

# SURF COAST YOUTH CENSUS



## Final Report





## Engagement Overview

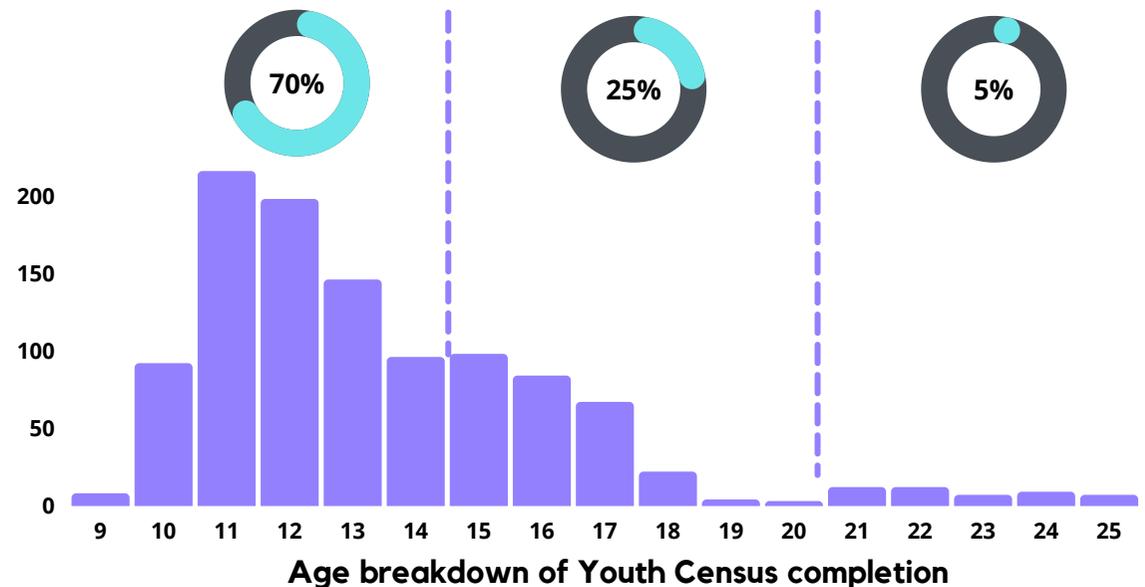
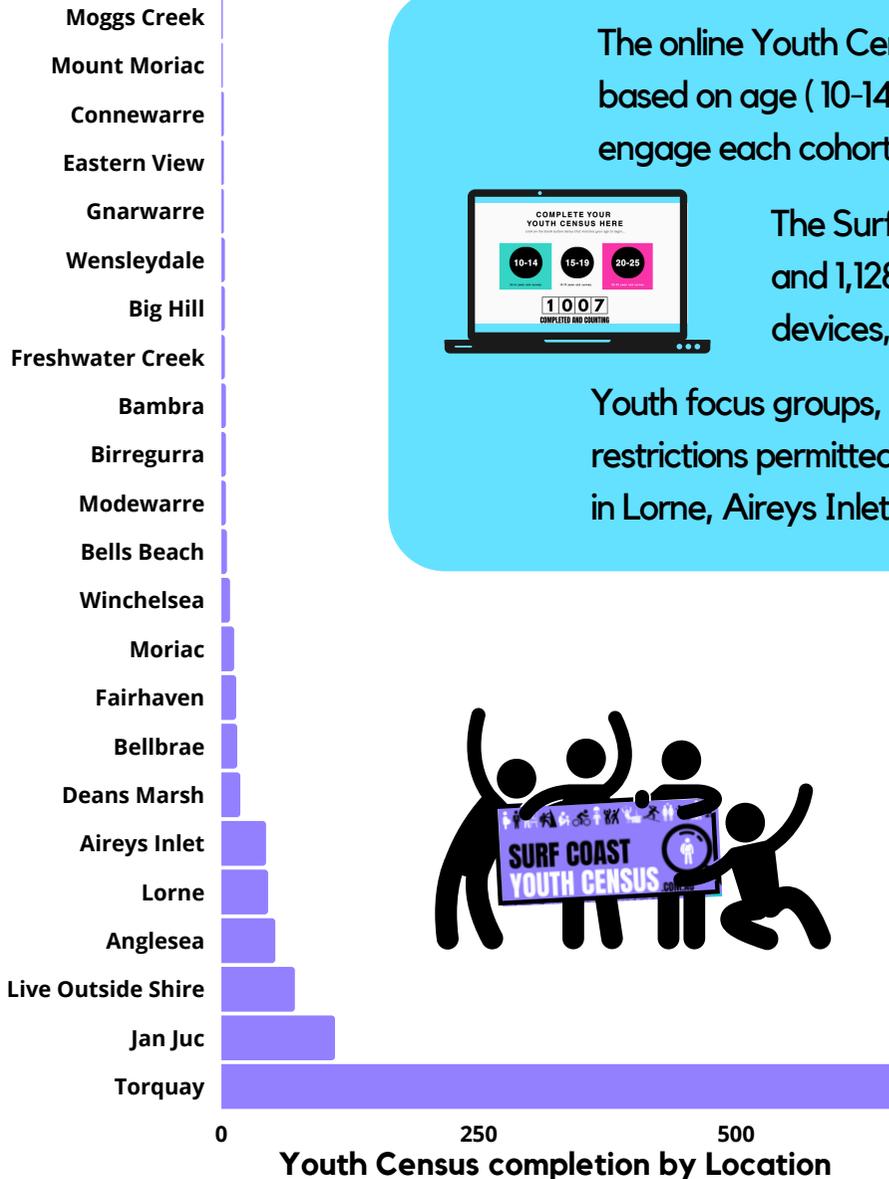
In the second half of 2021 the Surf Coast Youth Census was conducted in partnership by Surf Coast Youth, Youth Gurus and the Surf Coast Shire Council. In total 1,084 young people aged between 10 and 25 years of age completed the online youth census providing data and insight that has helped create this final report.

The online Youth Census survey was designed to target three separate cohorts based on age ( 10-14 | 15-19 | 20-25 year olds ) with survey questions being curated to engage each cohort on key issues and topics in an aged appropriate manner.



The Surf Coast Youth Census website attracted 910 unique site visits and 1,128 site sessions (572 from desktop computers, 521 from mobile devices, 35 from tablets/iPads).

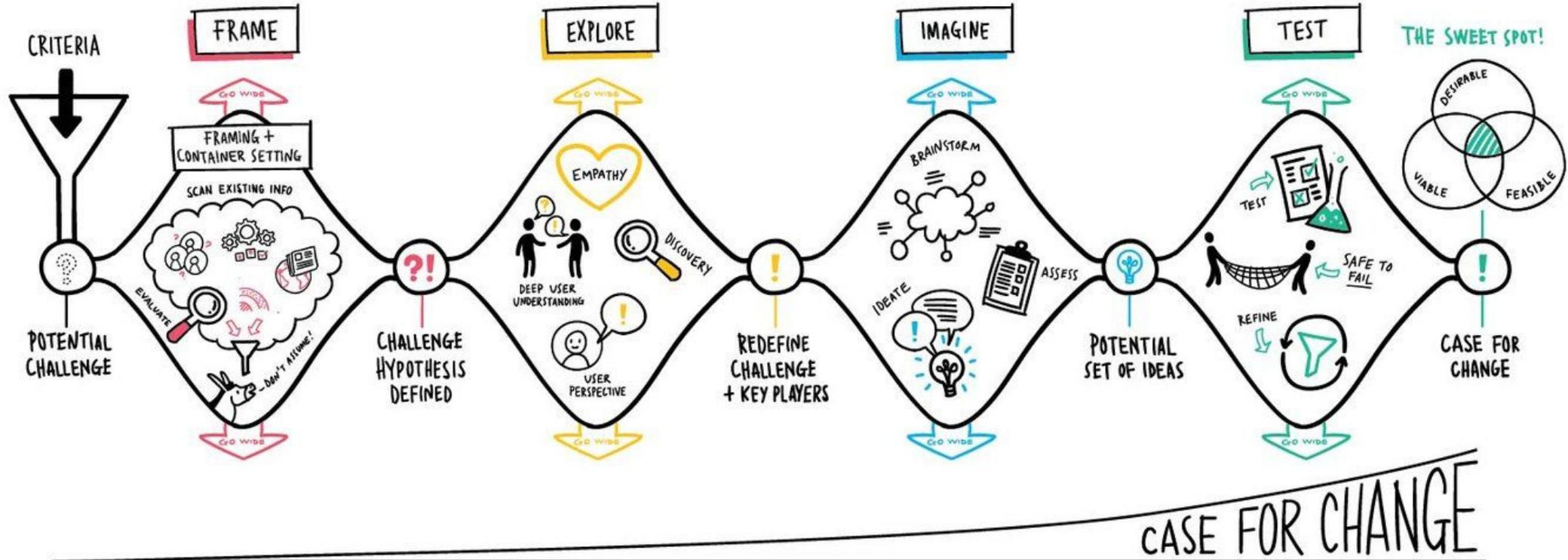
Youth focus groups, forums and engagement activities were held when Covid restrictions permitted across all four wards and engaged 150 young people including in Lorne, Aireys Inlet, Anglesea, Torquay and Winchelsea.



## Background

The Surf Coast Youth Census was commissioned to support the Surf Coast Shire Council to better understand young people including the health and wellbeing, challenges, interests and opportunities, as well as the impacts of Covid-19, and inform the Surf Coast Shire Council's future action plans, programs and services for young people.

The Youth Census was conceived as a mechanism to undertake a comprehensive research and analysis of young people aged 10-25 who live within the Surf Coast Shire. Youth Gurus and Surf Coast Youth worked collaboratively with a team of young adult co-designers from across the Shire to bring the initiative to life using the human centred design approach (below) and manage its rollout amidst Covid outbreaks/lockdowns.



# surf coast youth census report back



97% of young people would describe living on or near the Surf Coast as either good (22%), great (35%) or amazing (40%)



95% of young people said they were excited about the future. (sometimes 31% mostly 44% always 20%)



72% of young people told us they have a strong connection to their community (38% sometimes 34%)



52.5% of young people were unsure if they would be living, working or studying on or near the Surf Coast in ten years time, or not?

## What young people do for fun (top 10)

- Hanging out with friends
- Watching shows or movies
- Listening or playing music
- Time with pets/animals
- Hanging out with family
- Online gaming
- Playing sport
- Physical exercise
- Social media
- Spending time in nature



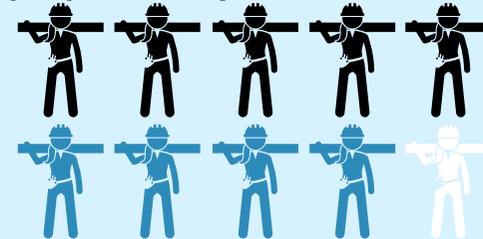
Young people described their relationship with social media as:

## Healthy (51%)

- Addictive (32%)
- Educational (27%)
- Helpful (27%)
- It's Complicated (25%)



## Young people (15-25 y.o.) and their relationship with work:



5 out of 10 young people were happy with their work status

4 out of 10 young people wanted work or more work.



9 out of 10 young people thought their parents/guardians set appropriate rules and boundaries for them in regards to:



i) how they choose to spend their own money



ii) where they go out with friends and their curfew

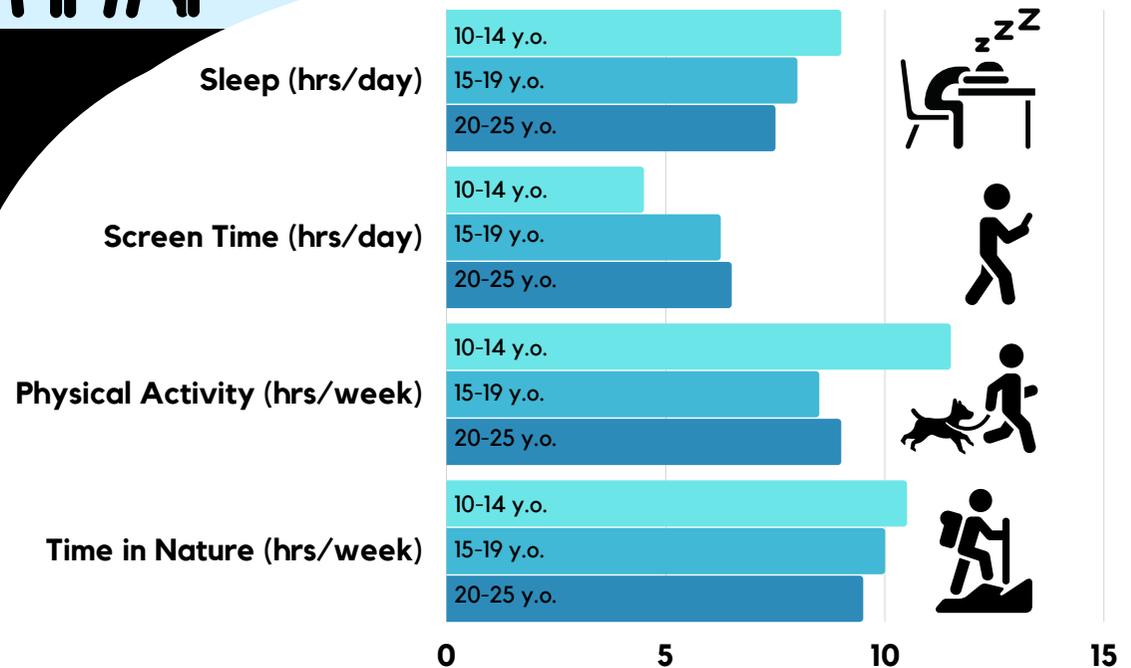


iii) what they eat and drink



iv) how much time they spend on screens/devices

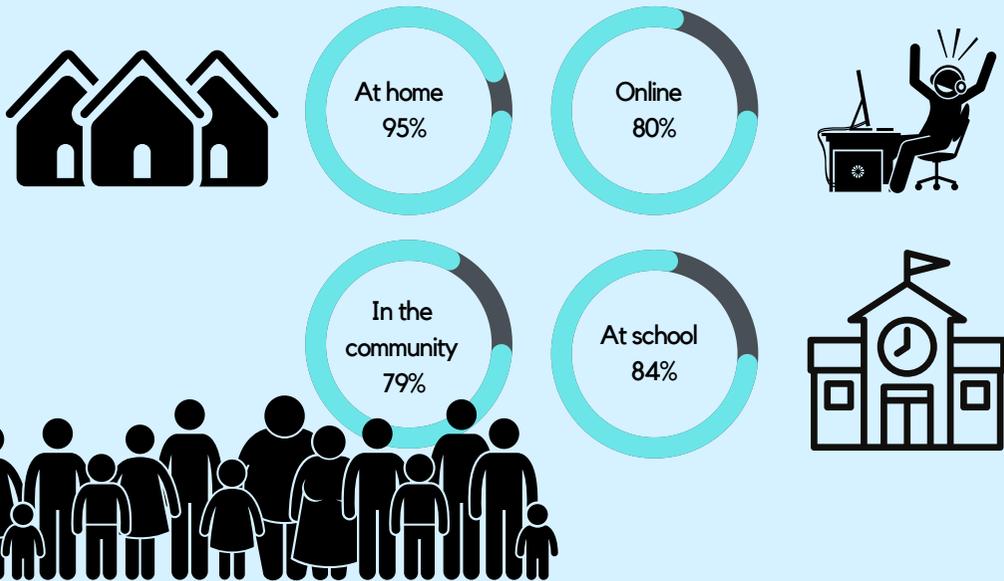
## Young people and their relationship with time:



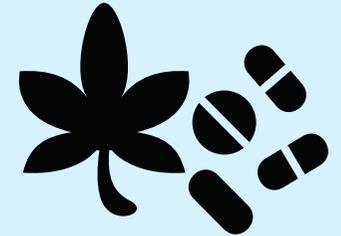
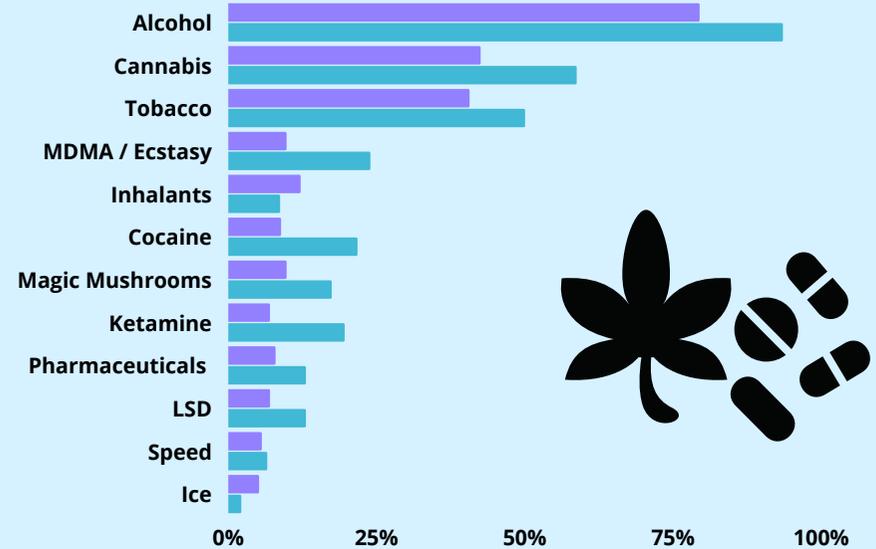
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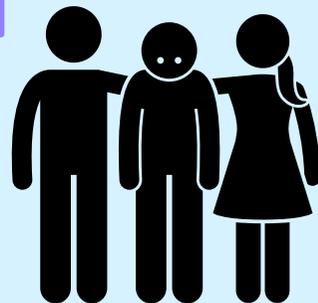
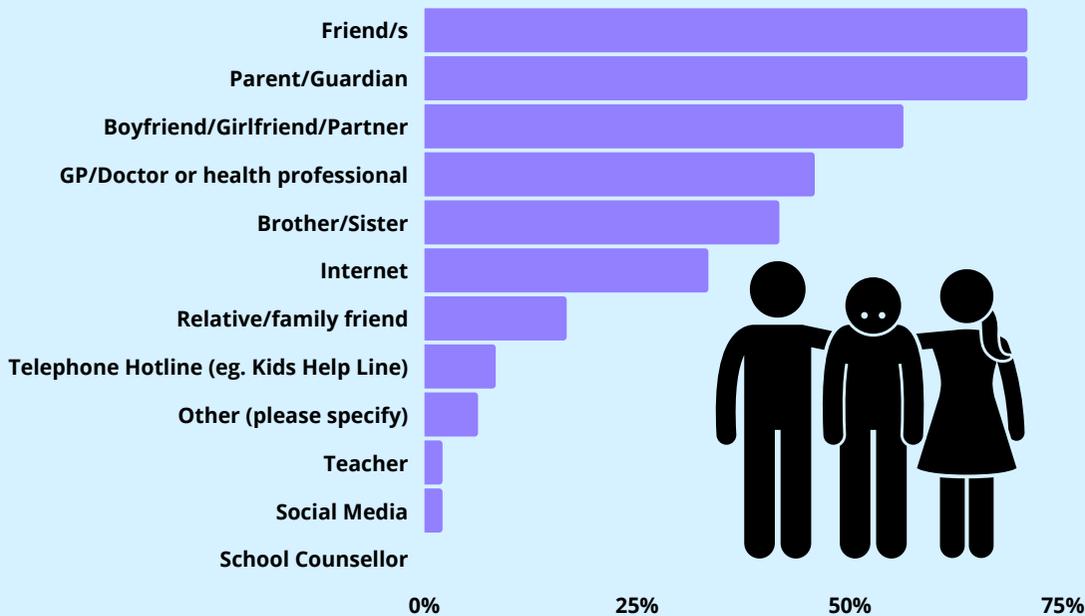
Where young people 10-25 reported feeling safe:



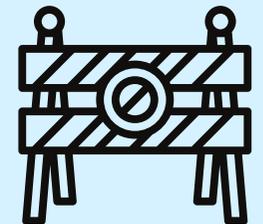
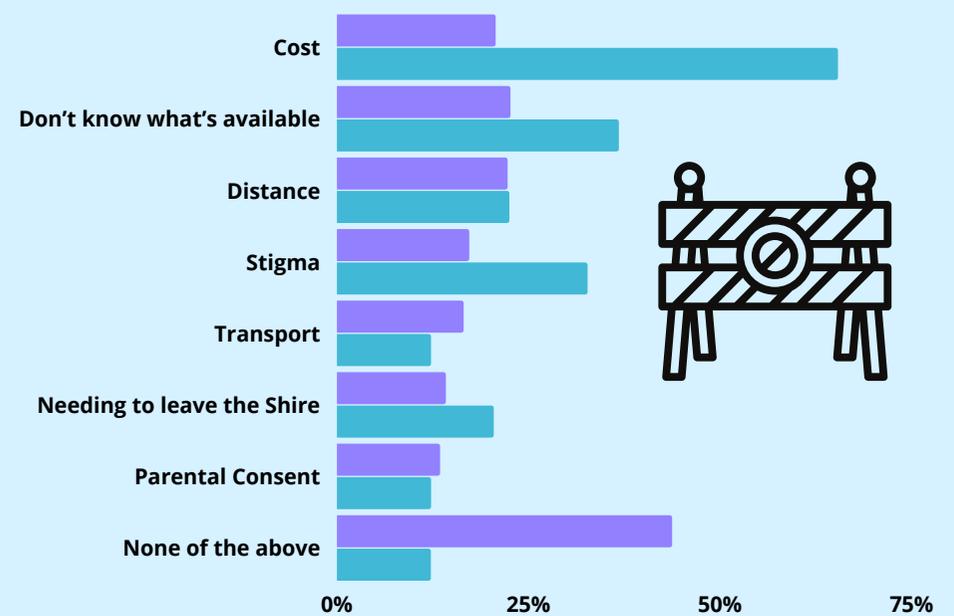
The substances young people (15-19 y.o. & 20-25 y.o.) self report ever having used before:



Where young people (10-25) reported that they would go to for help:



The barriers that exist for young people seeking help or accessing services? (15-19 y.o. & 20-25 y.o.)



## The biggest personal challenges faced due to COVID-19:



#1 Social Isolation



#2 Remote Learning



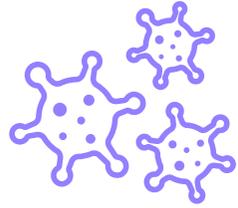
#3 Mental Health



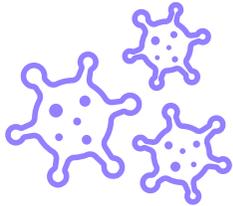
#4 Family Separation



#5 Participation in Sport



## COVID-19 has negatively impacted upon young peoples (15-25 y.o.):



#1 Activities/Interests



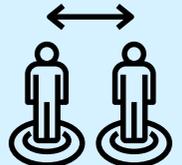
#2 Education



#3 Mental Health



#4 Physical Health



#5 Friendships

## The important things in life in a COVID-19 world:



#1 Friendships



#2 Family



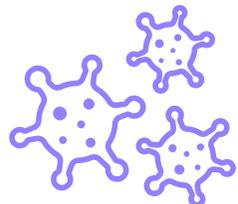
#3 Mental Health



#4 Physical Health



#5 Internet Connection



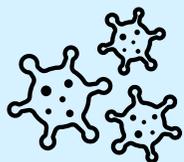
Young people were able to clearly articulate the challenges and negative impacts resulting from COVID-19 but also the things they found important in their life at the time. Like most Victorians they were frustrated by and suffering from having to isolate at home during lockdowns, not being able to see their friend and family, and from not being able to participate in social, recreational and educational activities as they normally would. The data sets above provide Surf Coast Shire Council with a set of clearly defined areas for continued and future investment to support our young people in those areas COVID-19 has had the most negative impact upon and helps reinforce and reinvest in those things young people identify as the most important things in life - friends, family, mental health, physical health and online connectivity.

# surf coast youth census report back



The issues of greatest personal concern to young people aged 15-25 y.o.

#1



Covid-19 (64%)

#2



Mental Health (60%)

#3



Anxiety (53%)

#4



Coping with Stress (53%)

#5



Body Image (52%)

#6



School/Study Problems (50%)

#7



Climate Change (45%)

#8



Physical Health (31%)

#9



Suicide (27%)

#10



Family Conflict (22%)

#11



Relationship Issues (21%)

#12



Financial Security (19%)

Data from the Surf Coast Youth Census is comparable to the finding of Mission Australia's Annual Youth Survey (15-19 y.o.) 2021:

#1 Coping with Stress

#2 Mental Health

#3 School or study problems

#4 Body Image

#5 COVID-19

#6 Physical Health

#7 Climate Change

#8 Personal Safety\*\*\*

#9 Family Conflict

#10 Discrimination

#11 Suicide

#12 Social Media

#13 Financial Security

#14 LGBTQIA+ Issues

#15 Bullying/Emotional Abuse

It is not surprising to have **COVID-19** listed as the #1 issue as the Youth Census was conducted in the second half of 2021 when Victoria was still in and out of lockdowns and remote learning. **Mental health** in all its forms (including anxiety, stress and suicide) is of concern to our young people who want more resources and supports allocated to address youth mental health in our communities.

**Body image** was an issue that was consistently raised by young people, at a higher frequency than anticipated and recorded in other statewide surveys, that should be a priority area for further examination and increase support. **Suicide** was listed as an issue by just over 1 in 4 young people in the Youth Census signalling it as a topic young people have an increased awareness of within our community and along with mental health are keen to see additional resources and youth-led initiatives delivered in the Surf Coast.

\*\*\*Personal Safety was added in 2021 and not measured in the Surf Coast Youth Census.

# surf coast youth census **report back**



## What young people (10-25 y.o.) see as the biggest issues in their community

#1



Rubbish

#2



Climate Action  
& the Environment

#3



Sport | Recreation  
Mountain Biking

#4



Anti-Social Behaviour  
Crime | Eshays

#5



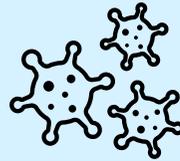
Alcohol & other Drugs

#6



Urban Growth  
& Development

#7



Covid-19

#8



Mental Health

#9



Bullying &  
Discrimination

#10



Road Safety

#11



Shops | Retail | Eateries

#12



Inclusion & Diversity

Young people in the Surf Coast Shire are upset by amount of **rubbish** left on our beaches, foreshores, parks and playgrounds. They are extremely passionate about protecting our **natural environment** and want to be better resourced to take **climate action** on both a local and global scale. Young people reported they struggled with **safety** because of discrimination, cyber-bullying or the threat of violence / sexual assault on our streets from eshays and 'creepy' or 'drug affected' men. **Drug and alcohol** use was identified as a big issue in the community, especially the youth vape culture, with higher rates of drug use reported by the older youth cohort. Young people who are concerned about the rate of **urban growth** and its impacts on the natural environment and our community, but also **a lack of affordable housing** forcing young people to leave the shire before they are ready to leave.

## What young people said:

"I want policy to make rental and home ownership more accessible. I want free programs to empower people to affect systemic change to address the climate crisis."

21 yo Torquay

"I think that there is a lot of stigma and stereotypes that teenagers are bad ... it would be nice to just be seen as a person and not a "teenager" along with all their stereotypes."

16 yo Torquay

"We need to be making mountain biking more accessible for kids looking for a sport. We need more jumps and tracks in more places in the Surf Coast please."

17 yo Lorne

# surf coast youth census report back



## What would make the Surf Coast Shire better for young people (10-25 y.o.)

#1



Recreation

#2



Youth Spaces  
Groups & Activities

#3



Entertainment, Shops,  
Retail & Eateries

#4



The Environment

#5



Mental Health  
& Support Services

#6



Less Rubbish

#7



Diversity  
& Inclusion

#8



Education

#9



Transport

#10



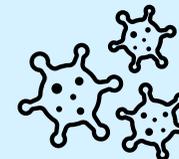
Job Opportunities

#11



Housing & Development

#12



Better Covid-19  
Response

## Breakdown of Recreation by number of mentions



Mountain Bike Jumps/Tracks (198)



Parks & Playgrounds (179)



Organised Sport (128)



Skateboard / Scooter Parks (80)



Music, Arts & Culture (77)



Aquatic Facilities (76)

More/better recreational opportunities was not only #1 way young people think we can make the Surf Coast Shire better for young people, it was also raised by 738 respondents, which is more than the rest of the top 5 topics combined. The desire to have increased **mountain bike facilities** was the standout suggestion with young people throughout the shire consistently speaking about the need for more jumps and tracks with great passion and excitement. Parks, playgrounds, skate/scooter parks, pools and splash parks as well as organised sports and music/arts/culture events were all identified as priorities for young people in their local community (as shown on the righthand side of this page).