

2017 YOUTH CONSULTATION STRATEGY

# YOUTH IPAD SURVEY REPORT

AUGUST 2017



GLEN EIRA  
CITY COUNCIL

**YOUTH  
SERVICES**  

Bentleigh Bentleigh East Brighton East Carnegie Caulfield Elsternwick  
Gardenvale Glen Huntly McKinnon Murrumbeena Ormond St Kilda East

# CONTENTS

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3**

INTRODUCTION 4

YOUTH IPAD SURVEYS 4

## **RESULTS AND OUTCOMES 8**

SCHOOL STRESS 10

PRESSURE FROM PARENTS 10

ANXIETY 11

BODY IMAGE, BULLYING,  
PEER PRESSURE AND LONELINESS 11

SEEKING HELP 12

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS 12

IMPROVING GLEN EIRA 14

## **CONCLUSION 15**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the key findings from the *Youth iPad Survey* conducted by Glen Eira City Council Youth Services between February and March 2017.

A total of **304** young people aged between 10 to 25 participated in the consultations and gave their opinions on youth issues, support, social connection and aspirations.

The following key areas were highlighted by young people in the consultations.



The top challenges personally faced by young people were:

- **school stress;**
- **pressure from parents; and**
- **anxiety.**

**50%**

of young people won't seek help around these issues.

**Instagram** is the new social media platform of choice for young people.



Almost **70%**

of young people still have connections with a sporting or social clubs in our community.

**50%**

of respondents had felt unsafe in public places and train stations late at night.



Given the money, most young people would build more spaces for young people to recreate or provide further support for the disadvantaged in our community.

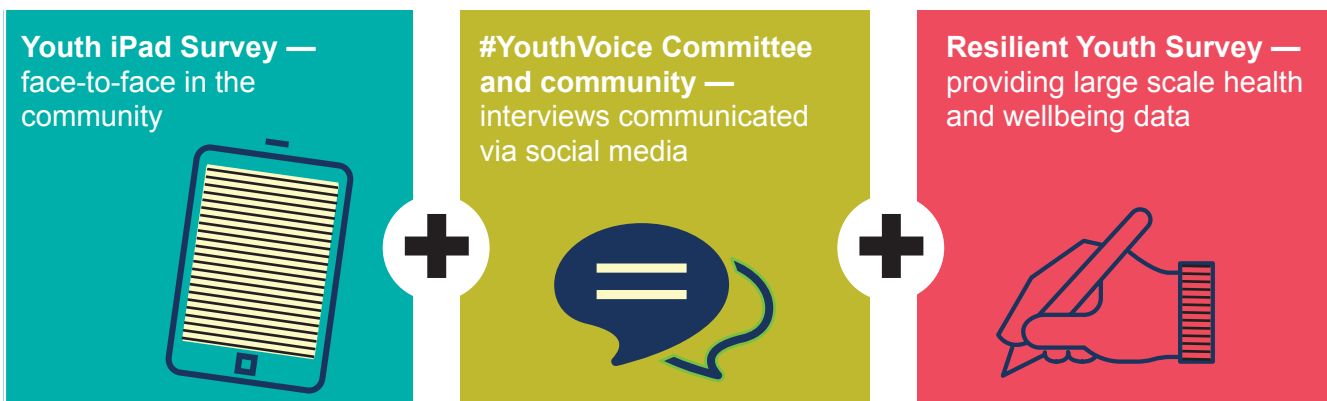
# INTRODUCTION

Glen Eira City Councils Youth Services provides programs, information and support to young people and their families, who live, work and socialise in the City of Glen Eira.

Youth Services has, at its core, a model of youth participation that supports youth engagement. Young people are involved in many areas of the organisation and its activities, including service development, social media, community awareness, advocacy, youth events and more.

To ensure Council is able to provide targeted services that are responsive to the ever-changing needs of young people, Youth Services decided to launch its *2017 Youth Consultation Strategy*.

The *2017 Youth Consultation Strategy* involves three key youth engagement activities:



These three youth engagement activities will combine to form one of the largest youth consultations projects conducted by Council and will provide comprehensive qualitative and quantitative data on youth issues and wellbeing.

## YOUTH IPAD SURVEYS

### Methodology

Glen Eira Youth Services used a qualitative methodological approach to youth consultations. Young people within the City of Glen Eira were asked to complete an online survey of 16 questions. The survey was made available on iPads, youth worker mobile phones and as a link on Glen Eira Youth Services' instagram account.

During the consultations, youth workers canvassed areas with a high traffic of young people, including local train stations; local establishments where young people spend time after school; walkways near schools; and from participants within our own community programs. These consultations were carried out over a four week period during term one — February to March 2017.

## Participants

A total of **304** young people aged between 10 to 25, who have a significant connection to the City of Glen Eira, participated in the consultations. This significant connection includes living, studying, working or socialising in Glen Eira.

## Demographic information

There were 267 respondents (87.8%) aged between 12 to 17 who are currently the largest users of Council's Youth Services and programs. Most consultations took place in the hour after school finished from 3.15pm to 4.15pm and in areas where a high traffic of students would either walk through or be waiting for public transport.

When asking for gender, it was important for the consultation to include a broader classification of gender terms for participants to identify with.

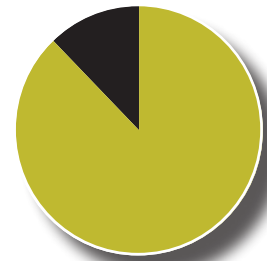
From those who took part in the consultation, 45 per cent identified as female and 51 per cent identified as male. Importantly four per cent of all respondents identified themselves as trans, intersex, gender fluid or non-conforming. Having a diverse range of gender options helps us create a more accurate representation of the young people who live in Glen Eira.

There were quite a few young people who were very pleased to see these other options and one participant's feedback recommended that all Council forms should include a broader range of gender classifications.

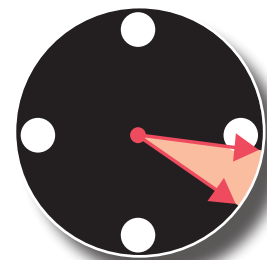
The consultations were conducted near schools and public transport explaining the larger percentage (88.5%) of young people identifying themselves as living or studying in the City of Glen Eira. The lower percentage (1%) of those identifying as working in Glen Eira can be attributed to the lower percentage (4%) of respondents aged 19 to 25 who participated in the survey and to the areas and time consultations took place.

## Analysis

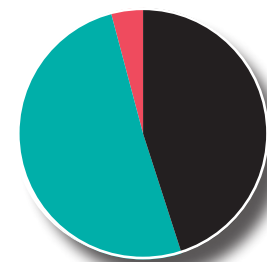
By using the online survey tool — Survey Monkey — the results were collected and collated electronically. The data report was then generated by Glen Eira Youth Services and an analysis of the key themes and outcomes was explored in consultation with Council's Youth Leadership Team and *YouthVoice* committee.



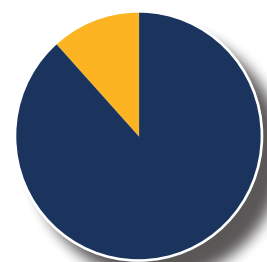
87.8 PER CENT OF RESPONDENTS WERE AGED BETWEEN 12-17



MOST CONSULTATIONS HAPPENED IN THE HOUR AFTER SCHOOL FROM 3.15PM-4.15PM



RESPONDENTS IDENTIFIED AS MALE — 51 PER CENT FEMALE — 45 PER CENT TRANS, INTERSEX, GENDER FLUID OR NON-CONFORMING — FOUR PER CENT



88.5 PER CENT OF RESPONDENTS LIVED OR STUDIED IN GLEN EIRA



# RESULTS AND OUTCOMES



## RESULTS AND OUTCOMES

Participants were given a list of common challenges, which were developed by our youth workers from their experience in dealing with young people. In addition to this, we included an 'other' option for young people to specify any challenges that hadn't been included.

Dominant themes that have been identified throughout this consultation include school stress (69.5 %); pressure from parents (26.6%); anxiety (25.3%); and body image (21.1%), bullying (18%), peer pressure (14.2%), and loneliness (15.6%).

Other themes identified to a lesser degree, included depression; relationship issues; family violence; and drugs and alcohol.

For a full list of results, see Table 1 on page 9.

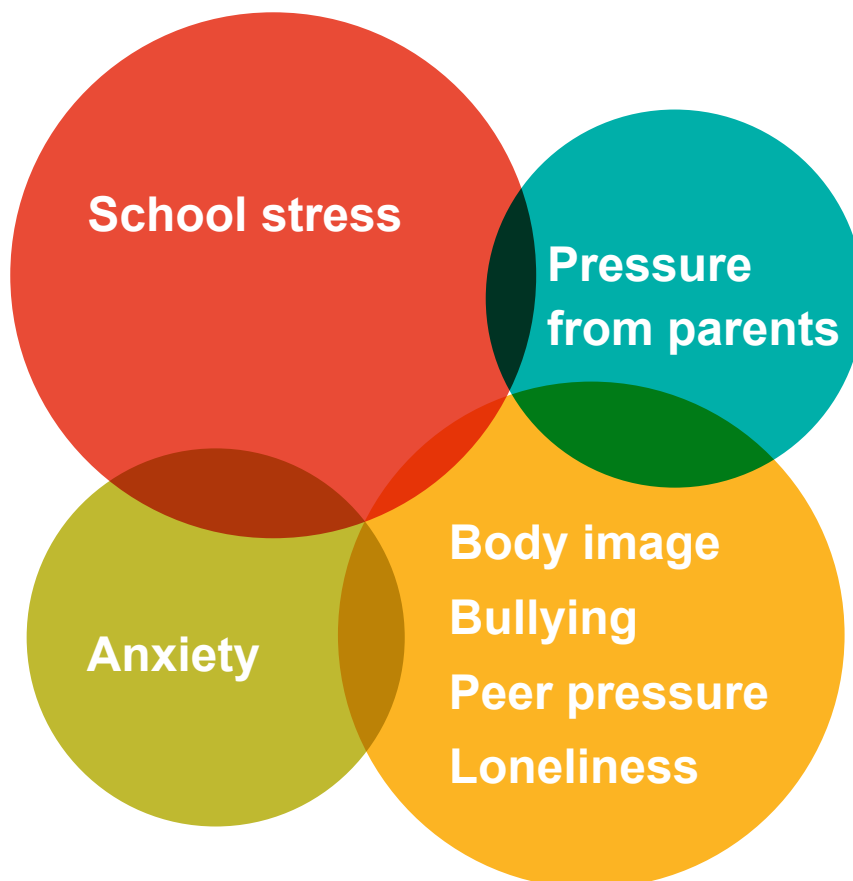
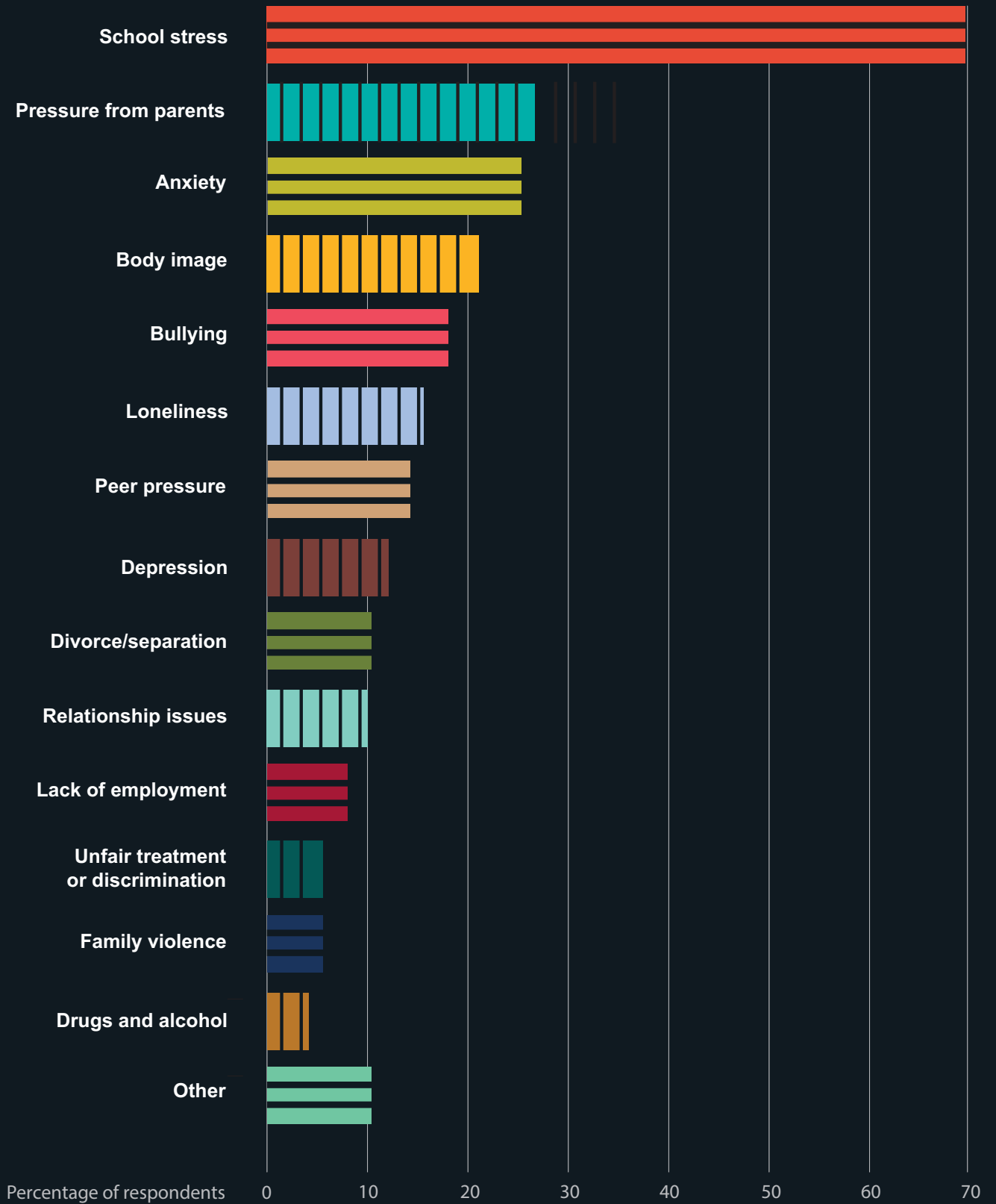




Table 1: What are the biggest challenges you have personally faced as a young person?



Described below are the key themes that have been identified as most challenging for young people by young people.

## School stress

During the consultations, 69.5 per cent of young people (201 respondents) identified school stress as a key challenge they have personally faced. Though they understood that education was very important, they agreed that there is currently far too much pressure placed on them to perform. One of the main pressures was linked to achieving a high Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR) score and being accepted into top-tier universities. This pressure can create an environment that promotes stress.

Pressure to perform not only increases the likelihood of drop-outs but can also impact a young person’s mental health, and if a high score is not achieved, the young person may not see themselves as capable and this in turn impacts their self-worth and self-confidence <sup>1</sup>.



OF RESPONDENTS IDENTIFIED SCHOOL STRESS AS A KEY CHALLENGE THAT THEY HAVE PERSONALLY FACED

## Pressure from parents

Getting in to university is much harder today than in previous generations. As a result, parents tend to increase the amount of academic pressure they place on their children and set high expectations. This intense pressure around school and performance can backfire, leading to social, emotional and physical stress — 26.7 per cent of young people (77 respondents) identified this as their biggest challenge they face.

Unfortunately, many young people can collapse under parental pressure. Sleep deprivation, anxiety, eating disorders, excessive worrying, cheating, burnout, loss of interest in hobbies or withdrawing from friends and family can all be consequences of excess pressure. Though parents believe they are being supportive, this extremely involved parenting style can undermine their child’s resilience and sense of self, resulting in increased levels of stress and anxiety.



OF RESPONDENTS CITE INTENSE PRESSURE AROUND THEIR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AS A CHALLENGE

## Anxiety

With school stress and pressure from parents identified as the leading challenges young people face, there is no surprise that anxiety has also been identified with 25.3 per cent of young people (73 respondents) stating that they feel anxious most days.

The effect of anxiety on academic performance is not always obvious however, research suggests that those suffering from anxiety find it harder to avoid distractions and take more time with allocated tasks than their less anxious peers <sup>2</sup>.

Not only is this anxiety coming from pressure at school, academic pressure has also started to come from home — parents' expectations on academic performance has generated a cohort of young people who are in a constant state of anxiety around their performance at school. Extreme or prolonged levels of anxiety can manifest into a variety of symptoms, including school refusal, social anxiety and a sudden decrease in confidence about their own abilities.



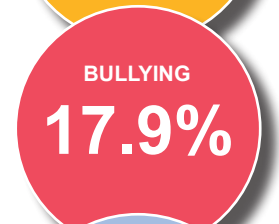
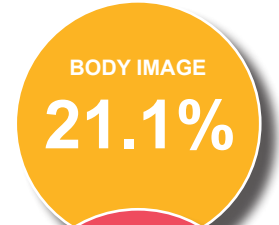
OF RESPONDENTS  
FELT ANXIOUS  
MOST DAYS

## Body image, bullying, peer pressure and loneliness

While they didn't come up in the top three responses, our consultation also highlighted that body image, bullying, peer pressure and loneliness were still significant challenges facing young people today.

Low self-esteem can be particularly hard for young people as it's a time when they're exposed to new life events and forming new friendships and relationships. How a person feels about themselves is a result of their direct experiences and their resilience in dealing with difficult situations. With the heightened pressure from school and parents around performance and achieving outcomes, young people are more susceptible to negative feelings about their own self-worth and body image.

All these factors can combine to negatively impact a young person's mental health as well as prevent the confidence needed to seek help, further isolating the young person from much needed support networks.

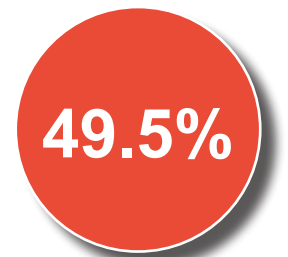


## Seeking help

While young people were often aware of the issues affecting their school and home lives, they were not always aware of what to do about them.

Importantly, we also asked young people if they have ever sought help around any of these issues, 49.5 per cent (143 respondents) told us they have never spoken to a parent, teacher or youth agency about these challenges with most stating that they either did not feel it was 'bad enough' to seek help, that they felt like they can handle it on their own and that they did not feel comfortable enough.

This is a critical factor towards youth mental health and why removing the stigma around asking for help is so important in dealing with small issues before they become bigger.



OF RESPONDENTS  
HAVE NEVER SPOKEN  
TO A PARENT,  
TEACHER OR YOUTH  
AGENCY ABOUT THE  
ISSUES AFFECTING  
THEIR SCHOOL AND  
HOME LIVES

## Social connections

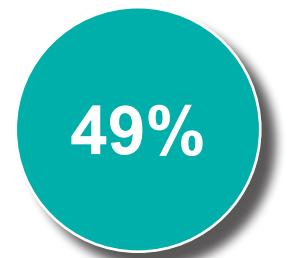
Social media remains an extremely important part of how young people connect with one another on a daily basis.

Instagram was identified as the most popular social media platform for young people. Images are uploaded and can be manipulated with filters, allowing users to create an aesthetically pleasing account. The followers and following tally can also give a sense of popularity with many young people obsessing over how many 'likes' they receive once an image or video has been uploaded.

Although most young people identified as having in excess of 250 followers on their social media platforms, trust was another issue altogether. Most respondents reported that they would only share their deepest secret with three or less of their closest friends. The reliance of affirmation and a sense of belonging from their online communities, can open a young person up to become more vulnerable to peer pressure, bullying, anxiety and loneliness — especially when there are no experiences of real connections with those around them.

Table 2 shows Instagram was identified as the social media platform of choice with 49 per cent (140 respondents) choosing this over Facebook 22.7 per cent (65 respondents) and Snapchat 11.2 per cent (32 respondents).

Table 3 shows more than half of respondents are involved with a sporting club outside of school, 53.1 per cent (152 respondents). It was surprising to see that more than 30.8 per cent (88 respondents) answered that they were not a part of any social or sporting groups outside of school. Strong and diverse social networks



OF RESPONDENTS  
IDENTIFIED  
INSTAGRAM AS  
THEIR SOCIAL MEDIA  
PLATFORM OF CHOICE



OF RESPONDENTS  
ANSWERED THAT  
THEY WERE NOT PART  
OF ANY SOCIAL OR  
SPORTING GROUPS  
OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

Table 2: What is your social media platform of choice?

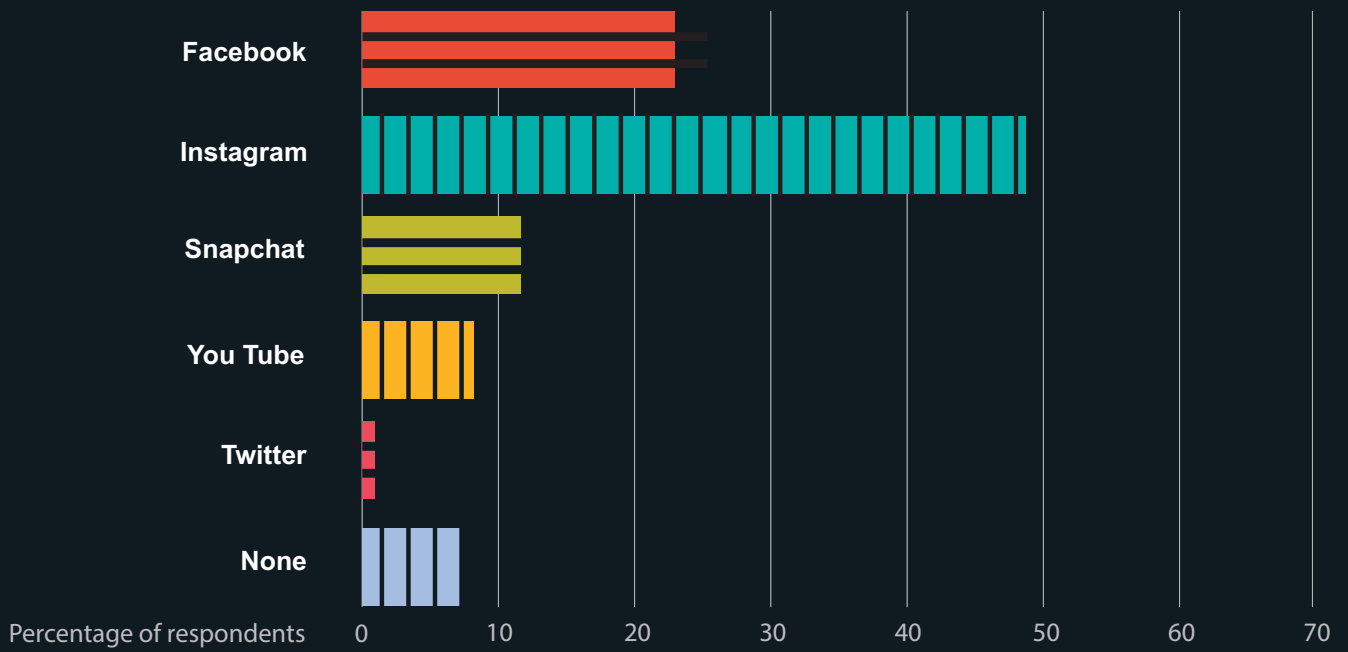
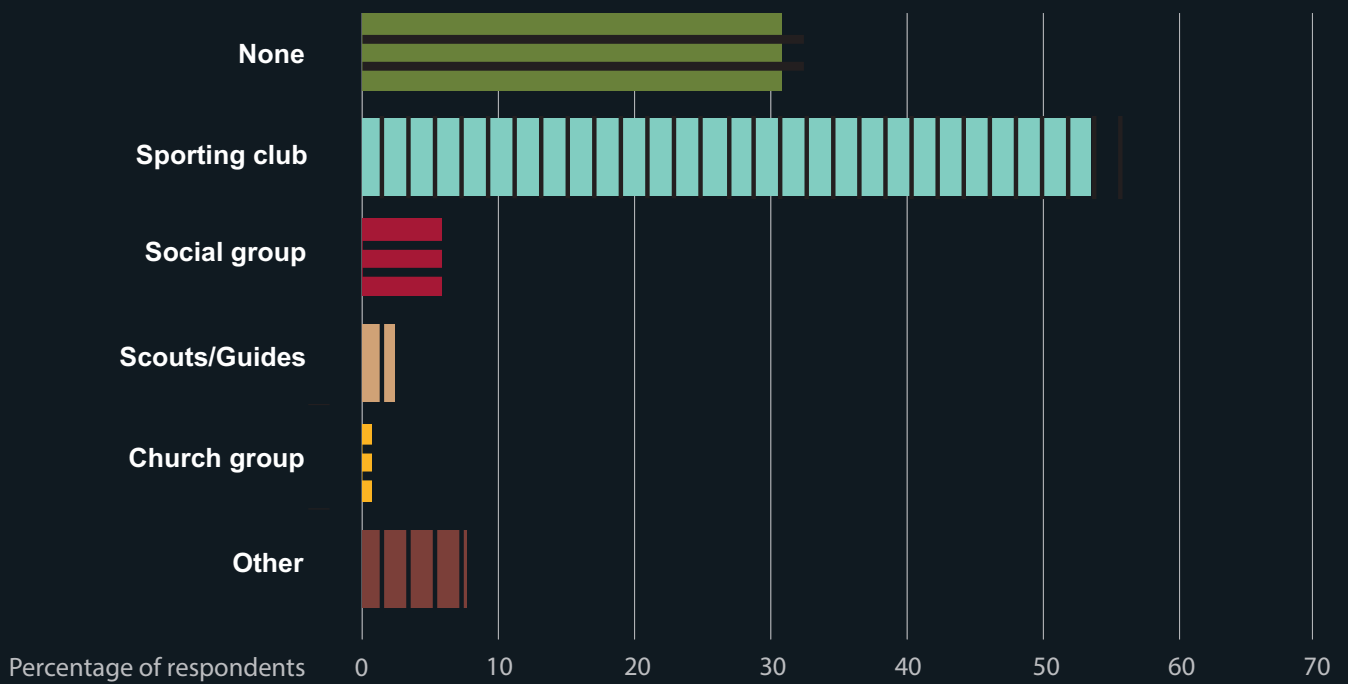


Table 3: Are you a part of any social or sporting groups outside of school?



are a key factor to youth resilience and young people who have no connections outside of school are far more vulnerable to the challenges they face.

Encouraging young people to build their physical social networks and develop a strong sense of community is important as social media can provide them with a false sense of their support network.

## Improving Glen Eira

As part of the survey, young people were asked what they would do if they were given \$10 million dollars to improve the City of Glen Eira. Most young people reported that they would spend the money on creating more recreational spaces specifically for young people, such as skate parks, outdoor basketball centres, sporting equipment upgrades and studio arts facilities.

Also important to note is that many young people would like to do more for their community especially in helping the homeless, improving education infrastructure and by creating more community events.

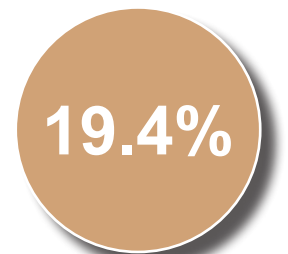
Young people are some of the biggest users of public transport in Glen Eira and are reliant on trains and buses most days. Almost 65 per cent of young people rated public transport in Glen Eira four out of five stars or higher, commenting that ensuring buses are on time would be the only way to improve it.

Apart from delays, relying on public transport can often present other issues with young people with 19.4 per cent (55 respondents) claiming they did not feel safe in certain public places and train stations late at night in Glen Eira.

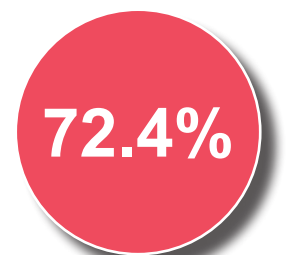
Most young people however, 72.4 per cent (205 respondents), still identified that they had never felt unsafe in Glen Eira.



OF RESPONDENTS IF GIVEN \$10 MILLION DOLLARS WOULD SPEND THE MONEY ON CREATING MORE SPACES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO RECREATE ...



OF RESPONDENTS DID NOT FEEL SAFE IN CERTAIN PLACES AND TRAIN STATIONS LATE AT NIGHT



OF RESPONDENTS HAVE NEVER FELT UNSAFE IN GLEN EIRA

## CONCLUSION

Results from the Youth iPad Survey have given us insight into what challenges young people are facing, allowing Council to target its support services and engagement to their needs. These results will also be used to form part of the 2017 Youth Consultation Strategy.

On average, young people in Glen Eira are under a lot of stress, including school and parental, and have feelings of anxiety associated with school performance. While both parents and schools are somewhat aware of this, the scale to which this pressure is affecting young people still needs to be addressed by our community.

From a social media perspective, Instagram is the new platform of choice for young people. Expanding Council's use of Instagram is something to be considered across all departments so that young people do not miss out on potential engagement and recreation opportunities.

While it is encouraging to see that around 70 per cent of young people are involved with a social or sporting group outside of school, it's important that Council still provides opportunities that allow socially isolated or disengaged young people to connect with their community and build their social support network.

## REFERENCES

1. headspace Youth Consultations: Report for the Office of Youth, October 2015:6.
2. Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). (2009, June 26). Anxiety's Hidden Cost In Academic Performance. ScienceDaily. Retrieved June 7, 2017 from [www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/06/090623090713.htm](http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/06/090623090713.htm)

