

Attachment 3

YOUTH ISSUES PROFILE



A RESEARCH REPORT INTO THE
PRIORITY NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN
GREATER BENDIGO

2017



CITY OF GREATER
BENDIGO

Acknowledgement of Country

The City of Greater Bendigo is on both Dja Dja Wurrung and Taungurung Country, whose ancestors and their descendants are the traditional owners of this Country.

We acknowledge that they have been custodians for many centuries and continue to perform age old ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. We acknowledge their living culture and their unique role in the life of this region.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Young people in Greater Bendigo, like young people all around Australia, are concerned about a range of issues that directly and indirectly impact on them personally and the communities in which they live. Greater Bendigo's young people have shown through a series of surveys and consultations that while they identify some issues of personal concern such as *coping with stress*, *school and study issues*, *body image*, *education*, and *employment*, they also identify other issues they believe are of concern to the local community such as, *crime and safety*, *mental health*, and *discrimination*.

The Youth Issues Profile provides an overview and analysis of the key issues raised by young people. The priority areas examined in this profile include mental health, education, training and employment, income, personal safety, drugs and alcohol, transport, physical and sexual health, discrimination, and connecting to community. Where possible this profile compares Greater Bendigo data to National or Victorian data.

The Profile demonstrates that young people in Greater Bendigo:

- Have higher levels of mental health related issues than young people on average in Victoria.
- Are overall happier than young people at a national level, but that, slightly more young people in Greater Bendigo are very unhappy compared to young people nationally.
- Have lower levels of Year 12 attainment and higher levels of early leavers from school.
- Have lower levels of further education or training and higher levels of deferral from further education or training. With higher levels of part-time employment for those deferring than the average Victorian rate leading to a higher risk of disengagement from education, training, and employment.
- Have higher levels of receiving youth allowance than on average in Victoria.
- Feel less safe in their community, including while at home and on public transport.
- Are more likely to be a victim of crime and more likely to commit a crime than the average in Victoria.
- Have higher drug and alcohol usage rates and treatment rates than on average in Victoria.
- Have some issues with transport, especially young people living in rural areas of Greater Bendigo.
- Have lower levels of health in most health indicators than on average in Victoria, except for exercise levels.
- Have experienced less discrimination because of ethnicity than nationally.
- Are less connected to their peers than on average in Victoria.
- More active in participating in sport, but less active in participating in other community activities than nationally, and felt less able to have their say than on average in Victoria, except at school.

This profile also identifies several gaps in local data. These include suicide rates, cyber bullying rates, more in-depth data on the impacts of transport issues in rural areas, a better understanding as to why many health indicators are below the State average, and data on discrimination experienced by young people because of disability, gender, and sexuality. As well, it would be helpful if more recent data regarding many major issues was available than is currently the case.



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the City of Greater Bendigo's (the City) Youth Strategy 2017 - 2021 Youth Issues Profile.

The new Youth Strategy titled *Explore Engage Empower: Young People in Greater Bendigo* focuses on the needs of young people aged from 12 to 24 years. A focus on young people in this age range is in accordance with the State Government's youth policy "*Building Stronger Youth Engagement in Victoria*" and the most recent Commonwealth Government youth policy the "*National Strategy for Young Australians (2010)*".¹

The Youth Issues Profile is a key element in the youth strategy evidence base that comprises six other reports, these being: the Youth Demographic Profile, Review of Plans, Policies and Reports, *Having Our Say* - Community Engagement Report, Service Mapping Report, Benchmarking against two other local governments; and the COG Vision and Strategy Plan (45 Mundy Street Facility). Along-side these reports the Youth Issues Profile provides a comprehensive evidence base to support the development and implementation of the Youth Strategy 2017 – 2021.

The Youth Issues Profile contains findings and analysis concerning the priority issues identified by young people during the engagement process undertaken to assist focus the development of the Youth Strategy for the next four years. Where possible the report provides a comparison to the National and/or Victorian data and trends. To help prepare the profile, research and reports have been sourced via various government departments and organisations whose primary concern is youth health and wellbeing. There are some gaps in the data that appear throughout this report due to the unavailability of local data, while some data is dated and therefore possibly not totally representative of current trends, but is the only data available. This suggests new research is required to ensure that the City and community is informed and has a good understanding about the needs and issues being faced by young people in Greater Bendigo.

BACKGROUND

At the time of the Census in 2011, there were 18,315 young people aged between 12 and 24 years in Greater Bendigo, which accounted for 18.2% of the overall population of 100,611. The suburb with the highest percentage of 12 to 24 years olds was Flora Hill – Quarry Hill – Spring Gully – Golden Gully with 24.4% of the population, while the suburb with the lowest percentage of 12 to 24 years olds was Heathcote and District with 12.9%. The projected population of Greater Bendigo in 2036 is expected to be 156,151, representing an average growth rate of 1.7% per annum from 2011 to 2036. While the projected population of 12 to 24 year olds in Greater Bendigo for 2036 is expected to be 25,890 or 16.9% of the population. The suburb forecast to have the highest number of 12 to 24 years olds in 2036 is Flora Hill – Quarry Hill – Spring Gully – Golden Gully with 2,607 residents aged 12 to 24. But while suburbs like Flora Hill will continue to have high numbers of young people, the suburb of Huntly is expected to grow by 225.8% to 1,900 by 2036.²

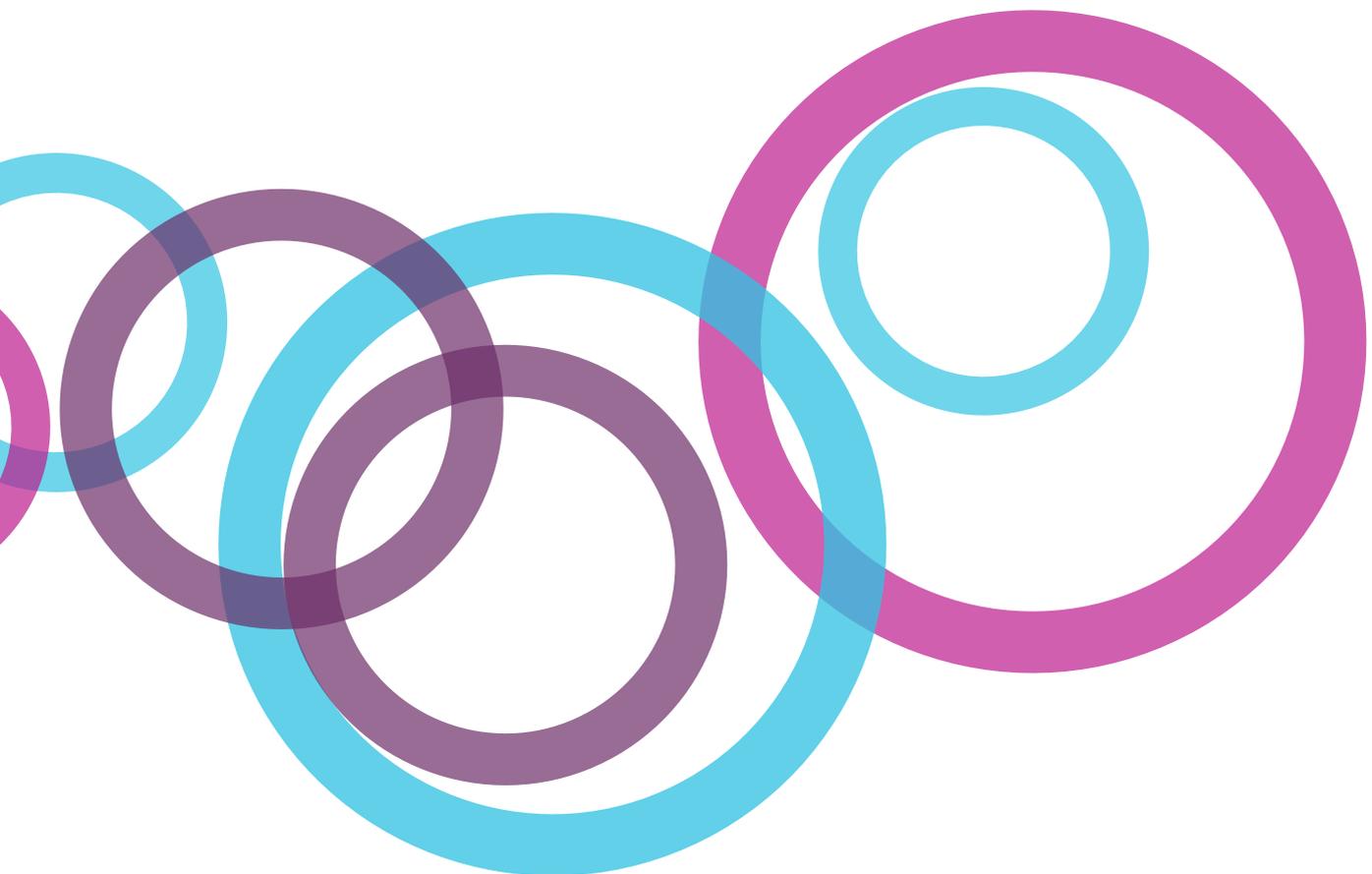
The City plans and delivers programs that prioritise community development, youth participation, capacity building, and advocacy. The current youth development service aims to provide targeted and meaningful opportunities for young people to participate in decision making that impacts on

¹ Victorian Government, Department of Health & Human Services, *Building Stronger Youth Engagement in Victoria*, 2016 & Commonwealth of Australia, *National Strategy for Young Australians*, 2010.

² Profile id, *City of Greater Bendigo Community Profile*: <http://profile.id.com.au/bendigo> and Forecast id, *City of Greater Bendigo*: <http://forecast.id.com.au/bendigo>

community life, responds to their priority issues and raises the profile of young people to achieve better outcomes for themselves and their peers.

Through the Youth Strategy 2017 – 2021, the City aims to inform, enable, and provide opportunities for young people to build their capacity by developing support networks and skills; and strengthen their connections to increase participation in the social, civic and economic aspects of their community.



YOUTH ISSUES AT A NATIONAL LEVEL

There are many issues that the young people of Australia are concerned about. Young people across Australia make their concerns heard every year through Mission Australia's Youth Survey. Coping with stress, school problems and body image are common themes. But young people also show that they are concerned about societal issues like drugs and alcohol, equity and discrimination and mental health.

Mission Australia Youth Survey 2016

One of the most reliable sources of information on young people in Australia is the Mission Australia Youth Survey. This survey of young people aged 15 to 19 is conducted annually across Australia in all States and Territories. The aim of the survey is to identify the issues of concern, activities, and experiences of young people across Australia, with over 20,000 young people responding to the survey in 2016.³ The results to this survey provide a comparative benchmark to Greater Bendigo data.

The table below (see Table 1) outlines the national key issues identified by young people as issues of "most concern to them personally". Participants were asked to rate issues on a five-point scale from "not at all concerned", "slightly concerned", "somewhat concerned", "very concerned", and "extremely concerned". Issues of concern were then identified by combining the categories "very concerned" and "extremely concerned".

The issues of most concern to young Australians in 2016 – combining the categories of "very concerned" and "extremely concerned" were:

- Coping with stress (44.4%)
- School and student problems (37.8%)
- Body image (30.6%)
- Depression (23.7%)
- Family conflict (22.4%)
- Personal safety (18.4%)
- Bullying/emotional abuse (16.7%)
- Discrimination (14.2%)
- Suicide (13.2%)
- Drugs (8.5%)
- Alcohol (6.7%)
- Gambling (4.4%)

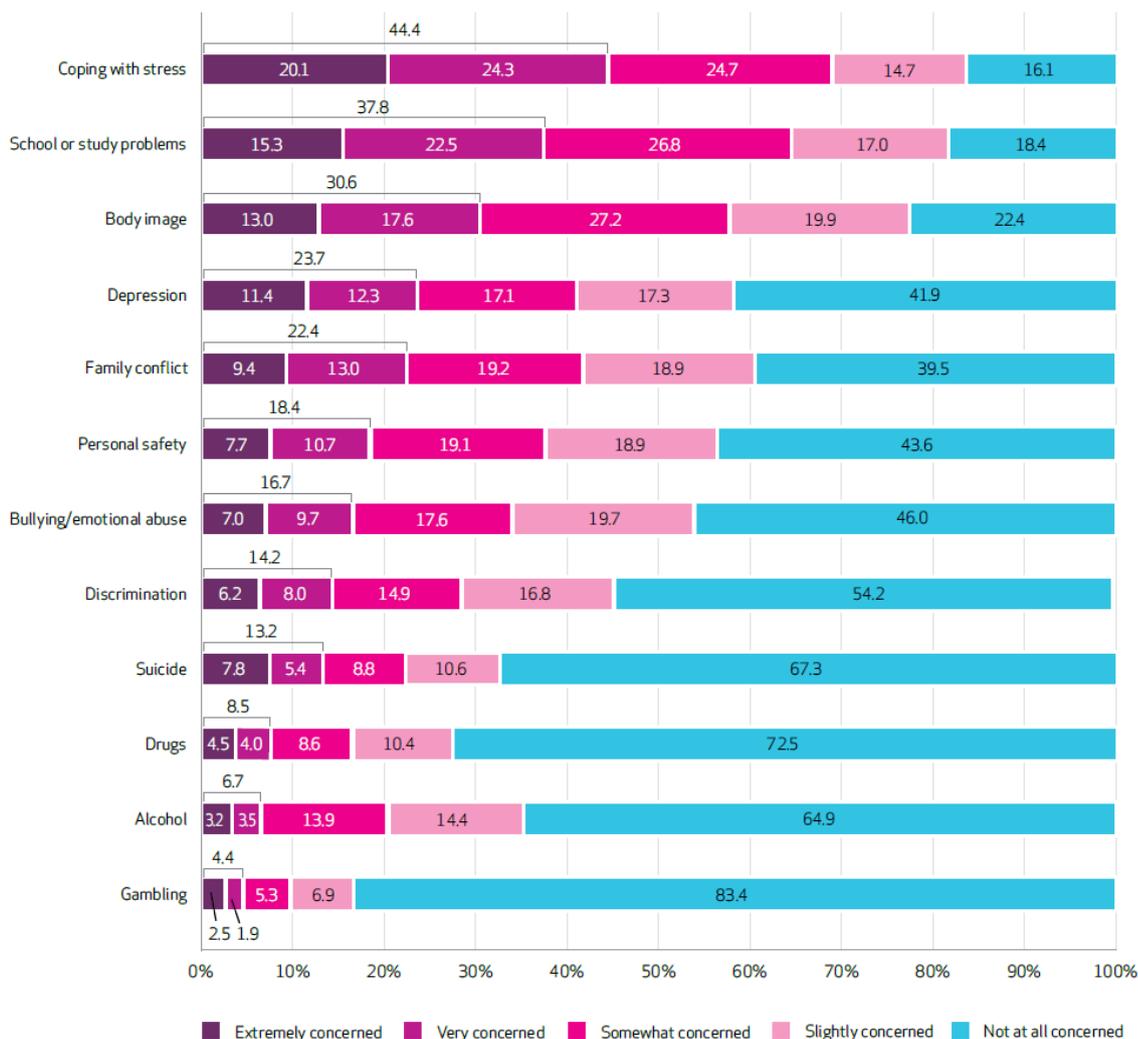
The top three issues of personal concern – *coping with stress, school and study problems, and body image* remained unchanged from previous years.⁴

³ Mission Australia, *Youth Survey*, 2016: <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-evaluation/youth-survey>

⁴ Mission Australia, *Youth Survey*, 2016: <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-evaluation/youth-survey>



Table 1: Issues of personal concern to young Australians



Source: Mission Australia, *Youth Survey*, 2016: <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-evaluation/youth-survey>

Young Australians also identified the issues that they thought were important to the nation (see Table 2). This highlighted some differences from the issues they saw as of personal concern. *Alcohol and drugs, equity and discrimination, and mental health* were the top three issues identified. All of the issues identified in this question were also identified as personal issues of concern (either directly or indirectly) but not as the top three issues. The issues young Australian thought were of most concern for Australia overall were:

- Alcohol and drugs (28.7%)
- Equity and discrimination (27.0%)
- Mental health (20.6%)
- International relations (16.2%)
- Population issues (16.0%)
- The economy and financial issues (14.7%)
- Crime, safety and violence (12.8%)
- Politics (12.8%)
- Education (11.6%)



- The environment (11.5%)
- Health (10.3%)
- Bullying (10.1%)
- Employment (9.9%)
- Homelessness and housing (7.5%)
- LGBTI issues (7.4%)⁵

Table 2: Most important issues in Australia today according to young people

	National 2016 %	Female %	Male %	National 2015 %	National 2014 %
Alcohol and drugs	28.7	26.9	31.1	27.0	22.1
Equity and discrimination	27.0	29.5	24.4	25.0	19.1
Mental health	20.6	26.2	14.1	14.9	16.3
International relations	16.2	15.2	17.7	13.4	3.3
Population issues	16.0	15.9	16.1	15.3	16.1
The economy and financial matters	14.7	13.2	16.6	18.9	25.1
Crime, safety and violence	12.8	14.0	11.6	10.1	10.1
Politics	12.8	10.5	15.6	16.1	23.5
Education	11.6	11.9	11.5	12.2	15.0
The environment	11.5	12.3	10.9	12.8	11.6
Health	10.3	10.4	10.2	9.5	13.4
Bullying	10.1	12.3	7.8	9.3	14.3
Employment	9.9	8.5	11.8	12.7	11.1
Homelessness/housing	7.5	8.9	6.1	7.8	7.4
LGBT issues	7.4	9.9	4.2	13.2	6.1

Note: Items are listed in order of national frequency.

Source: Mission Australia, *Youth Survey*, 2016: <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-evaluation/youth-survey>

Analysis

An analysis of the results of the Mission Australia Youth Survey on young people's personal concerns and what they see as issues of national importance shows some disconnect between personal concerns and perceived national concerns. Personal concerns are more immediately related to young people's lives (as would be expected), while perceived importance to Australia tends to be issues that are either related to personal issues such as mental health which can be linked to coping with stress, or larger macro socio-political or socio-economic issues such as international relations and the economy and financial matters. It is also obvious that the degree of concern is more pronounced in the issues of personal concern (concern to the young person themselves) compared to the issue of concern to the nation, as the first three issues of personal concern (*coping with stress*, *school and study*, and *body image*) are all above 30% "concerned", while the first three issues of national concern are all between 20% and 29%, perhaps explained by the fact that they are perceived as less of an immediate day-to-day impact on young people themselves.

⁵ Mission Australia, *Youth Survey*, 2016: <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-evaluation/youth-survey>

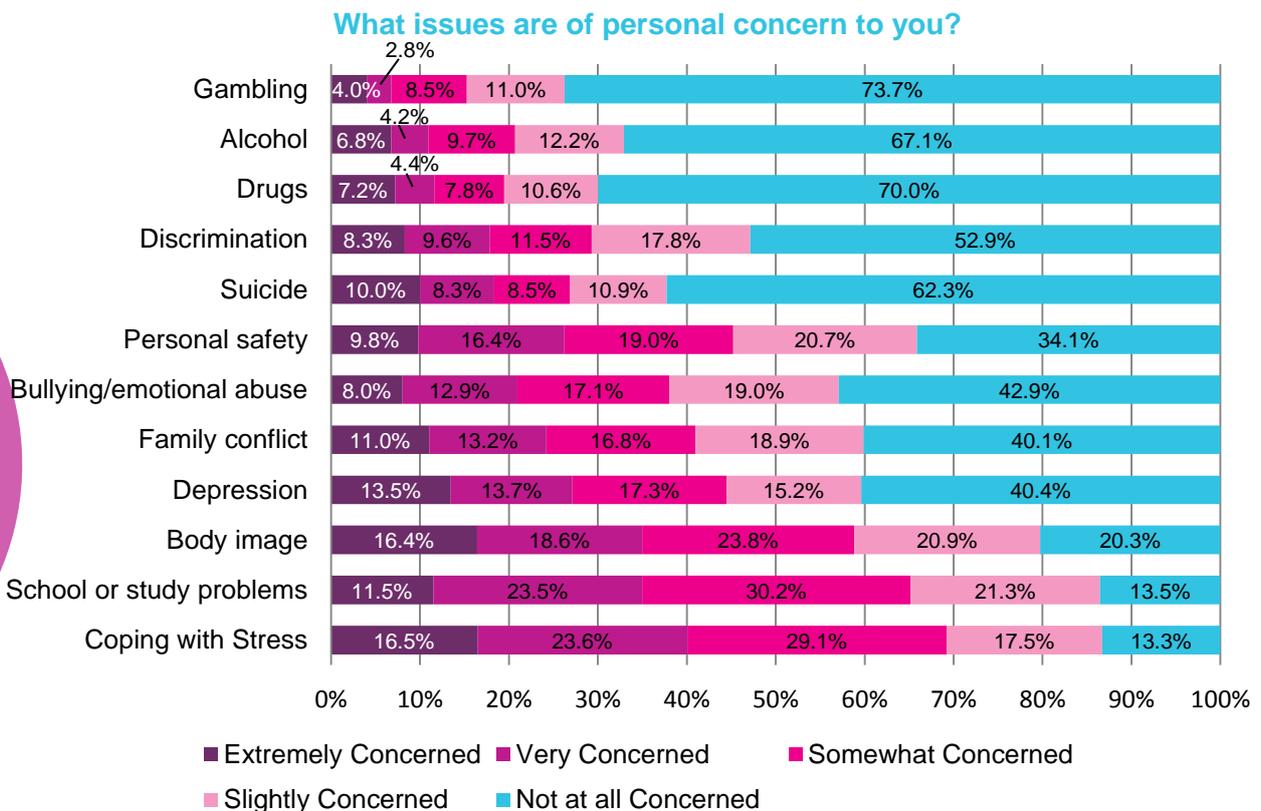
GREATER BENDIGO YOUTH REPORTS & SURVEYS

Throughout 2015 and 2016 the City of Greater Bendigo engaged with young people via several methods and on several occasions. This engagement included a Youth Wellbeing Survey in 2015, two Youth Summits in 2015 and 2016, and Youth engagement for the Youth Strategy in 2016. All engagement activities provided insights into the issues and priorities of Bendigo’s young people. In 2016 the City of Greater Bendigo also held a Citizen’s Jury. This process also highlighted several youth related issues and provided ideas aimed at meeting the future requirements of the City’s young people. Below are summaries of each report and the key youth based issues and priorities identified.

Youth Wellbeing Survey 2015

The 2015 City of Greater Bendigo Youth Wellbeing Survey identified several issues that concerned local young people. *Coping with stress, school and study problems, and body image, depression, and family conflict* were the five issues identified. Over 40% said they were either “*extremely concerned*” or “*very concerned*” about *coping with stress*, while 35% said they were either “*extremely concerned*” or “*very concerned*” about both *school or study problems* and *body image*. In addition over 27% said they were either “*extremely concerned*” or “*very concerned*” about *depression*, and over 24% said were either “*extremely concerned*” or “*very concerned*” about *family conflict* (see Table 3).

Table 3: Issues concerning young people in Greater Bendigo

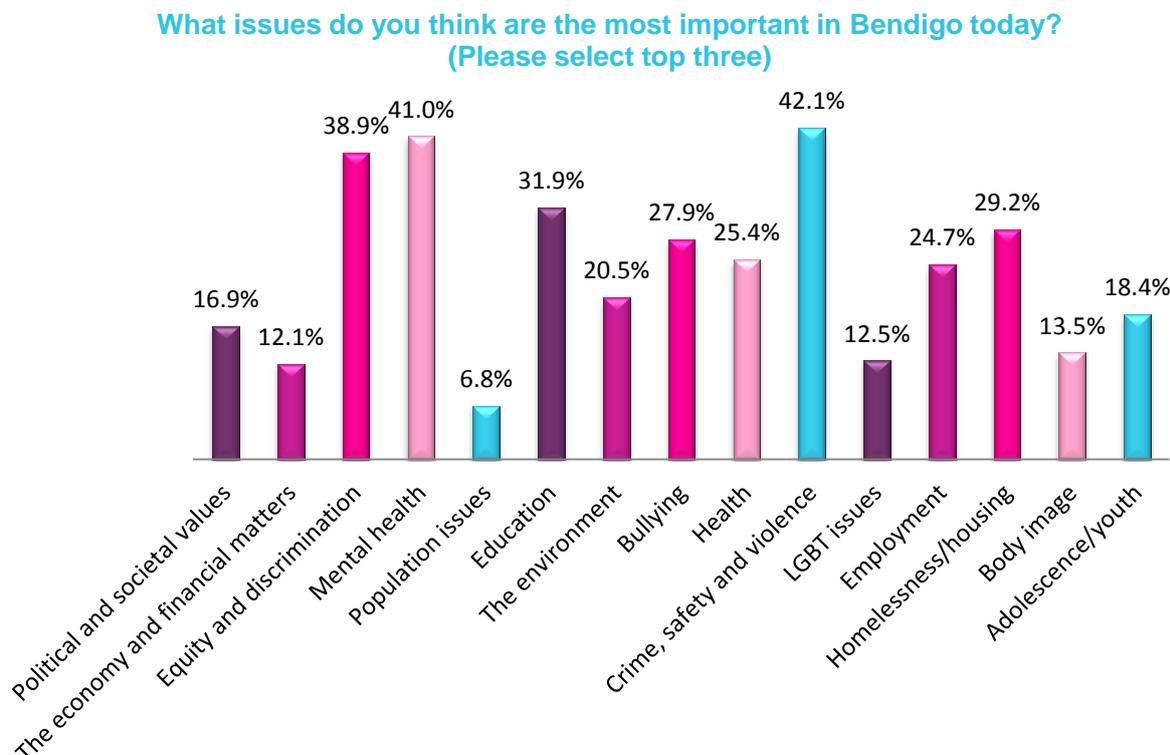


Source: City of Greater Bendigo, *Youth Wellbeing Survey, 2015*

Young people in Greater Bendigo also identified in this survey the issues they thought were of most important to the Greater Bendigo community overall. The three top issues were: *crime, safety and violence* with 42.1%; *mental health* with 41.0%; and *equity and discrimination* with 38.9% (see

Table 4). Again like the national survey, (see Table 2) this confirms there are some differences from issues of personal concern to issues young people think are of concern to the whole community.

Table 4: Issues young people think are of concern to the Greater Bendigo community



Source: City of Greater Bendigo, *Youth Wellbeing Survey*, 2015

Youth Summit 2015

In 2015, the City of Greater Bendigo's Youth Development Team conducted a Youth Summit attended by 120 young people. This provided an outline of the issues and concerns young people in Greater Bendigo were experiencing. The three broad issues to emerge from the Youth Summit were: *mental health, drugs and alcohol*, and *safety*. The summit also identified youth *employment, bullying*, and the *public image of young people* as concerns.⁶

Youth Summit 2016

In 2016, the City's Youth Development Team conducted a Youth Summit focused on developing the new youth strategy. The summit was attended by 65 young people from several schools including Eaglehawk Secondary College, Crusoe College, Bendigo Technical Education College, Bendigo South East Secondary College and Marist College Bendigo. The purpose of the youth summit was to provide young people with an opportunity to discuss issues that were important to them, to make connections with students from other schools, and have a say in decisions that impact them directly. Students were also asked to provide their ideas to help develop a new Youth Strategy for the City. The key themes to emerge from the Summit were that young people want to:

- Contribute
- Participate

⁶ City of Greater Bendigo, *Youth Summit Report*, 2015

- Be included
- Be supported
- Be heard
- Be empowered to make decisions
- Be informed⁷

Youth Strategy Engagement Report 2016

The Youth Strategy consultation process in 2016 engaged several key groups of youth stakeholders including young people via a survey, several workshops, and a youth agency forum. These combined engagement strategies identified numerous priority issues impacting young people. The three top priorities identified were *mental health*, *education*, and *employment*. Other highly rated issues include bullying, drugs, transport, and physical health. But of some importance were *violence*, *personal safety*, and *discrimination*. Issues that did not rate in the top 10 from these three sources include *housing* and *training* (see Table 5).

Table 5: Issues identified by the Youth Strategy consultation process

Engagement Report - top issues		
Issue	Weighted Score	Percentage
Mental health	28	17%
Education	24	14%
Employment	24	14%
Bullying	17	10%
Drugs	13	8%
Transport	12	7%
Physical health	11	7%
Violence	10	6%
Personal safety	9	5%
Discrimination	6	4%
Alcohol	3	2%
Environment	3	2%
LGBT issues	3	2%
Money	3	2%
Sexual health	1	1%
Housing	0	0%
Training	0	0%
Total	167	100%

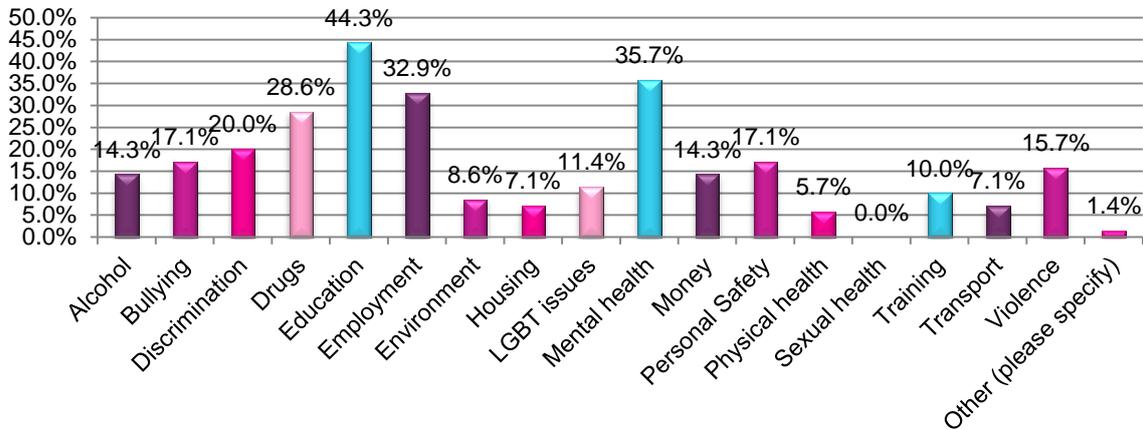
Source: City of Greater Bendigo, *Youth Strategy Engagement Report*, 2016

However, when the survey of young people is analysed without the responses from agency stakeholders, the priorities then alter. The top three issues identified are *education* with 44.3%, *mental health* with 35.7%, and *employment* with 32.9% (see Table 6).

⁷ City of Greater Bendigo, *Youth Summit Report*, 2016

Table 6: Youth Strategy survey responses

Please tick the three issues of most importance or concern to you.



Source: City of Greater Bendigo, *Youth Strategy Survey*, 2016

Citizen’s Jury Report 2016

In 2016, the City of Greater Bendigo conducted a Citizen’s Jury process with 28 jurors participating. The subsequent Citizen’s Jury report identified three broad areas of issues they identified as being relevant to young people. These were: a youth hub to engage with young people in their own space, a youth mentoring program, and a mechanism to promote opportunities and engage and build creativity in young people.⁸

Analysis

The numerous City of Greater Bendigo youth reports and surveys of the last couple of years highlight several key themes that often repeated. In a broad sense, these reports show that young people are concerned about similar issues that young people are at a national level such as education, employment, and mental health, but that they also wish to be better connected to the community, and to be actively included, involved, informed, and empowered in their community. These surveys also show (like the Mission Australia national survey) that young people’s personal concerns are different to what they see as issues of concern for Greater Bendigo. For example, the issues of coping with stress, school/education, body image, and employment are top rating issues of personal concern across many of the surveys, but when asked about issues of concern for the Greater Bendigo community, crime and safety, mental health, and discrimination are rated as the most important. However, the common theme between the personal and perceived local issues is mental health, as both questions highlight issues related to mental health (either directly or indirectly) such as coping with stress and body image.

⁸ City of Greater Bendigo, *Citizen’s Jury Report*, 2016

GREATER BENDIGO YOUTH ISSUES

After the consultation process for the youth strategy, several youth summits, and youth surveys several key issues are highlighted as priorities to young people in Greater Bendigo. The key youth issues to be examined in this report are mental health, education, training and employment, income, personal safety, drugs and alcohol, transport, physical and sexual health, discrimination, and connecting to community.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is a key issue identified by young people in the Mission Australia Youth Survey and in City surveys and other engagement processes. This section will examine several mental health indicators relating to young people at a national, Victorian and Greater Bendigo level. This will include the national rate of mental illness in young people, the national suicide rate of young people, and mental health indicators of adolescents in Greater Bendigo in comparison to Victoria such as intentional self-harm, psychiatric hospitalisation, levels of psychological distress, eating dis-orders, and levels of wellbeing. It will also explore the level of concern amongst young people about mental health issues at a local level in comparison to national data, as well as Headspace service statistics, and levels of happiness in young people.

Mental Health

Current statistics show that youth is a period of high risk for developing mental illness with 26.4% of young Australians or approximately 750,000 young people aged 16 to 24 experiencing a mental health disorder in the last 12 months.⁹ Indeed, the highest chance of developing a mental illness is between the ages of 12 and 25. While mental illness can then impact and increase the chance of increased physical health and sexual health problems, and can be linked to rates of self-harm and suicide.¹⁰

In 2015, the suicide rate for 15 to 19 year olds in Australia was 9.8 in 100,000 people and 14.8 for 20 to 24 year olds.¹¹ To place this in perspective, more young Australians aged between 15 and 24 years of age died by suicide in 2015 than by any other cause, including transport accidents. Of these suicides 72% were males. There are also high rates of suicide among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, LGBTIQ young people, and young people living in rural and remote areas. Furthermore, 5.1% of young people aged 16-24 years have experienced suicidal thoughts.¹²

These statistics illustrate the significance of mental health as a national issue amongst young Australians. This is reinforced with regards to young people and mental health in Greater Bendigo. This is because rates of intentional self-harm, eating disorders, and young people with high levels of psychological distress are higher in Greater Bendigo than the Victorian average. For example, the most recent data on self-harm among adolescents in Greater Bendigo shows that in 2009 0.9 persons per 1,000 persons self-harmed while the Victorian average was 0.6 per 1,000. The story was similar for eating disorders as 2.7% of Greater Bendigo adolescents in 2009 had eating disorders compared to the Victorian average of 2.4%. Greater Bendigo adolescents also experienced higher levels of psychological distress in 2009 with 15.1% of adolescents compared to the Victorian average of 13%, and experienced lower levels of emotional wellbeing compared to Victoria with 56.1% compared to 61.1%. However, psychiatric hospitalisation rates were lower for

⁹ Beyond Blue, *Mental Health Statistics*, 2017

¹⁰ Orygen, *Raising the Bar for Youth Suicide Prevention*, Report, 2016

¹¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Cause of Death*, Cat 3303.0, 2016

¹² Orygen, 2016



adolescents in Greater Bendigo with 6.1 persons per 1,000 compared to the Victorian average of 6.7 per 1,000 persons (see Table 7).

Table 7: Key indicators of adolescent mental health

Mental health indicators			
Key Indicators of Adolescent Mental Health 10-17 year olds - 2009	Greater Bendigo	Victoria	Difference
Intentional self-harm (rate per 1,000) 2008-2009	0.9 (no. 10)	0.6 (no. 310)	+0.3
Psychiatric hospitalisation (rate per 1,000) 2009-2010	6.1 (no. 70)	6.7 (no. 3655)	-0.6
Proportion of adolescents with the highest level of psychological distress in 2009	15.1%	13%	+2.1%
Proportion of adolescents with an eating disorder in 2009	2.7%	2.4%	+0.3%
Proportion of adolescents with a high level of emotional wellbeing in 2009	56.1%	61.1%	-5%

Source: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *City of Greater Bendigo, Adolescent Community Profile*, 2010: <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/govrel/Policy/children/adolescentprofiles/igaprofiles/greaterbendigo.pdf>

In addition to the above statistics, several City of Greater Bendigo surveys such as the Youth Wellbeing Survey and the Youth Survey for the Youth Strategy have identified mental health as a major issue of concern for young people. During the consultation process for the new Youth Strategy in 2016 mental health was identified through a survey of young people as the second highest issue of concern after education (see Table 6). But when all consultation feedback was aggregated (this included student workshops and a youth agency forum) then mental health was identified as the top issue of concern (see Table 5). A year earlier in 2015 the Youth Wellbeing survey conducted by the City identified mental health as an important issue with 41.0% of young people saying it was a concern for the community of Greater Bendigo (see Table 4). This was second only after crime, safety, and violence.

But when asked what concerned them personally most young people in Greater Bendigo identified coping with stress as the top issue with 40.1% either “*extremely concerned*” or “*very concerned*”, study problems & school and body image as the second and third highest issues with 35% either “*extremely concerned*” or “*very concerned*” each, and depression the fourth highest issue with 27.2% either “*extremely concerned*” or “*very concerned*” (see Table 3). All of which can be identified with mental health.

When compared to national statistics, young people in Greater Bendigo are more concerned about mental health as an issue in Bendigo than young people are at a national level (see Table 2), with mental health identified as the third most important issues concerning Australia (after alcohol and drugs, and equity and discrimination) compared to second in Greater Bendigo.

But when asked about what is of personal concern to themselves (see Table 1) then again the issue coping with stress was the top issue with 44.4% either “*extremely concerned*” or “*very concerned*”, body image as the third highest issue with 30.6% either “*extremely concerned*” or “*very concerned*”, and depression as the fourth highest issue with 23.7% either “*extremely concerned*” or “*very concerned*”. Compared to national statistics, there are a lower percentage of young people in Greater Bendigo personally concerned about coping with stress, but a higher percentage of young people concerned about body image and depression (see Table 3).

Fortunately there are a number of services available in Greater Bendigo to assist young people who are experiencing mental health issues, including: Bendigo Community Health Services;

Headspace; Secondary School nurses; St Luke's; and Youth Support and Advocacy Service (YSAS). As well as locally based services, there are a number of online or telephone based counselling services, including: Beyond Blue, Kids Help Line, and Lifeline. The tables presented below indicate the number of youth presenting at a Headspace centre, both nationally and locally.

The Headspace data shows that both the number of young people serviced by Headspace Bendigo and the number of occasions serviced in Bendigo are higher than the national average, with the number of young people serviced 27.9% higher in Bendigo and occasions of service 61.7% higher in Bendigo than the national average (see Table 8). It also shows that the largest age group of young people serviced in Bendigo was the 15 to 17 age group which accounted for 36.8% of all clients compared to the national average of 33.1% (see Table 9).

Table 8: Bendigo Headspace services in 2016

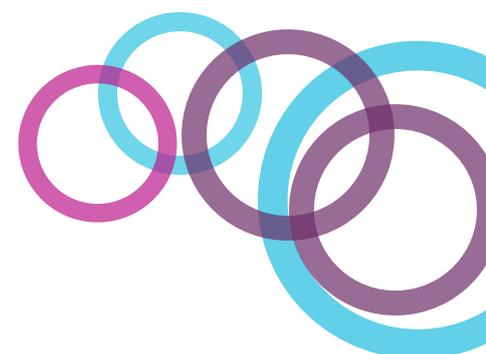
Headspace Bendigo – services				
2016	Bendigo 2016	National (Centre average)	Difference between Bendigo and National	Difference between Bendigo and National %
Occasions of Service	5,113	3,161	1,952	61.7% more than national average
Serviced Young People	949	742	207	27.9% more than national average

Source: Headspace Bendigo Centre, *Service Data*, 2016

Table 9: Bendigo Headspace client age groups in 2016

Headspace Bendigo – client age groups							
2016	Age group percentage						
	Under 12	12-14	15-17	18-20	21-23	24-25	Over 25
Bendigo	0%	23.5%	36.8%	23.5%	13.3%	2.7%	0.2%
National	0%	20.6%	33.1%	23.5%	17.0%	5.4%	0.3%

Source: Headspace Bendigo Centre, *Service Data*, 2016



Level of Happiness

One of the key measures Mission Australia uses every year in its Youth Survey is happiness – an indicator linked to positive emotional wellbeing. This is also an indicator that the City of Greater Bendigo measured in its Youth Wellbeing Survey in 2015. Therefore comparisons of happiness between young people at a national level and at the local level can be provided. Both surveys use a 0 to 10 scale with 0 representing very unhappy/very sad, 5 representing neither happy/or sad, and 10 being very happy.

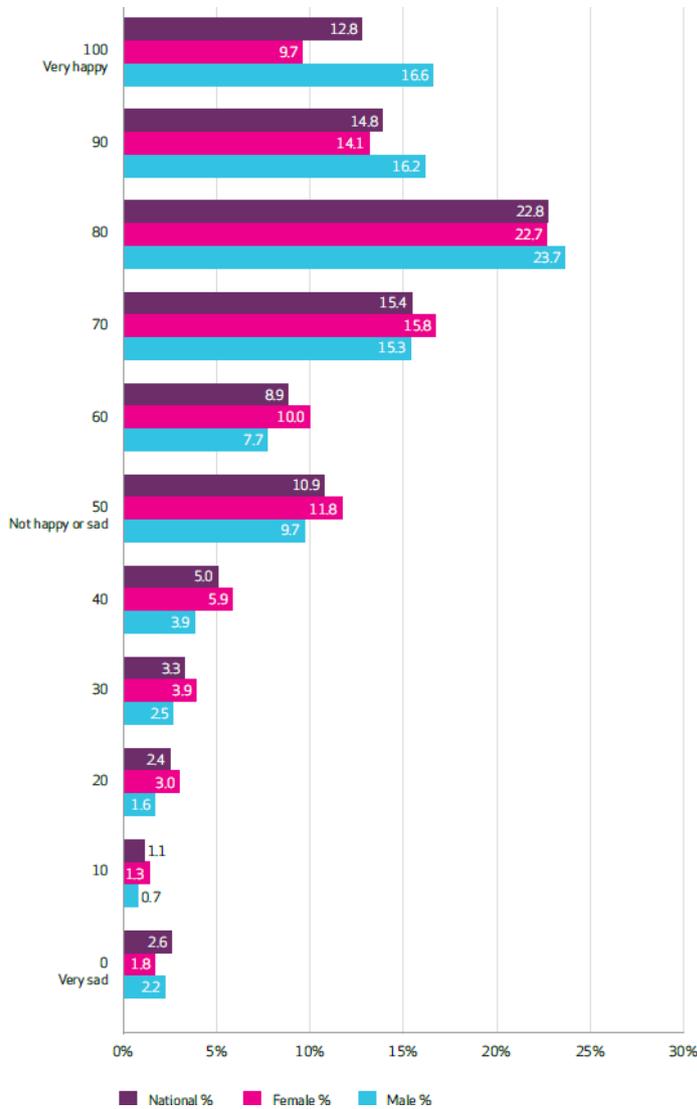
The Mission Australia Youth Survey shows that the percentage of young Australians who indicated they feel happy (that is the total percentage of happiness – above 50%) was 74.7% in 2016, while 10.9% stated they were neither happy/or sad, and 14.4% stated they felt sad (see Table 10).

The Greater Bendigo survey shows that the percentage of young people who indicated they feel happy (that is the total percentage of happiness) was of 77.2%, while 6.1% stated they were neither happy/or sad, and 16.8% stated they felt sad (see Table 11).

However, when we compare the two surveys for levels of very happy (100%) or those who rated their happiness levels at 10 out of 10, then fewer young people in Greater Bendigo are very happy compared to very happy at a national level with 9.1% and 12.8% respectively. Furthermore there are marginally more young people in Greater Bendigo who are very sad than at a national level

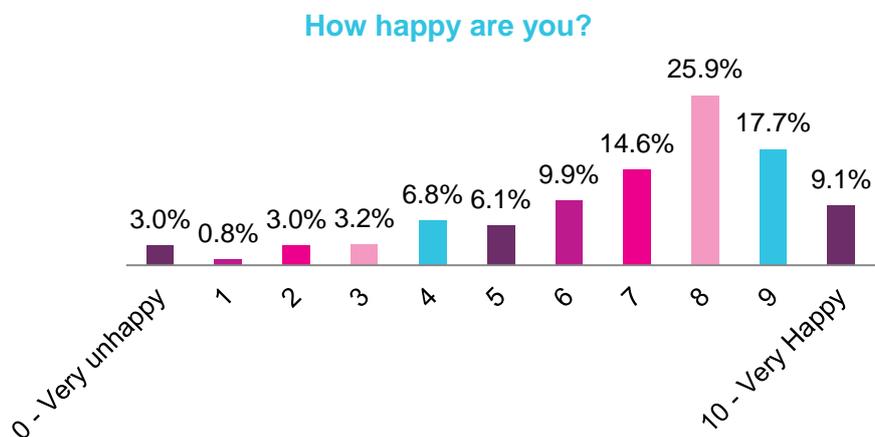
with 3.0% compared to 2.6% at a national level. Finally, fewer young people in Greater Bendigo were neither happy/or sad with 6.1% compared to 10.9% at a national level (see Tables 10 and 11).

Table 10: National level of happiness amongst young people



Source: Mission Australia, *Youth Survey*, 2016: <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-evaluation/youth-survey>

Table 11: Level of happiness amongst young people in Greater Bendigo



Source: City of Greater Bendigo, *Youth Wellbeing Survey*, 2015

Analysis

An analysis of young people and mental health related issues and statistics in Greater Bendigo and nationally highlights the significance of mental health as an issue impacting on young people both locally and nationally. It also shows that young people in Greater Bendigo are not only concerned about mental health as a societal issue but a personal issue as well. The difference between Greater Bendigo and Victoria mental health indicators shows that young people in Greater Bendigo have higher levels of self-harm, psychiatric hospitalisation, psychological distress, and eating disorders, with lower levels of emotional wellbeing. This is supported by Headspace statistics showing a higher utilisation rate of services than the national average. In addition, the level of happiness surveys shows that while more young people in Greater Bendigo are on the happy end of the happiness scale than at a national level, less local young people did however identify as very happy compared to national levels and slightly more were very sad compared to national. Finally, analysis shows us that there are some gaps in local data, specifically a shortage of recent research and age related suicide data.



EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

Education, Training and Employment are key issues identified by young people in the Mission Australia Youth Survey and in City of Greater Bendigo surveys. This section will examine several education and training, and employment indicators relating to young people at a national, Victorian and Greater Bendigo level. This will include educational institutions in Greater Bendigo and their enrolments, Year 12 attainment, NAPLAN literacy and numeracy levels, Year 12 destinations (further education, training, and labour force), year 12 deferrals from tertiary studies and reasons for deferral, and early school leavers in Greater Bendigo all compared to Victorian trends. This section will also examine young people's concerns about employment and education in Greater Bendigo in comparison to national data, and youth unemployment.

Education and Training

In 2015, when young people in Greater Bendigo were asked to rate the issues of most personal concern to them in the Youth Wellbeing Survey, the issue of school and study problems was rated second with 35% saying they were either “*extremely concerned*” or “*very concerned*” about school or study related problems (see Table 3). This is slightly below national data on the same issue, as in 2016 at a national level young people rated school and study problems as the second most important issues with 37.8% saying they were either “*extremely concerned*” or “*very concerned*” about school and study related problems (see Table 1). This is supported by the City's engagement process for the current youth strategy which found that education was the equal second highest issue of concern along with employment with 14% of young people stating it was an issue of concern (see Table 5).

It is not surprising that young people in Greater Bendigo rate school and study problems as a priority, as Greater Bendigo's population of over 18,000 young people are - to varying degrees and at some stage in their lives - linked to the numerous secondary colleges and several tertiary institutions. The local secondary schools: Bendigo Senior Secondary College, Catholic College Bendigo and Bendigo South East College all have student populations of well over 1,000 students each, with 1,765, 1,195, and 1,454 respectively. Tertiary institutions La Trobe University and Bendigo TAFE also have student populations of several thousand each with 4,771, and 4,517 respectively (see Table 12). Greater Bendigo is also served by various Registered Training Organisations such as Access Skills Training and CVGT which provide accredited training for the regions young people.

Table 12: Greater Bendigo - enrolments in education institutions

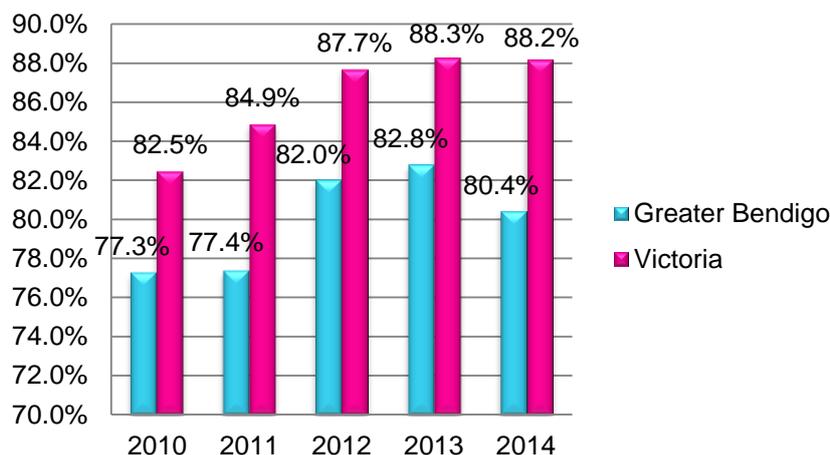
Enrolments in education institutions			
Institution	Year levels	Year of data	Number of students
Bendigo Senior Secondary College	11 & 12	2016	1765
Catholic College Bendigo	7 to 12	2014	1195
Girton Grammar	7 to 12	2016	745
Bendigo South East College	7 to 10	2016	1454
Weeroona College	7 to 10	2016	605
Eaglehawk	7 to 10	2016	566
Crusoe	7 to 10	2016	597
DOXA	12 to 18 year olds	2014	45
Marist College Bendigo	7 to 9	2015	351
Bendigo Special Development School	7 to 12	2016	128
Kalianna Special School	7 to 12	2016	233
Bendigo TAFE	15 to 24	2013	4517
LaTrobe University	All ages	2015	4771

Sources: Department of Education & Training, Schools & Enrolments 2016, Catholic School Enrolments 2014, Girton Grammar 2016, Marist College 2015, Bendigo TAFE 2013, La Trobe University 2015

Nevertheless, Greater Bendigo's Year 12 completion rate of 80.4% for 19 year olds is below the Victorian State average of 88.2%. However while year 12 completions is lower in Greater Bendigo than the Victorian average there has been an increase in Year 12 completion rates in Greater Bendigo over the period from 2010 to 2014, with rates rising from 77.3% in 2010 to 80.4% in 2014 (see Table 13).

Table 13: Year 12 completion

Proportion of young people aged 19 years who have attained Year 12 or equivalent in Greater Bendigo



Source: Department of Education & Training, VCAMS Portal, 2017:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/vcamstableau.aspx>

The National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) results in Greater Bendigo schools show that the majority of Year 7 and Year 9 students achieved the national minimum standards for literacy and numeracy. In 2015 the percentage of Year 7 students achieving the minimum standard in literacy was 93.8%, below the Victorian average of 95.9%, while the percentage of Year 9 students achieving the minimum standard of literacy was 90.7%, again below the Victorian average of 93.5% (see Table 14).

In 2015 the percentage of Year 7 students achieving the minimum standard in numeracy was 94.5%, below the Victorian average of 96.3%, while the percentage of Year 9 students achieving the minimum standard of numeracy was 93.1%, again below the Victorian average of 95.6% (see Table 15).

Table 14: NAPLAN literacy results

Students achieving national minimum standards in literacy - 2015		
Year Level	Greater Bendigo	Victoria
Year 7	93.8%	95.9%
Year 9	90.7%	93.5%

Source: Department of Education & Training, VCAMS Portal, 2017:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/vcamstableau.aspx>

Table 15: NAPLAN numeracy results

Students achieving national minimum standards in numeracy - 2015		
Year Level	Greater Bendigo	Victoria
Year 7	94.5%	96.3%
Year 9	93.1%	95.6%

Source: Department of Education & Training, VCAMS Portal, 2017:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/vcamstableau.aspx>

Year 12 Destinations 2016

Current Department of Education & Training On Track 2016 Destinations data suggests that 2015 Year 12 completers or equivalent have continued on to further education or training at a lower rate than the Victoria rate, as only 56.4% of Greater Bendigo students continued in 2016 with further education or training, while 76.8% of Victorian students continued on to further education and training. This is a sizeable difference between the state average and Greater Bendigo. Of the 43.6% of Year 12 completers who were not in further education or training, 37.0% were employed (much higher than the Victorian rate of 17.7%), 5.7% were looking for work, and 1.0% were not in either the labour force, education or training. Both the categories of looking for work and not in the labour force, and education or training were marginally higher than the Victoria rates of 4.5% and 0.9% respectively (see Table 16).

Table 16: Destinations of Year 12 or equivalent completers who exited school in 2015

Destinations of Year 12 or equivalent completers in 2015				
Destination	Greater Bendigo		Victoria	
	Number	%	Number	%
Post-school destination				
In further education or training	337	56.4	22800	76.8
Bachelor degree	216	36.1	16081	54.2
Certificates/Diplomas	62	10.4	4327	14.6
Certificate IV or higher	20	3.3	756	2.5
Certificate I to III	42	7.0	3571	12.0
Apprentice/Trainee	59	9.9	2392	8.1
Apprenticeship	41	6.9	1645	5.5
Traineeship	18	3.0	747	2.5
Not continuing in further education or training	261	43.6	6871	23.2
Employed	221	37.0	5256	17.7
Employed full-time	72	12.0	1793	6.0
Employed part-time	149	24.9	3463	11.7
Looking for work	34	5.7	1346	4.5
NILFET (Not in the labour force, employment or training)	6	1.0	269	0.9
Unknown			8	0.0
Total respondents	598	100.0	29679	100.0

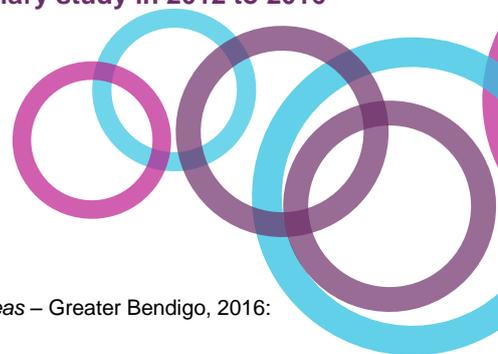
Source: Department Education and Training - *On Track Reports for Victorian Local Government Areas* – Greater Bendigo, 2016: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/localgovatoz.aspx>

Importantly, 21.3% of Greater Bendigo's Year 12s deferred tertiary studies in 2016. This is over one in five students – and more than twice the Victorian rate of 9.7% (see Table 17). This poses the question, what are they doing? The data suggests that the majority are working – although more than half are employed part-time (55.8%) and only 30.2% are working full time, with a further 7.8% looking for work (see Table 18). While these figures are significant and the rate of deferrals is over twice the level of Victoria, the level of those employed in both in part-time and full-time work is slightly higher in Greater Bendigo than the Victorian average for both part-time and full-time work, and the level of those either looking for work is slightly lower than the Victoria average. However, it is concerning that the number of tertiary deferrals in Greater Bendigo has over the years 2012 to 2016 increased from 17.6% to 21.6%, while the Victorian average has actually decreased slightly during this period from 10.3% to 9.7% (see Table 17).

The reasons as to why young people in Greater Bendigo are deferring at higher level than the state average are: “*wanted to start working/earn money*” (the most cited reason), “*needed a break from study*”, “*wanted other experiences like travel before continuing study*”, and “*would have to move away from home*” (see Table 19). The level of those in employment whether full-time or part time and those looking for work suggests that the response of wishing to work was by far the largest driver of students deferring tertiary studies. But other factors like needing a break from study did influence their decisions to defer their studies.

Table 17: Proportion of Year 12 or equivalent completers who deferred tertiary study in 2012 to 2016

Year 12 or equivalent completers - deferrals					
Deferrals	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Area	%	%	%	%	%
Greater Bendigo	17.6	18.5	19.0	16.1	21.6
Victoria	10.3	9.7	9.4	9.1	9.7



Source: Department Education and Training - *On Track Reports for Victorian Local Government Areas – Greater Bendigo, 2016*: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/localgovatoz.aspx>

Table 18: Destinations of Year 12 or equivalent completers who deferred tertiary study - 2014 to 2016

Year 12 or equivalent completers - deferral destinations						
Post-school Destination	Greater Bendigo			Victoria		
	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %	2014 %	2015 %	2016 %
Employed full-time	30.0	31.1	30.2	26.2	26.4	28.3
Employed part-time	59.2	55.3	58.9	54.3	54.0	55.0
Looking for work	10.8	11.7	7.8	14.7	14.1	12.4
NILFET	-	np	np	4.6	5.3	4.1
Unknown	-	-	-	0.2	np	np

Source: Department Education and Training - *On Track Reports for Victorian Local Government Areas – Greater Bendigo, 2016*: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/localgovatoz.aspx>

Table 19: Reasons provided by Year 12 or equivalent completers for deferring tertiary study in 2016

Year 12 or equivalent completers – reasons why deferred				
Reasons Why Deferred	Greater Bendigo		Victoria	
	Number	%	Number	%
You just needed a break from study	97	77.6	2150	78.8
You wanted some other experiences, like travel, before continuing your education	87	69.6	1934	70.8
You wanted to start working / earning your own money	113	90.4	2214	81.1
You would have had to move away from home	65	52.0	607	22.2
Total respondents	125		2730	

Note: Respondents may have agreed to more than one statement.

Source: Department Education and Training - *On Track Reports for Victorian Local Government Areas – Greater Bendigo, 2016*: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/localgovatoz.aspx>

But not all young people exiting school complete Year 12 or equivalent. This has an impact on local youth unemployment with 9.3% of early school leavers being unemployed. While this is above the rate of Year 12 completers looking for work in Greater Bendigo it is still below the Victorian average of 15.9% (see Table 20). Interestingly the number of early leaver students in further education or training is very similar to Year 12 completers with 56% compared to 56.4% respectively (see Tables 16 & 20). This is surprising considering that there are no students enrolled in university at this age, yet enrolments in certificates, diplomas and apprenticeships make up for this fact.

However, when we look at unemployment for early school leavers after 6 months from leaving school then the data suggest a higher rate of unemployment with Greater Bendigo experiencing 18.2% compared to Victoria at 15.5% in 2015 (see Table 21).

Table 20: Post-school destinations of early school leavers who exited school in 2015

Destination for early school leavers				
Early School Leavers	Greater Bendigo	Greater Bendigo	Victoria	Victoria
Post-school destination	Number	%	Number	%
In further education or training	42	56.0	1378	54.0
Bachelor degree			19	0.7
Certificates/Diplomas	15	20.0	604	23.6
Certificate IV or higher	5	6.7	327	12.8
Certificate I-III	10	13.3	277	10.8
Apprentice/Trainee	27	36.0	755	29.6
Apprenticeship	24	32.0	659	25.8
Traineeship	np	np	96	3.8
Not continuing in further education or training	33	44.0	1169	45.8
Employed	23	30.7	613	24.0
Employed full-time	8	10.7	234	9.2
Employed part-time	15	20.0	379	14.8
Looking for work	7	9.3	406	15.9
NILFET	np	np	150	5.9
Unknown			7	0.3
Total respondents	75	100.0	2554	100.0

Source: Department Education and Training - *On Track Reports for Victorian Local Government Areas* – Greater Bendigo, 2016:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/localgovatoz.aspx>

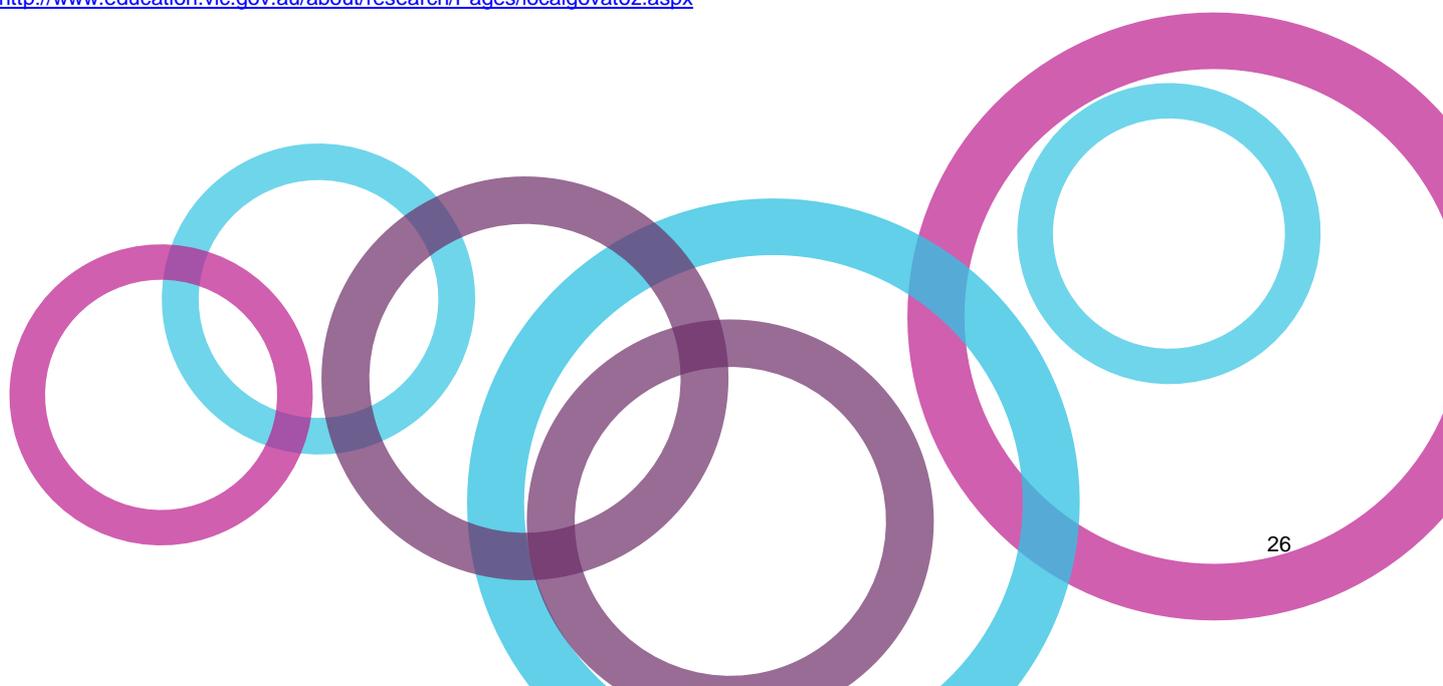
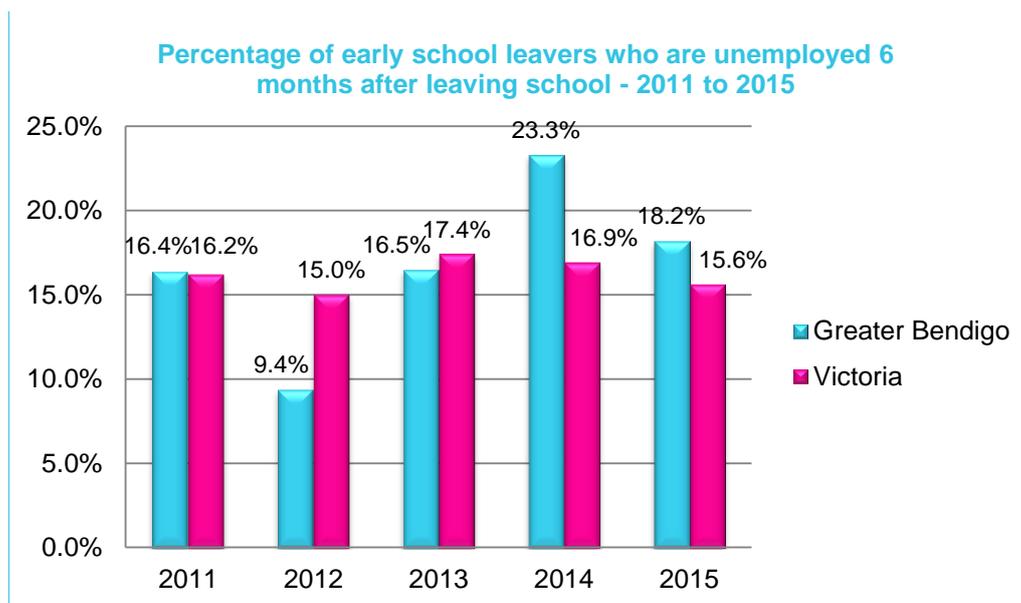


Table 21: Early school leavers who are unemployed 6 months after leaving school in 2015



Source: Department of Education & Training, *VCAMS Portal*, 2017:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/vcamstableau.aspx>

Current Youth Unemployment

In addition to the above data, City of Greater Bendigo surveys such as the Youth Wellbeing Survey and the Youth Survey for the Youth Strategy identified employment as a major issue of concern for young people in the region. During the consultation process for the Youth Strategy in 2016 employment was identified through a survey of young people as the third highest issue of concern with 32.9% after education and mental health (see Table 6). But when all feedback was aggregated (this included student workshops and a youth agency forum) then employment was identified as the equal second highest issue of concern along with education at 14% (see Table 5).

A year earlier in 2015 the City of Greater Bendigo Youth Wellbeing survey identified employment as the fourth most important issue with 31.9% of young people saying it was a concern for Greater Bendigo (see Table 4). However, national statistics from the 2016 Mission Australia survey show that only 11.6% of young people believe that employment is a major national concern (see Table 2). This is much lower than either of the percentages stated above for Greater Bendigo.

Interestingly the perception of employment as a problem is much higher than current youth unemployment statistics seem to indicate. The current (March 2017) rate of youth unemployment in Greater Bendigo is 6.2%, compared to an overall rate of 4.2%. However this is not likely to be accurate as the Victorian rate of youth unemployment is 13.2% and national rate of youth unemployment is 13.3%,¹³ while the 2011 Census data recorded youth unemployment (aged 15 to 24) at 10.6% in Greater Bendigo.¹⁴ Furthermore if we consider that other regional cities in Victoria such as Ballarat with 9.6% and Shepparton with 10.6% both have higher youth unemployment¹⁵, then it is likely that the Greater Bendigo figure is understated and is perhaps twice as high as currently reported (see Table 22). But unemployment is not all of the story, underemployment is also a major issue facing young people in Australia today, with 18% of the young workforce 15 –

¹³ ABS, *Labour Force Statistics, March 2017*, Department of Employment LMIP website, March 2017:
<http://lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP>

¹⁴ Atlas id, Youth Unemployment, Greater Bendigo, Census 2011: <http://atlas.id.com.au/bendigo>

¹⁵ ABS, *Labour Force Statistics, February 2017*, Department of Employment LMIP website, March 2017:
<http://lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP>

24 working part-time or casual but looking for more hours of work, and with young people most likely to be employed casual or part-time – a trend that has been growing for the last 15 years.¹⁶

Table 22: Youth unemployment

Youth unemployment in Greater Bendigo - March 2017		
Region	Youth Unemployment Rate (15 - 24) %	Unemployment Rate (15+) %
Greater Bendigo SA4	6.2%	4.2%
Victoria (average)	13.2%	6.1%
Australia (average)	13.3%	5.9%

Source: Department of Employment, *Labour Force, City of Greater Bendigo*:
<http://lmip.gov.au/default.aspx?LMIP/Downloads/ABSLabourForceRegion>

Analysis

An analysis of education attainment, school leaver destinations, and unemployment data for young people in Greater Bendigo indicates several key trends for young people in the local area compared to Victoria. Firstly, it shows that Year 12 attainment is lower in Greater Bendigo than in Victoria, and that fewer Year 12 completers go onto further study than the Victorian average, while a much larger percentage of young people in tertiary studies defer in Greater Bendigo than in Victoria, with a sizable percentage of them instead undertaking part-time work, as well as a higher level of early school leavers. However this also shows us that more young people enter the work force in Greater Bendigo than across Victoria, and more enter apprenticeships and training than across Victoria. Perhaps this goes some way to explaining why the current youth unemployment figure of 6.2% in Greater Bendigo is lower than the Victorian rate of 13.2%, but it is also possible that the official youth unemployment figure is lower than the actual youth unemployment rate in Greater Bendigo as it is significantly inconsistent with the 2011 Census youth unemployment rate for Greater Bendigo, the national average, and current regional cities in Victoria. Finally, the data also shows us that young people in Greater Bendigo are considerably concerned about education and employment almost to the same level as young people are nationally. This is understandable with high levels of part-time employment, with young people who have deferred further studies, and a general trend towards insecure and more precarious forms of employment nationally. This suggests that the issues of unemployment and underemployment - especially considering high levels of tertiary studies deferment - are likely to be indicators of higher levels of risk of future youth disengagement (which was at 9.8% of the young population aged 15 to 24 at the 2011 Census)¹⁷ if these trends continue.

¹⁶ Brotherhood of St Laurence, *Generation Stalled Report*, March 2017: <http://library.bsl.org.au/>

¹⁷ Social Atlas Id, Greater Bendigo Youth Disengagement: <http://atlas.id.com.au/bendigo>

INCOME & MONEY

The economy and finance is identified as a priority in both the Mission Australia Youth Survey and City of Greater Bendigo surveys. This section will examine several indicators relating to young people and money, income, and the economy at a national, Victorian and Greater Bendigo level. This will include young people's concerns about the economy and finance, income levels for 15 to 19 year olds, income levels for 20 to 24 year olds, and youth allowance payments for 16 to 24 year olds.

Money

City of Greater Bendigo surveys such as the Youth Wellbeing Survey and the Youth Survey for the Youth Strategy identified the economy and finance, and money as issues of concern for young people. During the consultation process for the City's new Youth Strategy, 14.3% of young people surveyed identified money as an issue of personal concern (see Table 6). A year earlier in 2015 the Youth Wellbeing survey identified the economy and finance as an important issue with 12.1% of young people saying it was a concern for the Greater Bendigo community (see Table 4), compared to the Mission Australia survey in 2016 where 14.7% of young people identified it as a concern (see Table 2). While recent survey results show that money is of some concern to young people in Greater Bendigo and not as high a concern as education, employment or mental health, income statistics for young people in the region show that young people's personal income justifies that concern because few have high incomes.

Income of 15 to 19 year olds

In 2011, the single largest group or 37% of 15 to 19 year olds in Greater Bendigo had a personal weekly income of between \$1 and \$199 per week compared to 32.6% in Victoria, while 28.8% had a negative or nil income compared to 39.3% in Victoria (see Table 23).

Table 23: Income of 15 to 19 year olds

Income of 15 to 19 year olds				
Income Level	Greater Bendigo %	Loddon %	Regional Victoria %	Victoria %
Negative/Nil income	28.8%	39.5%	32.6%	39.3%
\$1-\$199	37.0%	27.9%	34.7%	32.6%
\$200-\$299	9.7%	7.2%	7.5%	6.6%
\$300-\$399	6.3%	4.2%	6.2%	4.5%
\$400-\$599	5.8%	5.2%	5.6%	4.1%
\$600-\$799	2.4%	0.0%	2.2%	1.8%
\$800-\$999	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%	0.5%
\$1,000-\$1,249	0.2%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%
\$1,250-\$1,499	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
\$1,500-\$1,999	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
\$2,000 or more	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
not stated	9.1%	13.1%	10.2%	10.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100%	100%

Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profiles, cited in *Community Health & Wellbeing Profile 2015*, Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership: http://media.wix.com/ugd/c0043a_86e8d3c7a09e4939b72f311b929bb957.pdf

Income of 20 to 24 year olds

In 2011, the single largest group or 18.9% of 20 to 24 year olds in Greater Bendigo had a personal weekly income of between \$400 and \$599 per week compared to 14.6% in Victoria, while 18% had a personal weekly income between \$600-799, and \$200-299 compared to 15.2% in Victoria.

However, Greater Bendigo had a much lower proportion of 20 to 24 year olds with a negative or nil personal weekly income than Victoria with 4.7% and 12.2% respectively (see Table 24).

Table 24: Income of 20 to 24 Year olds

Income of 20 to 24 year olds				
Income Level	Greater Bendigo %	Loddon %	Regional Victoria %	Victoria %
Negative/Nil income	4.7%	5.7%	5.2%	12.2%
\$1-\$199	10.8%	11.3%	9.5%	11.9%
\$200-\$299	14.7%	9.8%	12.5%	11.6%
\$300-\$399	10.6%	13.9%	10.4%	9.4%
\$400-\$599	18.9%	16.5%	18.7%	14.6%
\$600-\$799	18.0%	18.0%	18.7%	15.2%
\$800-\$999	8.6%	12.4%	9.4%	9.0%
\$1,000-\$1,249	5.0%	0.0%	5.6%	5.6%
\$1,250-\$1,499	1.6%	0.0%	1.8%	1.8%
\$1,500-\$1,999	0.9%	0.0%	1.0%	0.9%
\$2,000 or more	0.4%	0.0%	0.6%	0.4%
not stated	5.7%	7.2%	6.8%	7.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100%	100%

Source: ABS 2011 Census of Population and Housing, Basic Community Profiles, cited in *Community Health & Wellbeing Profile 2015*, Bendigo Loddon Primary Care Partnership: http://media.wix.com/ugd/c0043a_86e8d3c7a09e4939b72f311b929bb957.pdf

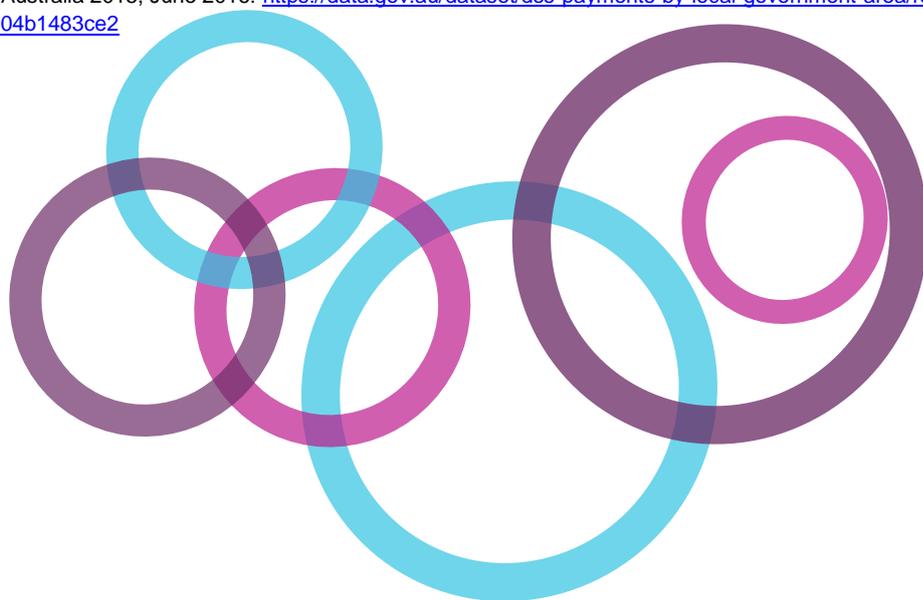
Youth Allowance

Current Youth Allowance statistics show that 18.5% of 16 to 24 years olds in Greater Bendigo are receiving Youth Allowance. This is higher than the Victorian average of 10.8%. However, this is easily explained by the fact that Greater Bendigo has a large population of students studying at University and TAFE who are eligible for youth allowance (see Tables 12 & 25).

Table 25: Youth allowance payments for 16 to 24 year olds

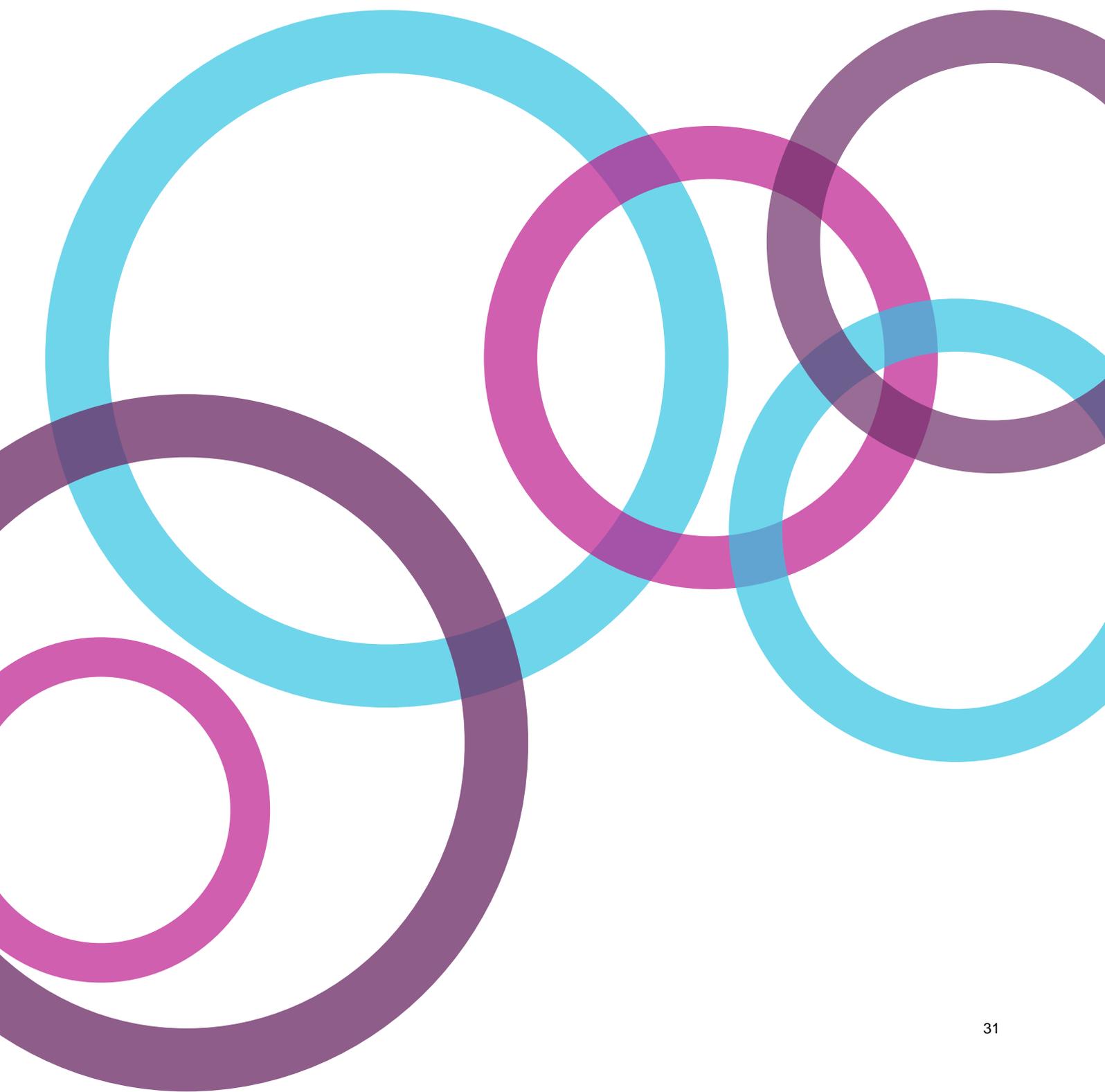
Youth allowance payments			
Area	Persons receiving Youth Allowance	Total Population aged 16 to 24	Percentage of young people receiving Youth Allowance
Greater Bendigo	2,558	13,813*	18.5%
Victoria	85,112	785,594**	10.8%

Source: DSS Payments by LGA, Sept 2016, *Forecast id, Greater Bendigo: , & **ABS, Cat 3235.0 Population by Age and Sex, Regions of Australia 2015, June 2016: <https://data.gov.au/dataset/dss-payments-by-local-government-area/resource/7c8c1ed7-9e62-4e18-bca5-6504b1483ce2>



Analysis

Analysis shows that young people in Greater Bendigo are slightly less concerned about the economy than young people are at the national level, but rank money as an important issue personally. Secondly, fewer young people in Greater Bendigo have a zero income than across Victoria overall, and fewer have an income over \$1,000 per week, perhaps reinforcing the previous data on education and employment about higher rates of young people in Greater Bendigo working than at a Victorian level but many of them working part-time. Finally, more young people aged 16 to 24 receive youth allowance than Victoria – most likely explained by the presence of tertiary education institutions.



PERSONAL SAFETY

Personal safety is an important issue identified by young people in the Mission Australia Youth Survey and City of Greater Bendigo surveys. This section will examine several personal safety indicators relating to young people at a national, Victorian and Greater Bendigo level. This will include young people's concerns about personal safety including feeling safe in their neighbourhood, feeling safe at home, walking in the local area, on public transport, and differences between day and night. It will also examine substantiated adolescent child abuse numbers in Greater Bendigo, young people as victims of crime, young people convicted and placed on community orders, and young people as offenders of crime. Finally, this section will explore young people's concerns about bullying, and the percentage of young people bullied including cyber-bulling.

Perceptions of Safety

City of Greater Bendigo surveys such as the Youth Wellbeing Survey and the Youth Survey for the Youth Strategy have identified personal safety as a major issue of concern for young people. So too did the Youth Summit in 2015, where personal safety was identified as the fourth most important issue.

In the Youth Wellbeing Survey of 2015, 26.2% of young people in Greater Bendigo stated that they were either extremely concerned or very concerned about personal safety, making personal safety the seventh most important issue to young people in the area (see Table 3). This is higher than the national average of 18.4% of young people either "extremely concerned" or "very concerned" about personal safety as stated in the Mission Australia Youth Survey 2016 (see Table 1). However the City of Greater Bendigo Youth Strategy youth survey found in 2016 that 17.1% of young people thought personal safety was a concern (see Table 6) – slightly below the national level of concern.

The available local data on adolescent perceptions of safety (while dated) does to some degree support these perceptions. In 2009 young people aged 12 to 17 in Greater Bendigo identified several circumstances where they felt less safe than would be hoped for in an ideal world. These include findings that suggest Greater Bendigo's young people don't feel very safe in their neighbourhood at night or on public transport at night. Indeed only 59.1% feel safe at home alone after dark, 34% feel safe travelling on public transport at night, 34.4% feel safe walking alone at night, and 76.4% feel safe overall in their neighbourhood. While it is expected to some degree that young people might feel unsafe at night on the street or on public transport, it is of concern that only 76.4% feel safe in the neighbourhood overall, especially when the state average is 82.4% (see Table 26).

Perhaps one of the more disturbing trends is that nearly 20% of adolescents feel they are not living in a functioning family with 80.3% of 12 to 17 year olds in Greater Bendigo stating they were living in a healthy functioning family compared to 83.1% in Victoria (see Table 25). And when substantiated adolescent child abuse figures are examined then there are reasons for concern, as Greater Bendigo has a rate of adolescent child abuse of 8.4 persons per 1,000 persons aged 10 to 17. This is nearly twice the rate of Victoria with 4.4 per 1,000 (see Table 27). This makes Greater Bendigo the tenth highest local government area in Victoria for adolescent child abuse.¹⁸ However, the available data is eight year olds therefore current data is needed confirm this trend.

¹⁸ Department of Education and Early Childhood, *City of Greater Bendigo, Adolescent Community Profile*, 2010

Table 26: Perceptions of personal safety

Perceptions of personal safety			
12 to 17 Year olds in 2009	Greater Bendigo	Victoria	Difference
Proportion of adolescents living with healthy functioning family	80.3%	83.1%	-2.8
Young people who feel safe overall in their neighbourhood	76.4%	82.4%	-6
Young people who feel safe at home by themselves during the day	78.5%	NA	-
Young people who feel safe at home by themselves after dark	59.1%	NA	-
Young people who feel safe walking in the local area alone during the day	73.0%	NA	-
Young people who feel safe walking in the local area alone after dark	34.3%	NA	-
Young people who feel safe travelling on public transport during the day	69.9%	NA	-
Young people who feel safe travelling on public transport after dark	34.0%	NA	-

Source: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *City of Greater Bendigo, Adolescent Community Profile*, 2010: <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/govrel/Policy/children/adolescentprofiles/lgaprofiles/greaterbendigo.pdf>

Table 27: Substantiated adolescent child abuse

Adolescent child abuse			
Age 10 to 17	Greater Bendigo	Victoria	Difference
FY 2009-2010	8.4 per 1,000	4.4 per 1,000	4 per 1,000

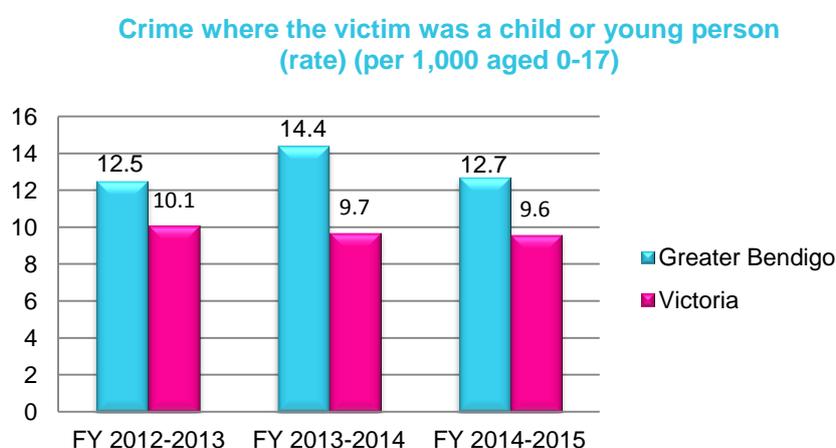
Source: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *City of Greater Bendigo, Adolescent Community Profile*, 2010: <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/govrel/Policy/children/adolescentprofiles/lgaprofiles/greaterbendigo.pdf>

Crime

The City of Greater Bendigo Youth Wellbeing Survey of 2015 found that 42.1% of young people in Greater Bendigo believed crime, safety and violence was an issue of the highest concern in Greater Bendigo (see Table 4). This is significantly higher than the national average of 12.8% for crime, safety and violence stated in the Mission Australia Youth Survey in 2016 (see Table 2).

Local data on young victims of crime supports this concern, as in 2014-2015, 12.7 persons per 1,000 aged between 0 and 17 were victims of crime in Greater Bendigo. This is higher than the Victorian rate of 9.6 per 1,000 (see Table 28).

Table 28: Number of young people who are victims of crime



Source: Department of Education & Training, *VCAMS Portal*, 2017: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/vcamstableau.aspx>

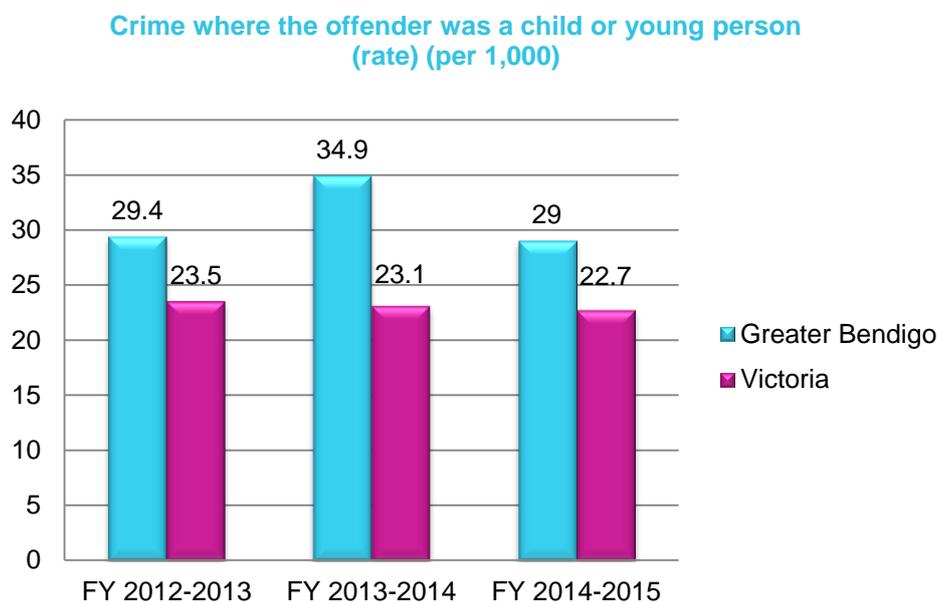
However, young people are not only victims of crime. Statistics show they are also perpetrators. In 2012-2013, there were 7.7 persons per 1,000 young persons who were convicted and placed on a community order in Greater Bendigo. This is over three times the average rate in Victoria of 2.2 per 1,000 (see Table 29). The number of young people offending in Greater Bendigo was also higher than the Victorian average, with 29 persons per 1,000 in Greater Bendigo compared to 22.7 in Victoria (see Table 30).

Table 29: Number of young people convicted and placed on community orders



Source: Department of Education & Training, VCAMS Portal, 2017:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/vcamstableau.aspx>

Table 30: Number of young offenders



Source: Department of Education & Training, VCAMS Portal, 2017:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/vcamstableau.aspx>

Bullying

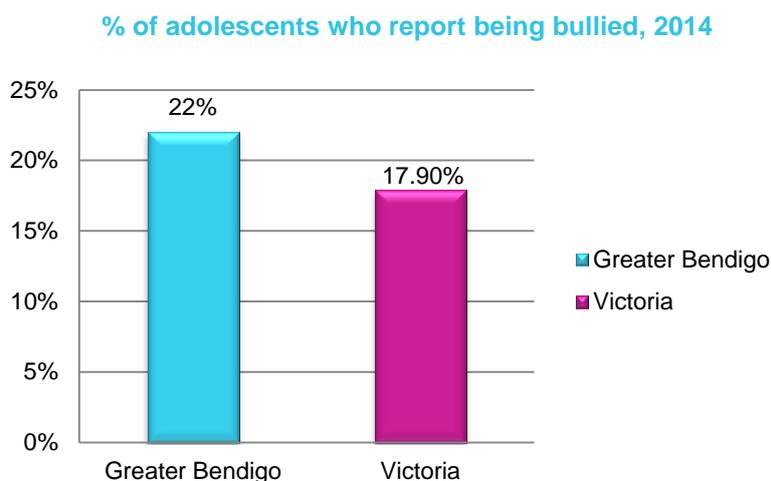
Local and national data suggests that bullying is an issue of concern to young people. In 2015, the Youth Wellbeing Survey found that 20.9% of young people in Greater Bendigo saw bullying as an issue of personal concern (see Table 3), while 27.9% said it was an issue to the community overall



(see Table 4). In addition, the Youth Strategy youth survey found that bullying was a high priority issue with 17.1% suggesting it was important (see Table 6). Compared to national statistics, young people in Greater Bendigo are more concerned about bullying, with 16.7% of young people in the Mission Australia Youth Survey stating bullying was a personal concern to them (see Table 1) and 10% stating it was a concern to the nation overall (see Table 2).

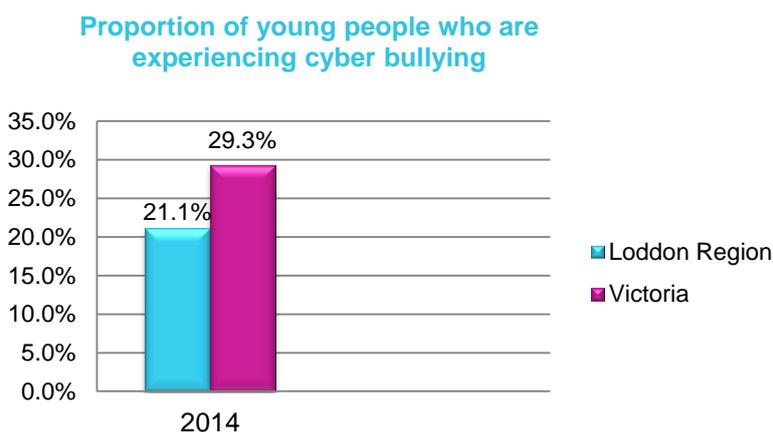
Statistics on adolescents who have experienced bullying support the perceptions of young people in Greater Bendigo. In 2014, 22% of adolescents in Greater Bendigo reported experiencing bullying, compared to 17.9% in Victoria (see Table 31). While Greater Bendigo has a higher rate of bullying than the Victorian average, the region that Greater Bendigo is situated (Loddon) has lower rates of cyber bullying than the Victoria average with 22% compared to 29.3% (see Table 32). Unfortunately specific data regarding cyber bullying for Greater Bendigo does not exist.

Table 31: Percentage of adolescents who report being bullied



Source: Department of Education & Training, *VCAMS Portal*, cited in City of Greater Dandenong LGA statistics – Greater Bendigo, 2017: <http://www.greaterdandenong.com/document/18464/statistical-data-for-victorian-communities>

Table 32: Percentage of young people who have experienced cyber bullying



Source: Department of Education & Training, *VCAMS Portal*, 2017: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/vcamstableau.aspx>

Analysis

Young people in Greater Bendigo are generally more concerned about their safety than young people nationally and at the Victorian level. These concerns include safety at home, in their neighbourhood, on public transport, and at night walking in their neighbourhood. Substantiated cases of adolescent child abuse is almost twice the Victorian average, the crime rate where young



people are the victim of crime is higher than Victoria, and so too is the rate of young people perpetrating crime compared to Victoria. In addition, concerns about bullying also add to the concern about safety as this is also higher in Greater Bendigo than across Victoria, and while there is no data for Greater Bendigo regarding cyber bullying, the regional data for Loddon shows that this is also higher than Victoria. Finally, analysis shows us that there are some gaps in local data, specifically data on cyber bullying. This suggests the need for not only data on issues such as cyber bullying at a Greater Bendigo level, but also a deeper understanding as to why young people in Greater Bendigo are so concerned about safety in their community and the implications of this.



DRUGS & ALCOHOL

Drugs and alcohol are key issues identified by young people in the Mission Australia Youth Survey and in City of Greater Bendigo surveys. This section will examine several drug and alcohol related indicators at a national, Victorian and Greater Bendigo level. This will include young people's concerns about drugs and alcohol and statistics on drug and alcohol usage amongst young people such as the number of young people who have tried alcohol, who have smoked cigarettes and marijuana, sniffed glue or chromed, and used illegal drugs. This section will also examine the numbers of young people who have had drug or alcohol treatment.

Drugs & Alcohol

Local and national data suggests that drugs and alcohol are both issues of concern to young people both nationally and in Greater Bendigo. In 2015, the Youth Wellbeing Survey found that 11.6% of young people in Greater Bendigo viewed drugs as either an “*extremely concerning*” or “*very concerning*” issue, and 11% personally saw alcohol as either an “*extremely concerning*” or “*very concerning*” issue (see Table 3). Drugs and alcohol also rated as a major issue during the 2015 Youth Summit,¹⁹ and the Youth Strategy Youth Survey in 2016 where 28.6% of young people saw drugs as an important issue (or the fourth most important issue), while 14.3% saw alcohol as an important issue (see Table 6). This is higher than national trends where young people see both drugs and alcohol as less important with drugs at 8.5% and alcohol at 6.7% (see Table 1). However, when asked to rate what they see as an issue for Australia overall (not personally), then drugs and alcohol are ranked as the number one issue with 28.7% of young people stating it is important (see Table 2).

Whilst from 2009, local drug and alcohol usage and drug and alcohol treatment statistics support these concerns. In 2009, statistics for the 12 to 14 and 15 to 17 year age brackets in Greater Bendigo are higher than the Victorian average. For example:

- More adolescents in Greater Bendigo report they have consumed alcohol with 54.6% of 12 to 14 year olds and 79.2% of 15 to 17 years olds stating they had consumed alcohol, compared to the Victorian average for 12 to 14 and 15 to 17 year olds of 46.4% and 74.1% respectively.
- More adolescents in Greater Bendigo have smoked cigarettes with 19.6% of 12 to 14 year olds and 41.3% of 15 to 17 years olds stating they had smoked cigarettes, compared to the Victorian average of 13.4% for 12 to 14 year olds and 36.4% for 15 to 17 year olds.
- Slightly more adolescents in Greater Bendigo have smoked marijuana with 4.6% of 12 to 14 year olds and 16.7% of 15 to 17 years olds stating they had smoked marijuana, compared to the Victorian average of 3.7% for 12 to 14 year olds and 16% 15 to 17 year olds.
- More adolescents in Greater Bendigo have sniffed glue or chromed with 9.5% of 12 to 14 year olds and 8.9% of 15 to 17 years olds stating they had sniff glue or chromed, compared to the Victorian average of 7.9% for 12 to 14 year olds and 7.0% 15 to 17 year olds.
- More adolescents in Greater Bendigo have used illegal drugs with 1.2% of 12 to 14 year olds and 5.2% of 15 to 17 years olds stating they had used illegal drugs, compared to the Victorian average of 1% for 12 to 14 year olds and 4.7% 15 to 17 year olds (see Table 33).

As a consequence of drug and alcohol use some young people are treated for drug and alcohol related problems, and young people from Greater Bendigo are no exception to this, indeed they are over represented in the statistics. More adolescents aged 15 to 24 in Greater Bendigo are treated for alcohol related issues with 83.7 persons per 10,000 persons (aged 15 to 24) compared

¹⁹ City of Greater Bendigo, *Youth Summit, Report, 2015*

to the Victorian average of 50.3 per 10,000. Significantly more adolescents aged 15 to 24 in Greater Bendigo have been treated for illicit drug related issues with 248.1 persons per 10,000 persons compared to the Victorian average of 127.2 per 10,000. Slightly more adolescents in Greater Bendigo have been treated for Pharmaceutical Drug related issues with 7.6 persons per 10,000 persons compared to the Victorian average of 5.7 per 10,000. More adolescents in Greater Bendigo have been treated for using Amphetamines with 45.3 persons per 10,000 persons compared to the Victorian average of 37.7 per 10,000 (see Table 34).

Table 33: Adolescent drug and alcohol usage

Adolescent drug and alcohol usage in Greater Bendigo				
2009	Greater Bendigo		Victoria	
Proportion of adolescents in Greater Bendigo who have:	12-14 year olds	15-17 year olds	12-14 year olds	15-17 year olds
Ever drank alcohol	54.6%	79.2%	46.4	74.1
Smoked cigarettes	19.6%	41.3%	13.4	36.4
Smoked marijuana	4.6%	16.7%	3.7%	16.0%
Sniffed glue/chromed	9.5%	8.9%	7.9%	7.0%
Used illegal drugs	1.2%	5.2%	1.0%	4.7%

Source: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *City of Greater Bendigo, Adolescent Community Profile*, 2010: <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/govrel/Policy/children/adolescentprofiles/lgaprofiles/greaterbendigo.pdf>

Table 34: Drug and alcohol treatment

Drug and alcohol treatment - 15 to 24 years			
Greater Bendigo - 2012-2013	Rate per 10,000 persons		
Category	Greater Bendigo	Victoria	Difference
Alcohol - Rate (treatment episodes)	83.7	50.3	33.4
Illicit Drugs - Rate (treatment episodes)	248.1	127.2	120.9
Pharmaceutical Drugs - Rate (treatment episodes)	7.6	5.7	1.9
Amphetamines Rate (treatment episodes)	45.3	37.7	7.6

Source: Turning Point, AODstats, *Victorian Alcohol and Drug Interactive Statistics and Mapping*, 2013: <http://aodstats.org.au/VicLGA>

Analysis

An analysis of drug and alcohol data shows us that some young people in Greater Bendigo have a higher personal level of concern about drugs and alcohol than young people do at a national level. Unfortunately this is supported by statistics that show higher levels of drug and alcohol related problems in Greater Bendigo compared to Victorian levels, with higher levels of stated alcohol use, smoking cigarettes, smoking marijuana, sniffing glue or chroming, and higher levels of other illegal drug usage. This is then supported by adolescent treatment levels because of drug and alcohol use, all of which show higher levels of treatment for adolescents with drug and alcohol related issues in Greater Bendigo than the Victorian average. This suggests a need to understand why there are greater levels of drug and alcohol related issues in Greater Bendigo with young people than at a State level and whether prevention services are sufficiently resourced.

TRANSPORT

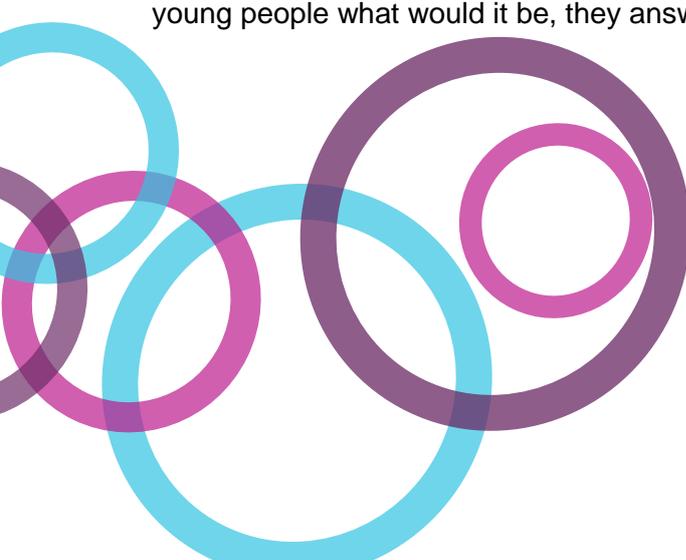
Transport was another priority issue identified in the Mission Australia Youth Survey and City of Greater Bendigo surveys. This section will examine transport issues relating to young people at a national, Victorian and local level. This will include national issues with the transport for young jobseekers in Australia, young people's problems with accessing transport in Greater Bendigo, mode of transport for young people in Greater Bendigo, and access to transport and impact in Greater Bendigo compared to Victoria.

Transport

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) report *U-Turn: The Transport Woes of Australia's Young Jobseekers* argues that that 25.1% of unemployed young people (under 25) nominated transport as a barrier to securing work, and that transport barriers are significantly more common for young job-seekers than for those aged over 25 with 14.8% for those under 54 and 8% for those 55 and over. The report found that 61% of unemployed 18-25 year olds had no driving license. Whereas young people with jobs had a lower level of being unlicensed with 27.4%.²⁰

While precise data on young people and access to transport in Greater Bendigo is unavailable, the City of Bendigo's Youth Wellbeing Survey in 2015 did identify several transport related themes. These were: most (55.4%) young people *rarely* experienced problems with transport, 32.3% *never* experienced problems with transport, 9.5% experienced problems with transport on weekdays, and 5.5% experienced problems with transport on weekends (see Table 35). The survey also identified that most young people (89.3%) travel around Greater Bendigo by car, with 49.9% saying they also walk, and 36.8% saying they also use public transport (see Table 36). Transport was also identified as an issue during the engagement process for the City's new youth strategy with 7% of participants stating transport was an issue. This was the equal fifth ranked issue along with physical health (see Table 5).

In addition, the 2010 Adolescent Profile of Greater Bendigo shows that more adolescents (10.9%) in Greater Bendigo report having a lack of transport option that impacts them getting to work, school, doctors, and/or socialising compared to the Victorian average of 9.3% (see Table 37). Finally, the survey conducted for the City of Greater Bendigo's *Young People in Rural Townships in Greater Bendigo Report* in 2016, also shows that 19% of young people in Greater Bendigo rural areas when asked if they could change one thing in Greater Bendigo to make it a better place for young people what would it be, they answered improved or more transport to attend events.²¹

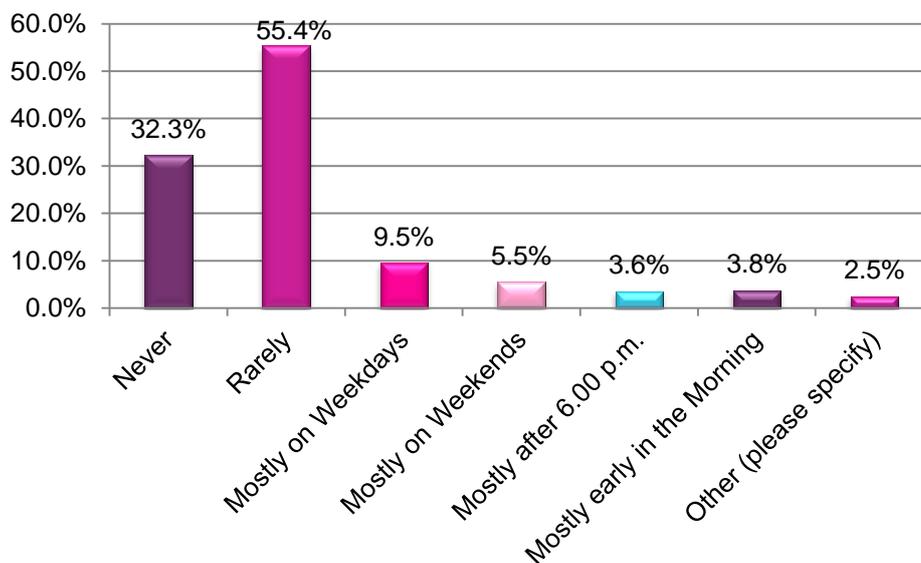


²⁰ Brotherhood of St. Laurence, *U-Turn: The Transport Woes of Australia's Young Jobseekers*, 2016.

²¹ City of Greater Bendigo, *Young People in Rural Townships in Greater Bendigo Report*, 2016

Table 35: Young people's experience of transport in Greater Bendigo

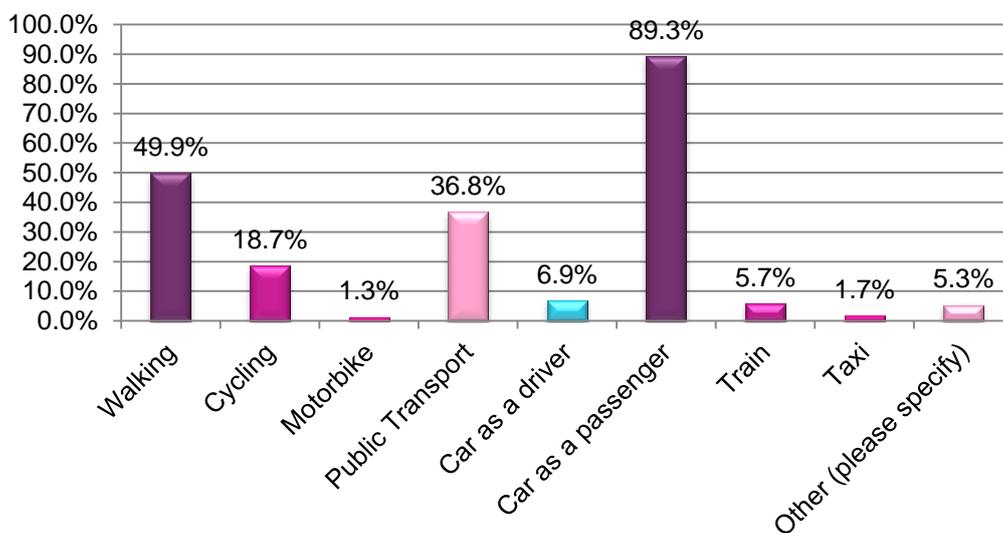
I experience issues with transport...



Source: City of Greater Bendigo, *Youth Wellbeing Survey*, 2015

Table 36: Mode of transport for young people in Greater Bendigo

I currently get from place to place by...



Source: City of Greater Bendigo, *Youth Wellbeing Survey*, 2015

Table 37: Proportion of adolescents whose lack of transport impacts on their capacity to work, study, see a doctor or socialise

Adolescents whose lack of transport impacts their capacity to work, study, see a doctor, or socialise			
12 to 17 year olds in 2009	Greater Bendigo	Victoria	Difference
Access to transport impact capacity to work, study, see a doctor, or socialise	10.9%	9.3%	1.6%

Source: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *City of Greater Bendigo, Adolescent Community Profile*, 2010: <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/govrel/Policy/children/adolescentprofiles/lgaprofiles/greaterbendigo.pdf>

Analysis

An analysis of transport data pertaining to young people in Greater Bendigo highlights a shortage of detailed transport specific data for the area. However, the Youth Wellbeing Survey of 2015 and the Greater Bendigo Adolescent Profile do provide some data to compare to national data, and shows us that while most young people in Greater Bendigo rarely have issues with transport, a sizable percentage of approximately 10% do have issues with transport that impact their ability to work, study, see a doctor and socialise; and that when they do have troubles with transport that it tends to be during the week. This is supported by 19% of rural young people suggesting they would like improvements in transport so they can get to events, and anecdotal reports of students having issues with public transport timetables matching school timetables, especially rurally based students. This suggests there are some gaps in local data, specifically a shortage of detailed Greater Bendigo data on the number/percentage of rural young people and unemployed young people who are impacted on a regular basis by transport issues.



PHYSICAL & SEXUAL HEALTH

Physical health and sexual health are key issues identified by young people in the Mission Australia Youth Survey and in City of Greater Bendigo surveys. This section will examine several physical and sexual health indicators relating to young people at a national, Victorian and Greater Bendigo level. This will include young people's concerns about physical health and sexual health in Greater Bendigo compared to Australia; and key indicators of physical health such as consumption of fruit and vegetables, use of sunscreen, healthy teeth and gums, special health care needs, young people with Asthma and Asthma plans, levels of good health, levels of exercise, and levels of electronic media use. It will also examine key indicators of sexual health including sexual activity, safe sex, teenage pregnancy, and STIs.

Physical Health

In 2015, the Youth Wellbeing Survey found that 25.4% of young people rated health as an issue for the Greater Bendigo area – the seventh highest issue out of a list of 15 topics (see Table 4). This is higher than the national level of concern identified by the Mission Australia Youth survey in 2016 where health was identified as the eleventh most important issue for Australia out of fifteen issues with only 10.3% (see Table 2). Both physical and sexual health were also identified during the engagement process for the Youth Strategy with 7% of participants identifying physical health as important (the fifth most important issue) and 1% identifying sexual health as important (see Table 5).

Key indicators of physical health of young people aged 10 to 17 years old in Greater Bendigo from the most recent data from 2009 support this concern as most indicators for Greater Bendigo demonstrate a lower standard of health than the Victorian average. For example:

- Fewer adolescents in Greater Bendigo (17.4%) regularly consumed adequate serves of fruit and vegetables compared to the Victorian average of 19%.
- Fewer adolescents in Greater Bendigo (2.9%) adequately used sunscreen compared to the Victorian average of 3.1%.
- Fewer adolescents in Greater Bendigo (64.1%) had healthy teeth and gums compared to the Victorian average of 76.4%.
- More adolescents in Greater Bendigo (16.9%) had special health care needs compared to the Victorian average of 15.3%.
- Greater Bendigo also had more adolescents with Asthma with 13.3% of 10 to 17 year olds reporting suffering from Asthma, compared to the Victorian average of 11.6%, while fewer of those with Asthma reported having Asthma plans with 30.8% compared to the Victorian average of 31% (see Table 38).

Overall, fewer adolescents in Greater Bendigo (85.9%) reported having good health, compared to the Victorian average of 89.2%. But reversing the trend, more adolescents in Greater Bendigo (13.2%) reported having adequate levels of exercise compared to the Victorian average of 12.3%, while conversely, more adolescents in Greater Bendigo (62.6%) reported excessively using electronic media (more than 2 hours per day), compared to the Victorian average of 58.7% (see Table 38).

Table 38: Indicators of physical health

Indicators of physical health			
Indicators of physical health status for 10-17 year olds in 2009	Greater Bendigo %	Victoria %	Difference %
Adequate serves fruit and vegetables	17.4	19	-1.6
Use of adequate Sunscreen	2.9	3.1	-0.2
Healthy Teeth and Gums	64.1	67.4	-3.3
Special Health Care Needs	16.9	15.3	1.6
Adolescents with Asthma	13.3	11.6	1.7
Adolescents with Asthma Plans	30.8	31	-0.02
Adolescents self-reporting Good Health	85.9	89.2	-3.3
Adequate levels of Exercise	13.2	12.3	-0.9
Use of electronic media for 2+hrs per day (excessive levels)	62.6	58.7	3.9

Source: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *City of Greater Bendigo, Adolescent Community Profile*, 2010: <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/govrel/Policy/children/adolescentprofiles/lgaprofiles/greaterbendigo.pdf>

Sexual Health

The Fifth National Survey of Secondary Students and Sexual Health in 2013 highlighted several national trends in sexual health in young people in Australia. The survey of over 2,000 Year 10, 11, and 12 students from across the Government, Catholic and Independent school systems showed that most young people in years 10 to 12 have a good knowledge of HIV, but have poor knowledge of STIs, Hepatitis, and Human Papilloma Virus; while 34% are sexually active, and that 59% of those sexually active use condoms.²²

Local and Victorian data suggests that sexual health is an issue for young people in the Greater Bendigo area. Key indicators of sexual health of young people aged 12 to 17 years old in Greater Bendigo support this concern as most indicators for Greater Bendigo demonstrate a lower standard of sexual health than the Victorian average. For example, young people aged 12 to 14 are more sexually active at 7.9% than the Victorian average of 4.7%, while young people aged 15 to 17 years are also more sexually active at 38.3% than Victoria at 22.4%. Furthermore, fewer young people in Greater Bendigo practice safe sex (condom use) with 47.5% than the Victorian average with 58.1%, and fewer females practice safe sex to avoid pregnancy than the Victorian average with 65.7% and 78.9% respectively (see Table 39). In addition, there is a significantly higher rate of sexually transmitted infections amongst 12 to 17 years old in Greater Bendigo than the Victorian average with 776 persons per 100,000 in Greater Bendigo compared to 406.4 per 100,000 in Victoria (see Table 40). Finally, the teenage birth rate in Greater Bendigo of 19.4 per 1,000 women aged 15 to 19 years is much higher than the rate in Victoria of 10.6 per 1,000 (see Table 40). This places Greater Bendigo as the 17th highest rate of teenage births out of all 79 local government areas in Victoria.²³

Table 39: Indicators of sexual health

Indicators of sexual health			
Indicators of adolescent sexual health for 12 to 17 year olds in 2009	Bendigo %	Victoria %	Difference %
Sexual Activity (12 – 14)	7.9%	4.7%	+2.2%
Sexual Activity (15 – 17)	38.3%	22.4%	+15.9%
Practice safe Sex: condom use	47.5%	58.1%	-10.6%
Adolescent Females safe Sex to avoid pregnancy	65.7%	78.9%	-13.2%

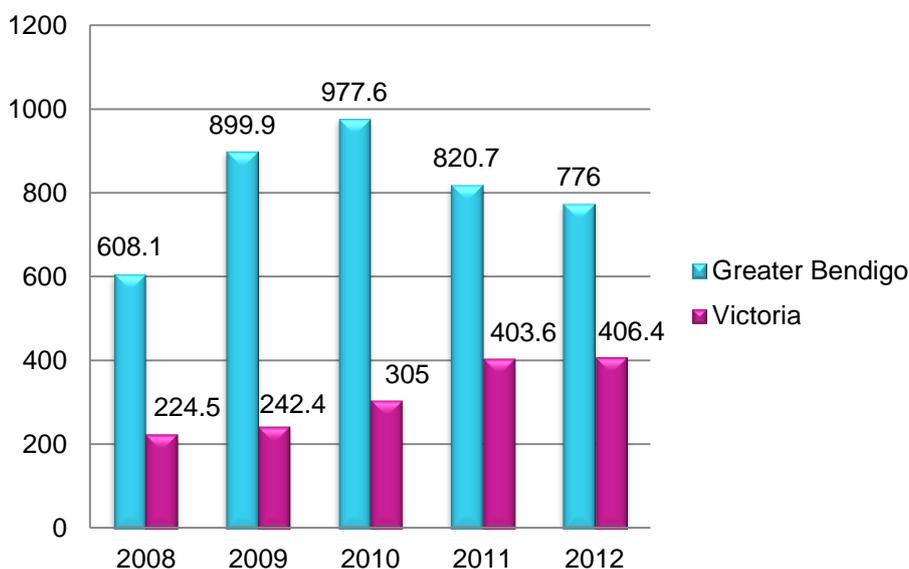
Source: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *City of Greater Bendigo, Adolescent Community Profile*, 2010: <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/govrel/Policy/children/adolescentprofiles/lgaprofiles/greaterbendigo.pdf>

²² Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, *5th National Survey of Australian Secondary Students and Sexual Health 2013*, April 2014

²³ Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *City of Greater Bendigo, Adolescent Community Profile*, 2010

Table 40: Rate of sexually transmitted infections in young people

Rate of sexually transmitted infections in young people aged 12 to 17 years (per 100,000)



Source: Department of Education & Training, *VCAMS Portal*, 2017:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/vcamstableau.aspx>

Analysis

A higher percentage of young people in Greater Bendigo see health as an important issue for the community than young people at the National level. Analysis of the key health indicators relating to young people confirm young people in Greater Bendigo have lower levels of health than young people at a Victorian level. Fewer young people in Greater Bendigo report having adequate levels of fruit and vegetables, sunscreen usage, healthy teeth and gums, and overall good health. As well, fewer practice safe sex and actively avoiding pregnancy, and more have sexually transmitted diseases. More young people in Greater Bendigo suffering from Asthma, while against the trend, more young people reporting having adequate levels of exercise than in Victoria. This suggests that further work is required on understanding why these health indicators are overall worse in Greater Bendigo than in Victoria overall.



DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination is a key issue identified by young people in the Mission Australia Youth Survey and in City of Greater Bendigo surveys. This section examines discrimination relating to young people at a national, Victorian and Greater Bendigo level. This will include young people's concerns about discrimination and LGBTI issues in Greater Bendigo and nationally, young people's experiences of discrimination based on skin colour, ethnicity and religion in Greater Bendigo and nationally, and national data on all forms of discrimination.

Discrimination

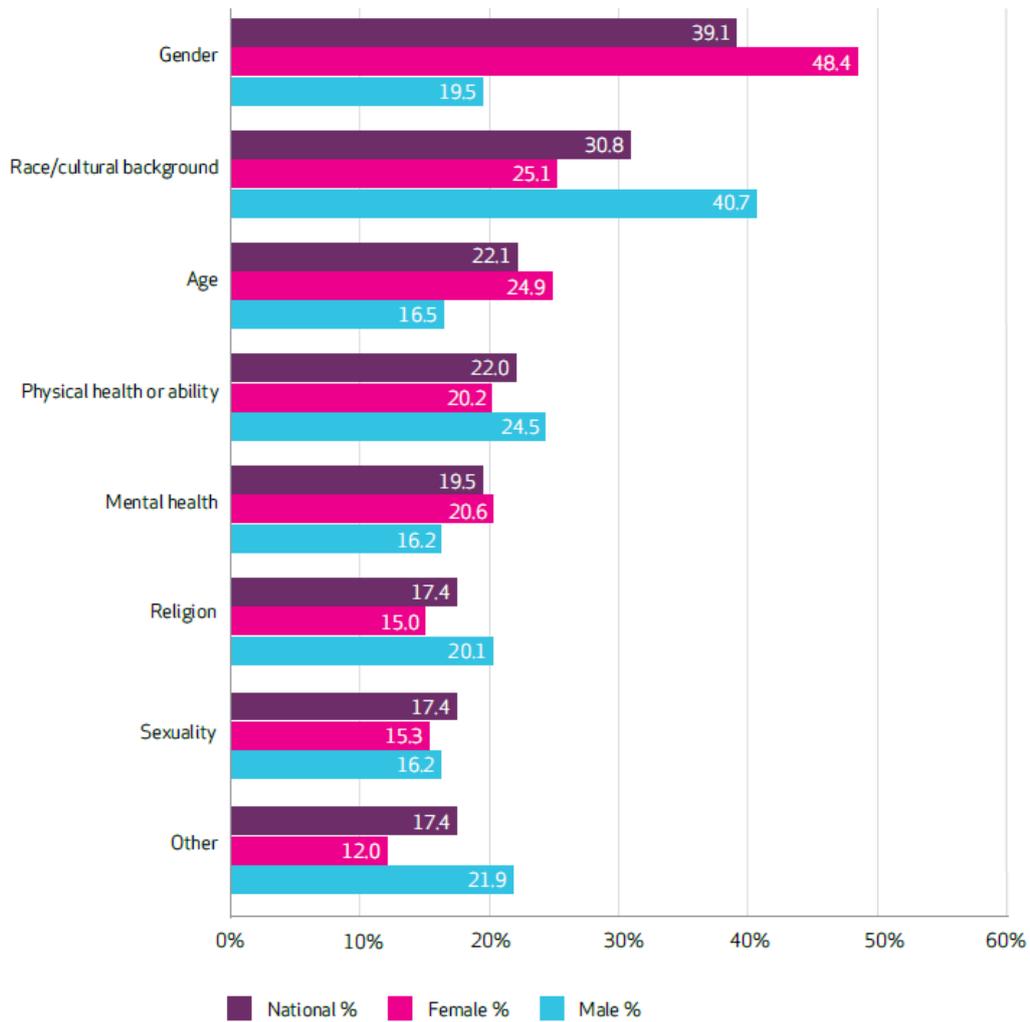
Local and national data suggests that discrimination is an issue at both the national and local levels. The City of Greater Bendigo Youth Wellbeing survey of 2015 shows that equity and discrimination is an issue that young people believe is a concern for Greater Bendigo. In 2015, the Youth Wellbeing Survey found that equity and discrimination was the third most important issue to Bendigo (after crime, safety and violence and mental health) with 38.9% of young people identifying it as a concern, as well as 12.5% of young people identifying the related topic of LGBTI issues as of concern (see Table 4). The engagement process for the Youth Strategy also identified that 7% of participants were concerned about discrimination and 2% about LGBTI issues (see Table 5). While the Mission Australia Youth Survey in 2016 found that 27.0% of young people identified equity and discrimination as the second most important issue to the nation after alcohol and drugs, with 7.4% identifying identified LGBTI issues as an issue of concern (see Table 2).

The Mission Australia Youth Survey shows that young people across Australia experience many forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on gender, race and cultural background, age, physical ability, mental health, religion, and sexuality. The survey found that 39.1% of young people had been treated unfairly or discriminated against because of their gender, 30.8% because of their race and cultural background, 22.1% because of their age, 22.0% because of physical health and ability, 19.5% because of their mental health, 17.4% because of their religion, and 17.4% because of their sexuality (see Table 41).

While some data about young people and discrimination is available for Greater Bendigo – not all areas of discrimination data is available at a local level. Data on young people in Greater Bendigo and their experience of discrimination based on gender, age, physical ability, mental health, sexuality is not available. However, there is some data on young people and their experience of discrimination because of their colour of their skin, ethnicity and religion from the City of Greater Bendigo Youth Attitudes to Multiculturalism survey in 2016. This survey found that 11.9% of young people in Greater Bendigo had experienced some form of discrimination because of their skin colour, ethnicity, or religion (see Table 42). This is significantly fewer than at the national level, but nonetheless it is still over one in ten young people identifying in the survey as experiencing discrimination based on skin colour, ethnicity, or religion.

Table 41: Perceived reasons for unfair treatment or discrimination experienced by young people nationally

Figure 1.8: Perceived reasons for unfair treatment or discrimination: experienced

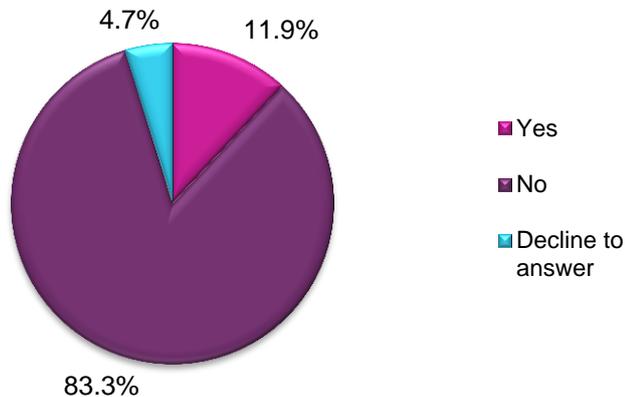


Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

Source: Mission Australia, *Youth Survey*, 2016: <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-evaluation/youth-survey>

Table 42: Number of young people who have experienced discrimination in Greater Bendigo

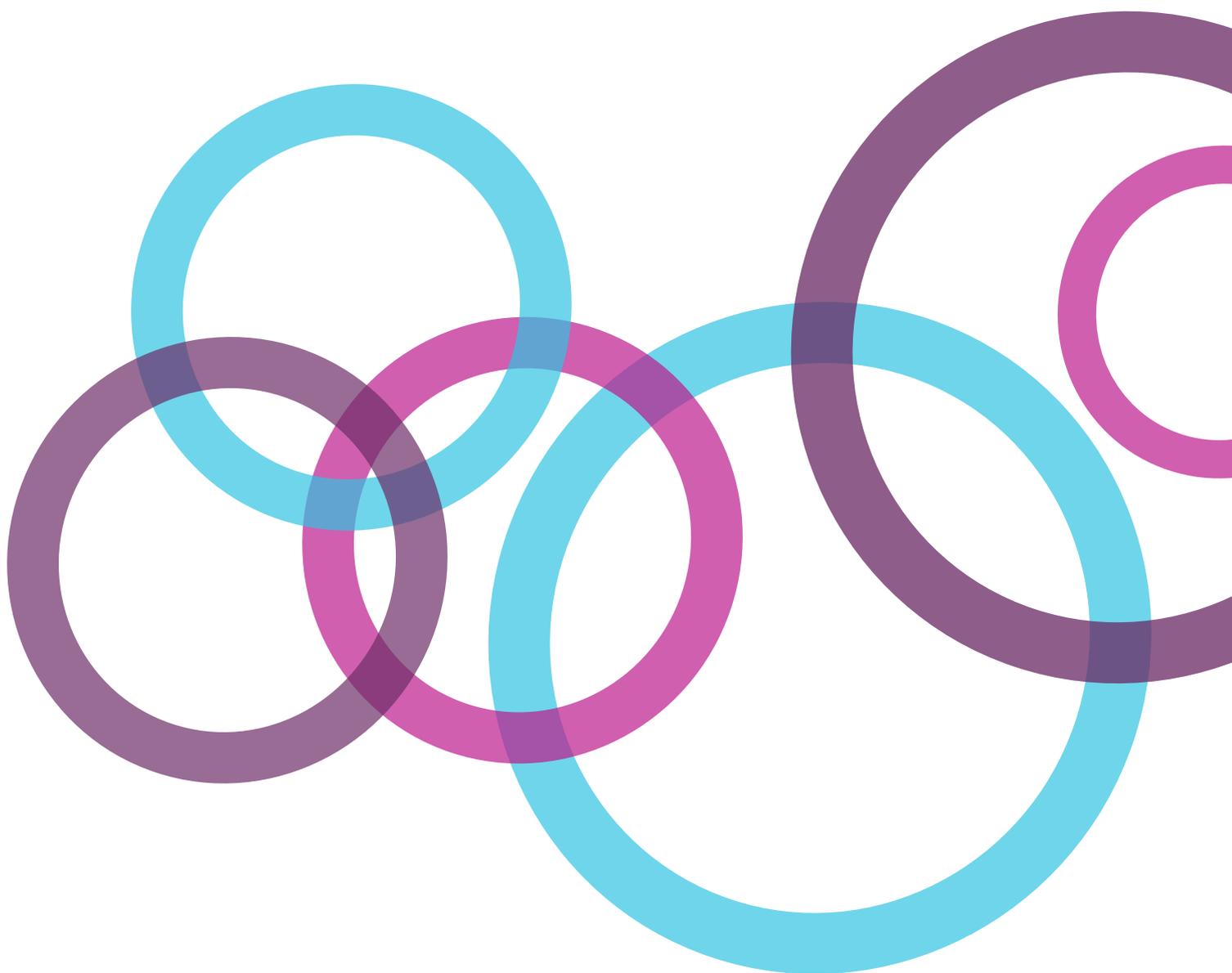
Have you experienced discrimination because of your skin colour, ethnic origin or religion over the last 12 months?



Source: City of Greater Bendigo, *Youth Attitudes to Multiculturalism Survey*, 2016

Analysis

Our analysis shows that young people in Greater Bendigo are similar to young people nation-wide in their concern about equity and discrimination issues, whilst being slightly less concerned about LGBTI issues compared to young people at a national level. It also shows us that fewer young people in Greater Bendigo have experienced discrimination because of their ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, perhaps explained by the low level of cultural diversity (7%) compared to Victoria or Australia nation-wide.²⁴ Finally, analysis shows us that there are some significant gaps in local data, specifically a shortage of data on young people who have experienced discrimination on the basis of disability, gender, and sexuality. This suggests a need to for more targeted collection of local data about young people and their experiences of discrimination on a regular basis.



²⁴ Profile id, City of Greater Bendigo Community Profile: <http://profile.id.com.au/bendigo/age-by-birthplace>

CONNECTING TO COMMUNITY

This section examines several community related indicators for young people at a national, Victorian and Greater Bendigo level. This will include young people's views about being part of the community including contributing, participating, and being involved with the community. It will also include the level of connectedness young people feel to their peers in Greater Bendigo compared to Victoria; and the activities that young people participate in the community in Greater Bendigo and nationally such as sport, arts/cultural/music activities, volunteering, students organisations, youth organisations, religious organisations, environmental organisations, political organisations. Finally, this section will explore the level of say in their community young people feel they have in Greater Bendigo and Victoria including at school, at home, and in their neighbourhood.

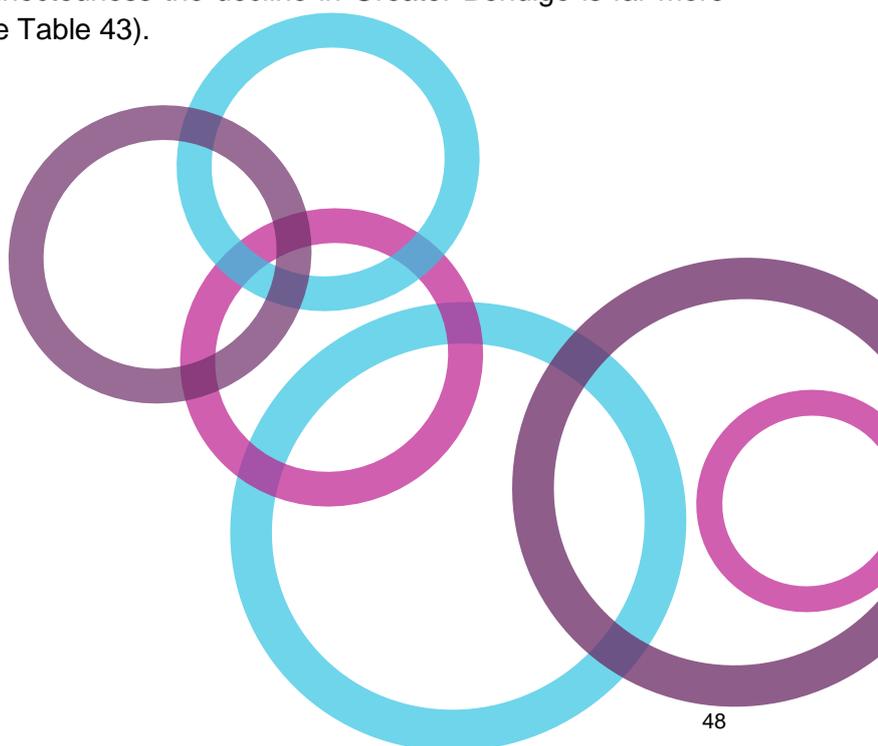
Connecting to Community

The City's 2016 Youth Summit held to discuss the new youth strategy found that young people believed that being connected to the community was important. They stated that it was important for them to contribute, participate, be informed and involved, be heard and supported, and be empowered to make decisions in their own community.²⁵

The 2016 City of Greater Bendigo Citizen's Jury report outlined three areas that to varying degrees support these aspirations: a youth hub to engage with young people in their own space, a youth mentoring program, and a mechanism to promote opportunities and engage and build creativity in young people.²⁶ All three suggestions would directly or indirectly increase young people's ability to contribute, participate, be informed and involved, be heard and supported, and be empowered.

Connectedness to Peers

An important aspect of feeling part of a community is being connected to one's peers. Young people in years 7 and 9 in Greater Bendigo are unfortunately less connected to their peers than their Victorian counterparts. This trend has continued from 2011 to 2015 with young people in Greater Bendigo showing declining levels of connectedness to their peers over the period. In 2011, 51.8% of young people in Greater Bendigo said they were connected to their peers compared to 58.8% in Victoria. By 2015 only 45.1% of young people in Greater Bendigo said they were connected to their peers compared to 54.6% in Victoria. While there has been a decline in both Greater Bendigo and Victorian level of connectedness the decline in Greater Bendigo is far more pronounced than the decline in Victoria (see Table 43).

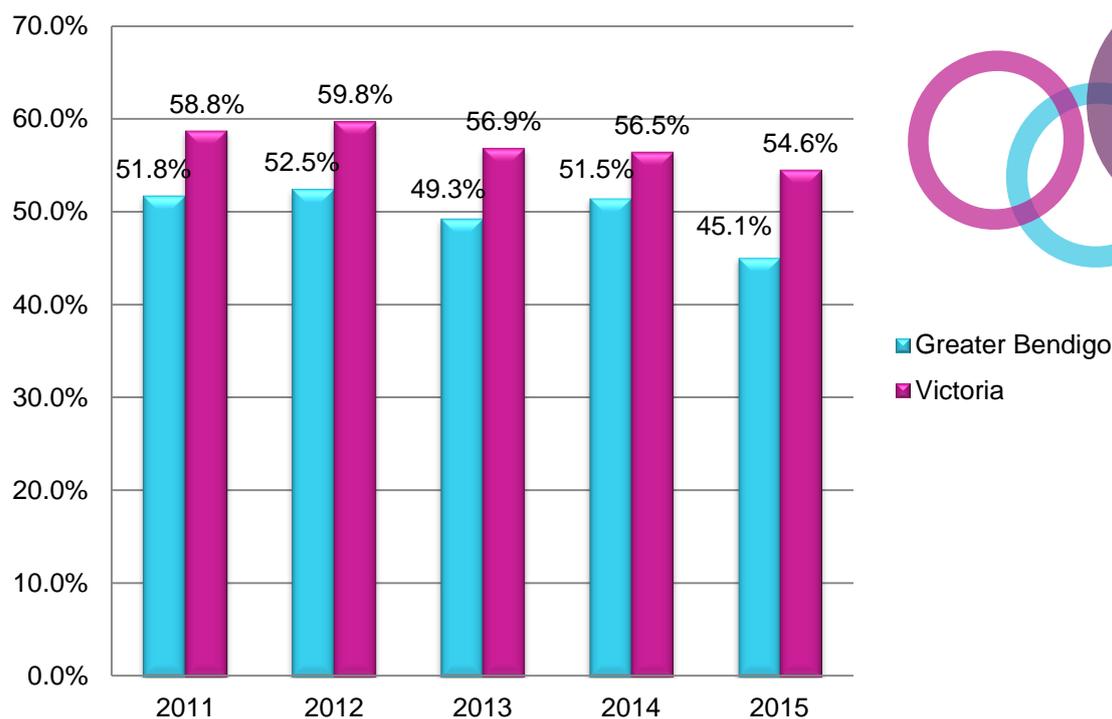


²⁵ City of Greater Bendigo, *Youth Summit*, 2016

²⁶ City of Greater Bendigo, *Citizen's Jury Report*, 2016

Table 43: Connectedness to peers

Student perception of connectedness with peers - year 7 to year 9



Source: Department of Education & Training, *VCAMS Portal*, 2017:
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/research/Pages/vcamstableau.aspx>

One way to understand levels of connectedness is to look at the activities that young people actively participate in as members of their community. The national and local data shows that activities are of varying significance to young people. There are also differences between national and local trends concerning youth participation in activities.

The Mission Australia Youth Survey 2016 shows that the five most popular activities for young people were: sport (as a participant) with 75.7%, sport (as a spectator) with 67%, volunteer work with 53.5%, arts/cultural/music activities with 52.7%, and student leadership activities with 42.5%. These were followed with youth groups and clubs with 30.6%, religious groups or activities with 28.7%, environmental groups or activities with 24.6%, and political groups or organisations with 8.7% (see Table 44).

This was different from the Greater Bendigo data from the Youth Wellbeing Survey (2015) which found that the five most popular activities for young people were: sport (as a participant) with 79.7%, arts/cultural/music activities with 40.8%, student leadership activities with 33.3%, sport (as a spectator) with 29.6%, and youth groups and clubs with 22.1%. These were followed with volunteer work with 18.2%, religious groups and activities with 8.7%, environmental groups and activities with 6.4%, and political groups and organisations with 2.7% (see Table 45). There are some differences here, young people in Greater Bendigo are more engaged with participating in sport, and going to arts/cultural/music activities, but less involved with volunteer work, student leadership, religious groups, youth groups, environmental groups, and political groups.

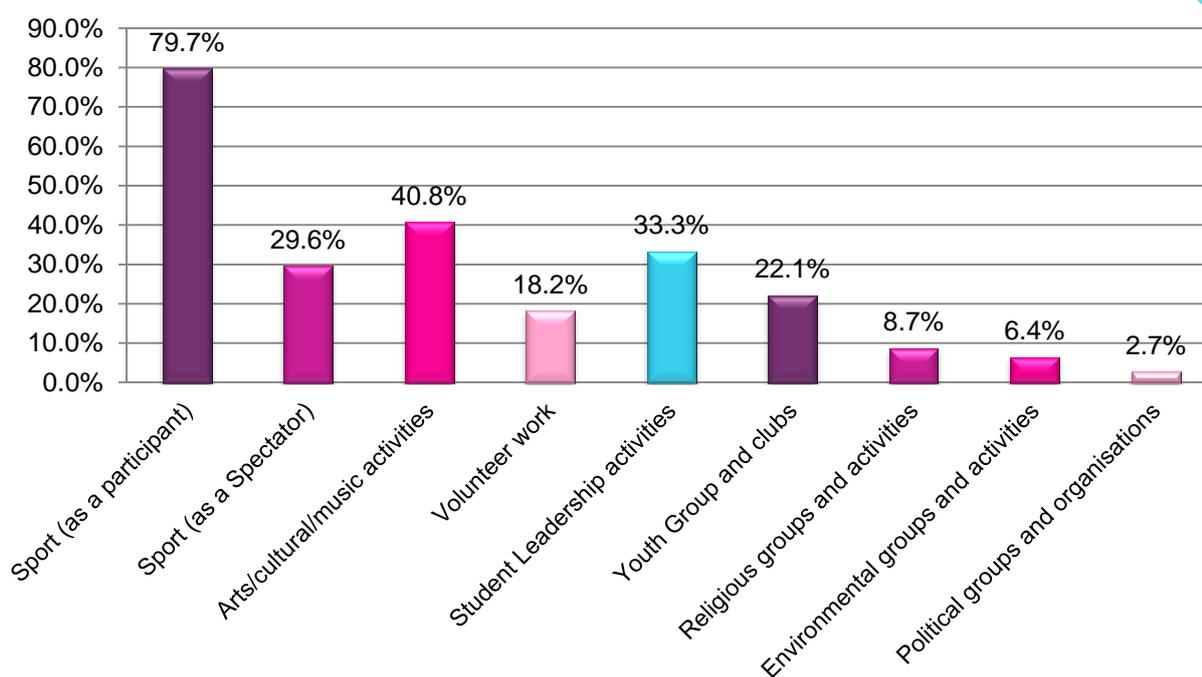
Table 44: Activities young people have participated in over the past year (National)

	National 2016 %	Female %	Male %	National 2015 %	National 2014 %
Sports (as a participant)	75.7	72.8	80.1	74.3	74.1
Sports (as a spectator)	67.0	62.7	73.0	67.4	67.6
Volunteer work	53.5	59.1	47.4	51.3	53.4
Arts/cultural/music activities	52.7	59.8	44.0	50.7	53.0
Student leadership activities	42.5	46.7	37.9	40.0	41.9
Youth groups and clubs	30.6	32.0	28.9	33.1	32.4
Religious groups or activities	28.7	31.2	25.5	30.8	29.3
Environmental groups or activities	24.6	25.5	23.3	22.0	23.7
Political groups or organisations	8.7	8.1	8.6	7.7	8.5

Source: Mission Australia, *Youth Survey*, 2016: <https://www.missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-evaluation/youth-survey>

Table 45: Activities young people have participated in (Greater Bendigo)

What activities are you involved in? (Please select top three)



Source: City of Greater Bendigo, *Youth Wellbeing Survey*, 2015

Having a say in the Community

As well as connecting to peers in the community through activities young people also feel connected by how much say they have in their communities. A comparison of Greater Bendigo and Victorian data shows that 12 to 17 year olds in Greater Bendigo feel like they have less of a say in their community than the Victorian average with the exception of at school. In 2009 (the most recent data available), 67.4% of 12 to 17 year olds in Greater Bendigo said they were able to help

make decisions at school compared to 58.8% for Victoria, while fewer (60.1%) were allowed to make decisions at home compared to the Victorian average of 61.5%. In addition, fewer 12 to 17 year olds in Greater Bendigo (58.7%) said that adults in their neighbourhood gave attention to what adolescents said compared to 61.0% in Victoria, while only 42.1% of 12 to 17 year olds in Greater Bendigo said they were able to have a say in making decisions regarding activities in their neighbourhood compared to 47.1% in Victoria (see Table 46).

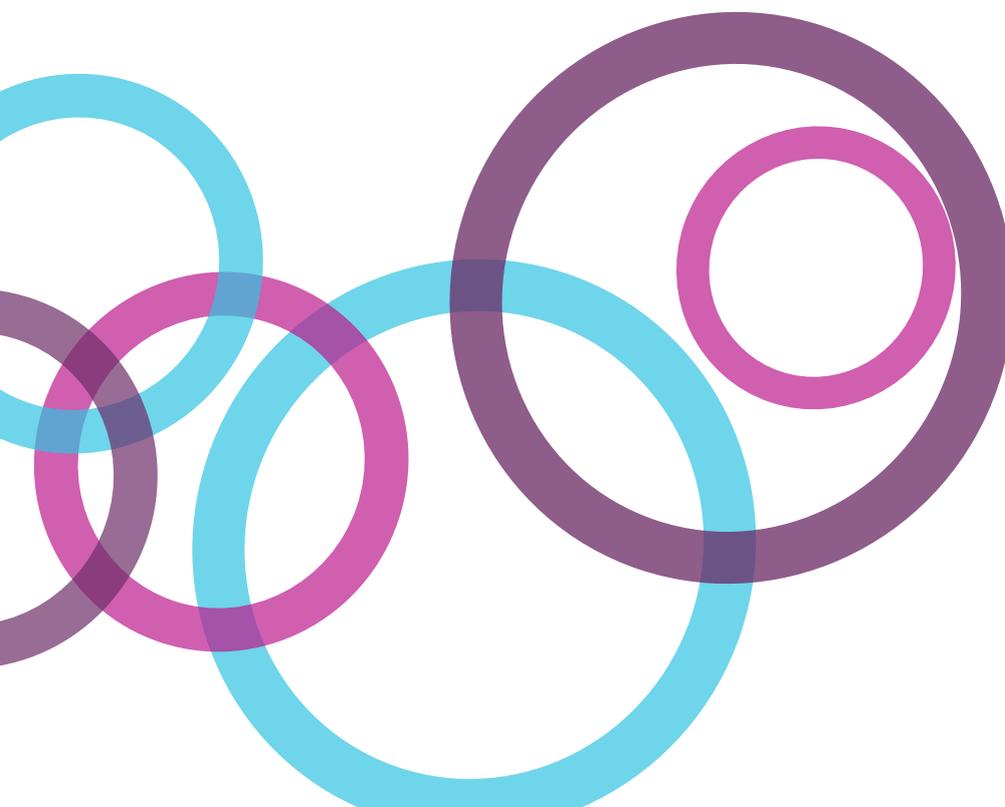
Table 46: Young people’s say in community

Young people having their say in the community			
Aged 12 to 17 years - 2009	Greater Bendigo %	Victoria %	Difference %
Help make decisions at school	67.4%	58.8%	8.6%
Help make decisions at home	60.1%	61.5%	-1.4%
Adults in the neighbourhood pay attention to what adolescents say	58.7%	61.0%	-2.3%
Make decisions regarding activities in neighbourhood	42.1%	47.1%	-4.9%

Source: Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, *City of Greater Bendigo, Adolescent Community Profile, 2010*: <https://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/govrel/Policy/children/adolescentprofiles/lgaprofiles/greaterbendigo.pdf>

Analysis

Both young people and wider community believe that it is important for young people to be an active part of the community. Unfortunately young people in Greater Bendigo feel less connected to their peers than in Victoria overall, yet more young people in Greater Bendigo participate in sport than at a national level, while less young people participate in other forms of activities such as arts/cultural/music, student leadership, youth organisations, environment organisations, religious organisations, political organisations. This suggests a lack of either diversity in options for young people to participate or a lack of understanding amongst young people about these options for participation. Finally, young people in Greater Bendigo feel less like they are able to have a say in their community than in Victoria as a whole with the exception of at school. This suggests a need for better communication strategies to highlight the opportunities available for young people to actively participate, connect and have a say in the Greater Bendigo community.



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