services that are both reflective and responsive to the needs of young people in our community. Findings will be incorporated in the City of Greater Dandenong's new integrated Child, Youth and Family Plan for 2019 and beyond.