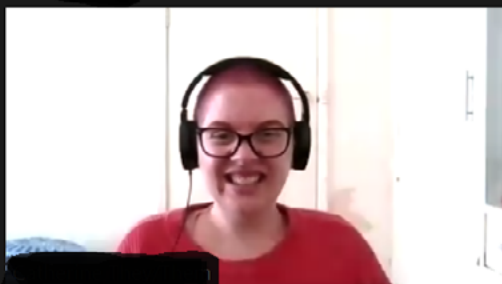
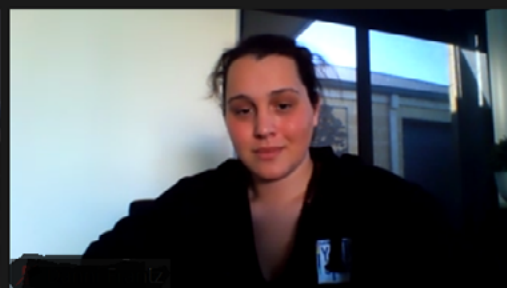


Engagement Inspiration

from Young People in Latrobe





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The Latrobe Health Advocate respectfully acknowledges Aboriginal people as the Original Custodians of the land we walk on today – the land of the Braiakaulung people of the Gunaikurnai nation and passes on respect to their Elders past and present, future and emerging.



The Latrobe Health Advocate thanks all the people who shared their time, experience, wisdom and ideas with us. It is their lived experience that we share in this document so that we might all learn to better connect, communicate with and support one another.

Ministerial Foreword

Engagement Inspiration from Young People in Latrobe

Engagement Inspiration from Young People in Latrobe encourages all of us to provide young people with opportunities to take ownership of local issues, make positive changes and be active representatives within their communities.

This report provides valuable insights into how we can engage with young people better and hear about the issues that matter to them, and how we can create and strengthen opportunities for them to take an active role in their own health and wellbeing.

Engagement Inspiration from Young People in Latrobe is a living example of how we want to engage with young people and communities, right across the state to develop a new Youth Strategy for Victoria. This strategy will draw on our learnings from the challenges we faced in 2020 and will give young people, organisations, and the broader community opportunities to direct the Andrews Labor Government's work with youth now and into the future.

We want every single young person to have equitable access to opportunities and support to participate fully in the social, economic, and civic life of our state. We want to build a strategy that will create real, meaningful change.

The Latrobe Valley is leading the way in this space. We have seen the value of youth-led initiatives through the successes of the Latrobe Youth Space and the Latrobe City Youth Council. Both of these initiatives harness the power to be found in engaging young people in decisions that impact future generations, and the value in getting our young people involved in planning and policy discussions

Young people in Latrobe have been telling us what is required to achieve lasting change for a long time now, and this report provides us with the opportunity to listen. Our young people belong, they are valued and their contributions matter.

Thank you to Jane Anderson and all of the young people across the Latrobe Valley who contributed to this report – we all have a lot to learn from your ambition and commitment to building better communities for future generations.



Martin Foley MP
Minister for Health



Ros Spence MP
Minister for Youth

Letter from the Advocate

This report captures the voices of young people in Latrobe, highlighting what enables good health and wellbeing. It delivers on my 2020-21 Statement of Intent to the Victorian Minister for Health to learn more about ways to engage with young people, and to design a health system that meets their needs.

The young people I met with expressed a strong desire to have their voices heard and for their concerns and suggestions to be acted upon. Young people have talked to me about feelings of belonging, enjoying good mental and physical health and having the support of a community that is there for them.

For the purpose of this work my office defined young people as anyone living, working or studying in Latrobe aged between 12 and 25 years. Based on the 2016 Census there are 12,718 young people in this age range that live in Latrobe, making up almost 20% of the local community.¹

Many of these young people have been raised locally and many will continue to participate in and contribute to the Latrobe and broader Gippsland community in the decades ahead. As a society we have a responsibility to create the conditions that will enable young people to thrive, to support them in their journey into adulthood and to open our minds to the possibilities that they can create into the future.

It concerns me that the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System found that one in eight 18-24 year-olds experience high levels of psychological distress. In 2017-18 more than one-quarter of mental health-related emergency department presentations were for people aged under 25 years.²

Young people have talked to me about a pressure that they feel to succeed and the impact this can have on their wellbeing. They shared their goals to achieve greater balance in life and talked about self-care, acceptance, happiness and love.

I am now focused on the systems changes that need to occur to improve the mental and physical wellbeing of young people. In bringing about change it is vital that we learn more from young people about the ideas and solutions that they have. We need to understand how they want to access services and participate in their community.

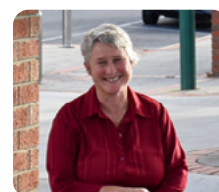
The work ahead is not about repairing a broken system, it is about building on what is already working well across all social determinants of health. The overall system needs to work together as one with young people at the centre of health, education, employment, housing, social and environmental decisions.

Young people in Latrobe have inspired me to achieve these changes and I am confident in their ability to contribute to how policies, systems and services are designed into the future. It is vital that as young people have their voice, the service system is ready to respond.

At the same time this work was occurring in Latrobe, the Victorian Government was engaging with young people across the State to inform the development of a Victorian Youth Strategy. I am pleased to have submitted this report as part of the consultation process and look forward to seeing the ideas and goals of young people in Latrobe reflected in the strategy.

I want to acknowledge the local agencies and youth workers who partnered with my office to do this work. The engagement was enhanced significantly by the advice and support I received.

I will continue to work with the Victorian Government and services operating within the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone to listen to and address the needs of young people.



Jane Anderson
Latrobe Health Advocate
May 2021

^[1] Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016 Census of Population and Housing

^[2] State of Victoria, Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, Interim Report, Parl Paper No. 87 (2018-19)

Themes

Considerations for good engagement


Engage by offering something to do and people to do it with

When we asked young people to rank their preferred ways of engaging, the standout response was about participating in social activities where there is something to do and with food and drink on offer. This may challenge some assumptions that young people and future generations prefer to connect through technology and social media.

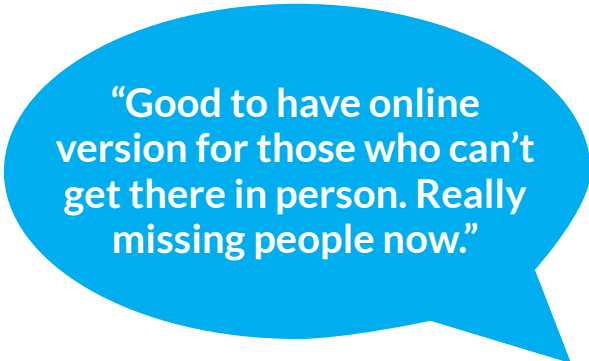
We heard suggestions that walking groups and community sport were good activities as young people can participate in the activity at the same time as talking through challenges or things that are bothering them. This incidental approach makes the conversation less intense and it is easier to talk about some things in this way.

Listen, document, analyse and share back

The young people that we spoke with were interested in having their say. They told us that they appreciate the opportunity to have their voice and for their views to be documented or analysed in some way. We heard that young people feel valued when there is a follow up or a feedback process where they are given the opportunity to see and understand the outcomes of their contributions. We heard that young people appreciated the formality of some engagement processes as this was a sign to them that their views were being taken seriously.



“This was good because we don’t usually get a chance to speak.”



“Good to have online version for those who can’t get there in person. Really missing people now.”

Engaging together alongside trusted partners leads to better conversations

We were able to connect with young people by partnering with others who already have an established trusted relationship and network. Through this partnership approach, we were able to build on existing relationships and activities within communities.

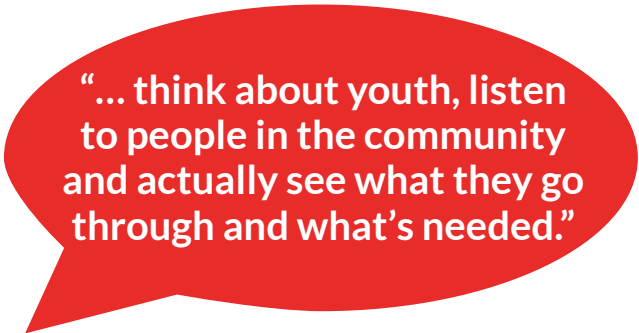
We approached this by first having conversations with agencies and groups who already engage with young people. We asked for advice about the virtual engagement activities we were planning, and we worked together to communicate the purpose of engagement and invite young people to participate.

We found that online discussions were easier and richer when the group organiser facilitated introductions and openly demonstrated their support for the work we were doing. We used an informal introductory activity to set the tone of a relaxed conversation and this helped people to feel comfortable to participate.

Young people told us that it helps to have ground rules in place so that the engagement environment and conversations are respectful. Establishing a connection with young people can take time and it helps to show patience. Young people can have their own language, expressions and terminology and other people involved in the discussion need to remain inquisitive.

We learned that preparation is vital, and it should include...

- What do we need to know about the group we are meeting with?
- Communicating ahead of time who we are and what we are doing
- Gaining consent from young people and their guardians
- Confirming which virtual platform(s) we would be using
- Clarifying who will be doing the introductions and how many young people might attend



“... think about youth, listen to people in the community and actually see what they go through and what’s needed.”

Designing virtual engagement activities that give young people options

2020 has been the year of virtual engagement. We connected with young people using digital meeting platforms such as MS Teams and Zoom. We also used interactive presentation software Mentimeter which enabled us to convert our hard copy engagement activities such as photo cards and speech bubble cards into an electronic format.

At first, we were unsure how it would work asking people to engage with us in multiple ways at once using the same screen. It was important for us to design an engagement experience that allowed people to connect with us and each other and fully participate in the conversations we were having.

We sought feedback along the way and made changes to how we were asking our questions. We found that the combination of group conversation and online interaction helped young people to see and hear the questions that we were asking, and it gave them the option of sharing their opinions in different ways. If they wanted to, young people could have their voice anonymously at the same time as being involved with a group discussion.

We found that the ideal group size for the conversations we were having was about six. If the group was too small, some young people may have felt pressured to speak and if the group was too large it would be harder to hear from everyone.

What we like about virtual engagement with options....

- No pressure to share out loud if you don't want to
- Virtual chat is a way for people to share more details and interact with others
- A combination of verbal discussion and online interaction is more inclusive
- People can remain anonymous or identify with their idea if they want to
- People can hear and see the questions we are asking

Barriers and enablers of good wellbeing

Balance and direction to achieve good mental wellbeing

Young people in Latrobe recognise that it is important to look after their mental wellbeing and have shared their aspirations to achieve happiness and an appropriate balance in life. They believe that to achieve this balance it helps to have a constructive outlook and a holistic approach to health that includes physical, mental, and spiritual.

We consistently heard that it makes a difference when young people feel a sense of belonging, can spend time doing things that they enjoy and importantly have goals to focus on. Young people have these goals for themselves and others and talked to us about their intentions to spread love and positivity and stay in contact with friends.

“Change the way you view success.”

“There’s this pressure to do well...No one congratulates you if you have a routine, but they’ll congratulate you if you graduate with honours”

Health and Wellbeing Goals	Things that get in the way	Suggestions about how to achieve good mental wellbeing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Mentally safe ✓ Healthy mind ✓ Achieving a good balance of health and wellbeing ✓ Improved mental health and reduced anxiety ✓ Feeling happier ✓ Spreading love and positivity ✓ Understanding ✓ Self-care and advocacy ✓ Access to supports for young people ✓ Actively listening to people ✓ Putting aside differences ✓ Keeping friendship group intact ✓ Sense of purpose. Belonging to a group ✓ Being able to go to people to open up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Waiting too long to see a counsellor or having a poor experience ✗ Self-expectations, pressure to be great all the time ✗ Balloon events; making something bigger than it should be ✗ Lack of self confidence ✗ Distractions ✗ Worrying about what others might say ✗ Financial issues ✗ Negative thinking ✗ Lack of motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Have goals 💡 Do what is best for you 💡 Seek help 💡 Figure out what is important 💡 Develop a routine and check in with yourself 💡 Look after yourself 💡 Review where your energy goes

Healthy food, fitness and exercise

Young people told us that it was important for them to be fit and healthy. We heard about the importance of being able to access nutritious and sustainable food. People told us that they want to consume less alcohol, energy drinks and processed foods. Some young people said that they depend on reliable access to food for their wellbeing. We heard about the importance of sport for young people, as a good way to socialise with friends, participate in their community and to be physically fit. Young people also talked about meditation and daily relaxation, noting that there is a connection between physical health and mental health.

“Physical activities are important, social media has its limitations.”

Health and Wellbeing Goals	Things that get in the way	Suggestions about how to achieve good physical health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Staying fit and having fun ✓ Keeping active ✓ More exercise ✓ Balance, learn to meditate ✓ Sport in my community ✓ Relax and take time for yourself ✓ Eating well and staying healthy ✓ Eat less junk ✓ Drink less energy drinks ✓ Eat more nutritional food ✓ Reliable access to food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Stress and anxiety ✗ Lack of time or motivation ✗ Busy with schoolwork and other activities ✗ The taste of junk food and advertising ✗ Temptation and peer pressure ✗ Procrastination ✗ Health issues ✗ COVID-19 ✗ Not having support ✗ Accessibility ✗ Family ✗ Limited access to food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Have a specific goal 💡 Stick to a schedule and program 💡 Get homework done early 💡 Have someone to help; be accountable and learn together 💡 Sleep 💡 Mindfulness and peace moments 💡 Be committed 💡 Understand your needs

A community that is there for you

When we asked young people about health and wellbeing, they talked to us about wanting reassurance that their needs will be met and that others will be there for them when they need them. Young people said that there needs to be equality and a world without discrimination. Some young people pointed out that they have no control over the world or circumstances that they have been born into and want others to have greater awareness of someone else's context.

Young people talked about the importance of helping others and knowing that this help may be returned one day when they too are in need. We heard that safe and supportive environments can be created by teachers who are able to put rules or boundaries in place that enable respect and listening. We heard that when young people feel that their community is inclusive and when they have a support network around them, they are more able to be healthy.

"Equality is a big thing that I see as important. Everyone should have an equal footing in life."

"Everybody's voice deserves to be heard, and I love a sense of community."

Health and Wellbeing Goals	Things that get in the way	Suggestions about how to be more inclusive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Feeling safe ✓ New connections ✓ Connecting with community ✓ Being supported ✓ Asking for help ✓ Having someone to trust ✓ Emotional Stability ✓ Mental health and help with holistic health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Prejudice ✗ Miscommunication ✗ Lack of shared understanding ✗ Negative relationships ✗ Feeling disrespected ✗ Difficulty accessing services ✗ Mental illness in the family ✗ Being born different to others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 💡 Better education 💡 Diverse representation 💡 Make activities relevant to individuals 💡 Pathways 💡 Increased accessibility 💡 Training 💡 Social skill training 💡 Clear communication 💡 Positive thinking 💡 Getting the help you need from others at rough times 💡 Being gritty, focused and kind 💡 Putting trust in others who can help you

Themes

What really matters

An inclusive support network of family and friends

Young people know that it is important to feel a sense of belonging and that being loved and cared for matters. This love and care can come from family and friends and makes the difference between someone feeling alone or helpless and someone feeling safe and looked after. We heard young people describe their family as people close to them who they love and who can take care of and listen to them. Young people also talked about their pets who can help them when they are feeling sad.

Self-care, happiness and love

Young people consistently talked about the importance of looking after their own mental wellbeing. Equally important was a common desire for everyone in the community to enjoy happiness. Young people described this as everyone being able to do whatever makes them happy.

Support from society to be fitter and stronger

Many young people enjoy sport and exercise. They are mindful of what they eat and drink and want to be fit and healthy. We heard from young people that everybody has the right to feel good about themselves and their bodies. We heard that it is important for young people to be able to access community sport and have a go. Access to sport can be impacted by cost and proximity to home or transport.

“I want a world where everyone is cared for, has their human rights respected and we look after each other and our planet.”

Having people and place to go to within their community

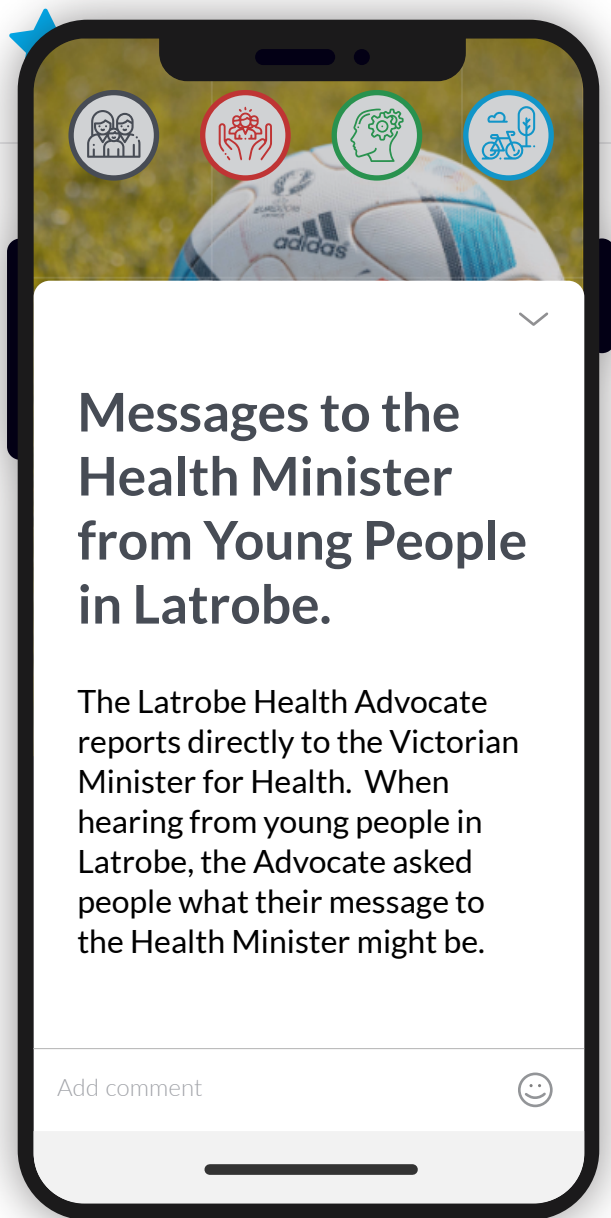
We heard about the importance of mental health support workers, sport and fitness programs, health and social services. Young people told us that they need to know who to go to and how to gain access. They told us that it needs to feel safe to reach out and speak up.

Learning that leads to life outcomes

When young people talked to us about education they talked about the importance of learning about life and social skills and how to interact in society. Some young people expressed a view that they could not make the connection between what they are learning at school and skills they might need for life. For example, learning French or Indonesian but not sign language, and learning complex mathematics but not being taught about the tax system. Young people recognise that education is important in relation to future job opportunities and for creating a more inclusive society, learning about other people's needs and cultures.

Human and environmental rights – doing something about it

Young people in Latrobe want to see action taken to address human and environmental rights. It is important to young people that they are supported to advocate for themselves and others. They want to live in a world where everyone's rights are respected and where the planet is looked after. There is a strong awareness amongst young people in Latrobe about protecting the planet, preventing the effects of climate change and protecting the future. Young people have said that they want to put more protections in place to end unsustainable and polluting industries.



Messages to the Health Minister from Young People in Latrobe.

The Latrobe Health Advocate reports directly to the Victorian Minister for Health. When hearing from young people in Latrobe, the Advocate asked people what their message to the Health Minister might be.

Add comment



Free education programs that support social relationships and support. Esp for parents and friends. Better outreach – look for people in need as well as accepting self referrals.

Teach the importance of mental health in schools

My message to the Health Minister is that I think that it is important for the community to maintain holistic sustainability (across all dimensions of health).

Maybe if there was a way to get wifi to do the tafe courses that u were meant to do but couldn't because no wifi or internet access

Please fund a livable wage in the wake of covid, obtain more affordable public housing, end homelessness, and keep pushing to protect human and environmental rights. Please listen to LGBT+ people, indigenous people, and other marginalised groups.

People may feel discriminated against if they don't understand

Would like to see more money spend into health and well-being and more money spend into jobs around the valley

You are doing a good job at what you are doing, however there should be more target at mental health and removing the stigma

Emphasising the importance of self-acceptance/love is essential to ensure young people are comfortable with themselves. Promoting strategies surrounding self-love, as opposed to measuring success in quantifiable measures (atars, marks, insta likes).

We can't live on a dead planet we need a healthy planet to live well

Help promote any and all health and well being organisations as it is important to get the word out there that these organisations exists

My message would be to make sure that all services and activities run are non discriminatory. Eg not running activities that are boys verse girls as many do not identify as either these genders

More support for young members of the LGBT+ community

More support into mental health services. With little access to services (long wait times, lack of specialising practitioners) young people can be even more hesitant to make the big leap to take care of themselves.

Helping young people get involved in community sporting groups and making them affordable so young people can have a crack at sports without being under financial stress

It is important to recognise the barriers effecting young people in regional areas. Accessibility to services is imperative to wellbeing and stigma towards mental health can be reduced with the well considered strategies and support.

More support to the LGBTAIQ+ is very much needed as many get discriminated against for being gay, bi, lesbian, etc.

More mental health support for youth with parents/guardians that don't think they have anything wrong with them // make information on where these young people can find support more readily available.





I think that there should be a lot more encouragement towards highschool students in particular to maintain their physical health, and to continue being involved in sport

Mental health needs to be discussed more!

Support being unknown to people

Resource heaps of prevention services from mental health support to the arts – consolidate, renew, and reunite the community sector so it can actually be effective again

**Towards stopping discrimination

Some form of campaign where students have a day where they are asked questions in a booth with some form of counselor and the counselor makes a decision regarding the mental health of that student. This would be a very basic detection system.



Importance of having knowing how to best look after your mental health

Remove the stigma around mental health and try to help more toward discrimination so those who feel so don't need to assimilate

Continue funding those organisations that promote health AND well-being, especially streetgames :)

Making the education regarding drugs only make it an optional for doing assignments and test about them. I feel like many of the youth might assign a negative connotation about their authorities (teacher) enforcing that 'drugs are bad'

More access to health and well-being programs



Important to emphasise the importance of mental stability

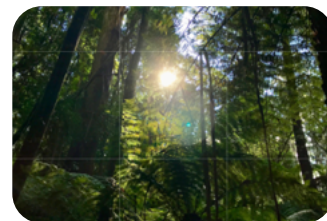
Understand perceptions of disability so people can enjoy their lives

Put more health protections in place to end unsustainable and polluting industries

Need a shared understand of people's circumstances

More awareness and services around mental health and removing social oppression in regards to male and female mental health

Create new ways to improve pollution make being outside a more refreshing activity



A spiritual angle would be an interesting angle to look

All kinds of health and support are much more important in person, and services, even if more safety precautions are in place (ie spacing, cleanliness, shields/equipment)





Insight 1

The weight of expectation

Young people in Latrobe have described a pressure that they feel to succeed and the impact this can have on their wellbeing. This pressure is associated with school, relationships, work and fitness. When young people talked about this pressure, they also shared their goals to achieve greater balance in life. They talked about self-care, acceptance, happiness and love.

Young people talked to us about the unintended consequences of celebrating academic success and the impacts of schools, students or parents creating expectations that centre on grades and comparative rankings. We heard that award ceremonies are important in that they celebrate someone's achievements, however some young people can walk away from these experiences feeling intimidated. We also heard that young people who are recognised for their academic performance can feel pressured to continue to perform. We heard examples of young people no longer talking to others about their results for these reasons.

Young people do recognise the importance of having goals and being supported by others to achieve these goals. We heard that a future oriented mindset and sense of purpose is good for mental wellbeing. Young people suggested that goals and results need to be more oriented towards personal

progress and development and not measured by rankings or comparisons to others. They also suggested that it was important to continually manage your own self-expectations and to not be too hard on yourself.

The Office of the Advocate is now reflecting on...

What are the government policies and programs that impact how schools, workplaces and young people define success? What changes need to occur to achieve an appropriate balance that recognises individual commitment and personal development?

What if...

Young people were given the opportunity to design recognition processes, academic and sporting award ceremonies? What would they come up with and how might this positively influence wellbeing outcomes?



Insight 2

Young voices making a difference

Young people want to have their voice and for this to contribute to making a difference. We have observed that young people in Latrobe are insightful and can offer meaningful, informed opinions and ideas. We found that young people were willing to share and wanted confirmation from us that their experiences would be valued and utilised.

We observed that through active listening and demonstrating openness and respect for what we were hearing, young people were encouraged to share more. This inspired and energised us to understand more about what we could do to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for young people in Latrobe.

Young people told us that it was helpful when we used interactive platforms to display their notes and ideas as they could see that their views and opinions were being recorded.

“As kids there’s not really much to say – we can’t really do anything until we’re older”

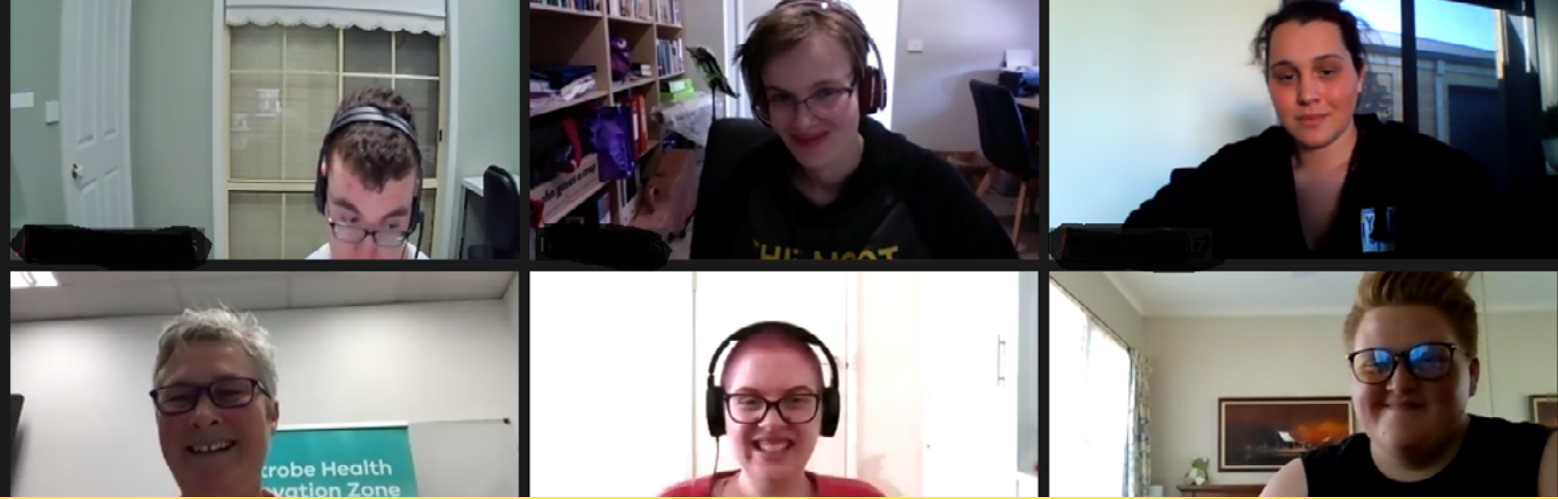
When we went back to young people to share our draft insights and analysis, they could see that we were taking their contributions seriously. They told us that they were more inclined to participate and have their voice if they knew that the engagement had purpose and would lead to outcomes.

The Office of the Advocate is now reflecting on...

How can we continue to hear from and work together with young people in more of our work into the future and what difference can their contributions make?

What if...

Young people in Latrobe were provided with even more opportunities to have their voice and contribute to the design and delivery of local services within the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone?



Insight 3

Building on the strengths of the existing system

From the outset of our engagement we reached out to existing groups and organisations that already work with young people. We sought their advice and created opportunities to engage with young people together. Some of the partners that we worked with included Latrobe Youth Space, Latrobe Street Games, Headspace, Centre for Multicultural Youth, the Ladder Program and Latrobe City Youth Council. We also met with young people who receive supports from social and housing services. By working in this way, we were able to see first-hand what is working and to learn about the strengths of existing structures and relationships within the region.

Local staff and youth workers were involved in our engagement activities and this helped us to establish rapport and to generate dialogue with young people.

We were inspired by the optimism and enthusiasm generated through the Street Games crew, all of whom were part of the young person demographic. We could see that the Ladder Program supports young people to set and achieve goals and that Latrobe Youth Space and Headspace were regarded as inclusive and safe. The young people involved with the Latrobe City Youth Council had a greater awareness of government structures and seemed more familiar with how their views could contribute to policy and program design.

We could see that young people, supported by Anglicare, are very familiar with social and housing services and were well informed to share feedback and ideas with us about how the service system can impact their health and wellbeing.

The Office of the Advocate is now reflecting on...

There are various programs and activities in Latrobe that effectively engage young people and support them to achieve their health and wellbeing goals. What needs to occur from a policy and strategy perspective to learn from and build on this work so that it can positively impact more young people and over a longer period of time?

Our engagement approach was enhanced significantly by the advice we received from local groups and organisations. Who else can we partner with into the future and what difference will this make to our work?

As part of our engagement approach, we made efforts to hear from young people who may not already be connected with services and programs. We did this through a poster campaign and social media; however, the response rate was low. What might we do differently in the future to communicate with and reach out to young people who are not already engaged?

What if...

The leaders and service providers supporting young people could share their operating models and approaches to engagement with health services and government to inform and help others to listen to and respond to young people?



Insight 4

The pros and cons of virtual engagement

The global coronavirus pandemic has led to worldwide uptake of virtual engagement and meeting platforms. The way we engage is entirely different, and through this rapid period of change we have had the opportunity to design various ways of hearing from people online.

We found that young people were quite comfortable engaging with us online, and capable of using different platforms and sharing their views in different ways. It was important to provide options in the ways young people could share their views and we were careful not to inadvertently put pressure on a single young person during group conversations by putting them on the spot. Young people told us that they appreciated this and suggested that the 'hand up' function is a great way to make it safe for people to speak if they want to, and to be OK with it if people didn't want to say anything at all.

When we asked young people about their preferred methods of engaging, they said that their first preference is to participate in in person activities and that digital or online engagement is considered as complementary to this.

The Office of the Advocate is now reflecting on...

How do we bring people into the conversation without spotlighting them and making them feel uncomfortable if we don't know them, particularly in the virtual world?

There are many benefits to virtual engagement however, young people have told us that their preferred way of

Pros

- Many young people have grown up with technology and electronic communication
- It can be more convenient and accessible for some people
- There are options for people to contribute in different ways such as chat or emojis
- Camera on or off is an individual choice
- Young people can engage from the comfort and safety of a location of their choice
- Young people are not dependant on transport to participate
- Young people can identify themselves or contribute anonymously
- It can create a more equal conversation
- In having more conversations to achieve a deeper understanding, we can strengthen relationships

Cons

- It takes longer to establish rapport
- It can be harder to read body language and social cues
- It takes more conversations and virtual interactions to achieve a deep understanding
- It might be intimidating to join a virtual group if you don't know anyone
- It can become transactional and process focused instead of relational
- Not everyone has access to technology or data, poor internet connection makes it hard
- Technology does not always work

engaging is in person. How might we combine the best aspects of in person and virtual engagement approaches into the future?

What if...

Governments and services could work together with young people in Latrobe to address some of the barriers and challenges to participating in virtual engagement activities?

Active reflection


Questions that might get you started...

If you are a **decision maker** consider;

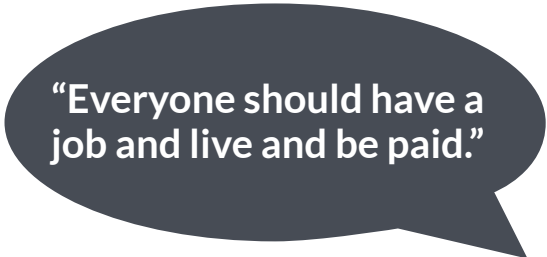
- What are you doing to understand and meet the needs and goals of young people?
- How can you demonstrate to young people that their opinion matters?
- What opportunities are there for you and your organisation to partner with local agencies and leaders that are already engaging well with young people?
- If a young person had your job for a day, what might they do differently to you?

If you are a **staff person, family member or friend**, consider;

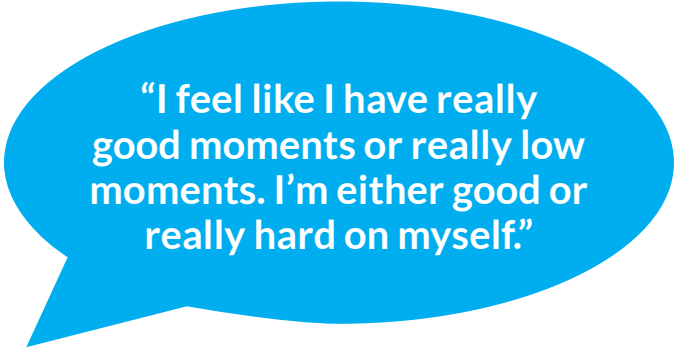
- What can you do to help young people when they need you and how do they know this?
- Are you working and communicating in ways that young people can relate to?
- What more can you do to help young people to know that they belong?



"We look out for balloon events – things that people put a bit too much air in..."



"Everyone should have a job and live and be paid."



"I feel like I have really good moments or really low moments. I'm either good or really hard on myself."

If you are a young person in Latrobe, consider;

- What matters to you and how can you let others know about this?
- What are your goals and aspirations and who can help you to achieve them?
- When do you feel the weight of expectation? How does this impact you and how do you respond to this?
- What might need to change and who can help you?

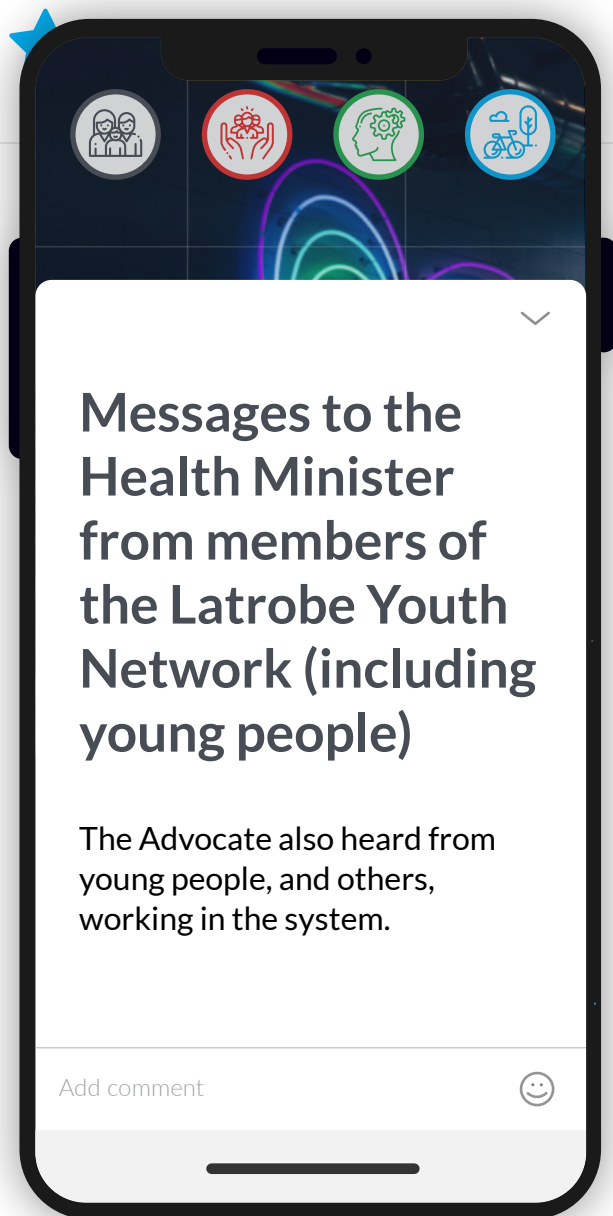
“Why are we learning French and Indonesian but why don’t we learn sign language then anyone could do it.”

It is important to recognise the barriers effecting young people in regional areas. Accessibility to services is imperative to wellbeing and stigma towards mental health can be reduced with well-considered strategies and support.

“You should do what you can to help people.”

“Change the DHHS system so that kids are parented well.”

“We live in a democracy, so we’re heard but they don’t take action, there’s no change... nothing happens so the next time why would you do it.”



Messages to the Health Minister from members of the Latrobe Youth Network (including young people)

The Advocate also heard from young people, and others, working in the system.

Add comment



We need consistency in providing support to our young people. Please listen to what young people are asking for. Make it easy for them to get the support when they are asking for it

Rebates for healthy eating

"Don't cut funding on programs that work and have youth engaged"

Need 5-10 years funding

Enable each LGA determine what programs/service that they want funded

More funding to develop a strategy plan for healthy community

Connect the dots more

Access to all my health needs, regardless of rural or metro, make being healthy affordable including dentistry, optometry, gym, gender transition, and more funding for community programs

Better transport

Network

Keep funding programs that work without too many hoops to jump through

Provide some flexibility in delivery of funded programs to allow for innovation

Go to where the people are

More sport & rec support

The Office Housing having Youth Only Accommodation

More employment & education support

More youth focused mental health programs

Keep funding and try engaging the people in community. Provide sports equipment and memberships collaborating with other services. Bringing out people with food and drinks get together

We need more funding for healthy eating programs & access to good food through community programs

Educate youth workers for modern youth so they understand each other better

Please provide long term programs that the youth would like and need that helps prevent youth issues rather than a band aid. Please make it easily accessible and approachable to all youth

Rebates for Gym/Sport Memberships

One size does not fit all

More collaboration

Place based solutions, grassroots delivery





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