

# Directions from Young People

## YOUTH STRATEGY ENGAGEMENT REPORT



SEPTEMBER 2025



City of  
**Melville**

Melville  
**YOUTH**  
COLLECTIVE



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# Executive Summary

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The City of Melville is revising its Directions from Young People - Youth Strategy (2026–2029) to guide how we work in partnership with young people aged 12–25, their families, carers, and service providers. The Strategy will build on the foundations of the current Strategy (2022–2025) and set a clear roadmap for initiatives that support health, wellbeing, and connection to community.

Between March and August 2025, the City undertook a comprehensive engagement process involving 555 participants through surveys, pop-up events and peer research, co-designed with the Youth Steering Group. Engagement was delivered at both the Consult and Collaborate levels of the IAP2 Spectrum, ensuring young people were not only heard but directly involved in shaping the process.

The engagement confirmed that young people want safe, affordable spaces to connect, strong mental health supports, opportunities to shape decisions, and practical pathways into study, work, and community life. These insights will directly inform the the new Strategy.

This report summarises the engagement methodology, communication channels, detailed responses, and emerging priorities of young people.



# Key Findings

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The engagement highlighted consistent and strongly expressed priorities:

- Safe, inclusive spaces: A youth centre or equivalent “third space” (hangouts away from home or school) remain the most urgent need, alongside better hangout facilities such as skateparks, pump tracks, and study spaces.
- Health and wellbeing: Mental health is the top challenge for young people, with calls for more accessible, affordable, and stigma-free support services.
- Cost of living and housing pressures: Affordability - from sport and recreation to housing - is seen as a major barrier to wellbeing and participation.
- Climate action and sustainability: Young people want hands-on opportunities to take climate action and contribute to a sustainable future.
- Youth voice in decision-making: Young people value being asked for input but want genuine influence, clear feedback loops, and stronger representation in decisions that affect them.
- Relevance of current focus areas: The four existing focus areas - Youth Voice, Wellbeing, Communication, and Making a Difference - remain highly relevant and should continue to shape the Strategy moving forward.

Above all, young people want to feel heard, valued, and included in shaping their community.

“lots of people over look us because we are young”

“more free activities locally”

“I think there should be more opportunities for youth to voice their opinion”

# Objectives and Principles

Our engagement approach was guided by the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) principles and the City of Melville’s Stakeholder Engagement Policy, with a focus on building trust, encouraging participation, and ensuring diverse voices are heard. It also reflected the core value of the Directions from Young People Strategy 2022–2025, which highlights the importance of involving young people in planning and decision-making.

Engagement was undertaken at the Consult and Collaborate levels of the IAP2 Spectrum, emphasising co-design with the Youth Steering Group and broader input from young people, parents, carers, and service providers. This ensured young people were meaningfully involved and their voices were central to shaping outcomes.

The City’s engagement principles guided every stage of the process:

- Integrity: Being transparent about the process and clear about what the community could and could not influence.
- Inclusivity: Ensuring affected communities felt welcomed and making it easy for them to participate.
- Informed: Providing timely, accessible information before, during, and after decisions.
- Accountability: Considering all feedback and showing how it influenced outcomes.
- Flexibility: Remaining adaptable to community needs and refining approaches to reflect diverse circumstances.
- Excellence: Learning from the process and continually striving for improvement.

## IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide balanced and objective information in a timely manner.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and or/decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of preferred solution.	To place final decision in making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and aspirations are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced.	We will look to you for advise and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advise and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

# Engagement Methodology

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The consultation ran from March to August 2025, offering online and in-person opportunities to maximise participation. Its purpose was to gather diverse input from young people and their supporters, ensuring the Strategy reflects lived experience, local knowledge, and community priorities, while giving young people a voice in shaping local services and opportunities.

Consultation was held with five key groups:

1. Youth Steering Group
2. Young people aged 12 to 25
3. Parents/caregivers of young people aged 12 to 25
4. Organisations and service providers
5. City staff and stakeholders

The engagement process included:

- Ideas gathered at Melville Collective Youth Market to identify key issues (n=27).
- Follow-up with past Youth Strategy participants to test relevance of themes (n=5).
- Co-designed survey and approach with Youth Steering Group (n=7).
- Community-wide survey online, in-person, and by phone, with versions for both youth and parents/caregivers (n=469).
- Peer researchers from the Youth Steering Group supported delivery.
- Eight pop-up events across the City, including Murdoch University and libraries (n=163).
- Interactive pinball prize activity to collect ideas (n=47).
- VISA gift card offered as survey incentive.

In total, the engagement attracted 555 responses across all engagement activities.



## Communication and Promotion

The engagement was promoted through a mix of traditional and digital channels, supported by both City staff and the Youth Steering Group members. This multi-channel approach ensured broad visibility, accessibility, and reach across diverse audiences:

- Online - dedicated Melville Talks project page (visits n=802+).
- Direct outreach:
  - Random sample of 5,000 households emailed, encouraging parents to complete the survey with or for their children/young person.
  - Targeted emails to previous participants and education providers, with a request to share widely (emails n=576).
  - Text messages to past PHAZE (City's urban art painting program) participants.
  - Direct promotion by City staff connected locally through families and networks.
- Events & in-person – eight pop-up events at key community locations, supported by posters, word-of-mouth, and Youth Steering Group promotion (n=163).
- Media & publications – features in City eNews, including Melville Matters, Youth Collective, Library, and Leisure channels (reach n=49,000).
- Social media – targeted campaign across City-managed platforms for young people and parents/carers (reach n=25,000).
- Posters & collateral – displayed in community centres, libraries, and other high-traffic facilities.

This layered approach created multiple touchpoints, strengthened reach into schools and peer networks, and ensured young people and their supporters were provided with opportunities to participate.



# Engagement Outcomes

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The following sections outline the survey questions and responses, capturing both quantitative results and qualitative insights. These findings provide a comprehensive picture of the priorities, challenges, and opportunities identified by young people, parents, caregivers, and service providers.

To ensure we heard from a wide range of voices, the City asked a number of demographic questions. This information helps us confirm if communication and engagement approach was inclusive, reaching different age groups, backgrounds, and circumstances across the community. The data also informs future engagement planning by identifying under-represented groups and tailoring methods to better reach them.

Engagement data collected across all platforms and stages has been combined and presented in the engagement outcomes, providing a consolidated view of the feedback received throughout the process.

## Age of Respondents

A total of 476 responses were received across the youth and parent surveys, with some parents completing the survey for multiple children. Responses have been grouped by age category.

- 0–11 years: 33
- 12–17 years: 215
- 18–25 years: 220
- 26–35 years: 2
- 36+ years: 6

This breakdown shows the majority of feedback came from young people aged 12–22 (395 responses), aligning strongly with the target group for the Strategy and the engagement.

## Suburb Breakdown

We asked where the young person(s) lived most of the time. Number of respondents 468.

- 73.71% (345 responses) identified as living within the City of Melville.
- 26.28% (123 responses) listed suburbs outside the City of Melville.



This shows strong participation from suburbs across the City, with the largest contributions from Melville, Kardinya, Palmyra, and Booragoon.

## Gender Identity

We asked to identify or provide information on gender identity. Number of responses 462.

- Woman / Female: 298 (64.5%)
- Man / Male: 145 (31.4%)
- Non-binary: 10 (2.2%)
- I use another term: 9 (1.9%)
  - Identified terms included: Genderfluid, Queen/Queer, Gender Queer.

This breakdown highlights that the majority of participants identified as female, with smaller but important representation across male, non-binary, and other gender identities. Ensuring inclusivity and recognition of diverse gender identities will be a key consideration in reviewing the Strategy.



## Diversity and Lived Experience

We asked about cultural background, diversity and lived experience (noting some participants selected more than one option). Number of respondents 282.

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander: 14 (5%)
- LGBTQIA+: 94 (33.3%)
- From a culturally and linguistically diverse background: 126 (44.7%)
- Living with a disability and/or neurodiversity: 88 (31.2%)
- Living with experience of a mental health difficulty or issues: 93 (33%)
- Young carer: 17 (6%)
- Parent: 11 (3.9%).

### Key Insights

- The largest group identified as being from a culturally and linguistically diverse background (126 responses).
- A significant number identified as part of the LGBTQIA+ community (94 responses) or having lived experience of mental health issues (93 responses).
- Disability and neurodiversity were also strongly represented (88 responses).
- Smaller but important groups included Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, young carers, and those identifying as parents.

These results highlight the diversity within the City of Melville's youth community and reinforce the need for services, spaces, and opportunities that are inclusive, supportive, and accessible to all.

## Connection to City of Melville

We asked to share their connection to the City of Melville (noting some participants selected more than one option). Number of respondents 458.

- Live in the City of Melville: 270 (59%)
- Go to school/TAFE/university in the City of Melville: 190 (41.5%)
- Work in the City of Melville: 92 (20.1%)
- Volunteer in the City of Melville: 41 (9%)
- Play sport in the City of Melville: 113 (24.7%)
- Spend leisure time in the City of Melville: 283 (61.8%)
- Not listed above or have more to share: 38 (8.3%).

This data shows that while many participants live locally, an even greater number regularly spend leisure time in the City. Schools, universities, workplaces, and sporting connections also play a strong role in linking young people and their families to the area.

# THE GOOD STUFF ABOUT MELVILLE

Young people see Melville as safe and welcoming, with parks, libraries, sport facilities, and social hubs central to their sense of fun, belonging, and wellbeing. They want more teen-focused spaces and events, modernised hangouts, and fairer access to facilities across all suburbs. Number of responses 386.

## 1. Parks, Green Space & the Foreshore

The most frequently mentioned positive was access to parks, reserves, and the river. Young people described these areas as safe, green, and ideal for sport, dog-walking, picnics, or simply hanging out.

"I love Shirley Strickland and the oval for footy"

## 2. Libraries & Learning Spaces

Libraries stood out as a key "third place" beyond home and school, used for study, workshops, arts programs, and as community hubs.

"Love that I can borrow at one library and return at another"

## 3. Sport and Recreation Facilities

Sporting clubs, skateparks, ovals, and fitness centres were highly valued, particularly where access is affordable and casual.

"Pump track at Point Walter"

"Alan Edwards oval for kicking footy"

## 4. Food, Shopping & Social Hubs

Shopping centres and food strips were central hangout spots, with Garden City (Westfield Booragoon) the most frequently cited. Cafés and eateries in Applecross, Ardross and Hulme Court also featured.

"Hulme Court boba tea and Asian food places."

## 5. Community Events & Activities

Festivals, markets, and youth programs were appreciated for adding vibrancy and connection.

"youth Market at Kadidjiny"  
"Midwinter Festival"  
"Phaze workshops and library events"

## 6. Safety, Friendliness & Belonging

Many described Melville as safe, clean, and welcoming, with friendly people and strong neighbourhood ties.

"It's a safe, peaceful suburb and everyone is friendly."

## ROOM TO IMPROVE

- More teen-focused hangouts (pump tracks, outdoor gyms, youth centres).
- More youth-specific events outside school holidays.
- Modernising some dated shopping strips.
- Addressing location gaps where some suburbs lack accessible facilities for teens.

# CURRENT AREAS OF FOCUS

We asked young people to rate how important each current focus area is to them.

## 1. Wellbeing

- 272 respondents (61.4%) said wellbeing “really matters to me”.
- Only 13 respondents felt it mattered little or not at all.

Key takeaway: Supporting young people’s physical health, mental health, and personal growth is by far the most important issue raised, reflecting strong concern for wellbeing and resilience.

## 2. Making a Difference

- 205 respondents (46.3%) said this “really matters to me”.
- Only 18 respondents rated it low importance.

Key takeaway: Young people want opportunities to actively contribute to their community and create positive change.

## 3. Communication

- 185 respondents (41.8%) rated this as “really matters to me”.
- A further 190 said it “matters quite a bit.”

Key takeaway: Clear, youth-friendly communication remains essential to ensuring young people feel informed and connected.

## 4. Youth Voice

- 170 respondents (38.4%) said youth voice “really matters to me”.
- 187 said it “matters quite a bit.”

Key takeaway: Inclusion in decision-making is a priority. Young people want their voices heard and reflected in community initiatives.

### Overall Insight

All four focus areas identified in the current Youth Strategy remain relevant. The strongest theme was wellbeing, closely followed by making a difference and youth voice, with communication also seen as vital to strengthening trust and participation.

# SENSE OF BELONGING

We asked if young people feel part of their local community. Number of responses 384.

## Quantitative Results

- I don't feel connected at all: 7 (1.8%)
- Not really: 63 (16.4%)
- Not sure: 80 (20.8%)
- Kind of / sometimes I do: 179 (46.6%)
- Yes, I feel really connected: 55 (14.3%).

Overall, most young people reported feeling somewhat connected but not strongly embedded in their community. Just over 14% feel highly connected, while almost 18% feel little or no connection.

## Qualitative Insights (312 comments)

- Young people feel connected through strong friendship and school/sport networks, involvement in clubs and volunteering, everyday neighbourhood interactions, access to parks, libraries, and community events, and a sense of familiarity from growing up locally.
- Young people feel disconnected by a lack of youth-specific spaces and events, limited awareness of opportunities, transport and accessibility challenges, life stage factors (uni, work, or introversion), experiences of exclusion or safety concerns, and for some younger children, community connection simply isn't a priority yet.

## Key Insight

Building stronger, more inclusive youth spaces and promoting accessible opportunities are critical to helping young people feel more connected and valued in their local community.



In a separate question, 329 respondents identified what supports their sense of connection.

### Key Factors

- Youth-friendly events – Festivals, markets, outdoor movies, library programs, and cultural celebrations.
- Sport and recreation – Club sports, casual hoops, pump tracks, skateparks, walking groups, gyms, and teen fitness.
- Friends and family – Informal hangouts, intergenerational activities, and local catch-ups.
- Schools and education – Clubs, cadets, study groups, and uni/TAFE societies.
- Clubs and hobbies – Art, music, gaming groups, car clubs, and book clubs.
- Shared spaces – Libraries, parks, foreshore, dog parks, and community courts.
- Volunteering – Tree planting, Friends-of groups, scouts, and Bushfire Brigade.
- Faith and culture – Church youth groups and cultural clubs.
- Youth centres & drop-ins – Safe, inclusive spaces for meeting, learning, and creating.
- Everyday connections – Local cafés, shops, and being recognised by staff or neighbours.
- Online tools – Social media platforms like Discord or Instagram to stay informed and connected.
- Nature and outdoors – Beaches, green spaces, and walking tracks.
- Work – Casual jobs that build ties with co-workers and customers.

### Key Insight

Young people feel most connected when opportunities are accessible, affordable, safe, inclusive, regular, and youth-led or co-designed. Strengthening these opportunities can improve community belonging.

“definitely community events. Things like markets or festivals really bring the community together”

“being in it – with others”

“Elders helping me feel connected to country”

# DO YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL HEARD?

We asked if young people felt their voices are being listened to in their community. Number of responses 381.

- Nope, not at all: 44 (11.5%)
- Unsure: 41 (10.8%)
- Sometimes: 240 (63%)
- Yes – definitely: 56 (14.7%).

The majority (63%) feel they are only sometimes listened to, with fewer than 15% strongly agreeing that youth voices are heard.

## Qualitative Insights

Why do you feel this way? Number of responses: 281 open comments.

Feedback highlighted both positive experiences of being listened to and frustrations about not being taken seriously or included in decision-making.

## When young people feel heard

- Youth Advisory Committees, school councils, and surveys like this one provide genuine input opportunities.
- Teachers, youth workers, and community staff were frequently cited as supportive adults.
- A few noted that their input had shaped playgrounds, events, or sustainability initiatives.

## When young people do not feel heard

- Many feel dismissed due to age, with views treated as naïve or inexperienced.
- Young people often see input as tokenistic, with little feedback or visible change.
- Council decisions and resources are perceived as skewed toward older residents.
- Access points to share ideas are unclear or not youth-friendly.
- Everyday young people feel excluded unless part of formal groups or leadership programs.

**Key message** Young people value being asked for their input but place equal importance on seeing how their feedback is acted on. Closing the feedback loop and creating accessible, youth-friendly channels for engagement are essential to strengthening trust and participation.

## Improving how young people's voices are heard

We asked young people to share one thing to improve how their voices can be heard in the community. Number of responses: 268

Suggestions clustered around the following themes:

- Meet young people where they are – Schools, sporting clubs, and youth centres were seen as the easiest and most effective entry points.
- Use the channels we already engage with – Short polls on Instagram or Facebook were preferred over long surveys.
- Close the loop – Share results back through posters, newsletters, or social media so youth know their time mattered.
- Formal youth representation – Calls for a Youth Council or designated youth representative on Council.
- Youth-friendly forums and events – Fun, safe, and social opportunities, with food as a drawcard.
- Better visibility and communications – A youth-dedicated social media page or regular updates targeted to young people.
- Move from consultation to co-design – Involving young people earlier and throughout projects, with opportunities to vote on ideas.

### Key Insight

- Young people want to participate, but on their terms - in spaces and formats that fit their lives.
- Visibility and transparency are critical to building trust.
- Embedding youth representation into decision-making structures would signal genuine commitment
- Providing diverse, age-appropriate, and interest-based opportunities ensures engagement is meaningful

“engage through schools i.e: civics or HASS”

“youth rep on the council”

“allow us to vote for at least minor things that affect us”

## Barriers to participation

We asked young people to identify barriers that prevent them from joining local events or programs. Participants could select multiple options. Number of responses 387.

Top 10 barriers identified were:

1. Unsuitable timing – 143 (37%)
2. Cost – 134 (34.6%)
3. Location (too far/inaccessible) – 97 (25.1%)
4. Transport – 94 (24.3%)
5. Age (too young/too old) – 79 (20.4%)
6. Employment – 46 (11.9%)
7. No barriers – 53 (13.7%)
8. No parking – 46 (11.9%)
9. Health (mental or physical) – 35 (9%)
10. Not inclusive – 32 (8.3%).

Additional feedback highlighted that lack of awareness of what was happening was also a significant barrier for many.

### Key Insight

- Practical barriers (time, cost, transport, and location) were by far the most common challenges to participation.
- Accessibility and inclusivity remain critical concerns, with age, health, and inclusivity noted as limiting factors.
- Awareness gaps suggest a need for more visible, youth-friendly promotion of events.
- Encouragingly, a portion of respondents (14%) reported no barriers to participation, indicating that current approaches are working well.

“not knowing about programs or events, therefore not participating”

“rarely know about events”

“don't hear about them, so don't know they are happening”

# WELLBEING

## Biggest challenges young people face

Participants could select up to five challenges. Number of responses: 348.

Top 10 challenges identified were:

1. Mental health – 169 (48.6%)
2. Social media (overuse, misuse) – 165 (47.4%)
3. School or study stress – 145 (41.7%)
4. Housing affordability – 90 (25.9%)
5. Body image – 86 (24.7%)
6. Bullying/cyberbullying – 79 (22.7%)
7. Financial hardship – 78 (22.4%)
8. Loneliness or isolation – 72 (20.7%)
9. Not enough places for young people to hang out – 72 (20.7%)
10. Drugs and alcohol – 65 (18.7%)

The data highlights both personal wellbeing issues (mental health, stress, body image, social media) and structural challenges (housing, finances, safe spaces).

## What could improve young people's health and wellbeing?

Number of responses: 273.

Young people identified improvements across 10 key areas:

1. Mental health support – Free, affordable, local services in schools and community hubs.
2. Safe, inclusive spaces – Youth centres, drop-ins, and welcoming hangouts beyond skateparks/playgrounds.
3. Affordable sport and recreation – Low-cost gyms, pools, and casual sport options.
4. Community connection – Events, volunteering, workshops, and intergenerational activities.
5. Cost of living and housing – Affordable housing, rental support, and cost relief.
6. Technology and social media – Phone-free events, positive messaging, and digital literacy.
7. School and study pressures – Quiet study spaces, mentoring, and reduced workloads.
8. Transport and accessibility – Better public transport, safer bike paths, and walkable hubs.
9. Inclusion and diversity – Programs for LGBTQIA+, neurodiverse, First Nations, and CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) youth.
10. Creative outlets – Arts, hobbies, cultural activities, and clubs.

Overall: Wellbeing is seen as more than clinical services - safe, inclusive, and affordable opportunities to connect, play, and create are central to young people's health.

## Where do you go when you need support?

Number of responses: 276.

- Family and friends were the first point of support for most.
- Professional services included Headspace, GPs, psychologists, and helplines (Kids Helpline, Lifeline).
- Some respondents were unsure or felt there was nowhere safe locally.
- Community-based supports (churches, centres, clubs) and digital platforms were also common.
- Interestingly, several mentioned ChatGPT as a source of advice, showing a reliance on AI and online tools as part of their support networks.

### Key Insight

- Mental health remains the single biggest challenge, but it is closely linked with pressures from school, social media, and body image.
- Safe, inclusive spaces are seen as critical to health and wellbeing, providing alternatives to playgrounds and traditional sports.
- Affordability is a consistent barrier - whether for sport, housing, or healthcare.
- Young people prefer holistic wellbeing approaches that combine clinical supports with fun, creative, and community-based opportunities.
- There is a need to build awareness of existing supports and ensure these are youth-friendly, visible, and easy to access.

# COMMUNICATION

## How do you find out about local activities?

Respondents could select more than one option. Number of responses 334.

### Top 10 Channels

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 1. Friends – 227 responses                   | 6. Posters / flyers – 80 responses |
| 2. Family – 200 responses                    | 7. TikTok – 61 responses           |
| 3. Instagram – 139 responses                 | 8. Facebook – 41 responses         |
| 4. Internet search (Google) – 106 responses  | 9. Email – 37 responses            |
| 5. School / TAFE / University – 96 responses | 10. CoM Instagram – 30 responses.  |

Friends and family are the main way young people hear what's happening, showing the strength of word-of-mouth. Social media is vital too, with Instagram leading, followed by TikTok and Facebook. Posters, flyers, and school or uni networks remain useful, especially for younger groups. City of Melville's own channels (website, Instagram) have some reach but could be strengthened, and more youth-focused.

# GETTING INVOLVED

## Preferred way to have your say

We asked young people how they preferred to share their ideas with us. Respondents could select more than one option. Number of responses: 276.

### Top 10 Preferred Methods

1. Surveys (online) – 223 (69.7%)
2. Feedback through school/uni/TAFE – 108 (33.8%)
3. Anonymous feedback box – 96 (30%)
4. Polls on the City's website or social media – 79 (24.7%)
5. Youth workshops (in person) – 79 (24.7%)
6. SMS questions on your phone – 57 (17.8%)
7. Surveys (at events) – 54 (16.9%)
8. Youth Advisory Group (regular attendance) – 48 (15%)
9. Email questions – 42 (13.1%)
10. Youth workshops (online) – 41 (12.8%).

### Key Insights

- Online surveys dominate (70%) as the most accessible and preferred method.
- Education settings (schools, TAFEs, universities) are a natural pathway for youth feedback (34%).
- Safe, anonymous options (feedback boxes, online polls) are valued by nearly one-third of respondents.
- In-person workshops remain relevant, showing that not all young prefer digital-only channels.
- Other options (SMS, advisory groups, email, online workshops) remain smaller but meaningful touchpoints.

Other suggestions included:

A dedicated feedback box for different age groups outside the City of Melville's council building, or options for providing feedback through trusted third parties such as teachers, parents, and caregivers.

## Encouraging participation

We asked young people what would encourage them to share their ideas with us.  
Number of responses 320.

### Top 10 Encouragement Factors

1. Payment / gift card – 186 (58.1%)
2. Food at workshops – 179 (55.9%)
3. Prize draws – 167 (52.2%)
4. Local business discounts – 139 (43.5%)
5. Free passes to LeisureFit – 122 (38.1%)
6. School community hours – 60 (18.8%)
7. Councillors/City staff opportunities – 49 (15.3%)
8. Participation certificates – 44 (13.8%)
9. Other – 25 (7.8%)
10. Priority booking - City activities – 12 (3.9%)

### Key Insights

- Tangible rewards are the strongest motivators: gift cards (58%), food at workshops (56%), and prize draws (52%).
- Everyday incentives such as local business discounts (44%) and free passes to LeisureFit facilities (38%) are also highly appealing.
- Formal recognition (certificates, community service hours) motivates a smaller group, while direct interaction with councillors and staff (15%) is important for others.
- Overall, young people respond best to a mix of incentives and meaningful opportunities to see their input valued.

Other suggestions included:

- Showing how feedback makes a difference through visible reporting.
- Offering volunteering opportunities within the City of Melville.
- Hosting workshops during school holidays, with free food provided.

Together, these findings show that young people are open and willing to share their ideas with the City of Melville when engagement is accessible, relevant, and rewarding. Online surveys remain the most effective method, supported by education settings, social media, and safe, anonymous options. Incentives such as gift cards, food, and prize draws significantly boost participation, but young people also emphasised the importance of seeing their feedback acted on.

The results highlight that future engagement with young people should:

- Prioritise online surveys and digital polls alongside in-person opportunities.
- Leverage schools, clubs, and peer networks as trusted pathways.
- Offer low-barrier, youth-friendly options like anonymous feedback tools.
- Provide tangible incentives while also closing the feedback loop to demonstrate impact.

# ISSUES THAT MATTER!

We asked what issues matter most to young people and what they would like to explore further. Number of responses: 217.

Top topics identified:

- Mental health and wellbeing – most frequently raised, with strong calls for more services, safe spaces, and open conversations.
- Climate change and sustainability – action on the environment, tree planting, and sustainability education.
- Cost of living, housing and financial skills – affordability, financial literacy, and housing security.
- Diversity, inclusion and social justice – gender equality, LGBTQIA+ rights, cultural safety, anti-racism.
- Volunteering, work experience and skills building – practical opportunities to gain skills and contribute.
- Youth spaces and belonging – safe, youth-friendly hubs beyond playgrounds.
- Education and future pathways – career pathways, entrepreneurship, and real-world learning.

Summary: Mental health, climate action, and cost of living were the strongest themes, with diversity, skills, and safe spaces also a high priority.

## Making a difference

When asked how they would like to make a difference, young people emphasised action and peer support. Number of responses: 188.

Key themes & examples:

- Volunteering and community service – food drives, disability buddy programs, local volunteering.
- Environment and climate action – clean-up days, conservation groups, tree planting.
- Mental health and peer support – conversations, mentoring, reducing stigma.
- Advocacy and awareness – petitions, campaigning, using social media for education.
- Youth leadership and events – joining advisory groups, contributing ideas and artwork, leading workshops.
- Inclusion and social justice – safe, inclusive events and campaigns against racism and discrimination.

Summary: Young people are not only concerned about big issues, but also eager to contribute - particularly through volunteering, environmental action, mental health support, advocacy, and youth-led events.

## What is the City's role in supporting young people?

We asked how we could support young people to get involved and make a difference. Number of responses: 184.

Key themes & examples:

- Events, workshops and opportunities – career expos, skill-building workshops, youth nights, creative events.
- Advertising and communication – clearer, targeted promotion through schools, social media, and posters.
- Youth voice and leadership – youth advisory groups, youth councils, diverse representation in policy-making.
- Mentoring, skills and employment – mentoring, CV and job readiness workshops, casual employment pathways.
- Funding, resources and facilities – grants, resources for youth-led projects, investment in youth centres.
- Safe and inclusive spaces – accessible spaces with support staff, inclusive programming, youth-friendly public spaces.
- Environment and sustainability – more tree-planting days, environmental volunteering, involvement in conservation.
- Listening and acting on feedback – show results, follow-through on survey feedback, visible reporting.

Summary: Young people want the City to back them with resources, mentoring, and safe spaces, but just as importantly, they want the City to listen and act. Support for leadership, creativity, and volunteering will help them feel valued and motivated to engage.

“create influencer-based campaigns”

“mentors would be a great start”

“help with resources, opportunities and mentoring”

# LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

## One BIG thing young people want

When asked about the one big thing young people would like to see in the City of Melville, respondents consistently emphasised the need for safe, affordable, and youth-specific spaces, supported by recreation, events, and opportunities for growth. Overall, young people want safe places to belong, inclusive opportunities to connect, affordable access to activities, and genuine ways to shape their futures. Number of responses 285.

Key themes:

- Youth centre / third space
  - The strongest theme was a call for a dedicated youth centre or “third space” for young people to gather, socialise, and access support.
- Better hangout spaces (non-commercial)
  - Young people want age-appropriate, free or low-cost places to meet friends after school and in the evenings.
- Recreation and sport Infrastructure
  - Demand for skateparks, BMX/pump tracks, basketball courts, outdoor gyms, and climbing/parkour facilities.
- Youth-friendly events and programs
  - Calls for more concerts, DJ sets, creative workshops, and gaming events.
- Study spaces and libraries
  - Requests for more study spaces, later opening hours, and libraries as youth-friendly hubs.
- Mental health, safety and inclusion
  - Strong demand for visible local services, inclusive programming, and safe spaces.
- Affordable access and cost of living
  - Cheaper sport, free gym access, and small grants were repeatedly mentioned.
- Youth voice and leadership
  - Desire for genuine roles in decision-making, advisory groups, and youth councils.
- Jobs, work experience and skills pathways
  - Practical pathways into work, skills-building, and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Environment and climate action
  - A clear call to protect trees, support sustainability, and enable youth involvement in conservation.

## What's missing in our community

When asked what is missing today that would make their community better, young people echoed and reinforced the themes raised in the “One Big Thing” question - showing that their priorities are clear and consistent. Young people want youth centres, safe and inclusive spaces, affordable recreation, and meaningful opportunities to connect, learn, and contribute. Number of responses 216.

### Key Themes:

- Youth centre and safe third spaces
- Recreation and hangout facilities
  - Requests for skateparks, pump tracks, basketball courts, and spaces designed for teens rather than young children.
- Events and programs
  - Calls for regular, youth-specific events and festivals that are exciting, inclusive, and not limited to school holidays.
- Transport, safety and accessibility
  - Concerns about street lighting, safe pathways, and affordable, reliable transport.
- Inclusion and belonging
  - Desire for welcoming spaces free from racism, discrimination, and stigma, with more cultural diversity represented.
- Mental health and support services
  - Demand for accessible, stigma-free services and safe, quiet spaces.
- Cost and affordability
  - Barriers created by expensive sport and recreation fees, with strong calls for free or subsidised options.
- Opportunities to learn and contribute
  - Skills-building, job readiness programs, and volunteering opportunities were frequently raised.

“gaming events like LANs and Minecraft days”

“A youth centre!!!”

“safe place which holds where youths can drop in”