



MOSMAN

MYVOICE  
2020/21  
Consultation  
Report



Mosman Youth Services  
MYvoice 2020/21 Consultation Report

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## **MYvoice 2020/21 Consultation Report**

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## Acknowledgement

Mosman Youth Services proudly acknowledges the Borogegal and Cammeraigal peoples for their Country, spirit, and traditions as customary owners of the lands upon which Mosman Council operates.

We extend our respects to Elders past, present, and emerging while committing to learning and listening to the stories, living cultures and practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We have the privilege to speak with many different people within our community and pledge to use this strength to connect with and elevate First Nations peoples and voices.

Mick Namarari  
*Mouse Dreaming*, 1997 (detail)  
Acrylic on canvas, Mosman Art Collection

**MOSMAN  
YOUTH**

**Mosman**  
COUNCIL

## THANK YOU

The MYvoice consultation was done in cooperation with several stakeholders. Mosman Youth Services would like to thank all participants and partners for their involvement and support.

Thank you to the following schools and organisations for their support and sharing the consultation across Mosman:

- Youth Action
- Lower North Shore Youth Interagency
- Mosman High School
- Queenwood School for Girls
- Balmoral Nippers Youth

Major contributors to the success of the consultation include members of the youth peer research team. This group of youth volunteers were trained in appreciative inquiry, designed questions to create movement and change and conducted valuable peer interviews with other young people in the community. Mosman Council thanks the members of the MYvoice 2020/21 youth peer research team: Iris B., Jenni L., Alia T., James F., Charlotte M. and Scarlet M.

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DEBATING 2019  
NETBALL 2019  
DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD 2020





## MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Our young people are an integral and vital part of the Mosman community.

Mosman Council and the team at Mosman Youth Services work to understand the aspirations, concerns and values of our youth, to serve them well and to foster their trust and confidence in the community organisations that support them.

The MYvoice consultation is a comprehensive enquiry into the priorities and concerns for Mosman's young people. It serves as an important check point that current community services are meeting the needs of our youth and provides valuable guidance and direction to shape future programs.

It facilitates collaboration and connection with our youth, to ensure we are fulfilling our responsibility to provide them with access and agency, and to empower Council to deliver the resources and services that can ultimately improve outcomes for young people in Mosman.

Our goal is to support all young people we serve to lead healthy, happy lives and be part of a caring and inclusive community.

**Carolyn Corrigan, Mayor**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolyn A Corrigan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C' and 'A'.

## MOSMAN YOUTH SERVICES

Mosman Youth Services aims to engage and empower young people in Mosman to value and develop their awareness as decision-makers in their own lives and communities. It provides young people aged 12-25 who live, work and spend time in Mosman with support, ways to foster social connections and opportunities for community participation.

The service utilises a community development approach, blending bottom up action driven by community partnership with resourcing, facilitation and coordination from a local government base. The service takes a collaborative approach to delivering programs, drawing on the strengths of the community to ensure outcomes are achieved for young people in Mosman. Importantly this means young people are at the centre of decision making, not only through consultation but also by involving and collaborating with young people.

The service is based out of the Mosman Youth Centre, which provides young people with a community hub space to relax, learn new skills, build social connections and grow networks in a comfortable, judgement-free environment. The Centre offers free and engaging activities, games, an equipped music room, Wifi, kitchen and hang-out spaces, and youth workers on site for support and guidance.

Programs include a variety of youth volunteering groups, school holiday activities, youth-led events and support for parents/carers, teachers and families.

Mosman Youth Services' key functions include to:

- Promote participation by young people in activities and decision-making opportunities that affect their lives.
- Provide a safe space that offers information, advice and learning opportunities.
- Enable community members and stakeholders to best support young people in their networks.
- Advocate for young people and make recommendations to Council on youth policies, programs and services and broader Council decisions.

Mosman Youth values and celebrates all young people and supports positive change in the community for their benefit.

[www.mosmanyouth.com.au](http://www.mosmanyouth.com.au)

## INTRODUCTION

Mosman Youth Services has a strong commitment to youth consultation and collaboration, and its work is underpinned by the voices of young people. Listening carefully to young people is critical to gaining an honest understanding of their experiences, insights, priorities and hopes for change. Consultation should enable young people to participate, influence and inform the service's strategic direction and delivery program.

Every three years Mosman Youth Services undertakes MYvoice, a large-scale consultation of young people aged 12-25 in Mosman. The purpose of the consultation is to identify:

- Key issues affecting young people who live, work and spend time in Mosman.
- Driving factors behind those issues.
- Potential solutions that Mosman Youth Services can contribute to through its programs and services.

Through MYvoice young people of varied ages, gender, background, education and lived experiences share their priorities and to what extent these are of concern to them. The data collected measures changes to key areas of concern and overall wellbeing of young people over time and identifies current priorities.

The findings serve as a periodical audit of the alignment of youth services with current needs and provides important insights for program development and planning.

MYvoice supports the goals of Mosman Council's 10-Year Community Strategic Plan, in particular its strategic directions for 'An Informed and Engaged Community' and 'A Caring and Inclusive Community'.

As a backdrop to MYvoice 2020/21 the COVID-19 pandemic was causing significant impacts for young people in their homes, educational environments, employment and various aspects of their personal lives and an urgency to consult with young people was felt across the sector.

This report outlines the participant demographics, methods of enquiry, topics of importance identified and takes a more in depth look at the key priority areas for young people in Mosman as well as recommendations to support them.

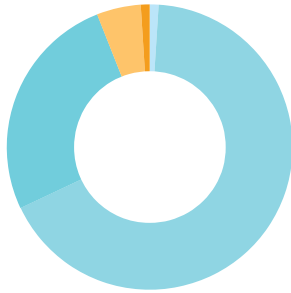
The findings of MYvoice emphasises the necessity and value of Mosman Youth Services for young people in the Mosman community, and its critical role to address emerging areas of concern. Sharing these findings also provides an opportunity to build connection and knowledge across the wider youth sector and Mosman community.

## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Mosman is home to approximately 3,917 young people aged 12-24, making up 13.75% of the residential population (based on place of usual residence data from the 2016 ABS Census). MYvoice 2020/21 consulted young people who live, work, study or spend time in Mosman as data suggests that these communities are not disjunct.

An initial online survey formed the largest portion of responses and was disseminated widely across these communities. This survey formed the foundation for the consultation and the demographic profile of MYvoice 2020/21 participants is based on the 186 young people who responded, with ages ranging from 11 to 25 years of age.

### Age



Under 12	1	0.5%
12 - 16 years	124	66.7%
17 - 21 years	50	26.9%
22 - 25 years	10	5.4%
No Response	1	0.5%

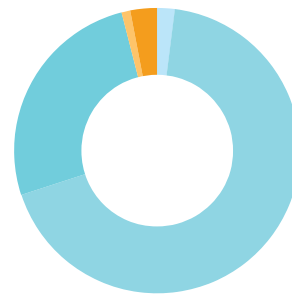
MYvoice 2020/21 requested more information about respondents' identity and circumstances than previous consultations, which recorded only age and gender as male, female or other.

Changes to the survey design included the use of pronouns for gender identification and more demographic questions. It sought to understand the number of young people who:

- identify as LGBTQIA+;
- are a person living with a disability;
- are culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD);
- are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The highest number of respondents identified with she/her pronouns (68.2%) followed by those who identified with he/him pronouns (25.2%). Of the remaining respondents 3.2% selected other, 2.2% selected they/them pronouns and 1% preferred not to say.

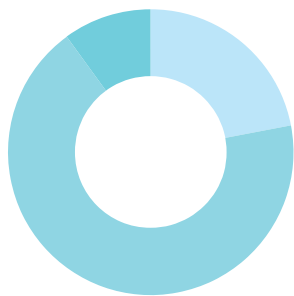
### Pronouns



They/Them	4	2.1%
She/Her	127	68.3%
He/Him	47	25.3%
Prefer not to say	2	1.1%
Other	6	3.2%

The two largest groups that were self-reported were those who belonged to the LGBTQIA+ and CALD communities, each with 22.6%. A further 10% identified as being unsure about belonging to the LGBTQIA+ community.

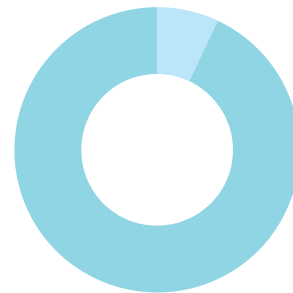
### LGBTQIA+ Identifying



● Yes	42	22.6%
● No	125	67.2%
● Unsure	19	10.2%

The consultation also captured voices of those who identify as having a disability through 7.5% of respondents.

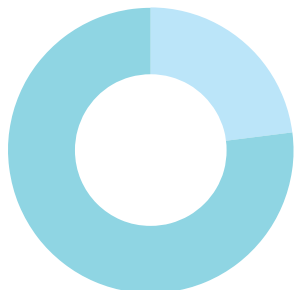
### I Identify as Having a Disability



● Yes	13	7%
● No	173	93%

No respondents identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

### I Speak a Language Other Than English at Home



● Yes	44	23.4%
● No	144	76.6%

# METHODOLOGY

The MYvoice consultation was undertaken between December 2020 and February 2021.

Given the circumstances and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic during this time the research approach was adapted from an open research methodology to a more socially distanced approach.

Young people were engaged via their schools, across the local community network, Mosman Youth Services, direct messaging and social media.

## Phase 1 - Online Survey #1

The initial phase of consultation involved an online survey. This was distributed to young people residing in and accessing Mosman via targeted advertising, SMS messaging and newsletters.

In this survey they were asked to identify key issues for themselves and/or their peers in Mosman. The survey included a mix of closed and open questions, with open box responses to identify key issues. Prompts for key issues were not provided so responses were based on young people's own interpretation and understanding of what that means.

Topics asked about in the survey included:

- Spaces and support
- Satisfaction with the spaces available to young people
- Satisfaction with mental health support available
- Local services and programs
- Identifying areas for change
- Overall satisfaction with current life and future security

MYvoice 2020/21 collected responses to this initial online survey from 186 young people.

## Phase 2 - Peer Interviews

Following delivery of the initial online survey a call-out was made for peer researchers through Youth Services newsletters and social media. Eight young people attended a peer researcher session with Youth Action and two subsequent workshops to design interview questions. Six of the peer researchers continued their involvement through to the interview stages.

Young people were invited to participate in peer interviews via a section in the initial online survey, SMS messaging and social media. All young people who participated in peer interviews completed the initial survey prior to discussions commencing.

Focus groups and peer interviews were used to further discuss the issues identified as the key priority areas of concern through survey responses, along with the factors driving them. Potential solutions were also named during these discussions. Interviews were conducted in pairs with a supervisor present to offer support if needed and the interviews were recorded to be later transcribed.

Qualitative data was collected about the following topics:

- Spaces:
  - School - do you feel supported, likes and dislikes, how does the school promote community/inclusion/ friendships, seeking help at school, what the ideal school would look, feel and sound like;
  - Community - if you were to build your own community that fostered and supported healthy young people what would you include, what do you enjoy in Mosman, what's missing?
- Inclusion: how young people are included in the community, what spaces are inclusive, what would an inclusive community look, sound, and feel like?
- Mental health: what is going well for young people in Mosman, what's not going well, what areas could be improved, or what specific areas young people struggle with, anything you're concerned about?

MYvoice 2020/21 collected comments from 39 young people during three focus group sessions and 14 peer interviews.

## Phase 3 - Online Survey #2

Following peer interviews a second online survey was fielded to respondents of the first survey and new respondents to delve deeper into the priority areas identified in the first survey and peer interviews.

In this survey young people were asked about the extent to which each of the key priority areas of youth spaces, inclusion and mental health were of concern to them, and to respond to open-ended questions about their ideas on what Mosman Youth Services could bring into the community to address those concerns.

MYvoice 2020/21 collected responses from 77 young people in the second online survey.

## Data

Data from the focus groups, interviews and open-ended responses was coded and analysed using qualitative research to investigate emerging themes in the data. All information collected was de-identified and answers kept anonymous.

## Limitations

Face-to-face engagement with young people during the consultation period was limited by COVID-19 restrictions leading to a greater reliance on the initial online survey being disseminated through schools and targeted advertising during a summer holiday period. Due to COVID-19 there was also an increase in online surveying generally which may have contributed to survey fatigue. These factors may have increased the potential for some young people to have missed the opportunity to participate or chosen not to be involved in this consultation round.

## SUMMARY – 2020/21 FINDINGS

### MYvoice 2020/21 Collected:

- Responses to an initial online survey from 186 young people.
- Comments from 39 young people during three focus group sessions and 14 peer interviews.
- Responses from 77 young people to a second online survey.

### Key Priority Areas

The key issues reported by young people in order of importance were:

1. Youth spaces
2. Inclusion and diversity
3. Mental health
4. Environment and sustainability
5. Access
6. Connection
7. Academic pressure
8. Privilege
9. Jobs
10. Drugs and alcohol

### Themes

The following themes also emerged:

- Affordability
- Life skills
- Study spaces
- Activities
- Accessibility
- Bullying
- Awareness of services available
- Generational differences
- Natural areas and sports
- Peer pressure
- Family and religious influences (traditions)
- Stigma around help-seeking behaviours





## Life Satisfaction

When asked about life satisfaction overall the response from young people was positive with an average of 7.17/10.

Those who identified with he/him pronouns averaged 7.3/10 for life satisfaction and those who identified with she/her pronouns averaged 7.26/10. The average life satisfaction rating for those who identified as living with a disability was 6.4/10.

Young people who identified as non-binary gave the lowest average for life satisfaction with 6.2/10. Those who identified as LGBTQIA+ - a group that included all those who also identified as non-binary - made up the largest portion (47%) of young people who rated below 5 on the life satisfaction scale. When comparing reflections on their current lives and feelings of acceptance by the community, those who identified as LGBTQIA+ indicated the lowest levels of feeling accepted in the wider community and made up 69% of those who rated the lowest score on the life satisfaction scale.

## Trends

Comparison of data collected from the 2014 and 2017 MYvoice consultations shows a trend from individual to collective thinking.

Results from the 2014 consultation revealed a desire by young people to be accepted by the community. Results from the 2017 consultation showed a desire to set up safe spaces, and 2020/21 data suggested young people want to be a more active part of a diverse and inclusive community.

## Positives

When asked in interviews what they appreciated about the Mosman community and believed was working young people often commented on access to open spaces such as parks, ovals and bush trails. Retail outlets that provide food at more affordable prices were also talked about with excitement and appreciation.

## KEY PRIORITY AREAS

The top three areas of importance for young people revealed through MYvoice 2020/21 were:

1. Youth spaces (including spaces for youth voices to be heard)
2. Inclusion and diversity
3. Mental health

These three areas emerged as being of significantly greater importance than others and were expanded on through peer interviews and the second round of online surveys. Factoring in the qualitative information and ratings of concern the reordered priority was:

1. Mental health - averaged rating of concern 8.5/10.
2. Inclusion and diversity - averaged rating of concern 7.5/10.
3. Youth spaces - averaged rating of concern 7.3/10.

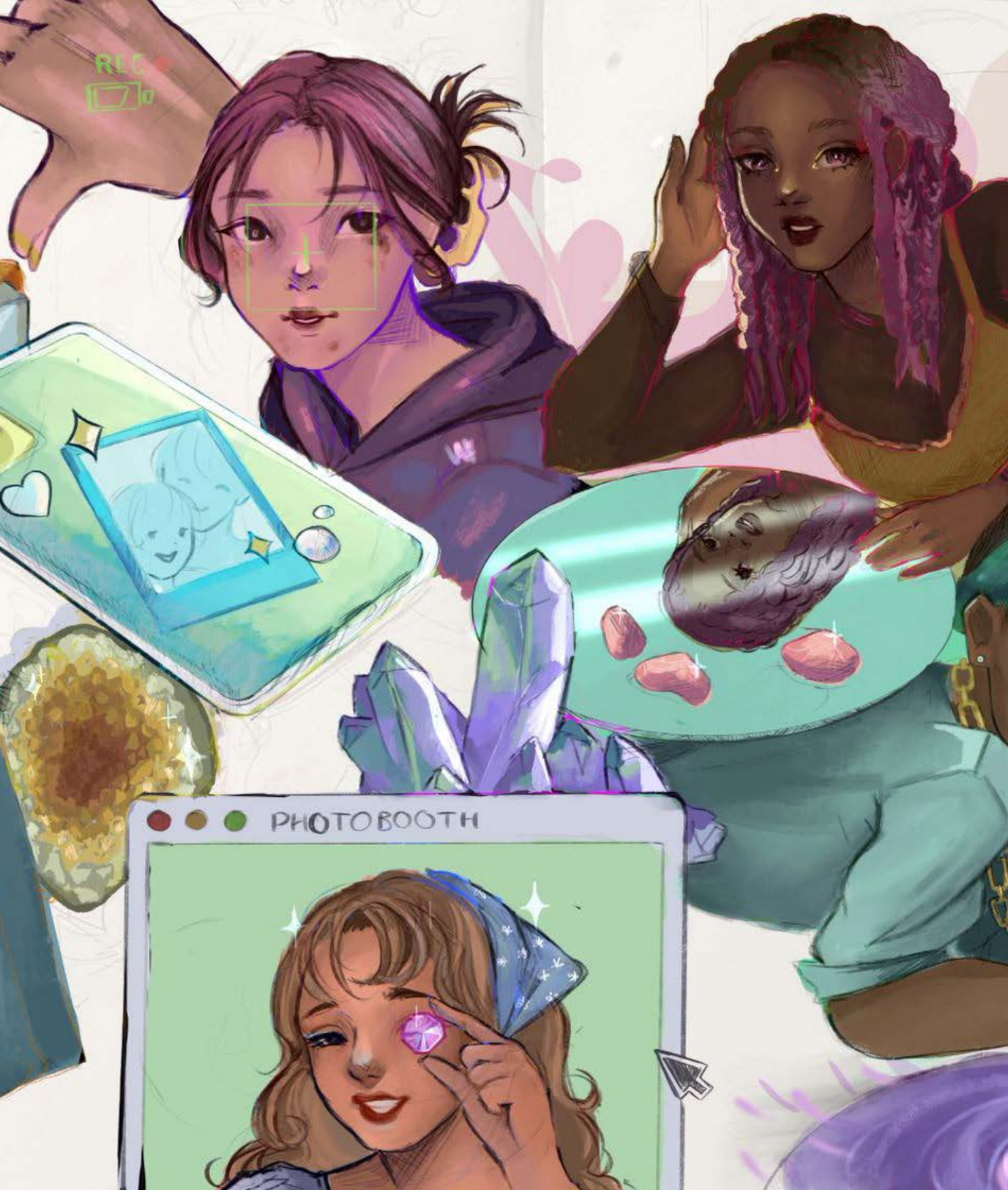
The top five issues identified in 2020/21 show a very different set of values and concerns to those identified in 2017. They show the priority areas for young people in Mosman, and the way they frame and understand them, has changed from a few years ago.

However, as in 2017 the interrelated nature of issues for young people was clear. In 2020/21 academic pressure dropped to 7th as an issue and body image did not rank in the top 10 at all, but in interviews and the second survey both were identified as driving factors for the highest rated area of concern, mental health.

The 2017 findings also showed the potential for the key priorities of concern identified in 2020/21 to emerge. The most prevalent emergent themes identified in 2017 were 1) pressure, considered to be a mental health issue for young people, 2) a desire to belong, including to feel validated, valued and supported without judgement, and 3) youth-friendly spaces and places.

The findings, driving factors and recommendations for the key priority areas identified through MYvoice 2020/21 - youth spaces, inclusion and diversity, mental health - are explored in more detail in following sections.

Key Priorities, 2017	Key Priorities, 2020/21
1. Academic pressure	1. Youth spaces
2. Body image	2. Inclusion and diversity
3. Alcohol	3. Mental health
4. Drugs	4. Environment and sustainability
5. Smoking	5. Access



## Emilia Louw

*"My artwork represents women of different races and backgrounds. I used themes of how we view each other and ourselves, from cameras to social media to mirrors etc. as I aim to demonstrate how we, despite who we are, should look at ourselves as strong, beautiful, empowering women."*

Submission to the 2021 Raise the Youth Mosman Youth Art Competition

# YOUTH SPACES

## Rated 7.33/10 as an Area of Concern

Youth-friendly spaces was the number one reported issue for young people although it had a lower rating of concern compared to other key priority areas.

## Driving Factors

Two major themes emerged around the interaction of young people and spaces in the community.

The first was **physical spaces** that young people spend time in. When asked about their overall feelings with the spaces available to young people in Mosman 24% of respondents said that they were not satisfied and the average score for this was 3.31 out of 5.

The second theme revolved around **spaces to be heard** in which young people's voices were heard and responded to.

## What's Missing

Respondents were asked to identify what is missing through open box responses.

In relation to physical spaces they noted there is the Youth Centre and areas where they can spend time in such as outdoor parks but they felt as though much of the community focused on places designed for younger children and senior citizens.

Comments included:

*"Mosman's mostly an area where people go to like retire after they've made money and stuff. So it's more of a place where older people go. So it doesn't really cater to young people as much 'cause most of the population is probably older."*

*"They [shops, businesses] don't really consider having stuff for younger people. Most people are older and they're gonna make stuff for older people. Kinda angry cause I feel like they don't really care."*

*"Yeah, we've looked through all old places and explored around there. But - and we want - like, we'd love more things to do like that. They're really not accessible."*

*"I don't think that there are enough entertaining things in Mosman for teens."*

*"We just walk around.... We find somewhere. There's not really much to do."*

*"It's got lots of open spaces like parks. It's not very interesting but it's still open."*

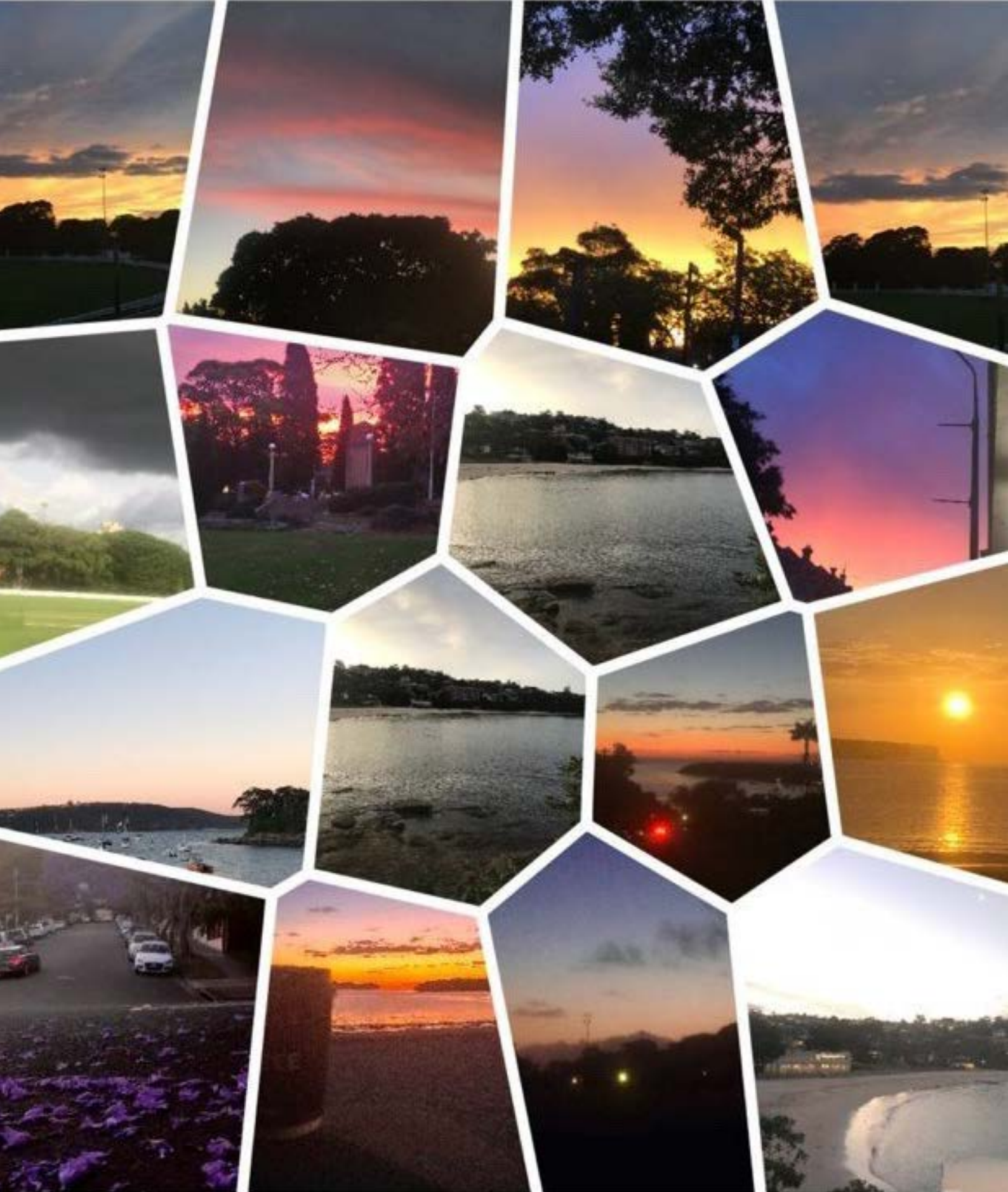
Because it is felt that there are not sufficient youth-friendly or designed spaces for young people they feel they have to leave the area and spend time in the city or surrounding suburbs.

Respondents also experienced challenges and barriers to being heard and listened to in the community. Young people who were actively engaging in the community felt that although they may have avenues to voice their opinions and concerns, they were rarely listened to in the sense that spaces for their voice are created without the intention of acting on the recommendations or ideas provided.

Comments included:

*"Being a child is not synonymous with idiocy. We speak, have thoughts and feelings and the years between us do not define how powerful our voices are compared to yours. Don't baby us all our lives and then expect we know how to survive in the real world. Respect our opinions. When you teach us to be kind, respectful and patient, practice what you preach."*

*"That sometimes we are scared to speak up on things because we are scared to be judged, and the fact we speak about our problems and that person doesn't do anything or judges us makes us lose trust."*



## Gina Gunthery

*"Diversity is connected to the language we use; Is the life experiences, religious beliefs, interests that make us who we are. Diversity is used as a medium and language which can create a powerful representation of individual and collective diversity that can shape our understandings towards people."*

Submission to the 2021 Raise the Youth Mosman Youth Art Competition

## Supportive Solutions

Respondents expressed a desire for more youth exclusive spaces and for spaces dedicated and designed for young people to be better integrated into community spaces, particularly outdoors.

Comments included:

*"I think if there was like an area that was sort of like the youth centre, but this is like inside - like if there was a specific outdoor area where teenagers can go just, in general. Like, instead of just being a specific group, like I know people I hang out with and others hang a lot at the oval. But if there was like a specific area with a few different stuff - like tables and whatnot that was for teenagers. And then there's not like a lot of kids around it's just like teenagers just relaxing or doing work and there was just an area that was just for us. I guess that would be nice."*

*"More open places to hang out and sit around with easy access."*

*"An area where only youths can go, games and places to sit, More places to sit and under the covers, YA books, desks, study materials, stationery, comfy seats, BEANBAGS, I don't know, advertising them as youth specific."*

*"I feel like, lots of open space and able to be shared and accessible."*

*"More areas specifically for teens that could facilitate meeting new people, hanging out with friends etc."*

Young people felt a positive impact would be made if youth spaces within outdoor multipurpose spaces were also integrated more into community life and events, and by more inclusion and representation of young people in community spaces and events. Young people viewed these spaces as providing more opportunities to host youth-friendly events supporting socialisation, for developing skills and providing inspiration. Key themes were identified around youth representation, diversity, variety, connectivity, and acceptance and affordability.

Comments included:

*"Life. Sure Mosman has a vibrant atmosphere, but there is nothing lively. More things need to happen in the community (with social distancing of course) to provide a welcoming and attention-grabbing space that people would enjoy to walk around in or participate in various activities. In doing so, it would definitely improve the quality of life within the community (both physically and mentally)."*

*"Just a bit more all interconnected."*

*"I feel like it's been really disconnected lately. They used to like, bring a lot of our works from school into the gallery but I don't think they really do that anymore. I don't know if it's cause of covid but I haven't really been there in a while."*

*In relation to spaces to be heard, respondents noted a willingness to share their views in the context of respectful two-way dialogue. One respondent commented:*

*"Times are changing so let us teach you what we know and you can do the same for us. There is no social hierarchy when it comes to learning from others."*



Young people who were active members of the Mosman Youth Centre had a more positive view on their own ability to influence and feelings of acceptance. One young person noted their ability to participate in community engagement was limited by their time and energy focusing on work and studies, and preferred a one-off or pop-up style of engagement and advocacy as more accessible than ongoing and conventional commitments.

Youth Participation in decision-making is a central theme in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child where the views of a young person are to be respected and organisations should consider ways to increase the inclusive representation of youth in decision making at all levels. This is also reinforced in the NSW Office of the Children's Guardian Child Safe Standards - Standard 2: Children participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously. A report by the Australian Youth Research Centre that involved young researchers that examined the opportunities and issues around young people in decision-making also noted 'a significant part of young people's connection to their communities is about having valued roles, having an audible voice and being heard' and emphasised the importance of listening to young people, including those who are less inclined or less confident to be involved:

Hearing, inviting, supporting, equipping, honouring, and celebrating young people in decision-making roles is a challenge not to be taken lightly. Involving young people badly may do more harm and cause more cynicism than not involving them at all (Kirby and Bryson, 2002). Taking it seriously will mean changes in the way we do business as organisations and as a community.

Sharing a New Story: Young People in Decision-Making

Australian Youth Research Centre, The University of Melbourne, October 2003

[https://education.unimelb.edu.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/2690277/2003-Sharing-a-new-story\\_WP23.pdf](https://education.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/2690277/2003-Sharing-a-new-story_WP23.pdf)

Mosman Youth Services can be more effective in strengthening the representation of young people and creating spaces for youth voices to hold influence.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the MYvoice 2020/21 consultation Mosman Youth Services recommends the following to improve youth spaces for young people in Mosman:

- Consult with young people and support them to design, plan and participate in programs.
- Develop partnerships that increase the number of events for young people.
- Promote youth-friendly spaces.
- Improve young people's access to technology and the internet in youth spaces.



## Charlotte McNicol

*"My art piece 'Colours' is symbolic of inner identity, representing ideas of progression, race and sexuality shown through the usage of colours. The pride flag is slightly faded and messy within my painting against a dark backdrop, contrasting the bright flag within the eyes of the persona, symbolising inner identity and diversity overcoming oppression. Moreover, the abstract use of colour for the personas skin ties to race and sexuality being expressed and further highlights this idea of identity and staying strong together in the face of oppression."*

Submission to the 2021 Raise the Youth Mosman Youth Art Competition

# INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

## Rated 7.5/10 as an Area of Concern

The views of many young people around inclusion and diversity demonstrated a desire to have a welcoming and accepting community. The findings align with the Mission Australia Youth Survey Report 2020 where new trends emerged demonstrating concerns around equity and discrimination.

## Driving Factors

As noted earlier in this report young people who identified as having a disability and/or being from LGBTQIA+ communities gave the lowest scores when reporting on their feelings about local mental health support, acceptance, current life satisfaction and future security.

The surveys, focus groups and peer interviews all highlighted the need for various minority groups such as young people with disabilities, those from diverse ethnic backgrounds and gender and sexually diverse people to be given more and better opportunities for participation.

Peer interviews highlighted the importance of shared understanding and creating a progressive atmosphere for discussions. Stereotypes about minority groups, prejudices held by different generations and individual actions were reported to have a negative impact on feelings of community acceptance.

The importance of equality was also among the most common responses. This could be explained by the higher proportion of females and/or gender-diverse respondents and appeared to be an issue mostly for respondents from minority or non-dominant groups, rather than an issue with the possibility of affecting the wellbeing of the whole community and its contribution to social cohesion.

The inclusion/diversity topic also included responses that referred to everyone's right and ability to live and be accepted for who they are. For many young people inclusion is the sum of many things.

Comments included:

*"Really just seeing the Mosman community you know, really more diverse, more accepting of different communities and I think just having more awareness about these activities, events etc. as well within the community because, I don't doubt that they're not existent, I'm just saying maybe some people might not know about it. And I know definitely if there were more things going on and more people knew about them tonnes of people would want to be a part of that."*

*"Diversity in all manners. It can be apparent that Mosman pushes out other suburbs that are more culturally diverse, for example through expensive parking it pushes out other suburbs - not inclusive. It would be great to see a typically 'white' suburb welcome and celebrate cultures and diversity rather than the white wealthy."*

*"I think that most suburbs, not just Mosman but including Mosman, they're doing more to try and include a lot of under or misrepresented groups. Like racial minority groups or the LGBTQs or the disabled community etc. things like that. I think as society evolves we're all trying to you know, push some more of that. So, I think it's just those sorts of groups which might need a bit more uplifting every now and then."*

*"I think for inclusion, a lot of people look towards representation and seeing services or clubs or activities or etc. sort of things to be you know, included for them, like they can see themselves doing that."*

*"You know, it's available to them for whatever reason it could be like, there could be things with people having more access to like, disabled activities or maybe an awareness day for this type of minority group etc. sort of thing. I think people really like look forward to that sort of thing because they're like 'oh that's me, I can relate to that or I can see myself doing that.'"*

Many young people also noted the current offering of opportunities to participate via groups and clubs for young people within the community were not of interest to them or they did not find them relatable. One respondent commented:

*"There's a lot of sporting teams which I'm not interested in. That's all really."*

## What's Missing

Awareness should be increased about relevant activities and initiatives by schools, services and community members, and opportunities for community engagement and connection by celebrating inclusion and diversity.

Comments included:

*"And being aware that things like this exist because we do have a lot of great inclusion things going on in Mosman. And I think it's just a matter of letting the whole community know and getting them all participating."*

*"Like, we do have Mosman festivals but adding a cultural aspect..."*

*"Because there's all sorts of different festivals for all different cultures that people celebrate. Like, I know in Indian culture there's like Diwali, and Ramadan. They could do little festivals for that and stuff like that."*

*"Yeah, things like that. I and my friend went to Turkey for a while and she's Muslim and I don't know anything about her culture, and I don't know anything about when their celebrations are and things like that. And we just put so much effort into Christmas like, it's like, you know even atheists and stuff celebrate Christmas. Me included. I love it so much, but it would be nice to have at least some acknowledgment of celebrations from other cultures or some education about it because I realised how clueless I was."*

*"That would just be really cool. Experience culture, while without leaving the country."*



**Amalie**

*"What I tried to illustrate in this artwork is what it may feel like to be hated for you and who you love. The left side is presenting what someone might feel if they are putting themselves down because of their identity whereas the right side is showing how that person embraced their identity and felt acceptance from themselves."*

Submission to the 2021 Raise the Youth Mosman Youth Art Competition

## Supportive Solutions

When peer interview participants were asked for ideas that support young people feeling included in the community, education and interaction opportunities were viewed as key factors in understanding differences and challenging singular viewpoints. These conversations were also considered important to occur in structured and formal settings, not left to young people to organise within their own clubs and social spaces.

Utilising organisations with current knowledge, influential people and programs that support a variety of dialogues is key. As an example, several focus groups highlighted the lack of education around non-binary relationships and how the lack of representation or inclusive education has created a gap in support around sex education. This view was confirmed by several respondents.

Comments included:

*“That’s like the main thing you know about – not know about, learn about – in the like, and mainly like cis-gendered stuff as well.”*

*“Let’s see. Sex ed. Let’s talk about same sex and how to protect yourself in that situation. Cause from my experience it’s just a guy and a girl, what do you do?”*

*“I mean, yeah. Full stop. Because there’s not that much education on like same gendered sex and stuff like that.”*

*“Yeah, so maybe make the community more open to Trans men and women. Like, accepting that a Trans woman will walk into a women’s bathroom and they don’t need to have top or bottom surgery to walk into that bathroom.”*

It was highlighted that adults such as parents and teachers should also receive the same information and education, to increase their accountability and build peace amongst differentiating groups of young people.

Comments included:

*“Well technically they [teachers] are already being trained to cater more to that, but I think some extra training would definitely be quite useful and it would be quite beneficial for schools to maybe host mental health or I don’t know, let’s say LGBT workshops more often. Just so that people are more aware about these kinds of things and just how to speak to others so that they don’t get offended or anything.”*

*“Educate people more, encourage youth to get together more, maybe something to spread more awareness to discrimination of women and POC that may be more normalised, support groups, same sex bathrooms, hold events that educate people about the different cultures so there are no misconceptions or generalisation/stereotypes against ethnic groups (for example, hold a community fair to market somewhere, advertise it for all ages and get people to learn more about diverse cultures), events specific to the groups “.*

*“I think things get way too overlooked. Yeah. Like, with some of the problems I’ve had it’s just been: ‘We’re gonna have a stern talk with you and just a slap on the wrist.’“*

*“And like, I had to... I reported it and I don’t even know what we could do beyond reporting it because sometimes when you actually report something to a teacher you get attacked more for it by like, the people.”*



## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the MYvoice 2020/21 consultation Mosman Youth Services recommends the following to improve inclusion and diversity for young people in Mosman:

- Create opportunities for young people to celebrate diversity.
- Link young people with other parts of our community to plan inclusive programs and services, making them more accessible.
- Create ways for young people to have their views, concerns and aspirations for inclusion and diversity included in decision making.
- Improve access to social networks and services for young people with a disability and from minority groups.



## Blake Alberts

*"The COVID experience has been tough on all of us, yet we have all pulled together. My double portrait is a symbol of endurance and resilience during the year of pandemic."*

Submission to the 2021 Raise the Youth Mosman Youth Art Competition

## MENTAL HEALTH

### Rated 8.48/10 as an Area of Concern

Mental health was not the most reported priority however it emerged as the highest rated concern. This suggests that for those young people affected or concerned by mental health issues it has a more significant impact on their lives.

## Driving Factors

According to the World Health Organization half of all mental health conditions start by 14 years of age but most cases are undetected and untreated (<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health>).

This suggests enormous potential to provide positive and earlier mediations to change the trajectory for young people so they have a flourishing and successful experience. Greater understanding around what is typical behaviour and what is cause for concern can empower young people in developing and maintaining social and emotional habits that positively impact their mental health within a supportive community environment:

*“I wish more adults would understand or realise what their child/children or kids are going through. In my case, I wish my parents understood how I actually have depression and how it’s not a phase and because they keep neglecting it I have to mentally deal with it by myself. In simple terms, I wish more adults knew and understood the hardships that kids/teens are facing nowadays and maybe support them”.*

*“So I think that was a major part in helping us feel better mentally. With the whole mental health stuff like, support of your community which is a huge part of getting through anything really.”*

When asked about the driving factors for stress, anxiety and depression respondents identified school as the number one contributing factor, followed by relationships, futures, body image and discrimination. The impact of academic workload and pressure to succeed from school and family resulted in young people feeling isolated and fearful of backlash if expectations were not met:

*“As always, I think that a huge amount of pressure for young people comes from academic life because you know being a student is really hard.”*

*“That by being overprotective children find it hard to talk to their parents about anything or ask them anything because they are fearful of their parents reaction. This leads to social isolation.”*

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic also created significant and lasting impacts for young people in their family homes, educational environments, employment and various aspects of their personal life. Almost half of respondents, 46%, reported that they felt lonely or isolated during COVID and 76% had to give up something that they loved. When asked about not being able to participate in their normal activities 41% felt lost, 41% felt disappointed, 35% felt sad and 35% felt a loss of social connections. In comparison 20% found they had more relax time, 15% tried new things and 12% found new interests.

Comments included:

*“There is too much pressure on young people during the lockdown. It’s a different time, we can’t be expected to do more work than we were doing before - even though we have the access to internet and social media we still want to see people in person”.*

*“I think obviously a huge part of this is like the COVID pandemic. So, I think in terms of young people and mental health the thing that’s kind of boosting them right now is that we’re all in this together mentality which I think that’s really helped a lot of people especially like me as well sometimes it seems a bit bleak especially when we were in lockdown and I think the support which has been kind of going around has carried us through...”*

## What's Missing

Many young people reported that the support system is complicated and challenging when identifying services and opportunities available to young people in their local area. Over 18% of respondents to the survey had never heard of the Mosman Youth Centre and the majority of respondents had heard of the Youth Centre but never engaged with the service.

Comments showed that young people believed the community could be doing more to support young people with mental health issues including offering practical workshops, applicable tools and a variety of networks to access:

*"More mental health awareness and cheaper access to mental health services."*

*"Just be more understanding and have a bigger focus on mental health."*

*"I feel like the school focuses a lot on drugs and but there are a lot of other issues that it doesn't touch on at all. Like, particularly mental health or like, you know, discrimination."*

*"I think in certain areas such as like academic struggle I think the school has a lot of support systems...But I think in terms of like wellbeing, I think the wellbeing program is relatively new to the school. So they're trying to kind of figure out exactly what they're doing."*

*"I would probably just try and get like a few kind of experts to come in and just kind of educate the why this is happening and how you can manage it ...minimise maybe sort of things like stress or feelings of uncertainty going forward."*

Other factors mentioned that affected their ability to participate included lack of time, motivation and experiences that their participation did not make a difference or was not actioned.

Barriers to accessing help included stigma, challenges around expressing concerns and privacy:

*"I think certain members of the LGBT community aren't being supported as much as well there's some individuals that may have certain mental illnesses that may be greatly romanticised. And made fun of by the others, making the individuals not only feel bad but as though they don't necessarily have a right to talk about them even though they do but it just doesn't really end well for some."*

*"Probably not school, for some reason. Don't really think that the teachers would - like of course they care and all but like, I don't think that they would take the time to follow up later on. So, I'd probably go to a café so I could have some peace of mind and think to myself."*

*"Maybe feeling like, embarrassed that you need help in a way. Or like, sometimes when you want to get help you kind of like in a way need to say to your parents 'Hey, I wanna get help', which can be quite confronting."*

*"Yeah, also like, at my school there's obviously counselling that's provided. But the terms and conditions to getting the counsellor is that your parents find out...And that's really discouraging. Because it's like, well the whole reason I'm seeing the counsellor at school is that I don't want my parents to know about - that I want to get through."*

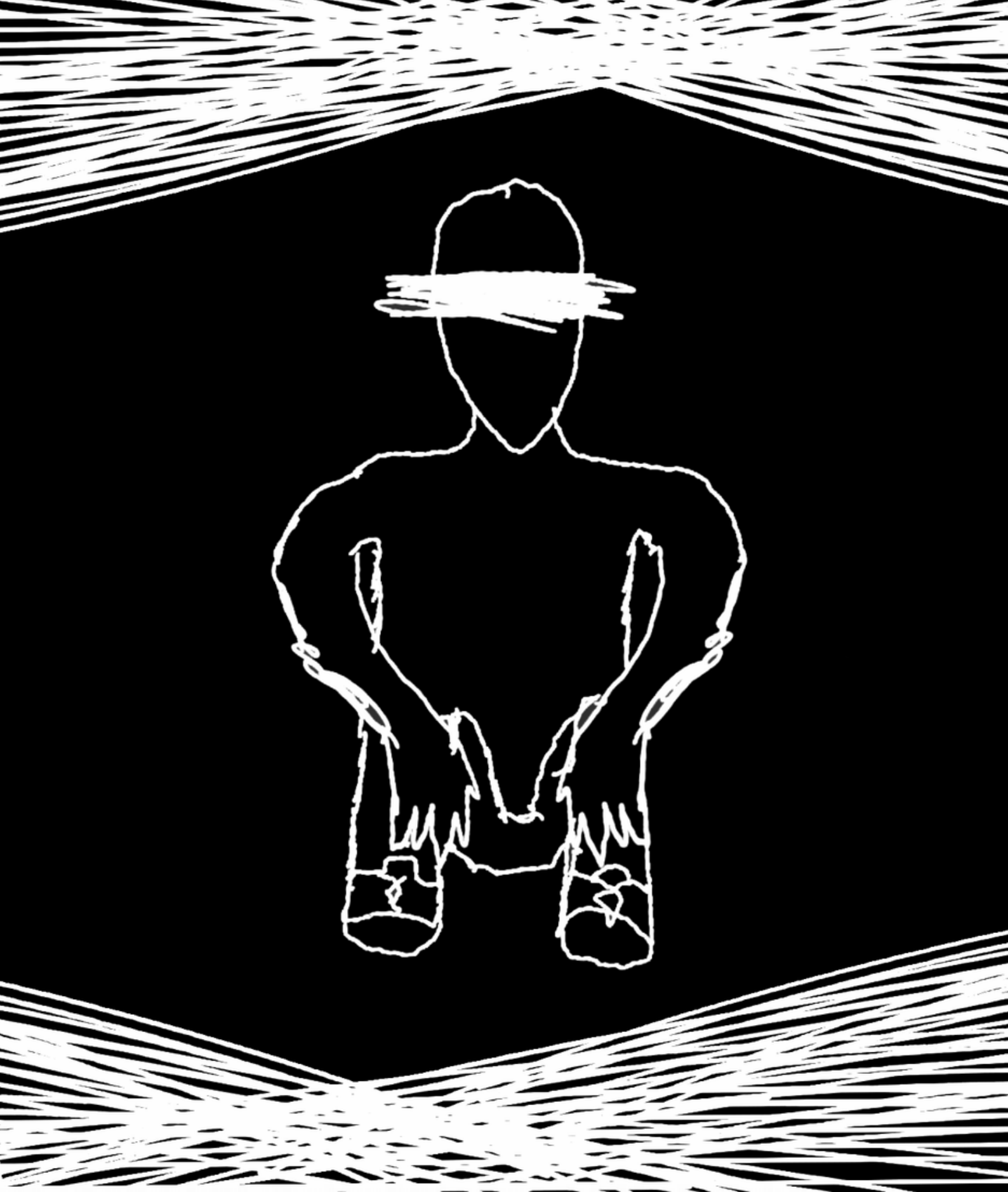
Responses showed an acceptance of mental health differences among peers and a shift to young people looking for better understanding, emotional support and consideration, not problem-solving, from the adults around them including their teachers, parents and community leaders:

*“Mental health is a real issue. It’s real and you don’t need to solve it for us, you just need to understand and support us and listen to us.”*

*“I think the only thing that really needs help is like a little bit more of that emotional support in a sense. Like maybe there might be a thing where people just feel stress, but they don’t really want someone to tell them like oh you need to make a to do list and use this method of studying and these supplies. And maybe they just want like a well why is this such a big factor of your life and how can we manage that in a way that’s effective and you’re not taking too much time of actually doing the work but you’re not feeling overwhelmed.”*

*“Young teenagers undergo extreme disruptions such as depression and anxiety and the adults in this world just don’t understand that it can happen to us too as well as them because they think we are young and naïve”.*

*“By being overprotective children find it hard to talk to their parents about anything or ask them anything because they are fearful of their parents reaction. This leads to social isolation.”*



## Joe

*"I drew this artwork to show how you feel when you are lonely and not accepted for who you are how it enshrouds your mind in negative thoughts. I drew this to vent about how I felt last year because of COVID and issues with my friends. I hope you like this and relate to this"*

Submission to the 2021 Raise the Youth Mosman Youth Art Competition



## Supportive Solutions

As a community and society we are gaining a better understanding of mental health and the factors that promote and protect positive wellbeing. Cumulatively the key issues raised in this report can have major implications on youth mental health, self-worth and wellbeing. Therefore it is imperative that we build on the foundations we have and work alongside specialists and experts to ensure information and support is available via the channels and spaces where young people spend most of their time: schools, family, peers, community groups and online.

Supporting young people to address positive mental health is complex. They require guidance, support and coaching to help figure out how to be responsible and at the same time slowly receiving greater amounts of freedom and independence while continuing to encourage an appropriate amount of reliance on other support networks.

When asked about the factors that support positive mental health in everyday life respondents mentioned friends and family. Inclusive spaces for activities that are integral to developing young people were also mentioned including making friends, hobbies and skill development opportunities for studying and work.

The role of family and friends in young people's mental health was highlighted, as well as the role of schools and family support services in transitional years. Respondents noted encouragement from friends and adults as important to inspiring and sustaining progress towards health and wellbeing, and that each young person should have the opportunity to be part of a community that feels inclusive to them:

*"So, a bit more on like educational sides and I think there can be some more community involvement as well. So really those two together. I think Mosman is doing a really good job of all this stuff but it's like the raising awareness sort of thing is always a good thing."*

*"Being considerate and raising awareness about mental illness and how to support others that experience mental health issues."*

*"Support, knowing that what I say can get me some help."*

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the MYvoice 2020/21 consultation Mosman Youth Services recommends the following to further support the mental health of young people in Mosman:

- Support young people to build resilience through evidence based programs.
- Run programs that improve mental health and wellbeing literacy for young people, parents, and educators.
- Empower young people to have strong and healthy relationships with people around them.





## Appendices

## APPENDIX 1 ONLINE SURVEY #1

Email

Name

Age (12-25)

Pronouns

Relationship to Mosman \*Please tick all that apply

I identify as having any disability.

I identify as belonging to a LGBTQIA+ community

I identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

I speak a language other than English at home

Are you happy with the spaces available to young people in Mosman to go or hang out? (1 = Not at all, 2 = Somewhat, 3 = Satisfied, 4 = Mostly happy, 5 = Very happy)

What's missing from the community?

Thinking broadly (eg. mental health, career, education, events) what are your 3 main sources of information and inspiration?

I feel that Mosman (eg. parents, schools, community) is supporting young people with Mental Health issues. (1 = Do not agree, 2 = Agree somewhat, 3 = Definitely agree)

I feel accepted in the community. (1 = Do not agree, 2 = Agree somewhat, 3 = Definitely agree)

Have you been to the Mosman Youth Centre or attended any of Mosman Youth events?

Issue (1)

Issue (2)

Issue (3)

“Thinking about your own life and personal circumstances, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole? (0=no satisfaction at all, 10=completely satisfied)”

“Thinking about your own life and personal circumstances, how satisfied are you with your future security? (0=no satisfaction at all, 10=completely satisfied)”

Open box, do you have any thoughts, opinions, or ideas for youth in Mosman that we haven't covered in this survey?

This survey is only the beginning of our consultation, we will also be running focus groups and interviews. If you would like to get involved please tick yes below and leave either your email or phone number

## APPENDIX 2

# INTERVIEW SCRIPT

### Example Introduction

(if you don't know everyone in the group) – Icebreaker for introductions

Every 3 years Mosman Youth conducts a community consultation with Youth People who live, work, study, or spend time in Mosman to get an insight into what is going on in the lives of Young people in the area. This information is used to shape the programs that are put on by the Youth Centre & Mosman Council, the information will influence policy decisions and will also be shared with local organisations and schools. The purpose is to ensure that the voices, opinions and needs of young people are heard by policy makers and leaders. Through the survey, and the conversation that we are having today, is your opportunity to have your say to influence decisions in the Mosman community.

Today I am hoping to keep the conversation casual, there are no incorrect answers, and I would just ask that we are respectful towards each other's opinions and when other people are speaking. The conversation will be recorded, this so that we can accurately capture what is said so that Mosman Youth staff are able to create a transcript and accurately represent the opinions. The recording will remain anonymous and will not be shared publicly. Mosman Youth Staff will be sitting with us while we have the conversation, if at any time the conversation brings something up for you that is of a private or sensitive nature, the Mosman Youth staff are here to talk to. You do not have to answer every question if you don't feel comfortable.

If you are all happy to get started, I will be starting the recording now.

Today I will be asking you some questions based off the current results from the MYvoice survey which is now active. We will be exploring some of the key topics which have been addressed within the survey.

### Introduction Checklist

- Icebreaker for introductions
- What is the MYvoice consultation
- Who it is for
- What is it used for
- Why is it important
- What to expect during the focus group
- Permission for being recorded
- Respectful conversations & keeping things general
- Youth staff present for support
- Where the topics for discussion have come from

## Questions

### Topic: School

Question 1: Are you currently a student?

---

Question 2: What do you enjoy/like about school?

---

Question 3: What don't you like about school?

---

Question 4: If you were to imagine the ideal school, what would it have?

## Prompts

### Topic: School

- Are you in education or training?
- What education or training are you in? e.g. school, university, tafe, etc.

- 
- What do you look forward to at school?
  - Do you feel supported? (and how?)
  - What supports are available at school?
  - What opportunities are available (facilities, extra curricula)?
  - How does the school promote community/inclusion/friendships?

- 
- What worries you?
  - Do you ever feel stressed/overwhelmed?
  - If something is not going well at school where would you seek help?
  - Is there anything you want taught?

- 
- How would it look, feel, sound?

## Questions

### Topic: Inclusion

Question 1: How are you included in the Mosman community?

## Prompts

### Topic: Inclusion

- How are you involved/connected in the community? (clubs, groups, school, places that you attend)
- Who/what makes you feel included and supported?

Question 2. What groups do you feel are not being included/supported?

- Who and how?
- What spaces are inclusive/ what spaces are not?

Question 3. What would the perfect inclusive community be like for you?

- How would it look, feel, sound?
- Who would be included?

## Questions

### Topic: Mental Health

Question 1: Thinking holistically about health, what do you think is going well for yourself/young people in Mosman?

## Prompts

### Topic: Mental Health

- What in Mosman is helpful for health?
- What health (physical, mental, spiritual) supports are in Mosman for young people?
- What makes you feel good?
- What do you enjoy in Mosman?

Question 2. Again, thinking about health, what do you think is not going well?

- Where do young people need more support?
- What areas of health could be improved?
- In terms of Mental health, what are some of the things young people struggle with?
- Is there anything you are concerned about?

Question 3. What would you include if you were to create a community that fostered and supported healthy young people?

- How would it look, feel, sound?
- What would it have?

MYVOICE  
2020/21  
Consultation  
Report

Mosman  
COUNCIL

MOSMAN  
YOUTH

