

## Wyndham Youth Services

# Youth Forum 2016 - Findings Report

The 2016 Youth Forum was held on Wednesday 16th March at the Youth Resource Centre in Hoppers Crossing with 141 students coming together for a full day of workshops on a range of topics. The information and feedback collected will be used to improve and inform services, programs, activities and facilities for young people in Wyndham. The information will be distributed locally to residents, community support agencies, education providers and Council departments via this report.

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>Page</b>
Executive Summary.....	2
Summary of Topic Feedback.....	2
Who attended the Youth Forum in 2016.....	7
Methodology.....	8
Themes That Concerned Young People.....	9
<i>WELFARE ISSUES</i>	
Healthy Living.....	12
Healthy Relationships.....	14
Bullying.....	16
Mental Health.....	18
Drugs and Alcohol.....	19
Homelessness.....	20
Positive Self Expression.....	21
Pathways.....	22
<i>COMMUNITY ISSUES</i>	
Safety in Wyndham.....	23
Diversity and Inclusion.....	24
Accessibility.....	25
Transport .....	26
Graffiti.....	27
Recreation Services.....	28
Things to do in Wyndham.....	29
Things to do in Point Cook.....	30
Things to do in Tarneit.....	31
Things to do in Wyndham Vale.....	32
Libraries.....	33
How The Findings Will Be Used.....	34

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2016, Youth Services held their annual Wyndham Youth Forum at the Youth Resource Centre with 141 students coming together to participate in a range of workshops lead by community support agencies and staff from various Council departments. The Forum aims to enable young people to have their say about key issues that affect them directly, and is used to empower and inspire young people. The information and feedback collected will be used to improve and inform services, programs, activities and facilities for young people in Wyndham.

The Youth Forum was attended by:

- 141 young people from 16 local secondary schools
- Wyndham Council Staff from 11 departments
- Community support agencies: Headspace, Whitelion Open Family, Centrelink, YSAS, Western Bulldogs
- Wyndham Councillor Marie Brittan
- Sacha Kaluri, Australian Teenage Expo Director
- Khurram Khan, Wyndham Young Achiever 2015
- The Uprising Youth Theatre

### WHAT CONCERNED YOUNG PEOPLE

There were several key themes raised by young people across all topics discussed at the Youth Forum. They identified these as impacting on many aspects of their lives. These themes were:

- **Safety:** This included feeling safe in public, open spaces, and around train stations.
- **Equality:** Young people expressed frustration and concerns over perceived gender inequality, especially regarding the opportunities available to males and females at school and in sports.
- **Finance:** Young people expressed that they felt concerned about the cost of things such as transport, education, and the ability to take part in recreational activities.
- **Peer judgement:** Young people explained that a major barrier for them seeking help when they were experiencing difficulties was being judged by peers.
- **Anxiety:** This included feeling anxious as a result of pressure to perform at school.
- **School Curriculum:** Young people felt that the curriculum in their schools did not adequately address their welfare needs. They argued that health education needs to be improved in general to focus more effectively on issues like sexual health, mental health and drug education.
- **Service Awareness:** Young people are unsure of which support services are available to them. There was a general lack of awareness around support services and programs available in the community, and how to access them with confidence.

## SUMMARY OF TOPIC FEEDBACK

### HEALTHY LIVING

Young people had a very multifaceted definition of health which included traditional aspects such as diet and exercise, but also recognised the importance of a balanced lifestyle, relationships and mental health. They made a number of suggestions to help them to feel healthy and access the relevant services:

- Schools could make healthy lifestyles part of the curriculum
- Help parents to understand the importance of a balanced lifestyle and mental health
- Reduce costs for memberships at gyms and sporting clubs for young people
- Plan your day well ahead if you need to get to places, get a job, and assist those who needs help.

## **HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**

Young people identified a number of issues that impacted the health of relationships in their lives:

- Issues with parents: this included high expectations of parents of children, trust issues, difficulties in talking to parents and feeling that their parents sometimes had a lack of understanding of the issues facing young people
- The sexual education they received at school is inadequate and sometimes no nurse is available
- Fear of judgement and bullying often prevented young people from seeking help about issues
- Concern about the acceptance of sexual/gender diversity in the community

Young people outlined key things they could do to have healthy relationships in their lives:

- Having an accessible wellbeing centre at school
- Being aware of how to deal with anger in an appropriate way
- Education for parents to help them understand issues faced by young people and be supportive
- Education and awareness around sexuality and gender are keys ways to address these issues.

## **BULLYING**

Young people outlined how bullying directly and indirectly affected them:

- Bullying occurs often on public transport and in schools
- The causes of bullying included the hierarchy of friendship groups, a lack of understanding of consequences, and anonymity on social media
- Bystanders do not get involved due to fear of becoming a target
- Young people often struggle to support friends who were being bullied
- Not all schools are good in raising awareness and preventing bullying

Young people outlined a number of suggestions to tackle bullying:

- Bullying education material needs to be more engaging and reflect modern times
- Young people need to be informed about the school anti-bullying policy and the laws regarding bullying, consequences and support tactics
- More support programs in schools and workplaces to teach victims to feel empowered.

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

The top three most prevalent mental health issues identified by young people were anxiety, depression, and stress. Key issues were identified were:

- A lack of parental or cultural acceptance of mental health issues which translates into a lack of support or consent for the young person to access services
- Fear of being judged
- A general lack of awareness about what services were available to help

Young people believed that schools should play a key role in increasing the understanding of mental health issues. They also acknowledged the importance of providing support to friends who might be experiencing mental health issues. Suggestions included:

- Mental health workshops to support students to develop strategies to help friends experiencing mental health issues, explain treatment options, and promote other support services.
- Education for families and parents on adolescent mental health.
- Reduction in the stigma around mental health in the community and at school

## **DRUGS AND ALCOHOL**

Young people believed that the main reasons for substance abuse by young people were:

- Using them as a coping mechanism
- Peer pressure or negative role models,
- Intergenerational drug use, and
- Experimentation.

Other issues discussed included:

- Young people felt they had limited knowledge of the services available to help
- They acknowledged the importance of support such as not judging people, not feeling pressured, being tolerant and understanding.
- Peer pressure and fear of being judged is a serious barrier to seeking help.

There were a number of suggestions put forward to tackle the issue of drugs and alcohol:

- Young people would like to see awareness raised about support services, promoted through workshops, school, community, and the media.
- Young people expressed that although there is no safe way to do drugs, it is important for them to educate themselves about the effects of alcohol and drugs, and have friends that would look out for them.

## **HOMELESSNESS**

Young people identified that there were many different reasons why people become homeless and that it impacts individuals in a variety of ways. These included having an abusive family and feeling unsafe at home, leaving home or being evicted due to alcohol and drugs abuse. Key barriers to accessing services identified were:

- Lack of services and lack of awareness of support available
- Lack of money and limited access to transport
- Limited support from family or experiencing family violence
- Feeling embarrassed, stereotyped and unmotivated.

Young people advocated the need for greater awareness and promotion of homelessness services in Wyndham, which they suggested could be promoted in schools or through media advertising.

- In general young people felt there should be a shelter or crisis accommodation options
- Young people recognised the support they could provide each other by having friends at risk of being homeless sleep over or couch surf, providing food and helping them to access services
- In schools young people suggested having referrals for further support, information packs, and have students take part in community projects to help tackle the issue.

## **POSITIVE SELF EXPRESSION**

Young people defined self-expression as the way in which they portray themselves, their strengths and weaknesses, their culture, personalities (introverted/extroverted), hobbies and online identity.

- Young people identified that they were able to express themselves via social media, but at times they were concerned about being judged by others
- There were a number of hobbies available that could give them an outlet for self-expression
- Many young people felt that peer pressure, stereotypes, stigma and fear of being judged caused people to make bad decisions or to not get involved in opportunities for fear of judgement.
- Young people identified the need to educate around the differences between positive and negative self-expression, in order to help reduce stigma, peer pressure, and the fear of being judged by others.

## **PATHWAYS**

Young people were very passionate about this topic and outlined a number of concerns they have about tertiary education and career pathways. These included:

- Young people felt they were not aware of the range of educational steps they needed to take in order to reach their goals
- There was a perception that the marks required to get into higher education were very high, they would have trouble finding a place, and that going to a public school would hinder their ability to get into higher education.

Barriers to accessing higher education included:

- The location and availability of transport,
- The high cost of courses,
- Feeling stressed and anxious, and
- Not having a family history of pursuing higher education

While most young people felt well supported by their schools in choosing career pathways, they felt the support could still be improved. Suggestions included:

- Schools could have motivational speakers to demonstrate success was possible, and to teach students how to improve confidence.
- Schools could provide more information on educational alternatives for students who do not fit into mainstream education
- University open days and career expos are extremely helpful and students would like to attend more of these

## **SAFETY IN WYNDHAM**

Safety was identified as a major issue in Wyndham.

- Young people felt unsafe on public transport, buses and at train stations. Older train stations feel less safe than new stations.
- Factors that impacted on how safe they felt were the time of day (day vs night), being alone, their age and gender, being around strangers, and being in a large group of people.
- Young people feel safer with their phone. Not having a phone or credit was a barrier for young people to access help if needed.

Young people had several suggestions to make Wyndham feel like a safer community:

- Installing more surveillance cameras and lighting in unsafe areas
- A greater presence of PSOs and police, especially around train stations
- Having a distress signal on buses
- Having a Wyndham-specific app so that they can log the areas they don't feel safe in

## **DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

Young people recognised the need to learn about different cultures to live together cooperatively, respectfully, and feel a sense of unity, but said there was limited cultural sharing at times.

- Young people admitted that at times they feel shy or feel excluded due to their culture
- Racism and prejudice are serious issues in Wyndham, given its diversity, and affect everyone in some way. They suggested that schools could run diversity programs to reduce stereotypes and prejudices
- There were many local opportunities for people to learn about other cultures, but safe participation was important

## **ACCESSIBILITY**

The Accessibility workshop discussed the accessibility of various services and facilities around Wyndham. Issues identified included:

- Lack of language translations for promotional materials
- Lack of accessible public transport options
- There is a need for more wheelchair accessible facilities across Wyndham
- There is often gender inequality in schools and sporting clubs, particularly when young people wanted to play sport traditionally played by the opposite gender (eg, girls playing rugby)
- Young people often had limited time due to school work and perceived some services and facilities as expensive to access
- Safety public spaces could be improved through increased lighting and security

## **TRANSPORT**

Discussion about transport focussed on three areas: paths and crossings, feeling safe, and attitudes.

Issues included:

- They would like to see more pedestrian crossings, wider footpaths, and better maintained paths
- Unlawful driver behaviour causes young people to feel unsafe when walking and cycling.
- Young people feel less safe when walking at night and would avoid it where possible, in areas where there is poor or faulty lighting
- They felt safer when walking close to familiar areas (school, home), or when with friends or near heavy traffic

Their suggestion for improving the way people move around Wyndham included:

- More PSOs patrolling at train stations, surveillance cameras and lighting
- Increased seating at bus stops and in high activity areas
- Educating people on how to stay safe when walking.

## **GRAFFITI & LITTER**

- Young people's attitudes toward littering were influenced by peer pressure, the norm within their families, and how they were feeling on the day (eg angry). Bins in public areas were not used as often as they should be.
- Young people commented that litter and graffiti in parks made the areas less attractive to visit.
- In order to tackle graffiti and littering, a number of suggestions were made:
  - More surveillance in public spaces
  - A hotline to report graffiti and litter, or to be made aware if one already exists.
  - Having a designated legal graffiti wall or art classes that could be used as an outlet
  - Limit the access of spray cans

## **RECREATION**

While there were many local recreational facilities, at times young people couldn't access them due to overcrowding, transport and cost issues, or vandalism.

- Young people would like to see open and public spaces that can accommodate summer and winter events and activities, such as having an outdoor cinema during summer
- Young people expressed the need for more pool facilities, particularly in Point Cook
- Public transport and bus routes were needed to make recreational facilities accessible

## **THINGS TO DO IN WYNDHAM**

Young people outlined a number of key issues for local areas including Wyndham, Tarneit, Wyndham Vale, and Point Cook.

- They reported that almost all areas shared the common issues of having limited public transport, vandalism, hooning, drug use, smashed glass at bus stops, bullying, family issues and domestic violence, feeling unsafe when walking at night, and a perceived lack of activities and events targeted at young people
- In general they would like to see more lighting, bike lanes, BBQs, a cleaner and less polluted environment, more public seating in public places and around bus stops, more job opportunities, more funding for sports clubs, and have safe spaces to socialise
- Young people would like to see more gender equality and cultural acceptance within the community, more police patrols, stricter consequences around drug use, and more awareness of support services available
- They would like to see more promotion within schools about the services, events and programs available in the area. Young people would like to see youth workers engaging with students within their schools.
- Young people would like to see more (or be made more aware of) community events and facilities

## WHO ATTENDED THE YOUTH FORUM IN 2016

The 2016 Youth Forum was held on Wednesday 16th March at the Youth Resource Centre in Hoppers Crossing. The breakdown of attendance is as follows.

### School attendance

- 141 young people representing 15 local secondary schools
- Students from Werribee Community & Education Centre's VCAL program
- Teachers

### Youth Forum workshop facilitators:

- 18 Youth Services staff
- 11 young people from various volunteer committees

### Wyndham Council – 20 staff from the following departments:

- Open Space - Graffiti
- Environment and Sustainability - Waste and Litter
- Advocacy - Transport
- Strategic Transport and Growth Infrastructure
- Facilities and Recreation
- Community Planning and Development - Safety, Grants, Arts
- Corporate Services - Emergency Risk & Resilience
- Community Planning and Development - Disability
- Libraries and Community Learning
- Sustainable Development
- Youth, Early Years & Families

### Special guests

- Wyndham Councillor Marie Brittan
- Hobson's Bay staff
- Sacha Kaluri, Australian Teenage Expo Director
- Khurram Khan, Wyndham Young Achiever of the Year 2015
- The Uprising Youth Theatre

### Community services:

- Headspace
- Whitelion
- Hampstead Medical Centre
- Centrelink
- Western Bulldogs
- YSAS

The total number of people who attended the 2016 Youth Forum was 204.

## METHODOLOGY

Each year, Youth Services holds the annual Wyndham Youth Forum which brings together students from local secondary schools, community support agencies and staff from a range of Council departments. The Forum aims to provide local young people with an opportunity to:

- Provide feedback and advice to Council about issues that concern them;
- Engage with Council staff and local service providers; and
- Identify future directions for advocacy, projects and programs that can be actioned by Council, various youth committees and the combined Wyndham School Representative Council.

To ensure that the Forum was responsive to the issues affecting young people, young people were consulted prior to the event about the issues they felt had the most impact on the community. Key focus areas were identified through extensive consultation with young people who attended various youth programs and services, which was used to provide an outline of topics for the Forum.

As this occurred, various council departments, community support agencies and schools were consulted with to determine any priority areas for discussion with young people. The topics of interest from the initial consultation with young people and from council, agencies and schools was used to create a preferences form that was completed by each student who had been nominated by their school to attend. These preference forms were used to guide the planning of the workshop topics, the number of times each topic would run, and to allocate each student into their preferred workshop areas on the day.

On the day of the Youth Forum, the day was structured into three blocks of workshops, with eight workshops happening concurrently in each (24 workshops in total). Each student was assigned to one workshop per block and attended a total of three workshops each on the day. Each workshop contained 15-20 students from various schools. Facilitating the workshops was a mix of youth workers, council staff, agency staff, and young people who had received workshop co-facilitation training.

Topics were categorised under two main areas: 'Welfare Issues' and 'Community Issues'. Each interactive workshop covered core questions with the young people: what is the issue, how do young people perceive it, how does it affect them, what services or facilities are they aware that exist for it, can they access these, what are the barriers, what do they think is missing in relation to the issue, what would they like to see done about it, who should do something about it, and any ideas they may have for solutions.

In their feedback about the day, students described the Youth Forum as a fun, interactive, inspiring and informative day. Specifically, they indicated that:

- They were able to put forward their opinions and ask questions in a supportive, non-judgemental environment;
- They liked meeting and working with students from other schools;
- The forum provided a great opportunity for them to speak directly to their Council; and
- They could contribute to positive change within their community.

The information and feedback recorded from the workshops at the Youth Forum resulted in a wealth of subject specific data which will be collated and distributed locally to residents, community support agencies, education providers, Council departments and professional networks via this report, and made available on the Wyndham Youth Services website. View how the findings will be used on page 34.



## THEMES THAT CONCERNED YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people identified seven key themes that became apparent in all of the workshops that they attended. These themes impacted young people's lives in all aspects and were raised in all of the topics that were discussed at the Forum. These were:

- Safety
- Equality
- Finance
- Peer judgement
- Anxiety
- School Curriculum
- Service awareness

### SAFETY

Young people expressed that safety was a concern for them. Their key concerns were:

- Feeling safe in public areas, public transport and train stations
- New train stations felt safer than old stations
- Feeling safe was dependent on the time of day, age, gender, being alone or in a group, and having a phone and phone credit
- Areas of most concern: Werribee and Hoppers Crossing train stations, Wyndham Vale, Tarneit, Werribee CBD

In Wyndham young people want to see more

- Surveillance cameras, lighting
- PSOs and police, especially around train stations
- Distress signal on buses, an app to log unsafe areas

### EQUALITY

Young people expressed concerns over perceived inequalities.

- Differences in opportunities available to males and females at school and sporting clubs
- Gender diversity was rarely discussed and could be better supported by school, peers
- Opportunities for higher education due to attending a public school, cost, required grades, transport, low self-esteem and lack of family history
- Cultural diversity lead to feeling excluded or prejudiced

They felt strongly about the acceptance of

- Gender diversity
- Cultural diversity
- Marriage equality

### FINANCE

Young people expressed that they felt concerned about the cost of:

- Transport – impacted their ability to travel for work or recreation
- Education, tertiary education
- Recreation – fees, uniforms, transport, etc
- Support services – there was a perception that support services cost money, young people were not aware that many services were free for them

Their suggestions:

- Payment plans, concession prices for young people
- More awareness that some services are free
- Improved public transport, cycling/pedestrian infrastructure – in order to travel at minimal cost

### **PEER JUDGEMENT**

Young people said a major barrier to seeking help when experiencing difficulties or voicing their opinions was being judged by peers. Key concerns were:

- Feeling judged or labelled
- Peer pressure, feeling influenced by friends
- Feeling self-conscious
- The pressure to 'fit in', what is considered 'normal'
- Social media and cyber bullying

The areas that peer judgement most affected were Welfare Issues: Healthy Living, Healthy Relationships, Bullying, Mental Health, Drugs and Alcohol, Homelessness, Positive Self Expression

### **ANXIETY**

Young people often felt anxiety around the pressure to perform at school. They highlighted the importance of parent education to raise awareness and emphasise the importance of a balanced lifestyles and mental health as well as the benefits of young people participating in community or recreational activities.

Other causes of anxiety:

- Being judged by peers
- Feeling unsafe in some areas, on public transport

### **SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

Young people felt that the curriculum in their schools did not adequately address their welfare needs.

Their suggested areas of improvement:

- Sexual health – inadequate or no nurse, lack of open discussion
- Mental health – more strategies, information
- Drug and alcohol education
- Healthy relationships
- Bullying – rights and law, strategies, consequences
- Healthy living and body image
- Pathways – tertiary education, guest speakers
- Diversity – cultural awareness, address stereotypes

### **SERVICE AWARENESS**

Young people are unsure of which support services are available to them. There was a general lack of awareness around support services and programs available in the community, and how to access them with confidence.

Young people are very often unsure about:

- Where to go to get help outside of school
- Which support services are available to them

**AREA-SPECIFIC THEMES**

<b>Werribee</b>	<b>Tarneit</b>	<b>Wyndham Vale</b>	<b>Point Cook</b>
<p>Feels unsafe at night, on public transport, at train stations and around Werribee River</p> <p>Lots of facilities available</p> <p>Cost of recreation</p> <p>Needs: some footpaths, cycling paths, lighting in public areas</p>	<p>Lots of cultural diversity, but some prejudice and conflict</p> <p>Family issues: domestic violence, divorce</p> <p>Cost of recreation</p> <p>Needs: jobs, gym, restaurants, shops, family activities, spaces</p>	<p>Financial issues, drug and alcohol, boredom, hooning</p> <p>Feels unsafe at night and near train station</p> <p>Lots of cultural diversity</p> <p>Needs: jobs, gym, skate park</p>	<p>Public transport can be an issue</p> <p>Lack of time, anxiety, pressure from school and extra-curricular activities. Some parents can be strict.</p> <p>Needs: pool, cinema</p>
<p><b>Lack of awareness of what's happening, services</b></p>			

## HEALTHY LIVING

### **The Issue:**

Young people had a very multifaceted definition of health which encompassed traditional aspects such as diet and exercise, but also demonstrated an understanding of the importance of a balanced lifestyle, relationships and mental health. In group discussions, young people defined “being healthy” as:

- Feeling balanced between work and relaxation, getting enough sleep
- Being physically active, having spaces to do this and not spending too much time indoors
- Eating healthy food, eating in moderation and staying hydrated
- Having positive support from family and friends
- Having a positive mind and attitude, including feeling motivated
- Having healthy relationships and not feeling the need to take drugs
- Having something to do besides school, having various activities

When asked how relationships affected their health, young people explained that they had a direct impact on motivation, and outlined the positive and negative effects:

- Positive effects of relationships: Relationships were able to help them through difficult times, provide support and motivation, prevent isolation, act as a positive influence and role models, encourage the young person to stay healthy, provide love and hope, keep the young person in a good mood and maintain a positive self-image.
- Negative effects of relationships: Relationships could cause stress to the young person, they could cause them to feel sad, depressed, emotional, unmotivated and lonely. Negative relationships could cause or be caused by break ups, peer pressure and bad role models.

### **Available services that young people were aware of:**

The following is a list of places young people felt could have a beneficial impact on their health. These correspond to the wide range of factors identified in their definition of a ‘healthy lifestyle’.

- Wellbeing officer
- School welfare/nurse, School support/counselling
- Support services such as headspace and the Youth Resource Centre
- Careers Counsellor
- Sporting centres and clubs
- Gyms, Pool
- Library, Books, Internet
- Employment companies

### **Barriers to accessing services:**

Young people identified a number of broad factors that acted as barriers to feeling healthy or accessing the relevant services. These included:

- Having a good or bad mindset, and not feeling motivated
- Feeling time poor due to school commitments
- A lack of transport
- Spending too much time with technology or on the internet
- Feeling influenced by friends, fear of judgement and feeling self-conscious
- The weather could play a role in determining the activities a young person could do. They identified that there were facilities such as the gym and indoor sports centres that could be used if weather didn’t permit the use of outdoor spaces.
- The cost of activities could act as a barrier, but the pressure could be reduced if payment plans were available
- Young people expressed concern over the portrayal of health and body image issues, and felt that having body image issues was a barrier for some people to access services or feel healthy

**What needs to happen?**

- Young people suggested that schools should make Healthy Lifestyles part of the curriculum in order to deal with misconceptions and combat the incorrect information being supplied by the media.
- Young people highlighted the importance of parent education to raise awareness and emphasise the importance of a balanced lifestyles and mental health as well as the benefits of young people participating in community or recreational activities.
- Reduced cost for memberships at gyms and sporting clubs for young people
- Young people also identified that to ensure that they lead a healthy lifestyle there were a number of things they could do themselves:
  - Plan your day well ahead if need to get to places
  - Get a job
  - Talk or listen to those who needs help
  - Encourage one another to seek help when need it
  - Seek help when needed from services if you feel like your mental health in at risk

## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

### The Issue:

Young people generally felt that healthy relationships were not spoken about enough and treated as “taboo” subjects, being sensitive, private and confidential. They identified a number of issues that impacted the health of relationships for each of the main people in their lives:

- Parents and children: Young people felt that parents often had high expectations of children, trust issues, and were sometimes hard to talk to. Further issues they identified were having arguments, feeling restricted and having limited freedom, curfews, having a lack of space or privacy, bringing up past issues and hindsight, having financial issues, family violence, and feeling like there is a generational gap between parents and young people. Young people wanted honesty, respect, understanding and to learn from mistakes from parents.
- Teachers and students: Young people often felt that they didn’t want to bother teachers with their specific needs, they couldn’t talk to them, and that there was often an age gap between students and teachers. Young people were aware of the professional limits that had to be maintained between them and teachers.
- Boyfriend and girlfriend: Issues that young people identified as impacting on their boyfriend/girlfriend relationships were communication (or lack thereof), feeling insecure or jealous, feeling pressured or influenced by family and friends, not feeling that they could trust their partners, hearing rumours and breaking up, and feeling pressured by one partner wanting more than the other could give.
- Friendships: Young people identified the issues as being too much drama, having trust issues, being open and honest about friendships, feeling accepted and supported by friends, communication, having personal issues, and living up to the expectations of others including peer pressure, smoking, stealing, and having guilt trips. Young people also identified social media and sexting between friends as a major point of concern.

In regards to sexual health, young people expressed concern over several issues, including:

- Some young people expressed that they felt the sexual education they received at school was inadequate, not prioritised at all by the school, and in some cases there was no nurse accessible at school. They also felt that sexual education was often filtered by teachers and parents.
- Young people were often not aware of the support services available to them, and felt they did not have an adequate knowledge of how to prevent STIs
- Young people felt the sexual education they received often focussed on the negative outcomes more often than the positive outcomes
- Young people felt that sexual education at school was often taught via theory and books, and not enough open discussion was had. They also felt that their sexual education focussed too much on one aspect and missed others, such as mental health
- Fear of judgement by others prevented young people from opening up about any issues or problems they may be facing
- Young people suggested that schools could supply condoms and contraceptive pills, or have guest speakers in to teach various aspects of sexual education

Young people expressed many concerns about sexuality and gender, and specifically identified many factors that impacted on them:

- The idea of what is considered “normal” was often an issue, and some young people felt judged and labelled
- The word “gay” was often used in a negative context
- Young people are concerned about gender identity, how gender roles will affect their lives, and expressed concerns regarding the acceptance of sexual/gender diversity in the community
- Young people highlighted there was gender diversity in schools although it was rarely discussed openly. They felt that gender neutral toilets and uniforms were a way of accommodating gender diverse people.

- Young people expressed concern that gender diverse people would feel the expectation to live up to what others thought, and feel obligated to choose a gender
- Young people felt extremely strongly in support of marriage equality in Australia
- Supportive friendship groups could impact on the way that a gender diverse young person felt

**Available services that young people were aware of:**

- Sexual education was taught in most schools, although young people felt it was often inadequate
- The availability of a school nurse
- Young people said festivals such as the Mardi Gras made them feel comfortable, confident, and supported

**Barriers to accessing services:**

There was a general lack of knowledge from young people about the services available to them that could support them with sexual health and relationship issues.

Barriers that prevented a young person from expressing their gender, sexuality or 'coming out' included:

- Lack of acceptance
- Bullying, stereotypes, having other people make assumptions about them
- Feeling trapped and alone, feeling like they don't belong
- Being viewed or treated differently, and facing the aftermath as a result of coming out
- Health education in schools isn't comprehensive
- Lack of awareness or understanding regarding the issues facing young people as a result of a particular religious or cultural perspective

**What needs to happen?**

Young people outlined a number of ways to things they could do to have healthy relationships with the people in their lives:

- Working to understand each other better, having good communication and listening, being respectful towards one another
- Not sharing personal information or rumours on social media
- Being aware of how to deal with anger in an appropriate way
- Contacting support services that would help with relationships
- Having a good wellbeing centre at school that was accessible and they felt comfortable using
- Being aware of when self-care was needed and taking time to do it
- Young people suggested that education and awareness were keys in addressing the issues around sexuality and gender
- Parent education to help adults come to terms with the issues faced by their children and to equip them to be more understanding and supportive

## BULLYING

### **The Issue:**

Young people identified a number of issues around the topic of bullying and the ways in which it directly and indirectly affected them:

- Bullying could be physical, verbal and occur online. Young people reported that bullying occurs often on public transport, and physical bullying is still happening in schools
- Young people reported that bullying at school, between friendship groups, in the workplace or at home can take a variety of forms such as exclusion, discrimination, racism, sexism, gender bias/diversity, peer pressure, and gossip.
- They identified the underlying causes of bullying as including the hierarchy of friendship groups, jealousy/exclusion in groups, social norms, boredom, power trips, family culture, low self esteem, the ease of labelling people, to cover insecurities within the bully, feeling superior, a lack of understanding of consequences, and anonymity on social media.
- Young people feel the targets of bullying include minorities (cultural people, GLTBI, disabilities), people who are shy and not confident in standing up for themselves, and people who do not conform to the 'norm'
- Bystanders are not getting involved due to fear and consequences of becoming a target
- Young people felt there wasn't enough discussion about bullying in primary school, and as a result they often didn't fully understand the consequences or ramifications until they were addressed again in high school
- Cyber Bullying had its own specific problems such as anonymity with posting comments on social media. As well as social media, young people reported that bullying is happening on anonymous apps and websites and online multiplayer games.
- Young people in high school feel there is a hierarchy of bullying and that people on the bottom will always be bullied. They believed that while the effects of bullying could be minimised, it was unlikely to ever completely stop.
- Young people did not have a clear understanding of the consequences or laws regarding bullying. They felt there was a lack of understanding and empathy towards the real consequences and effects of bullying. They noted that while there was promotion everywhere around the effect of bullying, it seemed to be more cartoon-ish
- Young people were concerned that they often struggled to support friends who were being bullied, as well as finding support for themselves.

### **Available services that young people were aware of:**

When talking about support within the education setting, young people had mixed reactions about accessing support.

- Some young people felt that support such as well-being teams and counsellors were good, while others felt that they shrugged it off.
- Some young people felt that their schools were good in raising awareness and preventing bullying and organising speakers, while others felt that their school lagged behind in this area.
- Young people are aware of cyber bullying support tactics such as reporting, screen-shots or blocking but still wanting to engage in social media.
- Young people were aware also of counselling services through Youth Services, Beyond Blue, and Headspace.

### **Barriers to accessing services:**

- Young people explained that a barrier to standing up for people being bullied was the belief that they would then become a target of the bully.
- Some identified that barriers within schools were lack of support and real consequences and outcomes for people who bullied.



### **What needs to happen?**

Young people outlined a number of suggestions for ideas they would like to see tackle the issue of bullying, although they believed it was an issue that could never be completely eradicated.

- Bullying education material needs to be updated to be more engaging for young people and to better reflect modern times. The young people feel the government needs to change the images represented with bullying campaigns as it is too cartoon-ish and does not accurately representing the 'darkness' and true consequences and effects of bullying. They believed awareness materials should evoke empathy.
- The young people also feel that schools should have guest speakers – not only people who have been bullied, but also people that were bullies but reformed. The young people suggested having greater education around bullying, consequences and support tactics in primary school in order to reduce the likelihood of it occurring in secondary school
- Young people would like to see the bystander effect removed
- Young people suggested that it should not be possible to remain anonymous on social media
- They would like to see more support and programs in schools and workplaces to raise awareness and teach victims to feel empowered.
- Young people need to be informed about the school anti-bullying policy and the laws regarding bullying
- They believed that cultural norms should shift towards a greater acceptance of kindness towards other people and cultures

## MENTAL HEALTH

### The Issue:

- Young people identified the top three most prevalent mental health issues as being anxiety, depression, and stress.
- Young people outlined key areas that caused mental health concerns: Relationship and family problems, anger, bullying and peer pressure, isolation, learning difficulties, suicidal ideation, eating disorders, negative stigma, drug induced illnesses, and mental illnesses such as PTSD, bipolar, schizophrenia, ADD, OCD and brain tumour

### Available services that young people were aware of:

- Young people acknowledged the critical importance of peer support and identified the following characteristics they felt were required: listening, comforting, hanging out, distracting, communicating, being positive, offering advice, being empathetic, not treating them differently or pressuring them, acknowledging and accepting an issue, and assisting them to seek professional help.
- Young people suggested it was important to keep an eye over friends who may be experience mental health issues.
- They identified talking to a parent or guardian for support and advice

### Barriers to accessing services:

One of the key barriers that prevent young people from accessing support services for mental health issues was a lack of awareness about the help that is available. Where they were aware of services, they identified the following issues in regards to accessing them:

- Young people feel that there is a lack of parental or cultural acceptance of mental health issues which translates into a lack of support or consent for the young person to access services.
- There is a perception that confidentiality will not be upheld by mental health support services
- Time and cost are barriers that prevent young people from accessing support services
- Young people may not engage with services because of the negative stigma around mental health which results in a fear of being judged or labelled, confrontation, and lack of acceptance
- Young people experiencing a mental health issue often lack motivation to address the issue.
- Young people experiencing mental health issues may feel shame, denial, insecure, lack confidence and feel uncomfortable to seek help. They also hold concerns over being misdiagnosed.

### What needs to happen?

Young people believed that schools should play a key role in increasing the awareness and understanding of mental health issues.

- Young people said that schools should deliver mental health education in the form of workshops to arm students with strategies of how to help a friend experiencing mental health issues, explain treatment options, and visibly promote other support services that may be available. They could also provide with resources such as helpful books/ information sheets.
- They feel that families and parents require education on the topic of adolescent mental health.
- They believed that schools should offer Student Wellbeing Centres with a chill out room and access to counsellors
- In order to reduce stigma around mental health young and raise awareness, use television ads, posters in schools and around the community, social media promotion, fundraisers, national health dates.
- When asked about which year levels mental health education (Healthy Mind Project) should target, young people said Year 10 (22 votes), Year 9 (11 votes), Year 7 (10 votes), Year 8 (5 votes), Year 11 & 12 (2 votes), and Year 6 (1 vote).

## DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

### The Issue:

Young people identified marijuana, ice (methamphetamine), alcohol and tobacco as the most common substances used in Wyndham. They identified five main reasons for youth substance abuse:

- As a coping or escape mechanism to deal with family, trauma, life situations
- As a result of peer pressure or negative role models
- Intergenerational drug use, coming from a disadvantaged background
- Experimentation
- Medical purposes including mental health and self medicating
- Young people were confused about how to define when drug use becomes problematic, asking “How can you differentiate normal teenage experimentation from a drug problem?”
- Young people recognised the serious consequences of drug and alcohol abuse as impacting on quality of life, future career potential, social life and isolation, psychological and physical health, crime, trust issues, unable to focus on studies, and getting kicked out of home or school.
- Young people recognised the links between alcohol and drug abuse and family violence, mental health and homelessness.
- Young people felt there was a general lack of awareness about support services

### Available services that young people were aware of:

Young people felt they had limited knowledge of the services available to help with drug and alcohol issues.

- Young people outlined several people who are key in helping an individual overcome alcohol and drug issues, including friends, family, GPs, youth workers
- Young people identified a number of support services available to help with alcohol and drug issues, including Quitline, Beyond Blue, YSAS, YODA, Kids Helpline, Whitelion Open Family
- Counselling and other services available at the Youth Resource Centre
- Rehab
- In addition to these support services, young people acknowledged the importance of support such as not judging people, not feeling pressured, being tolerant and understanding.

### Barriers to accessing services:

Where young people were aware of the services available to assist with alcohol and drug abuse problems, they identified the following issues in regards to accessing them:

- Young people are embarrassed and feel anxious about requiring support. Peer pressure and fear of being judged is a serious barrier to seeking help. They are often afraid to speak up.
- In the case of addiction, young people believe that fear of withdrawals and relapses are barriers to seeking help
- Young people perceive cost to be a barrier to accessing help

### What needs to happen?

- Young people would like to see events and campaigns that raise awareness about support services. They expressed that they would like to see these services promoted through workshops, school, community, and the media.
- Better drug education through schools and the media, focusing more on positive messaging rather than the negative effects of drugs, and raising awareness of support services.
- Young people expressed that although there is no safe way to do drugs, it is important for them to educate themselves about the effects of alcohol and drugs, have friends that would look out for them, and using ‘clean’ drugs in a safe environment

## HOMELESSNESS

### The Issue:

The definition of homelessness expressed by young people varied and included not having a home, money, food or support, not feeling safe, living on the streets. They identified that a person was still homeless if they had only temporary accommodation and no permanent home

- Young people identified different types of homelessness, including couch surfing, living on the streets, living in a car, getting kicked out of home, and living in an unsafe environment
- Young people expressed their understanding of the causes of homelessness as including domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, financial issues, unemployment, unstable families, and running away from home.
- Young people identified that homelessness could result in a variety of problems: mental health, depression, loss of employment and opportunities, stigma, discrimination, social isolation, shame, poor health, and being perceived negatively by the community
- Young people commented that homelessness impacted on mental health due to not having access to basic human rights, lack of privacy, feeling anxious about having no place to sleep, trying to find a home, and feeling stressed.
- Young people were concerned that homelessness could be caused by having an abusive family and feeling unsafe at home, leaving home due to family members using alcohol and drugs, and getting evicted from rental properties due to using alcohol and drugs

### Available services that young people were aware of:

Young people had a very limited knowledge of support services available for homeless people, which is reflective of the limited services available in the Wyndham area.

- Support agencies young people were aware of included Whitelion Open Family, Salvation Army, and food vans such as NOSH
- Homeless shelters, youth refuges, foster care, and youth centres
- Donation boxes and volunteer support from the general community
- Young people recognised the support they could provide each other by having friends at risk of being homeless sleep over or couch surf, providing food and helping them to access services

### Barriers to accessing services:

As with the other issues discussed at the Youth Forum, Young people identified the key barrier to accessing homelessness services as having a lack of services and awareness. This was followed by a lack of money, lack of transport and a lack of places to go.

- Young people suggested feeling embarrassed, inferior to others, stereotyped and unmotivated would act as a barrier to seeking help
- They said that having an unsupportive family or experiencing family violence acted as a barrier to getting help

### What needs to happen?

Young people advocated the need for greater awareness and promotion of homelessness services in Wyndham, which they suggested could be promoted in schools or through media advertising.

- In general young people felt there should be a shelter or crisis accommodation options
- They suggested Wyndham have more homelessness support agencies such as the Red Cross, Whitelion, Salvation Army, and other services such as a night bus, cafes, and programs for homeless people.
- In regards to providing support to peers at risk of homelessness, young people suggested not treating them any differently, trying to assist them and assisting them to access services
- In schools young people suggested having referrals for further support, meet & greet days for people who want to offer a place to stay, information packs, and have students take part in community projects to help tackle the issue.

## POSITIVE SELF EXPRESSION

### **The Issue:**

Young people defined self-expression as the way in which they portray themselves, their strengths and weaknesses, their culture, personalities (introverted/extroverted), hobbies, differences and online identity. They commented that the types of events they attend and type of hobbies they participate in play a role in defining how they express themselves.

- Young people identified that they were able to express themselves via social media, but at times they were concerned about being judged by others
- Young people identified that the person they portray online can be different to who they are in real life, and recognised that other people do this as well
- Young people defined the difference between positive and negative self-expression as being influenced by the acceptance of themselves, stigma and social norms, and other people's attitude and judgement.

### **Available services that young people were aware of:**

- Young people identified that there were a number of hobbies available that could give them an outlet for self-expression, including dancing, singing, sports clubs, arts, writing, music, and performance.

### **Barriers to accessing services:**

Young people felt there was a stigma and perception around how people think young people should express themselves:

- Many young people felt that peer pressure, stereotypes, stigma and fear of being judged caused people to make bad decisions or to not get involved in opportunities for fear of judgement.
- Young people were very concerned about cost and transport access to the available services in the local area.

### **What needs to happen?**

- Young people identified the need to educate around the differences between positive and negative self-expression, in order to help reduce stigma, peer pressure, and the fear of being judged by others.

## PATHWAYS

### The Issue:

- Young people felt that the biggest issue facing them in regards to tertiary pathways was knowing what educational steps they needed to take in order to reach their goals. This included choosing between VCAL or VCE, and deciding which subjects to choose.
- Young people expressed concern over the cost of education at a secondary school level.
- The standard of results required to get into courses is very high.
- Some young people did not feel their school provided enough information on what qualifications that certain jobs needed

### Available services that young people were aware of:

Young people identified that schools provide a lot of internal services to support students.

- Most young people felt well supported by career's counsellors and subject selection meetings. Some had career days in which they discussed pathways, which they found extremely helpful.
- Students recognised that teachers made an effort to engage students by structuring lessons to accommodate a range of learning styles as much as is possible.
- Young people were aware of a variety of further education providers including TAFE and university options.

### Barriers to accessing services:

- There was a perception amongst young people that the marks required to get into higher education were very high, they would have trouble finding a place in higher education, and that going to a public school would hinder their ability to get into higher education
- Young people believed the location of higher education, availability of transport and the high cost of courses would act as a barrier to whether they pursued higher education
- Young people were very concerned that school was too expensive and not all families could meet the demand.
- Some young people cited a lack of tertiary education and attendance within their families as a reason why they would be much less inclined to go
- Young people felt that a lack of confidence, low self-esteem, and high entry scores could play a role in stopping them from pursuing their preferred career path
- Stress and anxiety were also cited as barriers for young people in pursuing higher education

### What needs to happen?

While most young people felt well supported by their schools in choosing career pathways, they also felt the support could still be improved.

- Young people suggested schools could feature motivational speakers to demonstrate to students with disadvantaged backgrounds that they can be successful. They also suggested teaching students how to improve confidence.
- Young people suggested that higher education programs, services, and infrastructure in Wyndham should reflect the community's specific interests, needs and goals
- Students would like to see pre-existing tertiary services better promoted in Wyndham
- Young people found open days to unis and TAFE extremely helpful in seeing what they are like and what courses are on offer. They would like to attend more open days and career expos.
- Young people felt that schools should provide students with information on a wider range of educational alternatives to accommodate young people who do not fit into the mainstream education mould. They were concerned that many of these students drop out of education because they don't know where to go.
- Some young people felt their schools provided enough support for TAFE courses and hands-on learning for students who needed it, but wished the school would encourage them more.

## SAFETY IN WYNDHAM

### The Issue:

Safety was identified as a major issue in Wyndham. It was raised extensively in the workshops discussing 'Things to do in' Tarneit, Wyndham Vale and Wyndham.

- Young people felt unsafe on public transport mainly busses and at train stations. They perceived older train stations as feeling less safe than new stations, in particular Werribee and Hoppers Crossing Stations.
- Factors that impacted on how safe young people felt were the time of day (day vs night), being alone, their age and gender, being around strangers, and being in a large group of people.
- When asked to identify areas on a map of Wyndham where they felt most unsafe, young people marked Presidents Park at night, Werribee CBD, Manor Lakes College, Thomas Carr College, and Werribee South at night.
- Young people feel more safe with their phones, and feel more safe the further they get from the Werribee CBD

### Available services that young people were aware of:

- Young people identified they felt safer in the presence of police, PSOs, and security guards.
- Young people feel safer with their phones, as a way of being able to contact friends or family or call for help if needed.

### Barriers to accessing services:

- Not having a phone or phone credit was a barrier for young people to access help if needed.
- A perceived lack of police or PSOs was identified as a barrier that would prevent young people from some activities.

### What needs to happen?

- Young people suggest installing more surveillance cameras and lighting in unsafe areas
- They suggested making the environment around train stations more colourful, inviting and having a greater presence of security guards or PSOs during more hours of the day and night
- Young people would like to see more of a police presence in Wyndham
- Young people suggested having a distress signal on busses
- They also suggested having a Wyndham-specific app so that they can log the areas they don't feel safe in.

## DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

### **The Issue:**

Young people defined diversity as encompassing different cultures and races. They recognised that people needed to accept different cultures in society and learn about them in order to live together cooperatively, respectfully, and feel a sense of unity and connectedness, but there was limited cultural sharing at times.

- Young people admitted that at times they feel shy or feel excluded due to their culture
- The young people identified that in an area as diverse as Wyndham, racism and prejudice is a serious issue which affects everybody in some way. They would like to see more awareness about racism and have a 'zero tolerance for intolerance' approach
- Young people commented that perception of cultural diversity depends on where they are.

### **Available services that young people were aware of:**

- Young people identified that certain cultures were celebrated with specific events and festivals
- Young people identified many local opportunities for people to learn about each other's cultures, but felt that safe participation was important.

### **Barriers to accessing services:**

- Young people commented that stereotypes are often used to make assumptions about others.
- Young people also felt that people in the community held prejudices informed by their own negative experiences.

### **What needs to happen?**

- Young people would like to see a diversity program in schools where they have the opportunity to learn about each other's cultures, help address the impact of stereotypes, generalisations, and personal experiences that cause prejudices and judgments.
- Young people would like to see more celebrations of culture in schools
- More events and festivals to raise further awareness of the reality of diversity in Wyndham, educate people on other cultures, and more promotion of these events



## ACCESSIBILITY

### The Issue:

The Accessibility workshop discussed the accessibility of various services and facilities around Wyndham, due to factors such as culture, age, gender, sexuality, disability, family and financial position.

- Young people felt that there was a lack of language translations for promotional materials
- Young people expressed frustration at the lack of accessible public transport options and the irregularity at which they ran
- They commented on the lack of accessibility to services for gender or sexually diverse people
- Young people felt that there was often gender inequality in schools and sporting clubs, and that there was a stigma and lack of acceptance when young people wanted to play sport traditionally played by the opposite gender (for example, girls playing rugby)
- They outlined the lack of accessibility of wheelchairs at the beach and playgrounds, when other municipalities had already put measures in place to make these areas more accessible

### Available services that young people were aware of:

- Young people were aware that there were many facilities available to them, such as shopping centres, swimming pools, parks and open spaces, sporting ovals, skate parks, cinemas and libraries
- Young people were aware that some information was available in multiple languages
- They were able to access tutoring if required.

### Barriers to accessing services:

- Young people cited school, homework and having limited time as barriers to them accessing some services and facilities.
- Young people expressed concerns over the cost of participating in recreational activities and associated costs (uniforms, registration)
- Other barriers included parents or young people working, family issues, cultural beliefs, language barriers, public transport, open hours of services, feeling unsafe near train stations and bus stops (especially when travelling alone), vandalism, being judged for doing things differently, stereotypes, financial issues, and access to technology or the internet
- Young people identified that people with disabilities often didn't get as many opportunities as others. This included accessing some public areas and the beach.
- Young people commented that not every service has information in different languages, and information should be written in easy English where possible. They recognised that some services (such as GPs) may require an interpreter.
- Young people felt that there was often gender inequality in schools and sporting clubs, and that there was a stigma and lack of acceptance when young people wanted to play sport traditionally played by the opposite gender (for example, girls playing rugby).

### What needs to happen?

- Young people would like to have an increased knowledge of services and facilities available, with promotional material written in simple English and translated in different languages
- They would like to see Wyndham implement wheelchair accessible facilities such as the beach mat from Hobson's Bay Council, and to increase the wheelchair accessibility around playgrounds
- Young people would like to see relevant services and facilities made more affordable
- They would like to feel safe in public spaces and suggested an increase in security, cleaning and good lighting
- Young people would like to see transport be accessible for everyone, regardless of language and disability
- Young people would like to see more equality in schools and the breakdown of gendered stereotypes for sports activities, uniforms

## TRANSPORT

### The Issue:

Young people discussed moving around Wyndham in three areas: Paths and Crossings, feeling safe, and attitudes.

- Young people felt these were a lack of pedestrian crossings in some areas and that there could be more crossings with flashing lights. They identified a number of locations where they would like to see paths and crossings added, which included Heaths Rd and all main roads, Old Geelong Rd near Forsyth Rd, across Derrimut Rd (between Sayers and Leakes Rd), Cottrell St, and around schools. They also identified that school crossing do not operate outside of school hours.
- They felt concerned about unlawful driver behaviour and safety when walking and cycling.
- Young people felt some footpaths were too narrow to accommodate walkers and cyclists passing, and highlighted this was an issues near some bus stops.
- Young people expressed some concerns about footpath maintenance, in particular overhanging vegetation, cracked or uneven paths, and muddy paths along waterways.
- Young people feel less safe when walking at night and would avoid it where possible, in areas where there is poor or faulty lighting, and if friends are acting silly or making unsafe decisions
- Young people said that Wyndham Vale train station did not have enough PSOs, the underpass was often empty and isolated, that they would often avoid taking the train after school and would choose to wait at a friend's house until alternative transport was available
- Young people cited Hoppers Crossing station as being open, having good surveillance, and liked that PSOs had a designated facility to operate from

### Available services that young people were aware of:

Young people identified that they feel safer when

- Walking close to familiar areas such as schools and home
- In areas where there is heavy traffic so they don't feel isolated
- When walking with friends

### Barriers to accessing services:

- Young people commented that the attitudes of parents and guardians influence young people's attitudes, such as their impatience and jaywalking
- Young people said they would generally choose to walk further in order to use a crossing to cross the road safely, however sometimes they did not use the crossings due to laziness, influence of friends, and not knowing that crossings existed nearby .

### What needs to happen?

- Young people would like to see more PSOs patrolling and having a presence at stations, such as Wyndham Vale, increases surveillance cameras, and more lighting at train stations and surrounding areas.
- Young people would also like to see increased seating and street furniture at bus stops and activity areas around Wyndham
- Young people would like to see more bike lanes and shared paths around Wyndham, markers to identify pedestrian crossings nearby, fines for incorrect or unsafe behaviour, announcements for new crossing locations, the addition of lights and reflectors on dangerous crossings to make them more visible to drivers
- In general young people believe walking is a positive activity and would like more attention brought to the benefits, however they would also like information about staying safe when walking. They suggested that newer areas need good paths.

## GRAFFITI

### The Issue:

- Young people identified that litter was often dumped anywhere even though there are bins
- Young people identified that there was a potential for environmental pollution of litter to enter waterways of Werribee River.
- Young people commented that litter and graffiti in parks around Wyndham made the areas less attractive to visit

### Available services that young people were aware of:

- Young people were aware that bins were located in parks around Wyndham, although at times they were not used as often as they should be

### Barriers to accessing services:

- Young people's attitudes towards littering was influenced by peer pressure, the norm within their families, and how they were feeling on the day (eg angry)
- In areas where there was a lack of bins or convenient location of bins, young people were more likely to litter

### What needs to happen?

- Young people felt that there should be more surveillance (police, cameras, council patrols) in public spaces to deter littering and graffiti. They would like a hotline to report people who do the wrong things, or to be made aware of who they could contact if one already exists. They suggested that raising fines for littering and graffiti might act as a deterrent.
- Young people suggested that areas around Wyndham need to have more bins or more convenient locations of bins
- Young people suggested having a designated legal graffiti wall or mural that could be used as an outlet, or running graffiti art classes
- Young people felt that a price increase and restricted access to spray cans may reduce the prevalence of graffiti

## RECREATION

### The Issue:

- Young people identified that while there were many recreational facilities around Wyndham, at times they were unable to be used due to overcrowding, transport and cost issues, or vandalism
- Young people are concerned about the distance, accessibility and cost of some recreational services and activities
- Young people expressed concern over the overcrowding of facilities such as AquaPulse indoor pool, and not being able to use it on days when it is at capacity
- Young people commented on the inadequate or lack of tennis facilities in Werribee, around Wyndham Central College, Hoppers Crossing (Mossfiel Reserve) Presidents Park and Werribee Racecourse

### Available services that young people were aware of:

- Young people commented that the recreational facilities in Point Cook were very good

### Barriers to accessing services:

- Young people identified that while there were many recreational facilities around Wyndham, at times they were unable to be used due to overcrowding, transport and cost issues, or vandalism

### What needs to happen?

- Young people would like to see open and public spaces around Wyndham that can accommodate summer and winter events and activities
- Young people would like to have events at the outdoor pool and outdoor cinemas during summer
- Young people expressed the need for more pool facilities, particularly in Point Cook
- When asked about a wish list of recreational facilities for Wyndham, young people suggested martial arts, girls soccer, girls rugby, indoor archery, beach volley ball, and badminton
- Young people expressed the need for public transport and bus routes to make recreational facilities accessible

## THINGS TO DO IN WYNDHAM

### The Issue:

- Young people expressed that they perceived there to be a lack of activities and events targeted at young people. They were also critical of the retail offer “only shopping to do in Werribee and nothing for us”
- Young people perceived some areas of Wyndham to be unsafe, particularly at night
- Young people were concerned about safety in the streets, on public transport, at Werribee Train Station, and along the Werribee River.
- Young people felt that some public spaces in Wyndham did not accurately reflect their needs. A general desire to improve the amenity was expressed, particularly with the Station and Werribee River.
- There was a sense that nothing was happening in Werribee, and that if something was happening that they didn’t know about it.
- These perceptions generally discouraged young people to use and engage with the Werribee City Centre, they also mentioned a lack of interest in the Werribee City Centre.

### Available services that young people were aware of:

- Young people identified a wide range of things to do in Wyndham, which covered six key areas:
  - Sporting facilities and clubs
  - Community events such as Youth Services activity nights, cultural festivals
  - Public facilities such as libraries, cinemas, bowling, shopping centres, restaurants
  - Outdoor and open space facilities such as skate parks, BMX track, playgrounds, fishing
  - Support services such as headspace, homework programs
  - Tourist attractions such as the Werribee Zoo and Mansion
- Young people liked the Station area and laneways have improved. They generally agreed that Werribee had improved over the last few years.
- The main areas young people were aware of were Station Place and laneways, Werribee River, Kelly Park and the main street. There was not much interest in Wedge Street Piazza.
- Young people said they use the Werribee River path to cycle along and stop for picnics, and as a short cut from Station to Hungry Jacks.

### Barriers to accessing services:

- Young people perceived some areas of Werribee to be unsafe, particularly at night due to poor lighting. They believed Werribee River felt isolated, unsafe and was a bad place to be alone.
- Young people identified a lack of footpaths and insufficient cycling infrastructure as a key barrier which limits access to facilities, services, or events.
- Young people felt that many of the activities which they would like to engage in were outside of their price range.

### What needs to happen?

- Young people would like to see more (or be made more aware of) community events and facilities such as concerts, markets, screenings, festivals, cultural events, drive-in cinemas, family attractions, BBQs, and picnic spots
- Young people would like to see more sporting facilities, in particular soccer and football grounds, LARP combat sports, basketball courts,
- Around Werribee River, young people would like to see more lighting, bike lanes, chairs, BBQs, and have a cleaner and less polluted environment
- To improve young people’s access the recreation services, the cycling/pedestrian infrastructure needs to be improved, Better public transport coverage is required to help them get to events/programs/services and bus services which run until later at night so they can get home.
- Improved street lighting so people feel safe to walk at night.

## THINGS TO DO IN POINT COOK

### The Issue:

- Some of the main issues focused on public transport in the area. Some young people noted that they had to catch public transport to Williams Landing to get anywhere else.
- Another main issue was the lack of time young people had to do things in Point Cook given the pressure of school, homework and extra-curricular activities.
- A lack of awareness of activities happening in Point Cook was identified and young people had a lack of knowledge about Youth Services in Point Cook and the programs, events and support services available to them. Young people identified that it would help if Youth workers were going to schools to promote services.
- Young people commented on some of the 'unclean' areas in Point Cook. They identified that the skate park in Point Cook, basketball area in the Town Centre and the Wetlands were dirty, and had alcohol bottles and other rubbish around, making them feel uncomfortable and unsafe in accessing these spaces.
- As young people are not aware of programs or struggle with public transport as a barrier often they prefer to spend time at home hanging out or playing consoles. They identified that a main issue was boredom.
- They identified that parents can be very strict and would like to know all the details about what programs they were accessing, and would hesitate to give them permission to go to the skate park, or other parks due to the empty alcohol bottles, graffiti and lack of safety in these areas.

### Available services that young people were aware of:

- Young people identified that the Town Centre was available for shopping and had the library.
- When asked about the library they specified books and more importantly 'free wifi', but were not aware of programs the library run.
- They spoke a lot about extra-curricular activities they were engaged in such as sporting clubs and dance.
- They identified that public parks were nice to spend time in.

### Barriers to accessing services:

- There was a lack of awareness about services, events and support in the Point Cook area
- Young people commented that public transport is slow, and bus routes don't match. Often they had to go to Williams Landing or Sanctuary Lakes first to get anywhere else.
- Young people expressed concerns about pressure from schools and parents with homework and extra-curricular activities
- Public safety and litter was an issue at skate parks and open spaces

### What needs to happen?

- Wyndham Youth Services should be promoting within schools and raising awareness about the services available. Young people would like to see youth workers engaging with students within their schools.
- Young people felt there were some public facilities missing in the Point Cook area, such as a pool and cinema

## THINGS TO DO IN TARNEIT

### The Issue:

- Young people identified that within the Tarneit area there was prejudice and conflict between people who are different culturally, religious or disabled. Young people felt the judgement of other people was a negative behaviour
- Young people identified that some areas in Tarneit feel unsafe due to harassment , and believed there were gangs in the area
- They also cited graffiti and bullying as prevalent issues in the Tarneit area
- Young people felt that family issues, domestic violence, and divorce were issues in the area
- They felt there were not enough shops in the area, and that activities and recreation were expensive. Due to the cost of services and activities, young people said they sometimes felt left out or that their families were under financial strain.
- They felt there was a lack of awareness of events and services that were happening for families
- Young people expressed concerns and intimidation over using public transport due to crime and gangs
- There were issues of bullying at schools which made students feel unmotivated to attend, and more likely to want to leave school.

### What needs to happen?

- When asked what changes they would make if they could do anything, young people suggested creating a safe space within Tarneit to socialise
- They would also like to see in the area more gyms, job opportunities, sports and facilities, restaurants, activities for families
- Young people would like the opportunity to learn more about cultures
- Young people expressed the would like to see more open and natural spaces around Tarneit
- Young people identified local council, volunteers, youth committees, and youth-led projects as entities that had the potential to help create the community they wanted to see and live in

## THINGS TO DO IN WYNDHAM VALE

### The Issue:

- Young people identified that financial stress in the Wyndham Vale area was a cause of drug and alcohol issues, single parent households, neglect, and had an impact on young people at school
- Young people identified that boredom was a cause of negative behaviour
- They did not feel safe walking in the area at night, or around the train station. Young people commented that some people posted crimes on social media and were not getting caught.
- Young people expressed concerns that litter and dumping rubbish (in particular near the river) made them feel upset and that some people in the community did not respect the environment
- They felt hooning was a major issue and made them feel unsafe. Hooning in the area happened at night and would sometimes keep them awake.
- Young people felt drug use was prevalent in the area, including drug use around school areas and underage drug use
- Young people expressed concerns over graffiti, vandalism to bus stops including smashed glass that took a long time to be repaired
- Young people felt that there was a general lack of awareness in the area about cultural differences
- Young people also commented on a lack of gender equality, which meant there were limited opportunities for some young people

### Available services that young people were aware of:

- Young people identified the Youth Resource Centre (Hoppers Crossing) and Wyndham Vale Community Learning Centre as being places where they could access services and support

### Barriers to accessing services:

- Young people felt that bullying was a barrier to accessing services and programs in the area
- They felt that some programs and services needed to be more culturally appropriate
- Peers and strangers were identified as sometimes having negative influences on the actions of young people
- Financial Stress was a barrier to young people accessing services and activities

### What needs to happen?

- In the Wyndham Vale area young people would like to see an increased presence of police patrolling at night
- Young people would like to see more cultural awareness and acceptance within the community, where differences are recognised and people feel equal and safe
- Young people felt there needed to be stricter rules and consequences around drug use, and more awareness of support available and where to get help
- They would like to see greater gender equality in sports
- They suggested holding a Clean-Up Day in schools
- They would like to see more public seating in public places and around bus stops
- Young people suggested some public facilities were missing such as a gym and skate park
- They would like to see more job opportunities within the Wyndham Vale area
- Young people would like to see sporting clubs in the area receive more funding and for schools to create more sporting opportunities
- They would like to see more community events and have more awareness about what is happening in the community



## LIBRARIES

### The Issue:

- Very often the first perception young people have of the library is that it is a boring place.
- They also perceived the library as a place for studying and activities for people of all ages
- There was a perception that sometimes the colours of furniture and walls was childish, the only games available to borrow or play are PG rated
- There were many events and programs currently already being run by libraries that young people not aware of. They suggested the best way to reach them with promotional material was using hard copy fliers distributed through schools, however teachers often did not pass these on to students.
- Although young people conceded that social media was the best way to contact them, they said they would be unlikely to follow the library on Facebook or Instagram.

### Available services that young people were aware of:

- Young people use the library as a quiet place to study, meet with friends to study, and use various resources including book rentals and the internet

### Barriers to accessing services:

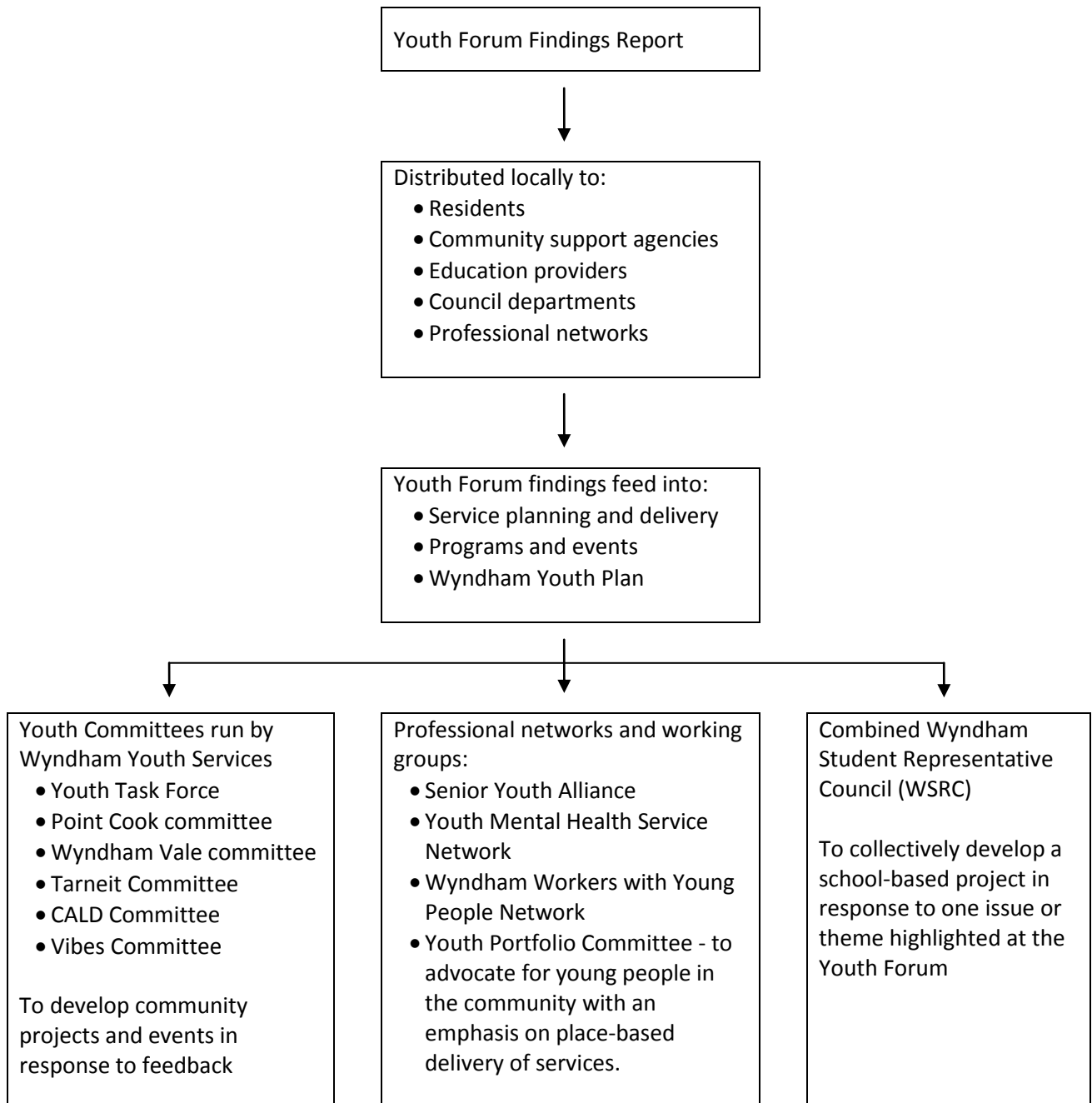
- A lack of awareness about the programs, services and events that the library provides
- Teachers not passing on fliers to students
- Young people admitted they were unlikely to follow the library on social media
- Young people who are non-library users have a perception that the library is a boring place filled with books

### What needs to happen?

- Young people would like to see updated computer facilities at the library, minimalist decor (in the Werribee Library), and have places to charge their devices and laptops
- Young people expressed they would like to use group study spaces, and have study days
- They would like to have a hang out space to watch movies of their choosing, have live music at the library, and dedicated spaces for teenagers
- Libraries need to find ways to communicate and market their services to young people to raise awareness, while they send hard copy fliers to schools they are rarely passed to students
- The Werribee Library branch needs a teen-only study space and some upgrading

## HOW THE FINDINGS WILL BE USED

The information and feedback recorded from the workshops at the Youth Forum resulted in a wealth of feedback and data which will be collated, distributed and used in accordance with the following process:



A copy of the Findings Report and additional information is available on the Wyndham Youth Services website at [http://youth.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/forum\\_2016](http://youth.wyndham.vic.gov.au/services/forum_2016)

For more information regarding the Youth Forum or findings, please contact Ruth Mihelcic, Youth Participation and Leadership Officer at Wyndham Youth Services on (03) 8734 1355 or email [ruth.mihelcic@wyndham.vic.gov.au](mailto:ruth.mihelcic@wyndham.vic.gov.au)