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CITY COUNCIL

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CONNECTING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE





Glen Eira City Council acknowledges the Boon Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional landowners and the historical and contemporary custodians of the land on which the City of Glen Eira and surrounding municipalities are located.

We acknowledge and pay tribute to their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.

CONNECTING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE STRATEGY 2018–2021

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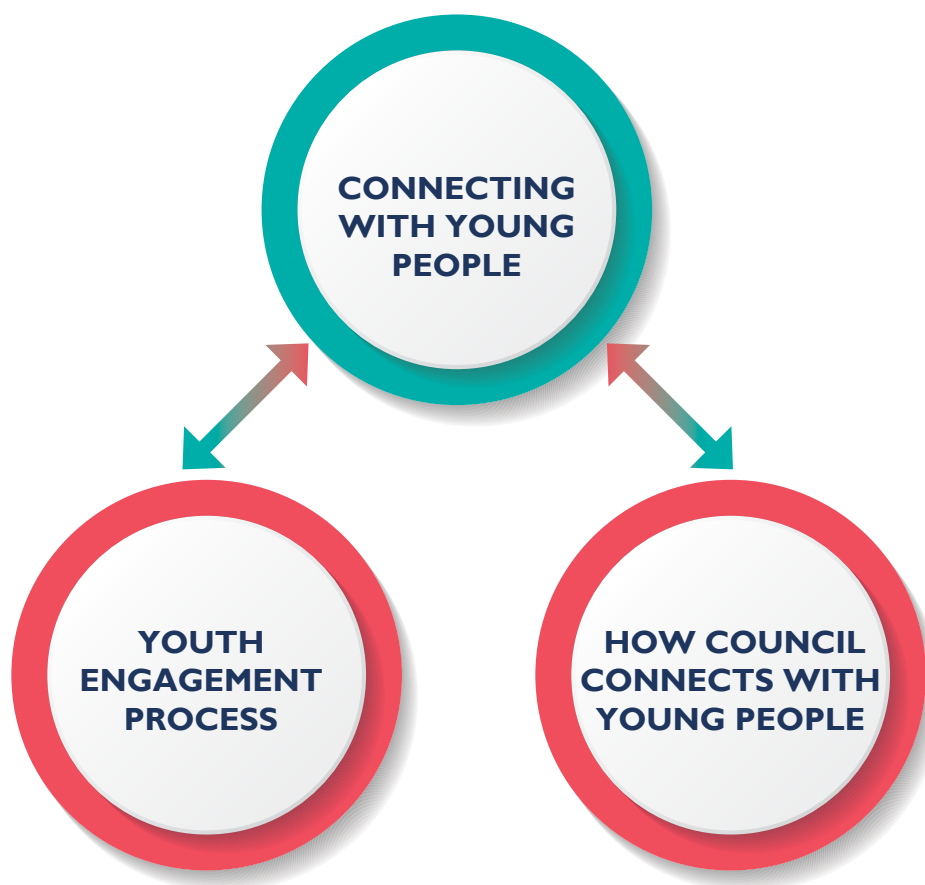
INTRODUCTION

Glen Eira City Council's commitment to improved community engagement is reflected in the *Council and Community Plan 2017–2021* that aims for a transparent and accountable Council that engages its residents in decision-making. Establishing a *Connecting With Young People Strategy* is also a key action of the *Glen Eira Council and Community Plan 2017–21*.

Data from the *2016 ABS Census* shows that young people aged 10 to 25 years make up a significant part (around 19 per cent) of the total resident population of Glen Eira. Young people are valuable members of our community and Council believes it has a responsibility to ensure that they have an active role in the decisions, strategies and projects that influence their lives.

The aim of this *Strategy* is to empower young people and Council to work together to improve how Council connects with young people, so that young people can actively shape their community and their future.

This *Strategy* is structured into two parts. Firstly, it provides guidance to the organisation about how to improve Council's youth engagement processes and secondly sets out initiatives undertaken by the Council Youth Services team to connect with young people.





PURPOSE

The purpose of this strategy is to:

- strengthen relationships between Council and young people aged 10 to 25 by creating open and honest lines of communication;
- increase the engagement of young people in Council activities and encourage a greater sense of ownership over Council projects, strategies and decisions;
- empower young people to guide Council on what tools, techniques and technology best enable effective consultation; and
- establish new ways for young people to communicate their needs, issues and ideas for the City of Glen Eira.

WHY CONNECTING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE IS IMPORTANT

It is important to consult and engage with young people for the following reasons:

- Young people deserve the right to represent their own interests. Effective youth consultation empowers young people to actively shape the future of their City.
- Young people possess unique ideas and live experiences that may differ greatly to adults.
- Youth engagement creates important partnerships between Council and young people where both parties can better understand and learn from each other.
- It ensures that services, opportunities, and supports are targeted to the specific needs identified by the young people themselves.

IMPROVING HOW COUNCIL CONNECTS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Council's Youth Services ran three workshops with 28 young people from their youth representative committees to get their input on how Council could better connect with young people.

Don't just 'post' on social media — you need to engage with young people to get buy in.

Keep it simple. Use 'quick polls' to get votes on new ideas.

Consider running some youth specific information sessions first so we can better understand what's involved.

Make sure it's actually relevant to young people. If it's not, then we won't be interested.

Create youth friendly spaces to promote consultations.

We often don't understand how Council decisions affect us or that we even get a say in what's going on.

Talk with us face-to-face and don't just tell us what's happening.

Offer opportunities to develop skills by working together, especially for young adults.

Based on their feedback Council has developed six key principles for effective youth engagement.



SIX KEY PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

1

MAKE THE PROCESS AN AUTHENTIC PARTNERSHIP.

Young people have experience that can provide valuable input and assistance with the design, administration, and analysis of youth consultation.

2

EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE BY ELIMINATING BARRIERS.

Work with young people to identify and eliminate potential barriers to participation such as the time, location, language and appropriateness of consultation activities.

3

MAKE THE EXPERIENCE CLEAR, QUICK AND RELEVANT.

Use friendly, accessible and simple language. Make sure the content is clear, concise and relevant to the young people involved.

4

PROVIDE SAFE, ACCESSIBLE YOUTH-FRIENDLY SPACES.

Use familiar, inclusive and welcoming spaces so that all young people feel comfortable and confident to contribute.

5

SECURE THE NECESSARY CONSENTS/ PERMISSIONS AND GO TO THEM.

Ensure you have obtained the necessary consent and parental permissions and where possible, talk to young people where they are — at schools, sporting clubs, railway stations, shops, youth service providers, parks and events.

6

SHOW YOUNG PEOPLE HOW THEIR INPUT WILL BE VALUED AND USED.

There are eight levels of youth participation* which vary from participation to non-participation. Show young people how their input will influence decision making and allocate time to involve young people in co-designing the engagement process.

*See the Ladder of Youth Voice based on Hart, 1992.

LADDER OF YOUTH VOICE



Adapted by Adam Fletcher (2011) from work by Roger Hart et al. (1994)



BARRIERS TO CONNECTING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

There are many reasons as to why young people may not be able to equally participate in the same consultation activities as adults. Through careful planning and by providing young people with additional information, resources and support, Council can reduce many of the barriers young people face to fully engage in consultation activities:

- Young people can be anyone aged 10 to 25, and a range of different methods and techniques are required to effectively engage the different age groups.
- Young people are busy and have limited time due to study, work, and family responsibilities.
- Young people may have insecurities or may not have their voices heard because of peer, parental or societal pressure.
- Young people may be unaware of what Council is and how their activities and decisions directly affect them.
- Young people can have limited transport options and may not be able to attend public workshops or forums held away from public transport.
- Council communications and consultation topics may use overly complicated language.
- Young people come from a variety of backgrounds and have differing interests, needs and abilities depending on their age.
- Young people under the age of 18 may require parental/adult permission before participating in interviews, surveys or workshops.
- Young people who are disadvantaged as well as those with disabilities, or from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, may need additional resources and support to participate.
- Young people, like adults, may face health issues such as mental health, alcohol or drug use, obesity, malnutrition, social isolation or exposure to violence.
- Young people may be more comfortable communicating on social media platforms that are typically not used by Council.
- Young people may not believe that their voice will be valued and may be reluctant to participate or may disengage from participation.
- Schools can be challenging to engage with to access young people as they have busy timetables and are already required to conduct a lot of surveys with their students.
- Incentives and prizes often require collecting personal information which needs to be carefully and securely handled for young people under the age of 18.

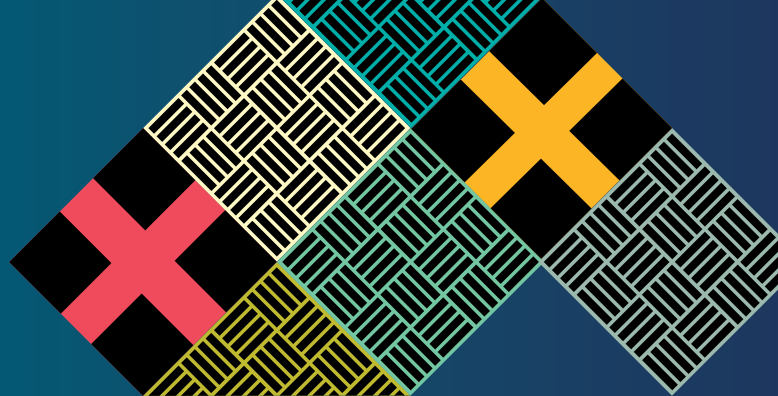
UNDERTAKING A YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

All Council engagement activities involving young people must be undertaken in accordance with Council's adopted approach to community engagement that is outlined in the *Glen Eira Community Engagement Strategy 2018–2021*. The approach is summarised in the diagram below and shows four interconnected elements: Design, Plan, Do and Review.

OUR APPROACH TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Adapted from the International Association of Public Participation: Design, Plan, Manage Model, www.iap2.org.au



IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONNECTING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

STAGE ONE — DESIGN

- Partner with young people to design an engagement process that will be relevant, appropriate and engaging to young people.
- Understand how the consultation relates to young people and determine which age groups between 10 to 25 need to be engaged. If you are unsure, consider asking an existing youth committee such as #YouthVoice or the Youth Leadership Team. See page 17 for an overview of Council's youth committees.
- Consider partnering with youth service providers to develop strategies that will engage disadvantaged young people and ensure their voice is included as part of Council's consultation activities.
- Community engagement involving young people under the age of 18 years may require consent or parental permission to participate.
- All Council staff, volunteers and consultants require a current Working with Children Check, if engaging with young people under the age of 18 years. This includes any engagement associated with face-to-face, telephone or any electronic interactions with young people under 18 years.
- Young people can be over-consulted and get 'survey fatigue'. Check Council's Community Engagement Calendar to determine what youth engagement activities have been undertaken in the past.
- Students are required to take part in many different surveys throughout the year and schools need a lot of notice before they can be included in engagement activities.

STAGE TWO — PLAN

- Engagement activities should be tailored to the differing levels of interest, needs and abilities of a wide range of young people aged between 10 and 25.
- Be guided by young people on what ideas, activities and language will work best to connect with young people. Consider forming a small working group or use existing youth committees such as #YouthVoice or a student representative council. See page 17 for an overview of Council's youth committees.
- Consider offering age-appropriate incentives (such as food, freebies, vouchers or a prize draw) to help encourage young people to give up their time to participate.
- Consider breaking down large consultation tasks into smaller activities that are more engaging to young people.
- Plan to meet young people in youth-friendly locations such as schools, train stations, youth centres and shopping centres.
- It is important to remember that young adults aged 18 to 25 may still face many of the same challenges, barriers and issues experienced by those aged under 18.
- Consider running some youth-specific information sessions first, so young people can better understand the background and what's involved.
- Most young people aged between 10 and 18 have limited time before and after school and may not be able to get to venues that are too far away from home.
- Be respectful of the different cultural or religious practices of young people to ensure that all young people have an equal opportunity to contribute.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR CONNECTING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

STAGE THREE — DO

- Make sure all the necessary permission forms have been obtained and that ALL staff involved have valid Working With Children Checks.
- Select the right staff to connect with young people. They should enjoy working with young people, treat them with respect, communicate effectively and see their participation as valuable.
- Council staff undertaking face-to-face youth consultations should always display an official means of identification. Remember as adults, Council staff are in a position of power and young people may be reluctant to participate if they feel intimidated.
- Make the process an authentic partnership with young people. Show them how their input will be respected, valued and used. Authentic engagement is vital to instill a sense of feeling listened to and develop trust in current and future engagement processes.
- Make it exciting and fun. Be creative in your activities such as using graffiti boards, voting jars or music competitions.
- For face-to-face engagement activities, provide a welcoming and youth-friendly or youth-familiar environment. Be friendly, relaxed, try not to be too formal and do not use a lot of jargon.
- Explain the level of impact that their input could make for them and others. Outline why the topic is relevant for them and their needs and check their level of understanding or interest.
- Consider how to ensure the young person's views will be accurately recorded and collected.
- Participation, incentives and prizes often require collecting personal information which needs to be carefully and securely handled for young people under 18 years of age.
- Not all young people are the same. Monitor the number of participants, demographic profile (age/ suburb) and quality of input being captured to ensure you have engaged with your target audience.

STAGE FOUR — REVIEW

- Acknowledge the contribution of young people, through regular updates for longer term projects or show them the outcomes by reporting back.
- Review the process and outcomes, test results and findings with young people.
- Announce results and make a user-friendly version of the outcome or findings report available to young people. Use clear messages or visual images to communicate vital information.
- Consider inviting young people to share the results with other young people.
- Always ensure that any records and permission forms are stored in accordance with Council's *Privacy Policy and the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.

UTILISE COUNCIL'S YOUTH SERVICES TEAM

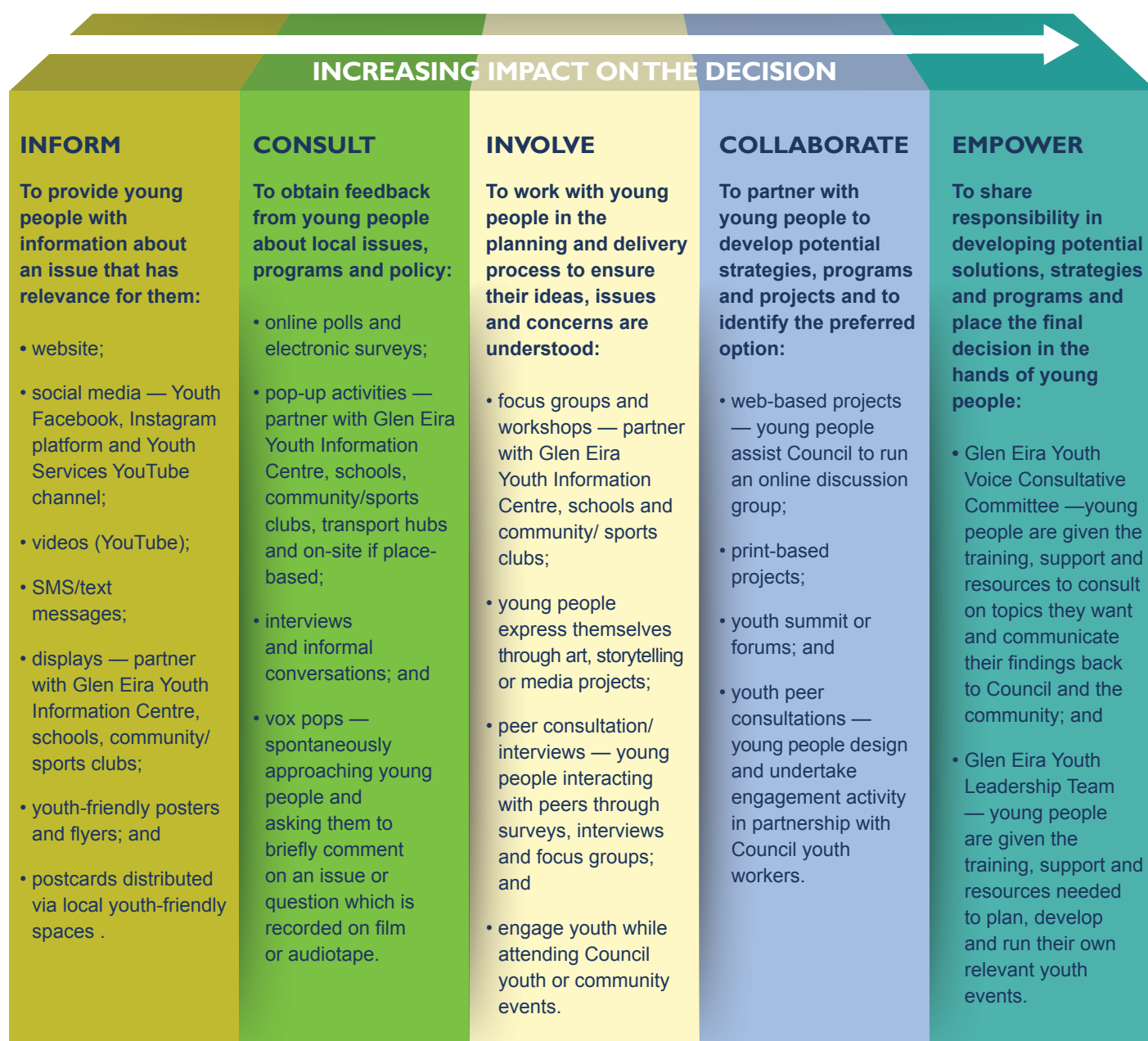
Council's Youth Services team is a valuable resource for Council staff designing and implementing youth engagement activities. Council's youth support workers can provide advice and assistance in co-designing effective youth engagement processes. They can also provide information about:

- appropriate youth-friendly venues and upcoming youth events;
- outcomes of previous youth consultations;
- youth demographic profiles;
- Youth Leadership Team and #YouthVoice committees;
- school engagement and support programs; and
- Council's youth social media platforms.

























































SELECTING THE LEVEL AND METHOD OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Council's *Connecting With Young People Strategy 2018–2021* sets out the requirement to carefully consider the level of engagement that is required to be undertaken depending on the project or issue, during the design phase of the engagement process. See page eight, *Undertaking a youth engagement process*.

The diagrams below describe the five possible levels of engagement (from very little impact in Inform, to the most impact in Empower) and what consultation methods are best suited to the different young people, primary school-aged to young adults.



AGE APPROPRIATE YOUTH CONSULTATION METHODS

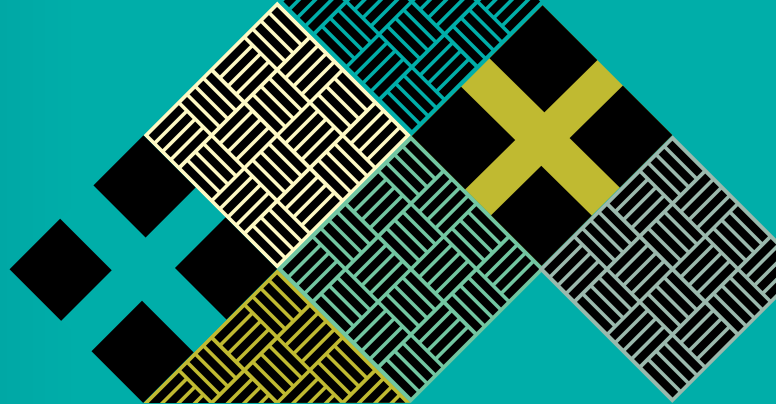
METHODS	10-12 YEAR OLDS (PRIMARY SCHOOL)	12-15 YEAR OLDS (LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL)	16-18 YEAR OLDS (UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL)	19-25 YEARS OLD (YOUNG ADULTS)	CONSIDERATIONS
SURVEY AND QUESTIONNAIRES					Questions must be tailored to differing levels of interest, needs and abilities.
SOCIAL MEDIA DISCUSSION GROUPS					Choose the right platform for the target age group. The minimum age for joining many social media platforms is 13.
SMS TEXT CONSULTATION					Younger age groups may not have access to a mobile phone.
POP-UP ACTIVITIES					Activities and games may engage younger age groups but be unappealing to young adults.
PUBLIC FORUMS/ WORKING GROUPS					Young people may need extra support and resources to participate alongside adults.
YOUTH CONSULTATION OR REFERENCE GROUP					Different reference groups may be needed for different age groups.
PEER-LED CONSULTATION					Young people will still need appropriate support and resources to lead consultations.
FACE-TO-FACE CONVERSATIONS					Parental permission is needed for minors. Consider a youth-friendly space and facilitator.
FORMAL INTERVIEWS					Parental permission is needed for minors. May be intimidating and confronting to some younger people.
COMMENT WALL, GRAFFITI WALL					Consider youth-friendly locations. May be unappealing and hard to access for older age groups.
VOX POP					Will need parental permissions and photo consent forms for minors. May need background information before being questioned.
SOCIAL MEDIA OPINION POLLS					Choose the right platform for the target age group. The minimum age for joining many social media platforms is 13.
SUBMISSIONS					May be too complex and time consuming for some younger age groups.
COMMENTS OR SUGGESTION BOX					Locations of comments box should be carefully selected to ensure all target age groups are represented.



HOW COUNCIL CONNECTS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Council's Youth Services team delivers a range of activities to regularly connect and consult with young people and to ensure their voices are heard within the community and Council. The following table provides an outline of the activities that will be undertaken by the Youth Services team to connect with local young people.





CIVIC LEADERSHIP AND YOUTH-LED ENGAGEMENT

Both the Youth Leadership Team and #YouthVoice Committee report to Councillors on an annual basis to share the outcomes of their work and to advocate for young people in Glen Eira.

PEER CONSULTATION

Young people will help develop and deliver face-to-face surveys that target at least 250 young people out in the community at local schools, shopping centres and train stations, to obtain information about relevant issues affecting young people.

VOX POPS AND POP-UP ENGAGEMENT

Young people will help develop and deliver face-to-face surveys that target at least 250 young people out in the community at local schools, shopping centres and train stations, to obtain information about relevant issues affecting young people.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Council's Youth Services team and #YouthVoice Committee will promote youth activities, events and engagement opportunities through Council's Youth Facebook, Youth Instagram platform and Youth Services YouTube Channel.

YOUTH PROGRAMS

Youth workers connect with young people and collect feedback at each Council-run youth program or event. Feedback will be collected about the events and issues that matter to young people at events such as *Sounds of Glen Eira* (Battle of the Bands), *Plugged In* (music program) and school holiday programs. These results will be used to inform the enhancement and development of the *Youth Service Program*.

EMPOWERING YOUNG PEOPLE TO HAVE THEIR SAY

Youth engagement occurs when young people are involved in responsible, challenging actions to create positive social change and where the process is structured as a partnership so all parties contribute, teach, and learn from each other (Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, 2004).

Empowering young leaders within the local community to advocate on behalf of young people is a powerful approach to improving youth engagement and the reach of Council-youth consultation activities. The following youth-led initiatives provide a voice and a platform for young people in Glen Eira to connect and express their ideas and create positive change in their community.

GLEN EIRA #YOUTHVOICE COMMITTEE

The #YouthVoice Committee is a group of up to 15 participants aged between 10 and 25 who connect with young people in our City to capture and project youth issues, opinions and achievements. Young people register their interest to join the #YouthVoice Committee through Council's website and meet weekly during school terms to plan and develop their projects.

Participants actively connect with young people through social media and also capture the issues that are important to young people out in the community at schools, shopping centres and train stations through face-to-face interviews. The Committee reports to Councillors annually and their work is published on the Council website.

GLEN EIRA YOUTH LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Youth Leadership Team is a committee of 10 young people aged 15 to 25 that is aimed at developing youth leadership skills. Young people nominate to be a part of the Youth Leadership Team through Council's website and volunteer for a 12-month position. The group advocate on behalf of young people and organise youth events that are held across the City including youth concerts, functions and arts and cultural programs. Participants receive training in leadership, advocacy and event management and are encouraged to use their skills to be leaders in their local communities.

The Youth Leadership Team meets fortnightly and is supported by a Council youth support officer. The Youth Leadership group reports to Councillors on an annual basis to provide feedback about their activities and to advocate on behalf of young people in Glen Eira.

YOUTH SURVEYS

Young people are also empowered to have their say through Council-run surveys such as the *2017 Youth iPad Survey* (304 participants) and the *2017 Student Resilience Survey* (4,350 participants). These anonymous surveys allow a large number of young people to express their open and honest opinions on important youth issues, such as the health and wellbeing of young people and their visions for the future of the City of Glen Eira.

Council's youth committees help with the design and delivery of survey questions and assist Council in analysing and sharing the results among their peers.

SUMMARY OF YOUTH PROGRAMS



GLEN EIRA PRIDE

Glen Eira Pride is a same-sex attracted, sex/gender diverse or questioning support group for young people aged 14 to 25. The support group is an opportunity to meet like-minded people and help promote LGBT+ awareness and inclusion in the City of Glen Eira.



GIRL UP GLEN EIRA

The *Girl Up Glen Eira* program aims to play an integral role in re-shaping the way girls feel about themselves and their future.

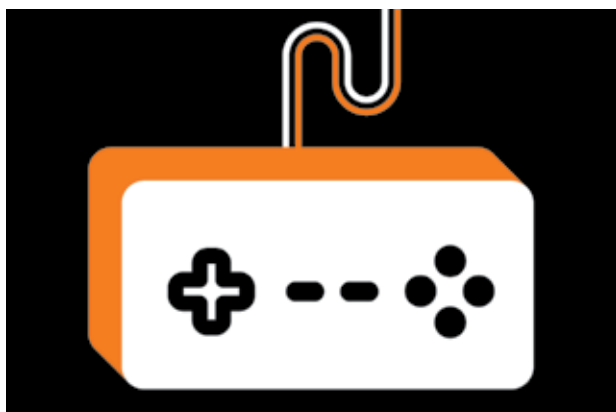
The committee work on large-scale projects that build on the positive identity of young girls in Glen Eira.



PLUGGED IN

Plugged In is a music and sound engineering program where young people learn how to set up and run their own recording sessions at the Youth Centre's purpose-built studio.

SUMMARY OF YOUTH PROGRAMS



PRESS START

Press Start is positive social gaming experience where young people aged 10 to 18 learn healthy gaming habits; connect with new people; and play and discuss multi-player games.



YOUTH LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Youth Leadership Team is a committee of volunteers who are interested in developing their leadership skills.

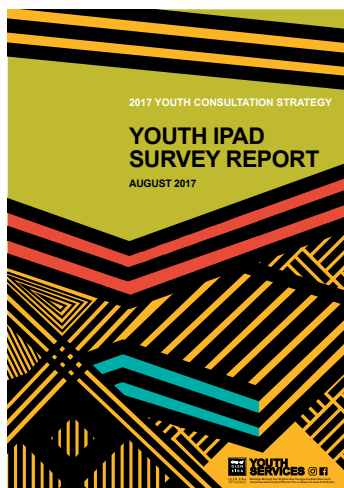
The group advocate on behalf of young people and organise youth events that are held across the City including youth concerts, functions and arts and cultural programs.



#YOUTHVOICE

#YouthVoice is a crew of young content creators aged 10 to 25 who interview, film and create social media posts to project important youth issues, opinions and achievements.

YOUTH PUBLICATIONS AND RESOURCES



This report presents the key findings from a youth-led community engagement program conducted in 2017 that involved face-to-face interviews with young people at schools, the train station and local shopping centres.

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

The report can be found on Council's website:

www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/Community-services/Youth/Youth-consultation

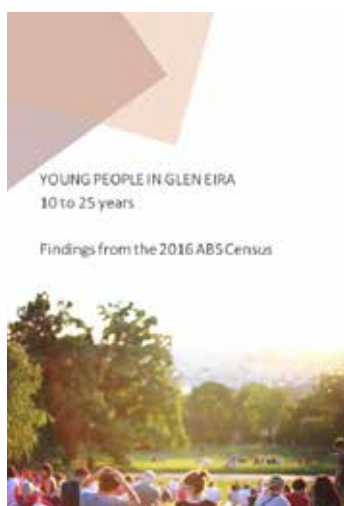


This report presents the results of the *Glen Eira Student Resilience Survey* conducted in 2017. A total of 4,350 students from Years 3 to 12 from 21 primary and secondary schools across Glen Eira participated in the survey.

The *Student Resilience Survey* is a 99-question online survey that analyses the wellbeing and resilience of young people attending school in Glen Eira.

The report can be found on Council's website:

www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/Community-services/Youth/Youth-consultation



This report provides a snapshot of young people living in Glen Eira using statistics obtained from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The report uses tables, charts and commentary across a range of youth demographic indicators, including population, population by suburb, population forecasts, housing, education and cultural statistics.

The report can be found on Council's website:

www.gleneira.vic.gov.au/Community-services/Youth/Youth-consultation



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If you are deaf, hearing-impaired, or speech-impaired, we ask that you call us via the National Relay Service and then ask for (03) 9524 3333.

Online: <https://internet-relay.nrscall.gov.au>

Teletypewriter (TTY): 13 36 77

Speak and Listen: 1300 555 727

Social media

What's on in Glen Eira:

www.facebook.com/GlenEiraCityCouncil

@cityofgleneira:

www.instagram.com/cityofgleneira

Glen Eira arts, gallery and events:

www.facebook.com/gleneiraarts

Glen Eira Libraries and Learning Centres:

www.facebook.com/GlenEiraLibraries

Glen Eira Maternal and Child Health:

www.facebook.com/GlenEiraMaternalandChildHealth

Glen Eira Sports and Aquatic Centre:

www.facebook.com/GESACOnline

[www.twitter.com/GESACOnline](https://twitter.com/GESACOnline)

Glen Eira Youth Services:

www.facebook.com/GlenEiraYouthServices

www.instagram.com/gleneirayouthservices

Glen Eira sustainable living:

www.facebook.com/sustainablelivinggleneira

