



A SNAPSHOT OF THE YACVIC RESPONSE TO THE MELBOURNE METROPOLITAN PLANNING STRATEGY.

Young people shared their ideas about the future of Melbourne through a consultation YACVic undertook on behalf of the Department of Planning and Community Development. The following provides a snapshot of these ideas and is based on data collected from 75 young people through focus groups and an online survey. The full report is available at www.yacvic.org.au

What do young people value about Melbourne overall?

Young people reported valuing the distinctiveness of Melbourne and stressed the importance of these qualities being retained as the city grows. They also expressed a desire to see some of the things that characterise the CBD happening in the suburbs. Examples included: more festivals events and gigs, and greater acceptance and celebration of both social and cultural diversity. The key things young people reported valuing about Melbourne were:

Activities, festivals and events make Melbourne a hive of activity. A place where you can have fun with friends, meet new people and feel you're a part of something bigger.

The unique mix of built and natural environments was highly valued, in particular having easy access to both the city and the beach.

Diversity is accepted and celebrated, you can be yourself and everyone is unique.

Cultural vitality, including music, art, sports and dining culture are a key part of Melbourne's identity.

"Melbourne is a massive music-based community and I think that is really awesome... for me personally, music is a big part of my life so having so many venues all around Melbourne where people can hold concerts is really cool... it's a really big thing in making Melbourne a place where I want to live."

"You can go from being in a central hub where things are happening on the streets, to being in a nice quiet area and being on your own and being able to experience nature and wildlife."

"When you go to a music festival, gig, or a big sporting event, everyone is your friend."

“Melbourne should be a place where you don’t have to try hard to find happiness or to fit in... everyone should have a fair chance to be healthy and happy.”

What improvements do young people want to see?

Feeling safe was important to young people with many reporting feeling unsafe in the suburbs where they live. Poor lighting, anti-social behaviour and unreliable or infrequent public transport were all things that contributed to young people feeling less safe in the suburbs than they felt when they were in the CBD. At times these fears limited social opportunities and made young people reliant on parents to drive them around. Increasing access to services was cited as a key measure to make communities safer, along with better lighting, wider streets, and more frequent and reliable public transport.

Transport repeatedly came up as area for improvement and was a key factor in shaping young people’s access to employment, education and recreational activities. Even when the distances between things were small, without a car they were often difficult – if not impossible – to navigate. Young people suggested that public transport should focus on getting people around their local area, not just in and out of the CBD. They also wanted more frequent, reliable, accessible and safe services.

Housing affordability was cited as a major issue of frustration for young people. There was an overwhelming sense that being a home-owner was not a realistic goal for the future and that even finding a stable place to rent was a challenge.

Access to education and employment opportunities

were thought to vary based on where you live – with young people reporting greater access to both in inner city areas. They said that they would like to have more choice and also felt that more money should be spent on keeping facilities up-to-date, particularly in public schools. With regard to tertiary education young people suggested that both variety and quality were higher closer to the CBD.

Culture, character and stereotypes

related to particular places made some young people feel less inclined to remain in their current suburb on a long-term basis. Many felt that the idea of Melbourne as a place where you can ‘be yourself’ was less applicable in the outer suburbs. They described feeling that the suburbs were more homogenous and less accepting of diversity. This resulted in increased pressure to conform to social ideals and, in some cases, reduced feelings of safety.

“I don’t think it will be that easy for us if we want to buy a house, it seems like it would be too difficult; I feel annoyed about that, I want my own house and I want to grow veggies and have a dog and stuff.”

“We are not using houses for what they are for, which is for living... just using them for investment and to make money.”

What do young people value about the suburbs where they live?

Although young people spoke enthusiastically about the buzz of the city centre, they also liked the idea of 'living locally' and were receptive to proposed investment in economic opportunity outside the CBD. The key things young people reported valuing about the suburbs where they lived were:

Cleanliness and proximity to nature were highly valued as was clean air, clean streets and access to walking tracks, parks and bike paths.

Affordability was cited by young people in outer suburban areas as an important feature of the places where they lived. Many felt that the cost of living was far more manageable than it would be if they lived closer to the CBD. One notable exception were young people in Footscray, who appreciated being able to live so close to the city without paying exorbitant rents.

"When I think of Melbourne, it's not just the city centre, because I don't really spend much time there, it's more about the suburbs and both of them together how they meld together... it's just homely and it's like a bit of a sense of community pride there."

Events, activities and services were important in fostering a sense of community. Young people liked living close to family and friends and also valued living in communities that were lively, multicultural, had access to good educational opportunities and had lots to do.

Creating a sustainable environment for the future

Young people are acutely aware of environmental challenges. Continued commitment to existing behaviour change programs (e.g. recycling, reducing energy consumption) and innovative approaches to new ones (e.g. ethical consumption) were cited as helpful ways of getting everyone on board to preserve Melbourne's environment. Things that young people wanted to see government and corporations doing to help the environment included: greater investment in, and commitment to, using renewable energy sources; the protection of natural resources and green spaces around Melbourne; funding for innovative programs and initiatives; and running promotion and awareness raising campaigns.

Getting Involved

Young people overwhelmingly agreed that they should be involved in planning for and shaping the future of the places where they live. They suggested that the best way to gain young people's input was to make sure consultation activities are interesting and accessible. They stressed the importance of informing young people on the issues, as well as consulting them and making sure young people's inputs are valued. The range of ways in which young people are already involved in their communities was also clearly evident. Creating strong links between local level community engagement and state level decision making is a great way to tap into this and ensure a strong role for young people in shaping the places where they live.

"Listen to us, I feel like these days we are written off really quickly because of the stereotypes attached to us."

More young people would want to get involved in their communities if they felt that they would be listened to."

THANK YOU to all of the young people who took part in this consultation.

To check out other submissions received by the Metropolitan Planning Strategy, or to find out what happens next, visit: www.planmelbourne.vic.gov.au

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