



Banyule

City Council

**Child, Youth and Family
Consultation Findings Report**

February 2021

Collation of engagement feedback for the Child Youth and Family Plan.

4 February 2021

The purpose of this document is to bring together the feedback provided through the four engagement activities (children under school age, primary aged children, youth, and parents and carers surveys) implemented to inform the development of the next iteration of the Child Youth and Family Plan (known as the Child and Youth Framework). The document will draw out the consistent themes from each engagement activity to represent a holistic assessment of local perspective.

The themes of Physical, Social and Psychosocial have been drawn from research as described in the Draft Child and Youth Framework 2021-2031.

Physical

- Public spaces are viewed as important across all four cohorts. They are critical spaces to connect, have fun and participate in community life. Children and young people seek to be included, welcomed and have their needs met whilst in public spaces. Children want to play, explore, interact and be exposed to new experiences. Young people seek places to connect, belong and pursue their interests. Parents and carers want these spaces to be safe, inclusive, affordable, accessible and encourage children and young people to be independent. Transport routes and connections between places are seen as critical infrastructure to support movement and independence.
- The natural environment is seen as a critical, yet fragile asset that supports children and young people to experience a good life. There is a strong signal that Council are expected to take steps to address climate change and protect and preserve the natural environment. Younger children tend to value the natural environment for the play opportunities and simple enjoyment. As children get older, the natural environment is seen as a place that can challenge their skills, allow them to explore and learn and enriches their wellbeing. However, primary school aged children demonstrate the respect they hold for the natural environment and understand steps are required to protect and preserve. Young people's concern for the health and sustainability of the natural environment is amplified, listing this as one of their top three concerns.

Social

- The importance of connection to family resonated in the feedback. The results align with the research findings that suggest Council should focus efforts on supporting families to raise children and young people. Parents and carers called for better supports from Council including access to trusted, consistent information, direct support to navigate challenges and parent education sessions.
- Friends and broader support networks are also important, and the absence of these supports during COVID-19 restrictions created feelings of isolation, impacting wellbeing. Opportunities to rebuilding social would be welcomed by children, young people and parents/carers alike.
- Place making is important to all. Building local social cohesion through focusing on inclusion diversity, employment, respectful relationships, community spirit and acceptance is sought. This can be achieved by bringing people together through a diverse range of community events, cultural celebrations, activities and opportunities to connect. Place making should develop the

soft infrastructure that supports connections like libraries, clubs, sporting groups and interest-based activities. These are valued bonding links to community.

Psychosocial

- Voice, equal participation and ongoing opportunities to contribute views and perspectives becomes important as children mature. Parents and carers seek this for their children and young people, but also advise these opportunities are important to offer to families if Council is truly interested in responding to local need.
- The impact of COVID-19 on mental health is seen as an important issue that requires a response and ongoing monitoring.

Cohort specific response

Children under school age drawings

Physical

- Invest in great early childhood services so they can continue enjoy going kindergarten, child care and playgroup
- Make the parks and play spaces fun and challenging, including space for tunnel slides, see-saws, monkey bars, swings, climbing frames, playing with friends, having birthday parties, experience the 'beach' (sand and water play experiences), butterflies, have a bbq, enjoying shade, ride a bike, playing with balls etc. Hamish suggests a spaceship playground would be ideal!
- Places to take the dog for a walk like dog parks and think about "a swimming pool for our dogs".
- Children enjoy going to the shops- think about ways you can welcome children in shopping precincts.
- Children appreciate nature – they want lots of fresh air, planting of flowers, fruit trees, big trees, grass, opportunities to visit rivers and beaches, enjoying the sunshine and "some animals to pat like bunny rabbits".

Social

- Children want to connect with family and friends and have the freedom to visit and interact.
- They look forward to attending education and care services and transitioning to primary school.
- Fun and experiencing good times is important to children. They seek more opportunities and resources to play.

Psychosocial

- Harry suggests adults should focus on "allowing us [children] to be ourselves"

Primary aged children survey

Physical assets

- Children believe Council should to invest in safe, well-lit, engaging places to play that have adequate space and shade for groups of people (family and friends) to enjoy together.

- Children urge Council to protect the natural environment so they can continue to enjoy fresh air, the indigenous flora and fauna and to experience the freedom to explore the benefits of being in natural environments.
- Council can support access to material basics for those children/families in need including affordable housing, adequate clothing, food security and school supplies. Children have signalled the willingness and capacity to support these efforts.

Social assets

- Children have strong connections and value trusted adults in their lives who support them to lead a good life. There is already a great network of people supporting children, therefore Council could consider how to better support people in children's networks, such as parents.
- Life is better when doing things together, be it with family, friends or community. Find new ways to invite children to experience community life with the people that make it fun!
- As children can learn anywhere and everywhere, consider providing more diversity in the range of activities that support children to learn, and be cognisant of the varied interests and passions of children.

Psychosocial assets

- Children are willing to contribute to civic life but advise Council staff to upskill with improved engagement techniques that children respond to.
- Children understand what it means to live a good life and have ideas on how to make Banyule a better place for all. Help children find their voice and develop sustainable, accessible opportunities to be heard.
- Council should keep front of mind the impact that love, family, friendship, kindness, fun, positivity, play, helping others, storytelling and culture has on children as they grow and develop. Amplifying opportunities to experience these elements can turn a good life into a great one!

Youth survey

Physical

- Provide spaces for young people to create and be together

Social

- Support young people to develop work skills and employment pathways
- Provide free events and activities for young people
- Speak up for the rights of young people
- Uplift access to quality education and support opportunities
- Support young people to strengthen social connections
- Young people view friends, family, pets and school as positive elements in their lives. Council could consider how to support families and schools to continue to provide support to young people.

Psychosocial

- Address the short and long term COVID effects on the mental health of young people.

- Give young people opportunities to have a voice

Parents and carers survey

Physical assets

- Future proof Banyule for a hotter climate- address climate change and support sustainable living
- Invest in place making and 20-minute neighbourhoods- Focus on creating safe, affordable and diverse places and opportunities for children to broaden their knowledge and experiences and to act with agency and independence. Suggestions included fencing around playgrounds, seamless movements within the walking and bike trails, baby friendly cafes, and sustainability programs for children.

Social assets

- Invest in employment opportunities for women with children and invest in affordable housing.
- Focus on uplifting the quality of education and employment pathways for children and young people
- Provide support to parents to navigate challenges. Suggestions include more places for parents to meet, longer new parent groups, provide telehealth from pregnancy and throughout early childhood, more free supported playgroups, toddler playgroups, culturally diverse workers and NDIS advocates.
- Because of COVID, respond to social isolation and build back sustainable community connections.
- Provide access to reliable, consistent information- more and better advertising of programs, activities and services.

Psychosocial assets

- More opportunities for people to bring forward their voice and ideas.
- Support children and young people to contribute to community.
- Build parental resilience- prepare families for the parenting journey before and during developmental ages and stages by understanding the needs and experiences of families and providing tailored, relevant information (multi-modal delivery). See important issues for parent/carers.