

City of Port Phillip

# Happy, Healthy and Heard:

**Youth Commitment  
2014-19**



## About this document

This document has been prepared based on the *Happy, Healthy and Heard: Youth and Middle Years Commitments 2014-19 Background Report*. It provides Council's commitments to young people aged 12-25 years who live, work, study or visit the City of Port Phillip. The policy sits within the broader context of the Council Plan, Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and other key Council policies.

Our vision for Port Phillip is an engaged, healthy, resilient and vibrant city. For young people in particular, Council's vision is for all young people to be *happy, healthy and heard*.

The *Youth and Middle Years Commitments 2014-19* package includes:

### Happy, Healthy and Heard Background Report 2014

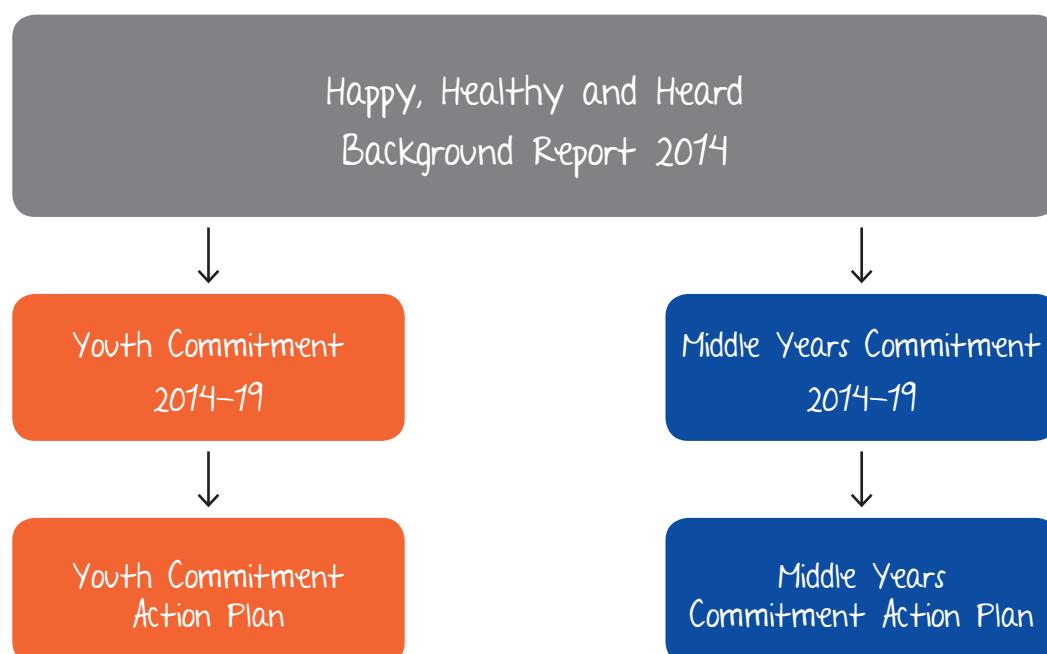
The Background Report provides the information required to implement a local policy for young people, including those in the middle years, in the City of Port Phillip. It provides the political and social contexts, developmental needs and youth development frameworks that have informed the *Youth Commitment* and *Middle Years Commitment*.

### Happy, Healthy and Heard: Youth Commitment 2014-19

The *Youth Commitment 2014-2019* is a summary of the conclusions from the Background Report, based on the *Your Top 3: Youth Consultation Report (2014)* and in context to the needs and demographics of young people aged 12-25 years. This document outlines the priority areas for Council, called our "Commitments". These are the basis of our decision-making and investment for the life of the policy. The *Youth Commitment Action Plan 2014-19* outlines key initiatives.

### Healthy Happy and Heard: Middle Years Commitment 2014-19

The *Middle Years Commitment 2014-19* is a summary of the conclusions from the Background Report, based on the *Your Top 3: Youth Consultation Report (2014)* and in context to the needs and demographics of young people aged 8-11 years. This document outlines the priority areas for Council, called our "Commitments". These are the basis of our decision-making and investment for the life of the policy. The *Middle Years Commitment Action Plan 2014-19* outlines key initiatives.



## Snapshot

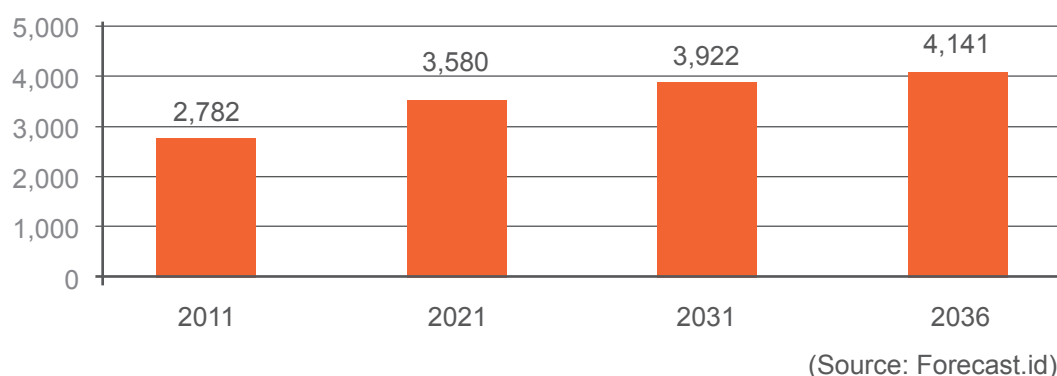
**In the City of Port Phillip, young people aged 8-25 years make up 16.1% of the total population. Of this, 13.7% are aged 12-25 years, and form part of the youth demographic (Census data, 2011).**

We recognise two age brackets within this youth demographic: adolescent young people (those aged 12-17 years) and young adults (aged 18-25 years).

### Adolescent Young people (aged 12-17 years)

Young people aged 12-17 are predominantly at secondary school, though in the latter part of the age group some have entered the workforce. It is a time of transition, and information about this group is pertinent to youth engagement policies, libraries and school planning, sport and recreation facilities, as well as economic development and employment planning. The population forecasts for Port Phillip predict a 48% growth for 12-17 year olds by 2036; around half of this forecast growth will occur during the life of the Commitments. This includes almost 500 adolescents living in the Fishermans Bend precinct. Excluding these figures, growth in this age group would be closer to 30%.

Figure 1. Forecast population of 12-17 year olds (2011–2036)

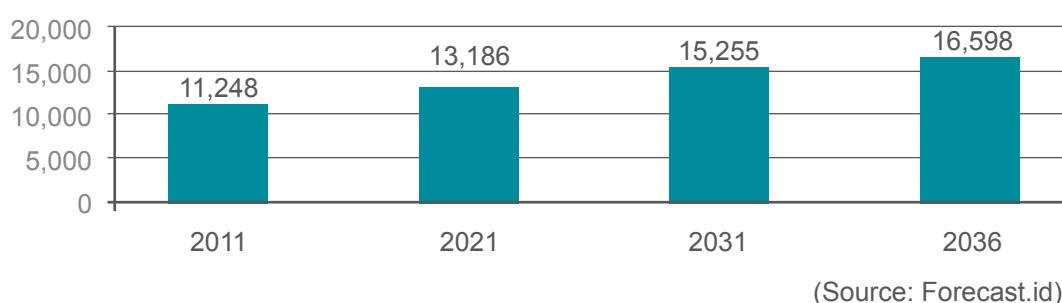


By 2036 there may be an additional 1,359 12-17 year olds in Port Phillip. The availability of larger dwellings suitable for families will be a constraint on the population, as will access to schools.

### Young Adults (18-25 years)

By 2036 Port Phillip is forecast to have an additional 5,350 18-25 year olds.

Figure 2. Forecast population of 18-25 year olds (2011–2036)



## Developmental Assets Framework

The City of Port Phillip uses the Developmental Assets Framework to underpin our work with young people. This approach aligns with our values and principles, and helps us achieve our vision for young people.

Figure 3: Search Institute® 40 Developmental Assets®



\*Source: Adapted from Search Institute (2006)

The 40 individual assets, as listed above, are divided into eight broad categories. Those on the left of the table are referred to as “external” assets - that is, assets we provide *to* young people. Those on the right side of the table are known as “internal” assets - these are assets we instil *in* a young person through our own actions and behaviours.

We have framed a Commitment to young people under each of the broad category areas.

## Council's Vision: Happy, Healthy and Heard

**Council's Vision is that all young people in the City of Port Phillip are Happy, Healthy and Heard**

### Happy

By this we mean all young people:

- have their basic needs met
- are motivated, optimistic and resilient
- have good self-esteem and a sense of self-efficacy
- have profound, intimate relationships
- are using their strengths to give back to society
- enjoy the little things in life.

### Healthy

By this we mean all young people are healthy:

- physically
- mentally
- socially
- spiritually.

### Heard

By this we mean all young people:

- are empowered
- have pathways to have their voices heard
- have opportunities to build on their leadership skills
- are involved in decision-making processes
- are given useful roles in the community
- have their contribution to the community recognised.

**To achieve this we have eight Youth Commitments that determine our actions and decision-making.**

# The Role of the City of Port Phillip in Youth Services

**Port Phillip City Council generally, and Youth Services specifically, have many and varied roles in relation to young people.**

Working in partnership our focus as a local Council is to provide the following:

## Leadership

By this we mean:

- innovation through policy and practice
- role modelling
- advocacy; and
- development.

## Resources

By this we mean:

- support for young people and the Youth Service sector
- information
- capacity building; and
- facilitation.

## Engagement

By this we mean:

- creating opportunities for young people's voices to be heard
- empowering young people through purposeful, inclusive engagement practice
- direct support; and
- prevention and early intervention.

### Implementing the Youth Commitment

Young people require a whole of organisation approach. This Youth Commitment applies to the five-year period 2014-19. To deliver on our Commitments to young people, we have an Action Plan that highlights Council's key activities and responsibilities.

A copy of the *Youth Commitment Action Plan 2014-19* can be located on our website [www.portphillip.vic.gov.au](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au).

# City of Port Phillip's Youth Commitments 2014-19

(young people aged 12 to 25 years)



## We commit to:

**#1 Support**  
Strengthen the links for young people to their friendship networks and build stronger connections to family, school and community.

**#2 Empowerment**  
Provide opportunities that enable young people's leadership to shine, through programs and services with an emphasis on active participation in the community.



**#3 Boundaries and Expectations**  
Facilitate the development of programs and services, and youth places and spaces, which have positive role models and encourage young people to have high expectations of themselves.

**#4 Constructive Use of Time**  
Implement programs and services that young people want to engage with - activities that are interesting, engaging and fun.

**#5 Commitment to Learning**  
Invest in settings and environments (or programs) where learning occurs - both formal and informal settings. Work with others to promote these opportunities.

**#6 Positive Values**  
Facilitate opportunities for young people to be proactive in their communities. Support them to care about the world around them and the people in it.

**#7 Social Competencies**  
Provide services and programs that enable young people to come together and build their friendships, and promote safe online relationships between young people.

**#8 Positive Identity**  
Create safe programs and spaces that allow young people to explore, be supported and be themselves - and celebrate them!

Contact: Youth Services  
E: [youth@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:youth@portphillip.vic.gov.au)

## Commitment 1: Support

### What do we mean by 'Support'?

*Support* refers to being loved and cared for and having access to material basics and positive feedback that strengthens identity.

### What does support look like?

Supported young people:

- receive high levels of love and support from their family
- experience positive family communication and feel like they can seek advice from their parents/carers
- have three or more other positive adult relationships in their life
- live in a caring neighbourhood
- receive care and encouragement at school
- have parents/carers who are actively involved in their schooling.

### What has the research told us?

Young people who are supported have better health and wellbeing outcomes. They are confident, have a strong sense of self identify, high self-esteem and are resilient to life challenges. They have access to positive adult role models or mentors in their life and can form secure attachments and strong connections with their family, peers and other members of their community.

### What have young people told us?

Almost one third of the 12-25 year olds consulted in Port Phillip identified relationships as being central in their lives.

They place strong emphasis on the importance of friends, family and community in their lives.

"I've got good mates who'll stand by me through thick and thin."

"My friends are the best."

"The sense of community is vibrant in Port Phillip."

### Our Commitment to young people

#### Youth Commitment #1

Strengthen the links for young people to their friendship networks and build stronger connections to family, school and community.

This may include:

- providing programs and services that link young people to strong adult role models
- providing activities that get young people involved in their local neighbourhood
- promoting friendships and social interactions in our program and service investments
- encouraging parents/carers to get involved with their young people's learning and school.



## Commitment 2: Empowerment

### What do we mean by 'Empowerment'?

*Empowerment* refers to a process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes.

### What does Empowerment look like?

Young people who are empowered:

- are valued by their community
- have useful roles in their community
- contribute to their society
- feel free of threats to their safety
- have critical analysis skills
- have opportunities to speak out.

### What has the research told us?

Young people who are empowered and given useful roles in their community have better health and wellbeing outcomes. They are also more likely to feel positive about the future, have healthy relationships and positive education and employment outcomes. Young people who are empowered feel valued and safe in their community and are more likely to be active citizens.

### What have young people told us?

More than one-third of 12-25 year olds consulted stated that access and affordability were issues of importance to them.

There was a particularly strong emphasis on empowerment and leadership opportunities, with young people drawing on social justice principles as a basis for their ideas.

"We need more inclusion of all young people on decision-making within our community."

"We should all be trying to inspire more social justice... I know I am."

"Would it ever be possible to have a student in the local council?"

### Our Commitment to young people

#### Youth Commitment #2

Provide opportunities that enable young people's leadership to shine, through programs and services with an emphasis on active participation in the community.

This may include:

- volunteering opportunities
- leadership & development programs
- access to programs by lead youth bodies
- engagement with schools and education institutions
- activities that support young people's independent mobility (such as cycling or using public transport).

## Commitment 3: Boundaries and Expectations

### What do we mean by 'Boundaries and Expectations'?

*Boundaries and Expectations* refer to rules, standards, norms and aspirations relating to behaviour.

### What do Boundaries and Expectations look like?

Young people with clear boundaries and expectations have:

- a clear sense of the rules and limits in the settings in which they interact (family, school and neighbourhood)
- a strong sense of what is right and what's not
- access to positive peer and adult role models
- an expectation to do well.

### What has the research told us?

Young people who are provided with clear boundaries and expectations have better relationships, self-esteem and health and wellbeing outcomes. Clear boundaries and expectations also encourage and help young people to develop their autonomy, enabling them to make good decisions and, as a result, less likely to engage in risky behaviours.

### What have young people told us?

The young people we spoke to emphasised the need for safe, affordable and accessible youth spaces and places to hang out with their peers.

They also mentioned their desire to access information and services from skilled, knowledgeable people when they need support.

"More places to hang out that are for young people."

"...that are safe, don't cost money, that can be accessed all year round including after dark."

"...where we can access info and talk with people who know their stuff."

### Our Commitment to young people

#### Youth Commitment #3

Facilitate the development of programs and services, and youth places and spaces, which have positive role models and encourage young people to have high expectations of themselves.

This may include:

- youth places and spaces directly focussed on positive youth outcomes, such as youth facilities
- investment in youth services and programs that enable young people to explore relationships and behaviours and be responsible for peer interactions
- engagement with schools and other educational institutions
- activities that support young people to take risks in a safe and supportive environment.

## Commitment 4: Constructive Use of Time

### What do we mean by 'Constructive Use of Time'?

*Constructive Use of Time* refers to how young people are engaged outside the home and traditional learning environments. It also refers to how young people use their personal and recreation time.

### What does Constructive Use of Time look like?

Young people who use their time constructively are engaged in:

- creative activities, such as music, dance or art lessons
- youth programs, sports or clubs
- religious or spiritual communities
- unstructured activities at home
- volunteering.

### What has the research told us?

When young people use their time constructively they have access to a network of positive influences and activities that stimulate their personal growth. They also have opportunities to develop positive social supports and skills and to gain an informal education.

Young people who are constructively engaged and participating are less likely to use their free time taking risks. They have better health and wellbeing outcomes and do better at school and work.

### What have young people told us?

Over 50% of 12-25 year olds consulted told us that services, programs and recreational activities were important to them.

The majority of responses advocated for more services, programs and activities that would support constructive use of time.

"I'd like to see more youth services across the whole place."

"We should be providing opportunities for social interconnectedness and support."

"What about targeting events that are inclusive to all cultural backgrounds and promoting the interconnectedness of these?"

### Our Commitment to young people

#### Youth Commitment #4

Implement programs and services that young people want to engage with - activities that are interesting, engaging and fun.

This may include:

- providing youth services and programs that have a recreational nature
- providing youth programs and services that young people tell us they'd like to participate in (such as leadership and development programs)
- exploring innovative programs and opportunities
- providing programs that encourage physical activity and interactions with the natural environment.

## Commitment 5: Commitment to Learning

### What do we mean by 'Commitment to Learning'?

*Commitment to Learning* looks at how motivated a young person is to learn and how engaged they are with their learning. It is a combination of personal beliefs, values, skills and a young person's ability to regulate their internal processes, such as goal setting.

### What does Commitment to Learning look like?

Young people that are committed to their learning:

- are motivated to do well at school
- actively engage with their learning
- feel connected to their school
- often read for pleasure
- do homework every school day.

### What has the research told us?

Education (in its many forms and settings) opens up life pathways and helps young people to reach their full potential. Young people who are committed to learning have positive mental and physical health and wellbeing outcomes and are less likely to engage in risky behaviours. They are also more likely to do well academically and get a good job that they enjoy.

### What have young people told us?

One in five 12-25 year olds consulted listed education in their Top 3. Responses suggest that young people value supportive educational environments and teachers, as well as opportunities that extend beyond the classroom and traditional educational settings.

They enjoy environments where they have access to other positive role models, such as netball coaches and teachers in recreational settings and are looking for opportunities to take on part-time work.

"Supportive schools and teachers that help and support me and my other class mates make it [learning] really great."

"Create more part-time jobs and work experience opportunities for young people."

"There needs to be more support for kids who disengage from school and community."

### Our Commitment to young people

#### Youth Commitment #5

Invest in settings and environments (or programs) where learning occurs - both formal and informal settings. Work with others to promote these opportunities.

This may include:

- providing volunteering opportunities or leadership and development programs
- engaging with schools and education institutions
- working with other groups to encourage informal learning and engagement
- raising awareness of education options and employment pathways.

## Commitment 6: Positive Values

### What do we mean by 'Positive Values'?

*Positive Values* refer to the social principles, goals or standards held by individuals or society. Values become deep, internalised commitments that consistently guide how one thinks and behaves.

### What do Positive Values look like?

Young people with positive values:

- care about others
- have integrity
- promote equity and social justice in the community
- are honest and responsible
- are restrained in their behaviours.

### What has the research told us?

For adolescents, gaining a sense of their emerging identity, exploring and developing values constitute a critical part of their development.

Young people with positive values are more likely to have better health and wellbeing outcomes and show resilience in times of adversity. They are also likely to have effective problem solving skills, high self-esteem and a sense of optimism about the future. They are more likely to do well academically and subsequently have better employment outcomes.

### What have young people told us?

More than 50% of all young people aged 12-25 surveyed clearly articulated a concern for their community and the impact that it has on the environment.

They also indicated concerns about social justice issues, with many demonstrating awareness of those less fortunate, and the opportunity they had as young people to help others in need.

"Global warming, climate change, sustainability are the issues we face now and in the future."

"Make sure everyone has a fair share."

"... [We'd like] more inclusion on decisions..."

### Our Commitment to young people

#### Youth Commitment #6

Facilitate opportunities for young people to be proactive in their communities. Support them to care about the world around them and the people in it.

This may include:

- providing volunteering opportunities or leadership and development programs
- engaging with schools and other institutions and agencies
- providing programs and services investment that encourages environmental and/or social justice-focused outcomes led by young people.

## Commitment 7: Social Competencies

### What do we mean by 'Social Competencies'?

*Social Competencies* refers to how young people make decisions, solve problems, plan for the future and interact with others in such a way that is skilful, socially and culturally appropriate and appreciative of the unique qualities of others.

### What do Social Competencies look like?

Socially competent young people:

- possess sound judgement, can plan effectively and make good decisions
- are culturally competent, can relate to their peers and make friends easily
- resist engaging in risky behaviours
- resolve conflict peacefully.

### What has the research told us?

Young people learn social competencies through their relationships with family, peers and other adult role models in the community. Ultimately, research shows that young people with social competencies have healthy relationships, good self-esteem and a sense of self-efficacy. They also have better health and wellbeing outcomes.

### What have young people told us?

Over 40% of young people aged 12-25 years listed issues of access and affordability in their Top 3, and demonstrated a real awareness and concern for others.

Responses about their social interactions were focussed on both those in the community (teachers, friends, people they didn't know), and also the important people in their lives - mostly their friends and family.

"I like hanging out with my friends."

"[I like] the inclusiveness of the community."

"I have a sense of belonging..."

"My friends are the most important thing to me, and my brother."

### Our Commitment to young people

#### Youth Commitment #7

Provide services and programs that enable young people to come together and build their friendships, and promote safe online relationships between young people.

This may include:

- volunteering opportunities and recreational or leadership and development programs
- programs that build the capacity and awareness of positive interactions, both online and in person
- programs that give young people opportunities to celebrate the community's diversity, share their culture and learn about others

## Commitment 8: Positive Identity

### What do we mean by 'Positive Identity'?

*Positive Identity* relates to a person's relationship to where they come from, what they believe in, whom they relate to, their feelings of belonging, their behaviour and their role in society.

### What does 'Positive Identity' look like?

Young people with a positive sense of identity have a healthy relationship with their:

- gender and sexuality
- culture and linguistic diversity
- family relationships and situation
- religious and political beliefs
- friends
- economic, employment and community status
- community networks and support
- abilities and experiences of achievement
- physical characteristics
- mental and physical health status
- intellect and learning styles; and
- geography and natural environment.

### What has the research told us?

The process of identity exploration is an essential task that occurs over the course of childhood, through adolescence and into adulthood. People with a positive sense of identity have better health and wellbeing outcomes and are more resilient. They are also more likely to have a sense of purpose and feel like they belong in society. They have good self-esteem, a positive view of their future and can develop healthy, intimate relationships.

### What have young people told us?

Identity was a theme throughout the *Your Top 3* consultation. Young people spoke of their awareness of the multicultural city they live in, and the need to express, celebrate and embrace differences in others.

"There are always interesting activities to do for all ages and interests, and you are never bored because of different cultural festivals and activities."

"Lack of esteem building programs specifically tailored for females and males."

"Make everything religiously, sexually and politically unbiased."

### Our Commitment to young people

#### Youth Commitment #8

Create safe programs and spaces that allow young people to explore, be supported and be themselves - and celebrate them!

This may include:

- hosting National Youth Week events, and other opportunities to celebrate young people
- providing programs and services to support young people during their adolescence, including programs with a specific focus on supporting young people that may be experiencing issues related to elements of their identity, such as cultural and linguistic diversity, or gender and sexuality
- providing education and support programs for parents, families and other community members
- engaging with schools and other education bodies to promote equality.

For further information or enquiries, please contact:

**City of Port Phillip Youth Services**

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