



GENERATION NOW

YOUTH VOICES.
YOUTH VISION.



CITY OF BALLARAT Youth Strategy 2022–2026





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The City of Ballarat acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land we live and work on, the Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung People, and recognises their continuing connection to the land and waterways.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend this to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.
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Message from the Mayor of Ballarat



The young people who live and work in the City of Ballarat will one day grow to be the future leaders of our community.

It is our responsibility as local government leaders to provide young people in our city with the space, support, and direction to help our young residents grow and thrive to become the best they can be.

The City of Ballarat *Youth Strategy 2022 –2026* lays the foundation for our young people to access the programs and services they need to build a brighter future for our city.


The visions, voices and creativity of young people will be fostered to grow through a range of exciting programs for young people aged 12 –25.

With a focus on 'Positive Youth Development' the City of Ballarat's Youth Services team will upskill, engage, inspire and provide new opportunities to develop personal skills and interests while creating change in the Ballarat.

Through incredible programs like the ever-popular Youth Awards, workshops and arts programs such as pod casts, screen printing, badge making, film/ photography, movie nights, novelty events, and so much more, young people will have so many options to take a hold of their ideas and really run with them to creative positivity right here in our community.

It is an exciting time for young people in our city to reach out and explore the opportunities for new leadership roles that allow them to create real and lasting change for our city.

It is also an exciting time for City of Ballarat to embrace the ideas and initiatives of our young people and champion their voices to ensure their vision for a better and stronger Ballarat is realised.



Cr Daniel Moloney
Mayor, City of Ballarat

Message from our Co-Designers



This Youth Strategy has been co-designed by 11 young people from the Ballarat community, with support from the City of Ballarat's Youth Services team and an external consultant. We are aged from 12-25 years and represent a diversity of backgrounds and experiences. Our role as Co-Designers involved us meeting regularly and engaging with other young people and the youth sector in many different ways and settings to really understand the issues impacting young people. The actions we have developed are likely to have a positive impact on the lives of many young people who live, study, work or play in the Ballarat region, both now and well into the future. In essence, we have put in motion the actions that will make Ballarat a better place for everyone.

Young people play a massive role in our Ballarat community and will be the group who shape and determine its future. Therefore, we believe it is vital to involve them today, to ensure they receive the essential skills and knowledge to advocate for a positive future

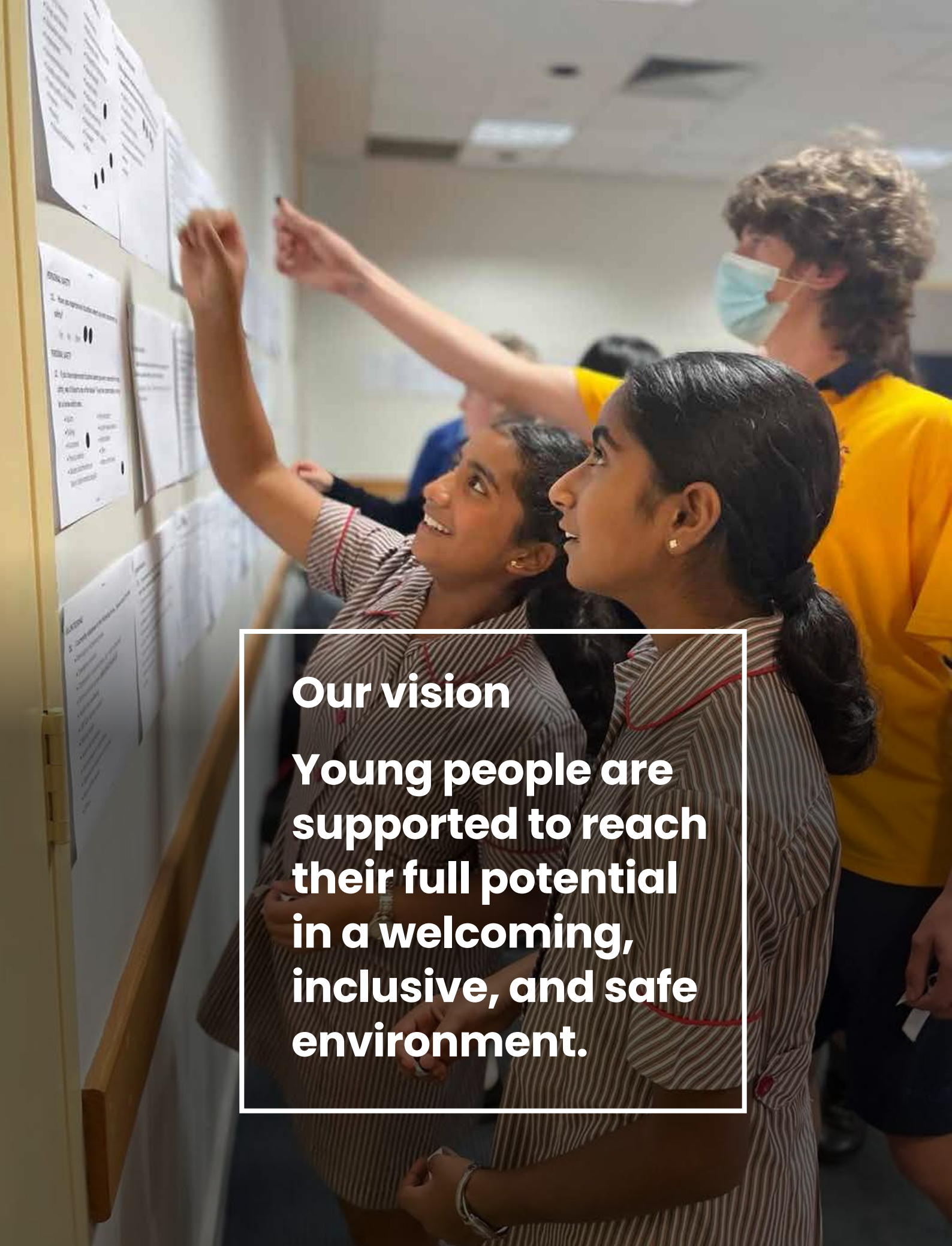
for all. So, as a group of 11 diverse, enthusiastic and passionate young people, we are thrilled to partake in this journey to create a 'Youth Strategy' that is dedicated to creating a stronger, supporting and safer future for every young individual in the Ballarat area. Coming from a past where the voices of youth were often overlooked, now, more than ever, it is imperative to consider the young people in our community and provide them with the opportunity to voice their experience and needs for change. As co-designers, it is our role and honour to speak on behalf of our peers on changes that are essential to provide us with the best and most successful opportunities and lifestyles. We are excited for the more inclusive, supportive and diverse future which the Youth Strategy will bring, and it is our pledge to ensure the voices and ideas of the Ballarat youth are heard in this new future.

Introduction



Young people are not only the future; they are our present. We have seen young people take the lead locally at an international level on things that concern them such as climate change, inclusion, equality and gender-based violence, but we have also seen young people experience high levels of anxiety and stress. Similarly, young people's experience with rapidly changing technology and social media has created some great innovations and learning opportunities but has also come at a significant cost for others through online bullying. To ensure that our young people can reach their full potential and navigate their transition from childhood to adulthood, we need to listen to their voices, understand their needs and struggles, empower them and support them. We must work in genuine partnership with young people to ensure that they can develop the tools they need and are provided with opportunities to achieve their aspirations. By investing in young people, we are investing in a more sustainable, resilient and inclusive community.

Our Youth Strategy identifies a vision for young people aged 12-25 years and the key priority areas that need to be addressed to achieve this vision. The vision acknowledges that it takes a whole community to nurture and support a young person in their journey from childhood to adulthood, including parents / carers, siblings, extended family, friends, teachers, coaches / instructors, employers, elders, community leaders and youth-based organisations. For each of our priority areas, we have developed actions which we aim to achieve over the next five years. These actions have been developed in partnership with our Co-Designers, based on what we heard from young people, the youth sector, the City of Ballarat business units and the broader community as current and emerging issues for young people in the City of Ballarat.



Our vision

Young people are supported to reach their full potential in a welcoming, inclusive, and safe environment.

How we developed the Youth Strategy



We put a call out to young people living in the City of Ballarat to join us on the journey of producing a new youth strategy. This call was heeded by 11 young people aged 12-25 years of age, representing a diversity of backgrounds and experiences. These Co-Designers met regularly with the City of Ballarat's Youth Services Team and an external consultant to design the process. Many hours were spent researching youth issues, preparing survey questions, speaking with young people and delivering workshops to the youth sector and the broader community. We had t-shirts and hundreds of bookmarks printed to promote our engagement activities.

Our engagement activities included:

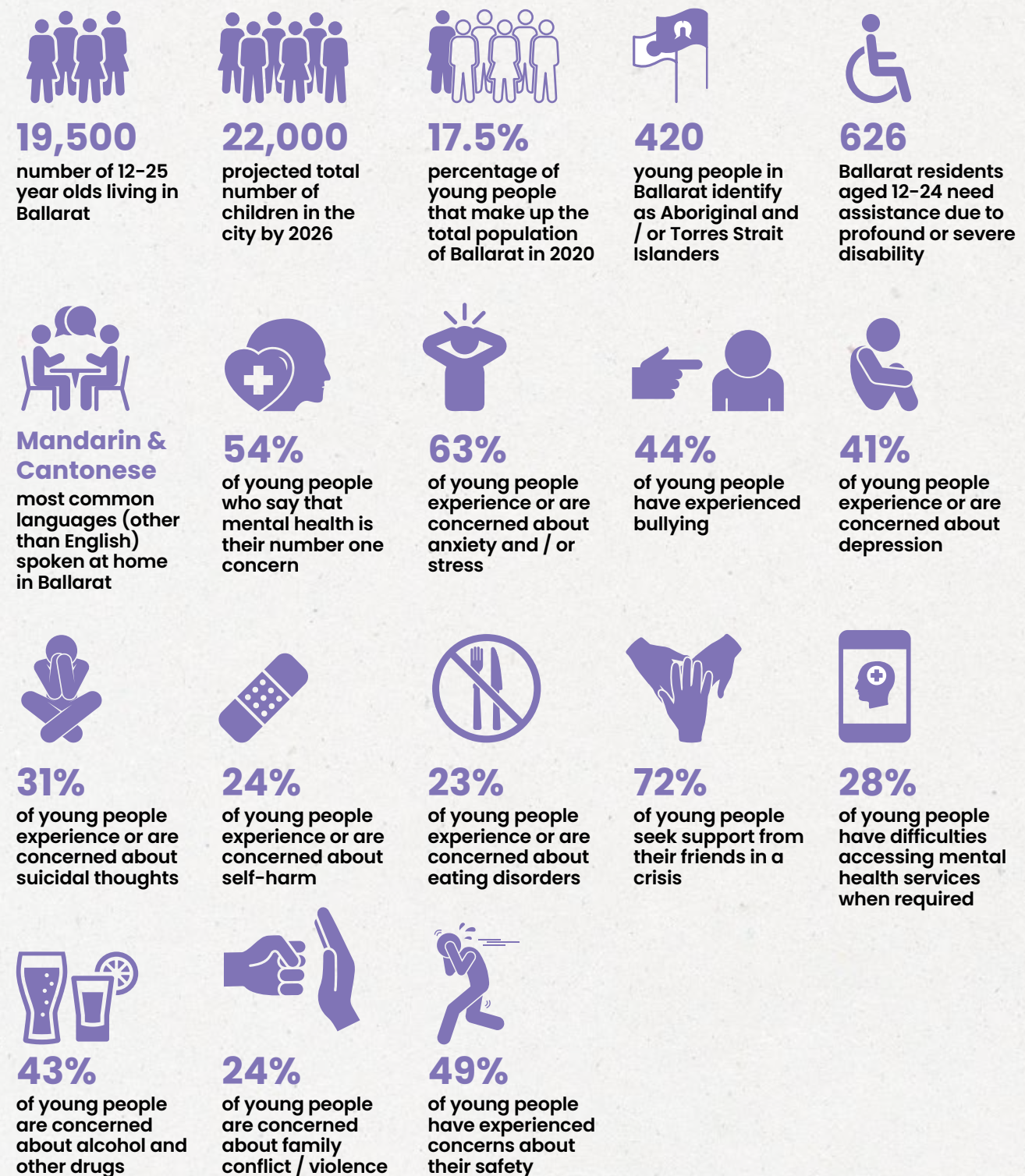
- Developing a youth survey (1,082 surveys completed). This survey was promoted through attendance at various community events including the Ballarat Begonia Festival and by speaking in schools and workplaces, and with family and friends.
- Developing a youth sector survey (48 surveys completed)
- Developing a community survey (91 completed surveys)
- Holding 2 workshops with Council staff (26 attendees)
- Holding 1 workshop with youth sector organisations (50 attendees).

In addition to engagement activities, we also reviewed the demographic profile of young people, undertook some service mapping to understand more about the types of organisations working with young people in the City of Ballarat and reviewed relevant local, state, and national reports and strategies.

Our young people

There are over 19,500 young people aged between 12-25 years currently living within our city. This figure is expected to grow to 22,000 by 2026. Other young people from neighbouring areas come into the city each day to study, work and play.

A snapshot of young people living in Ballarat (taken from Ballarat Youth Profile 2020 and our survey):



The City of Ballarat's role and strategic focus

The City of Ballarat has many roles including:

- Planning and delivering community facilities such as skate parks, libraries, swimming pools, sports facilities, footpaths, bike paths and parks
- Delivering programs and services such as the FReeZA program, programs for young parents and career expos
- Providing information to the community about services, programs and events such as the Ballarat Begonia Festival through its various promotional outlets, e.g. website, social media pages, media releases, banners, posters, etc
- Advocating to other organisations for improvements, e.g. advocating to the Department of Transport for changes to public transport routes
- Working in partnership with other organisations to deliver facilities, programs or services such as schools and businesses to run careers expos for young people.

Organisations such as the Victorian State Government, VicHealth and Youth Affairs Council Victoria (YACVic) classify 'youth' as young people between 12-25 years of age and 'early years' as children between 0-8 years of age. The challenge with the youth and early years age groupings is that children from 8-11 years of age are not technically covered by either early years or youth programs and funding and that young people 19-25 years of age do not necessarily view themselves as youth, but rather, as young adults.

Ballarat Youth Services acknowledges the need for support for children and young people between 8-25 years of age, particularly during periods of transition between primary school to secondary school and from secondary school to further studies or employment and will design some generic programs and services to cover all of these age groupings. However, it will focus the majority of its resources on the 12-18 age range as young people in this age range are typically more receptive to and are at the period of their development where they are most likely to benefit from programs and services such as leadership training, life skill development programs, music events, arts programs, etc.

The City of Ballarat is guided by strategic plans which identify the key priorities of Council into the future. Many of the actions contained within these plans directly or indirectly impact young people. These actions are designed to continually improve the health, wellbeing and liveability of the Ballarat community by focussing on enhancing facilities / infrastructure, programs, services and inclusion.

Relevant strategic plans include:

- Council Plan 2021-2025
- Gender Equality Action Plan 2021-2025
- Community Vision 2030
- Disability Access & Inclusion Plan 2019-2022
- Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2031
- Active Ballarat Strategy 2020
- Community Infrastructure Plan 2021-2036
- Active Women and Girls Strategy 2018
- Libraries and Learning Strategy 2022-2027
- Ballarat Creative City Strategy 2019
- Reconciliation Action Plan 2022-2024
- Ballarat Cycling Action Plan 2017-2025
- Ballarat Integrated Transport Plan 2020
- Ballarat Event Strategy 2018-2028
- Ballarat Prosperity Framework 2020
- Food Strategy 2019-2022
- Circular Ballarat Framework 2021
- Road Management Plan 2021.

City of Ballarat Youth Services

> Our current activities

The City of Ballarat's Youth Services Team currently works with young people to deliver youth services such as:

- **Youth Ambassadors** - Learn leadership and life skills. Team building, community networking and social connections.
- **FReeZA Program 'Sonika'** - Learn live music and event management skills. Deliver all-ages music, arts, cultural and recreation events.
- **T.E.A.M** – Learn event management, team building and develop social connections. Deliver youth-designed events and activities that promote health and wellbeing. Examples include R U OK? Day, IDAHOBIT, IDPWD and annual Youth Awards.
- **Youth Awards** – youth-led annual event to celebrate and recognise the contribution young people make to Ballarat.
- **Youth Facilitator Training** - mentoring and training opportunities to develop skills. Deliver paid workshops within the community in young people's areas of interest.
- **Youth led workshops, events and activities** – Youth Facilitators plan and deliver workshops at community events and venues. Examples include arts, cooking, photography, music, screen printing, etc
- **Skills for Life** – training and skill development opportunities to enable young people to reach their full potential in education, vocation, and community. Examples include training in media/podcasts, barista, water safety, environmental sustainability, first aid.
- **Western Bulldogs Leadership Program** - opportunities for young people aged 14 - 16 years. Build confidence, make new friends, and develop skills to become community leaders. Young Entrepreneurs' Program - build skills around enterprise and business development.

> Youth framework

The Youth Services Team has a strong focus on youth-led, co-design approaches to working with young people. The Team utilises the Positive Youth Development Framework developed by Griffith University to guide the way in which they do this. This framework is based on:



1. Learning and development



2. Leadership and decision making



3. Inclusive ethos



4. Community service



5. Partnerships and social networks



6. Ethical promotion.

>The following diagram shows where Council’s Youth Services Team works in the vulnerable youth continuum:

The majority of young people

This is a large group of young people who cope well with normal vulnerabilities that arise through adolescence.

Councils's role:

Service Policy and Planning, Advocacy and Leadership, Service Provision and Management, Facilitation and Communication, Organisational Development



Young people who are highly vulnerable

This is a group of young people who experience a high level of vulnerability and require comprehensive and co-ordinated interventions from a range of support services.

Councils's role:

Advocacy and Leadership, Facilitation and Communication

Young people who are experiencing additional problems

This is a group of young people who are experiencing additional problems that require 'early service intervention'.

Councils's role:

Service Policy and Planning, Advocacy and Leadership, Facilitation and Communication

Young people who are high risk

This is a relatively small group of young people with an extreme level of vulnerability and who require intensive support service

Councils's role:

Advocacy and Leadership



> Sector leadership

The Youth Services team also has a sector leadership role. This means that it coordinates meetings of youth-based organisations in the City of Ballarat so that workers and volunteers of these services can come together and discuss youth related issues; instigate shared programs; and work as a united group to advocate for more resources or changes to existing youth services in the region. This network of partners includes:

- Ballarat Youth Services Network Committee of Support
 - Centre for Multicultural Youth, Y Ballarat, Ballarat Community Health, HLLN, BADAC, headspace, Victoria Police, cafs
 - L2P Advisory Group
 - Ballarat Active Women's Leadership Network
 - Community Safety Working Group
 - Wendouree Renewal Project
 - Central Highlands Innovation and Entrepreneurship Network.
- These organisations that are included in our network of partners have a focus on:
- Mental health
 - Leadership
 - Housing
 - Family support
 - Alcohol and other drugs
 - LGBTIQ+ support
 - Health and health promotion
 - Recreation
 - Education, skills and training
 - Youth justice
 - Employment
 - Cultural services
 - Legal issues Relationships
 - Emergency relief
 - Entrepreneurship.



Focus area 1: HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Health and wellbeing refers to our physical and mental state as well as how we feel about ourselves and life in general. Health and wellbeing is influenced by connections to family, friends and the community; being physically active; eating healthy food; access to housing; education and skills; work opportunities; money; resources; the environment; health care; gender; discrimination; childhood experiences; and development.

“I was too scared to, was embarrassed to, or felt like my issues weren’t bad enough to warrant getting help.”

Survey respondent

> OUR PRIORITIES

- 1. Mental health:** young people have access to preventative programs that promote positive mental health and access to information about mental health services that are available
- 2. Physical health:** young people have a range of physical activity opportunities and healthy eating options to help them maintain good physical health
- 3. Alcohol and other drugs:** young people understand the risks of drug and alcohol consumption and are able to enjoy entertainment free of these substances
- 4. Suicide prevention:** young people at risk of suicide are supported and have access to positive mental health promotion and messaging.

What young people in Ballarat told us

Just over half of all young people surveyed (54%) told us that mental health is their number one concern and the most important issue for us to focus on is to provide and promote programs that focus on positive

mental health. Almost two thirds of young people said that they experience anxiety and stress (63% and 62% respectively) and two in five young people (41%) experience depression. Almost one third of young people have experienced suicidal thoughts or are concerned about suicide and approximately one quarter of young people have experienced or are concerned about self-harm (24%) and eating disorders (23%). For those young people who have needed mental health support, 28% of them have had difficulties accessing mental health services when needed.

Young people told us they need:

- faster access to mental health practitioners
- more affordable mental health services
- greater support for young people battling suicidal thoughts
- more support in non-school environments
- more support for young men
- greater diversity of mental health services
- mental health support available before or after school
- more welcoming and inviting mental health facilities
- better quality support from helplines
- more support for parents (as this impacts young people)
- to know that they are not alone when suffering from mental health issues.

In terms of physical health, young people said they want to make sure they can get the physical health support that they require, including easier access to contraception.

Young people said that drug and alcohol misuse, including vaping, is their 3rd highest concern. They want it to be harder for young people to access drugs and would like to see less drug-affected people in public places.

What the youth sector told us

Two thirds of youth organisations (67%) identified mental health as the biggest issue impacting young people in Ballarat. These organisations told us:

- the existing prevalence of mental health issues among young people has been exacerbated by COVID-19
- mental health including depression, anxiety, eating disorders and suicidal ideation is rising
- mental health services are struggling to meet demand by young people for their services
- young people need help to improve their resilience and coping mechanisms.

What the community told us

- Young people's mental health is the number one priority for the broader community (58%), with alcohol and other drugs coming in at 3rd place (31%). The community sector told us that:
- COVID-19 lockdowns impacted young people's mental health











- some young people are self-harming and others are self-medicating due to large mental health waitlists and having difficulties accessing doctors to refer them to services they need
- vaping is a growing issue amongst young people.

What we will do

Council's objectives in relation to health and wellbeing for young people aged 12-25 are:

- To ensure that young people have access to information about health and wellbeing services
- To advocate for more mental health services that are accessible and affordable
- To provide places and spaces where young people can be physically active
- To provide activities, programs and events in environments that enable young people to develop strong social connections and to increase their resilience
- To promote messaging about socially healthy lifestyles.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

ACTIONS	COUNCIL'S ROLE	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAMS
Mental health and suicide prevention								
Produce and regularly update a youth services directory to inform young people about support available to them via Council's website, posters and the Youth Services social media sites.	 Deliver		✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 
Deliver events and festivals that contribute to positive health and wellbeing.	 Deliver & Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent Government grants	 
Deliver the Live4Life program (youth mental health and wellbeing program).	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Deliver VicHealth module on addressing the social determinants of mental wellbeing – including an assessment of Council action on the social determinants.	 Deliver		✓				External grants	



Family, Youth and Children's Services (FY&CS)



















Communication and Design



Arts and Events



Health and Social Planning

ACTIONS	COUNCILS ROLE	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAMS
Physical health								
Develop the Len T. Fraser Skate Park into a significant youth destination incorporating a range of activities.	 Deliver	✓	✓				Recurrent Government grants	
Provide unstructured and social recreation programs to promote positive physical health and participation (e.g. swim survival, Stand Up Paddleboarding (SUP), skate park activations).	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		 
Install condom vending machines in designated public toilets / community infrastructure to help reduce the transmission of sexually transmitted infections and decrease teenage pregnancy rates.	 Deliver & Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		    
Prevention of alcohol and other drugs usage								
Provide messaging, information, events and programs in environments that encourage socially healthy lifestyles, e.g. adopt a smoke/ alcohol/ drug free environment FReeZA and the VicHealth LGP health promotion module.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent External grants	   



Family, Youth and
Children's Services
(FY&CS)



Property
and Facilities



Victoria Police



Health and
Social Planning



Ballarat
Community
Health



Recreation Services



Womens' Health
Grampains



Sports Central



Department
of Justice



Focus area 2: CONNECTED COMMUNITY



Being connected to the community can mean many different things. It can mean feeling included in a community, feeling safe, being valued for who you are, having good social networks and having your voice heard. It can also mean being connected electronically through various applications such as social media and being physically connected to the community and the people within it through transportation.

“As someone a part of the LGBTQ (community), I love seeing pride stuff around town”

Survey respondent

“(We need) a city circle bus route. Rather than going direct to the train station, an additional bus route that travels around the suburbs would make navigating the city faster and easier”

Survey respondent

> OUR PRIORITIES

- 1. Equality / inclusion / challenging discrimination** – young people are included in all aspects of community life
- 2. Transport** – young people have access to safe, affordable and convenient transport options to get to the places they want to go
- 3. Respectful relationships / friendships** – young people are supported and respected by their family and friends

What young people in Ballarat told us

Young people told us they feel strongly about equality, inclusion and eliminating/ reducing discrimination. This was rated the 6th highest issue from a list of 18 issues by young people we surveyed. Community education around diversity and inclusion was also identified as valuable.

Access to transport can be a challenge for many young people. A high proportion of young people said that they do not feel safe using the bus interchange or the train station and that buses don't go where they want to go when they want to go there. Young people who live in the outer suburbs find it particularly difficult to access the CBD via bus due to lack of services in those areas. Crossing from one side of Ballarat by public transport to another has also been identified as a challenge.

Young people recognise the value of social media in keeping them connected to their friends. However, they also recognise that social media usage comes with risks of bullying and other unwanted and inappropriate behaviours. Social media was listed as the 4th highest concern amongst young people we surveyed.

Young people are concerned that relationship and friendship issues such as bullying, coercion, criticising, excluding, physical abuse and sexual abuse can cause significant anxiety and harm to their physical and mental state.

What the youth sector told us

The youth sector told us that the young people they work with want to be included in broader community life, but for many, family breakdown, disengagement from school and poor mental health are barriers to community inclusion and connectedness. They feel that social media is harming young people's perception of self and image (for girls in particular). In terms of respectful relationships, members of the youth sector believe that some young people are lacking positive role models in their lives.

What the community told us

Members of the community feel that the impact of social media can be harmful for young people. It was rated as the 4th highest issue. They feel that much of the information obtained via social media is incorrect and misleading and that the focus on 'likes' and having a young person's self-worth attached to the online version of themselves is problematic.

Following in 5th place was equality, inclusion and reducing discrimination. They want to see a more inclusive city where everyone can participate, be heard and valued.












Community members acknowledge that transport is essential for building independence and feeling in control but recognise that improvements need to be made to the transport service so that it enables young people to travel around Ballarat (not just to and from Melbourne) and that young people in rural and remote areas need better access to Ballarat.

What we will do

Council's objectives in relation to connected community for young people aged 12-25 are:

- To deliver programs that are inclusive of all genders, abilities, ages and backgrounds and promote the value and importance of equality and diversity
- To advocate for improved transport options for young people
- To equip young people with the tools to develop respectful relationships and friendships and to provide support to those experiencing difficulties.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

ACTIONS	COUNCILS ROLE	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAMS
Equality / inclusion / discrimination								
Provide youth content and engagement / involvement opportunities for young people in events.	 Deliver & Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Provide dedicated youth spaces and programming in libraries.	 Deliver & Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Incorporate a greater 'youth lens' and strengthen engagement with young people when developing social policy-related documents, social inclusion frameworks and 'Design Guidelines' for community infrastructure plan.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 
Deliver broad inclusion training to volunteers and the community, e.g. Cultural competency, disability, etc.	 Deliver		✓	✓	✓	✓	External grants	
Seek partnerships to deliver intergenerational programs.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	



Family, Youth and
Children's Services
(FY&CS)





















Engaged
Communities



Libraries and
Lifelong Learning



Health and
Social Planning

ACTIONS	COUNCILS ROLE	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAMS
Equality / inclusion / discrimination								
Seek partnerships to deliver intergenerational programs.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Include a youth lens in the work of the Ballarat Community Safety Partnership Social Inclusion working group.	 Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 
Undertake a disability inclusion audit (of Council facilities and services) from a children's and young person's perspective.	 Deliver		✓				External grant	
Provide inclusive social connection programs (including a geographical spread) to improve access and connectedness within communities.	 Deliver & Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Work with young people to plan and deliver youth-focused creative events and culture-based programs and events.								 
Activate key facilities and community spaces that provide access to safe, inclusive and welcoming youth friendly programs for young people across the municipality e.g. Pools, libraries, school holiday programs.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	  
Involve young people in key inclusive community awareness days/weeks of significance activities e.g. Harmony, IDPWD, IDAHOBIT and RAW.	 Deliver & Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 



Family, Youth and Children's Services (FY&CS)



Engaged Communities



Libraries and Lifelong Learning



Health and Social Planning










Recreation Services



Art Gallery



Creative City

ACTIONS	COUNCILS ROLE	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAMS
Transport								
Advocate to PTV to review and overhaul the Ballarat Bus Network.	 Advocate	✓	✓				Recurrent	 
Continue to support the delivery of L2P Program.	 Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Respectful relationships								
Engage secondary schools/flexible learning options in respectful relationships initiatives such as 'Expect Respect'.	 Deliver & Partner		✓	✓	✓	✓	External grants	



Family, Youth and
Children's Services
(FY&CS)



Engaged
Communities



Advocacy
and Lobbying





Focus area 3:

LIVING AND LEARNING



Living and learning relates to education, training, employment and the material basics that we need to survive such as housing, access to food and money. It also refers to other issues that can impact our lives such as the environment.

Employment challenge:

“Balancing work and school. Being able to get hired with only working a few hours a week due to school and out of school commitments.”

Employment challenge:

“Lots of rude people; too much abuse from customers.”

> OUR PRIORITIES

- **Education, training and life skills** – young people have access to quality and diverse educational and training opportunities that help them to achieve their goals
- **Employment** – young people have access to suitable and safe employment opportunities within their areas of interest.
- **Housing** – young people have information about safe and secure housing options
- **Finances** – young people have access to information and training programs that help to increase their knowledge about finances and budgeting
- **Environmental issues** – young people are supported to help reduce the impact of climate change, fossil fuel usage, pollution and other forms of environmental damage so that they can live in a safe and healthy world
- **Access to food** – young people have access to information about healthy food options and about organisations that provide emergency food relief.

What young people told us

Young people told us they want more diverse educational opportunities and want to learn more life skills such as money / budgeting and cooking skills (64%) and to undertake more employment related skills training such as barista training and first aid (52%). They were also interested in accessing more work experience and internships (30%), business start-up programs (30%) and volunteering opportunities (24%). From an employment perspective, some young people said that they don't get enough hours or suitable hours of work (22%) and would like to learn how to apply for jobs and prepare a resume (20%).

What the youth sector told us

People who work in the youth sector told us that programs / initiatives designed to improve independence and relevant life skill development that will ultimately lead to improved mental health and outcomes for young people are important.

The youth sector told us that young people struggle to obtain affordable rents and struggle to compete with older renters to secure a home to live in. They also are struggling to enter the private property market due to price increases. Some people who work in the youth sector would like to see an investment in increased social / crisis / transitional housing.

The youth sector acknowledges that there are extremely limited housing options for young people experiencing homelessness or leaving care and that the leading cause of homelessness for young people is family violence / breakdown in relationships. Some members of the youth sector would like to see a dedicated youth housing service operate in Ballarat who can also work holistically with young people about their other issues.

Members of the youth sector also believe that the current levels of Youth Allowance / Job Seeker payments, jettison too many young people in our community into unstable housing, poor nutrition, anxiety, negative self-image/esteem and disconnect them from friendship groups and leisure pursuits.

What the community told us

The community would like to see more career guidance offered and more education options and supports for young people who find mainstream school unsuitable. They acknowledge that young people are keen to develop new life skills such as financial literacy training.

The community identifies underemployment is an issue for many young people who want and need work. They also identify the value of volunteering programs to help young people develop work-related skills, as well as developing a stronger sense of community connection.

Community members state that housing stress puts families in a precarious position, which then impacts every aspect of young people's lives. They state that young people often can't move out of unsafe family environments because of the difficulty in successfully sourcing a rental property.

Partial or full subsidisation of program costs need to be considered so that all young people can participate, e.g. breakfast at school, school uniforms, and so on, according to community member feedback.










Some community members state that we need significantly greater environmental sustainability within the community, or our young people simply won't have a world to live in.

What we will do

Council's objectives in relation to living and learning for young people aged 12-25 are:

- To support a diversity of learning and educational options for young people
- To equip young people with skills and experiences which will enhance their work opportunities and independence
- To advocate for additional resources to improve housing access for young people
- To advocate for increased youth allowances and payments
- To support initiatives that reduce the impact of climate change, fossil fuel usage, pollution and other forms of environmental damage
- To support programs that increase food security for young people.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

ACTIONS	COUNCILS ROLE	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAMS
Education, training, volunteering and life skills								
Deliver youth leadership programs, e.g. Youth Ambassadors, and the Western Bulldogs Leadership Program.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent External grants	
Deliver and partner with other organisations to provide work related and life skill development programs such as: job readiness, worker rights, volunteering, barista training, first aid training, cooking, money matters, etc.	 Deliver & Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	   
Support pathways for young people to access local volunteering opportunities in the community, e.g. the Soup Bus.	 Deliver & Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	



Family, Youth and
Children's Services
(FY&CS)




















Regulatory
Services



Libraries and
Lifelong Learning



Neighbourhood
Houses









ACTIONS	COUNCILS ROLE	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAMS
Education, training, volunteering and life skills								
Support young people to be involved in youth led and designed events and initiatives.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Build on training opportunities and pathways through youth facilitation programs e.g. creative programs and business entrepreneur programs.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Employment								
Provide greater access to employment programs such as graduate / apprenticeship / traineeships as well as work experience placements, internships, mentorship and career expos at the City of Ballarat.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Better connect industry to education providers to understand local needs – via expos, industry tours for schools, committees and taskforces.	 Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 
Develop paid pathway opportunities for young people within events, programs, workshops etc.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Housing								
Involve young people in the development of the Ballarat Housing Strategy.	 Deliver	✓	✓				Recurrent	 
Support sector advocacy for more resources for youth housing.	 Advocate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	External grants	  

Family, Youth and
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People and Culture

Economic
DevelopmentEngaged
Communities

Development Facilitation

ACTIONS	COUNCILS ROLE	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAMS
Environmental issues								
Engage young people in consultation about environmental issues to inform actions and initiatives.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Access to food								
Develop a food coalition with input from young people - (potential to advocate for food security and food access issues, healthy eating etc).	 Deliver & Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 
Work with sports clubs and event organisers to ensure healthy food choices are available at venues attended by young people.	 Deliver & Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	External grants	 



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Health and
Social Planning





Focus area 4:

SAFETY



There are many things that can impact our feelings of safety, ranging from physical spaces that may be dark, isolated or have blocked views, through to our interactions with others including people we know such as family members, friends, other students, colleagues or strangers.

“If I were the one being bullied, I probably wouldn’t tell anyone cause I’d be embarrassed. Telling someone about it isn’t really an option for someone with social anxiety like myself.”

“Making all these bullying programs and things isn’t doing anything...Bullies don’t respond to the assemblies we have at schools like mine. They just laugh cause they think it’s stupid.”

> OUR PRIORITIES

- **Personal safety** – young people feel safe and secure in public spaces throughout Ballarat
- **Bullying** – young people have the confidence, resilience and coping mechanisms to call out this negative behaviour and seek support
- **Social media** – young people are able to benefit from the connections provided by social media
- **Family conflict / violence** – young people have access to programs that increase their confidence, resilience and coping mechanisms and know where to seek support in relation to family conflict / violence.

What young people in Ballarat told us

Young people said they would like to see safety and security addressed through more security, policing and CCTV cameras. At the same time, they would like to see a focus on creating safer community spaces through urban design, including lighting, more colour, more appropriate plantings, art installations and more regular maintenance.

Almost half of all young people surveyed (49%) stated that they have experienced situations where they have been concerned for their safety. The key types of safety concerns experienced are harassment (46%), bullying (44%), physical violence (26%), homophobia (21%), gender-based violence (20%), discrimination (16%) and racism (13%). Family conflict / violence was identified by 24% of young people as a concern.

Areas where young people feel most safe in Ballarat include the library (97% feel safe), workplaces (96%), Lake Wendouree (96%), sports grounds (95%) and shopping centres (90%). Conversely, the places where young people feel most unsafe include public toilets (55% feel unsafe), bus stops / interchange (44%), Bridge St Mall (40%), Ballarat Train Station (35%) and schools (13%).

What the youth sector told us

Family conflict (30%) was identified by members of the youth sector who completed a survey as the second biggest issue facing young people, followed by bullying (28%) in third place. The youth sector told us that they believe that there has been an increase in family violence in the home and that this disempowers our youth and affects many areas of their lives including physical health, mental health, education and employment.

What the community told us






Bullying (face to face and cyber bullying) was identified as the 2nd highest priority by community members. They acknowledged the huge impact bullying has on people's mental health. Similarly, community members note that if young people aren't safe at home, every aspect of their development is impacted. Community members also mentioned the impact that urban design can have on providing public spaces where young people feel welcome, safe and respected.

What we will do

Council's objectives in relation to safety for young people aged 12-25 are:

- To work in partnership with urban planners and young people to improve safety and the perception of safety in public places
- To instigate programs that actively discourage bullying, conflict, and violence
- To instigate programs that increase young people's resilience and improve their community connections so that they have improved support mechanisms to cope with issues
- To educate young people about social media
- To provide information to young people about what types of support are available for those who are experiencing bullying or family conflict / violence.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

ACTIONS	COUNCILS ROLE	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAMS
Personal safety								
Provide opportunities for young people to influence urban renewal projects to increase their sense of safety.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 
Implement and embed the Victorian Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management (MARAM) Framework and Child Safe Standards across all City of Ballarat services, policies and frameworks.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	









Family, Youth and
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Engaged
Communities



Development
and growth

ACTIONS	COUNCILS ROLE	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAMS
Bullying / Social Media								
Engage secondary school students in bullying prevention and awareness initiatives (including a component on critical thinking) and campaigns such as Project Rockit or similar.	 Deliver & Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Family conflict / violence								
Include a youth lens in the work of the Ballarat Community Safety Partnership Family Violence working group and respectful relationships programs.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Improve access to information, resources and supports for issues related to family violence.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	





Focus area 5:

YOUTH INFRASTRUCTURE, SECTOR LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS



Although there are numerous youth services operating in Ballarat, there is significant value in bringing these services together on a regular basis to network with one another, discuss youth related issues and opportunities, undertake joint projects, share resources and advocate for additional resources to enhance programs, services and support offered to young people.

Council role: “Advocacy on the bigger stage for local youth issues – leading the charge with and on behalf of the youth sector”

Youth sector survey respondent

“Young people need more coordinated service support – i.e. a one stop shop. Especially important for young people with complex needs”

Youth sector survey respondent

> OUR PRIORITIES

- **Youth Infrastructure** - young people have access to safe places for social connection and support services
- **Support service access** - young people have access to information about available support services
- **Sector leadership** – youth services in Ballarat are connected and supported and work together to improve outcomes for young people.

What young people told us

28% of young people told us that they struggle to access support services when needed.

What the youth sector told us

Agencies are keen to work in partnership with Council, but also for Council to provide more support, network leadership, sharing of resources and advocacy. Some specific assistance that they would like from Council includes:

- Advocate for easily accessible information for youth on how to get help for mental health related issues
- Easily accessible information on transport options and/or lobbying for additional public transport routes or frequency of current services.
- Provide young people with an opportunity to have their voice and opinions heard
- Support the development of a regional youth hub that supports the physical, emotional and social needs of vulnerable young people through the provision of youth programs and services.

What the community told us






















The community told us that access to quality support services in the Ballarat area is a huge obstacle and the wait to see a mental health specialist is very long. Therefore, mental health issues cannot be appropriately treated.

There was strong support from community members who completed a survey for the development of a dedicated youth space where young people can access support, programs, and services.

What we will do

Council's objectives in relation to sector leadership and partnerships are:

- To develop improved provision of infrastructure for young people
- To advocate for improved support services for young people
- To support the Ballarat youth sector through facilitating network leadership and advocacy.

ACTIONS	COUNCIL'S ROLE	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAMS
Youth Infrastructure								
Undertake a study to determine the feasibility of developing an integrated and multidisciplinary youth hub in Ballarat.	 Deliver		✓				Council budget External grants	
Develop an integrated youth hub in Ballarat (if feasible).	 Deliver					✓	Council budget External grants	
Develop relationships and partnerships to expand the provision of youth infrastructure that improves outcomes in areas of safety, access to health and wellbeing, and social connection.	 Advocate		✓	✓	✓	✓	Council budget External grants	
Support service access								
Support the youth sector to advocate for additional mental health support in Ballarat for young people.	 Advocate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 
Sector leadership								
Play an active role in contributing to sector networking, professional development, advocacy and leadership via Ballarat Youth Services Network.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Provide recognition to young people celebrating their contributions and achievements via annual Youth Awards.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Improve provision of information via Youth Services landing page/website that provides program info and support services which have various methods of contact e.g. Chat function, text, phone.	 Deliver	✓	✓				Recurrent	 
Develop inclusive engagement guidelines and opportunities to ensure that young people are actively consulted, engaged and considered in Council's decision-making processes.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	 
Review and develop Youth Profile on periodic basis.	 Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	



Communication and Design



Family, Youth and Children's Services (FY&CS)



Engaged Communities

ACTIONS	COUNCILS ROLE	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026 & beyond	BUDGET	LEADING TEAMS
Sector leadership								
Increase accessibility of Parent Place and early years information for all families – inclusive of young parents, including outreach and co-delivery with community organisations.	 Deliver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Collaborate with antenatal care providers to link vulnerable young parents with the types of services they need at the earliest possible stage.	 Partner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Recurrent	
Provide diverse representation of imagery on Council social media platforms and collateral								 



Communication
and Design



Family, Youth and
Children's Services
(FY&CS)



Engaged
Communities

Implementation and evaluation



Although reporting of actions contained within this Youth Strategy lies with the Youth Services Team, overall responsibility for implementation of this Youth Strategy lies with the entire City of Ballarat. Some aspects will be the responsibility of one area of Council, whilst others will be the responsibility of multiple units working together in partnership.

The Youth Strategy should be reviewed on an annual basis by a cross-sectoral group and a new strategy should be prepared in 2025.



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