



Young people

City of Port Phillip Health Profiles

Adolescence is a time of significant physical, cognitive and emotional development. Young people are growing up surrounded by technology, stagnating wages, rising underemployment, increasing exposure to online content, increasing mental health pressures and increasing concerns about climate change and their futures overall. They also have more opportunities for communication and agency through social media, youth participation and co-design, and are adapting to meet a changing employment market. Transitioning from adolescence to adulthood is becoming increasingly complex with family, peers, community, the legal system and job market playing roles in shaping this transition.

Who lives in our municipality?

- In 2016 young people (aged 12 to 25) comprised 13.1 per cent of the Port Phillip population, which is lower than the Greater Melbourne average of 18.3 per cent.
- While City of Port Phillip had a lower proportion of young people aged 12 to 25 years compared to the Greater Melbourne average, there was significant variation within the Council area. Proportions ranged from a low of 10.2 per cent in Port Melbourne to a high of 17.8 per cent in Ripponlea. The three suburbs with the highest child proportions were Ripponlea, St Kilda Road (15.7 per cent) and Balaclava (15.5 per cent).
- The largest forecasted growth is in the young adult population (18 to 25 years old anticipated to increase from 8.3 per cent of the residential population to 10.1 per cent by 2026).
- Approximately 27 per cent of young people living in Port Phillip were born overseas (this is consistent with the proportion for Greater Melbourne). The greatest proportion of residents born overseas were born in China (4.2 per cent), slightly less than in Greater Melbourne (5.7 per cent). Port Phillip is home to a higher proportion of young people born in the United Kingdom (4.1 per cent) and New Zealand (3.1 per cent) when compared to Greater Melbourne (1.4 per cent and 1.8 per cent respectively).
- A significant proportion of 18 to 25 year olds in Port Phillip were living independently in 2016, either in group households (24.7 per cent), single-person households (10.9 per cent) or couples without children (19.8 per cent). The trend toward independent living was higher than for Greater Melbourne, where 14.6 per cent lived in share households, 5 per cent in



single-person households and 11.1 per cent as couples without children.

How are young people in our municipality tracking?

- In 2016, 89.7 per cent of young people aged 15 to 25 were employed (compared with 85.1 per cent in Greater Melbourne), with 46 per cent employed full-time and 42.2 per cent employed part time. This was slightly less than the 2011 rate of 91.6 per cent.
- In 2016, 10.3 per cent of City of Port Phillip's labour force aged 15 to 24 years were classed as unemployed, compared to 14.9 per cent in Greater Melbourne.
- 82.8 per cent of Year 12 or equivalent completers took part in further education or training compared to the Victorian average of 75.2 per cent.

Young people attending secondary schools (12 to 18 years) in the City of Port Phillip reported in a 2019 resilience survey (Resilient Youth Australia, 2019) that:

- 90 per cent felt they had the love and support of family
- 91 per cent displayed strong social skills and positive values.

However, they reported some key challenges:

- 48 per cent did not feel able to talk about things that upset them
- 52 per cent reported they were having trouble sleeping
- 45 per cent reported being self-critical and 43 per cent reported spending more time alone.

And concerns:

- Young people report mental health as a key concern. This is consistent with 26 per cent of young Australians experiencing a mental illness every year, one in eight young Victorians reporting feeling lonely and one in four unable to find social support when they need it (Department of Health and Human Services, 2015).
- Young people reported a wish to “make our environment healthier” and for “action on climate change”.

How do outcomes vary for different population groups?

While it is hard to pinpoint sub-population effects among young people, there is significant evidence that some population groups face a greater risk of complex and interconnected social and health concerns.

- Compared with males, **female** secondary school students participating in the 2019 Youth Resilience Survey reported lower resilience. They struggled more with getting sufficient sleep, feeling tired and keeping physically active (Resilient Youth Australia, 2019).
- **LGBTIQ-identifying** young people are at a greater risk of family violence or rejection, driving higher levels of youth homelessness (Dempsey, Parkinson, Andrews, & McNair, 2020).



- **Trans-identifying** young people are at a particularly high risk of mental ill health, with nearly three quarters reporting to the first Australian survey of trans youth that they had been diagnosed with depression or anxiety at some time. Nearly 80 per cent had self-harmed and just under fifty per cent had attempted suicide (Strauss, et al., 2017).

How has COVID-19 affected outcomes for young people?

- Young people have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through joblessness, disrupted education, reduced social connections and increased anxiety about their futures (VicHealth, 2020). Changes in schooling, work patterns and COVID-19 disruptions will impact youth transition to University from secondary school and may also impact school disengagement.
- According to YACVic's (2020) survey into the impacts of COVID-19 on young people, the loss of social interaction was a primary concern for the majority of young people with increased social isolation and reduced access to services which in turn impacted mental health outcomes.

Why is supporting young people important for our community?

- When young people have their voices heard and are involved in the community, they develop skills, opportunities and are better equipped for the future which contributes to healthy and productive adults. Likewise, communities' benefit through young peoples' innovations, social cohesion and understanding of young people's strengths.
- Young people make considerable contributions to the creative and cultural life of Port Phillip. They are active participants in arts-based programs, community enhancement programs and public events. This contribution needs to be maintained and enhanced.

What is the role of Council in contributing to outcomes for young people?

For most young people, families and care givers continue to play an important role in their lives however this is a time of increasing independence and identifying with their peers. Services for young people are provided through schools, not-for-profit groups and community organisations.

Local government has a long history of engaging with and supporting young people through a range of programs including sporting and recreational facilities, events, libraries, homework clubs, youth centres, leadership programs and support programs to support the specific health and wellbeing concerns of young people in the local community.

Victorian local governments are required to promote the health and wellbeing of all its residents including young people. In addition to mandated responsibilities, over the next three years Port Phillip has the opportunity to make a more substantial contribution to outcomes for young people in the municipality by:



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- Undertaking activities with reference to the Developmental Domains associated with the Transition to Adulthood and application of the Development Assets Youth Development Framework.
- Enabling youth leadership through initiatives such as the Student Leadership Program, FReeZA Committee, Youth in Chamber and the Youth Advisory Committee while also providing spaces for young people to make contributions to their community and feel heard.
- Facilitating networks for local services, educators and community groups to identify opportunities to work together to achieve improved outcomes for young people while also providing professional development opportunities to ensure the local youth sector has the knowledge and skills to manage the current issues faced by young people.
- Continuing to provide opportunities for young residents to contribute to creative activity and public events taking place across the municipality. This is achieved by Port Phillip's annual involvement with Under the Radar Film Festival (St Kilda Film Festival's youth component), Takeover Melbourne Story telling Competition and Minus 18's Queer Formal.
- Providing youth support to assist individual young people living, working or studying in the City of Port Phillip while also funding group recreational activities supporting early intervention such as the Skate Club at park towers and 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament at the St Kilda Foreshore in 2020.
- Providing recreational opportunities for young people to support early intervention and prevention through programming at the Adventure Playgrounds as well as providing referral pathways into specialist services.
- Introducing of the Youth Access Grants program to increase the provision of recreational activities in the municipality and ensuring 12 to 18 year olds can access these activities, especially throughout the recovery phase of COVID-19.
- Considering diversity of events held in public space. Encouraging family friendly events and events that support youth participation.

Who are our partners?

In order to facilitate a comprehensive, consistent and whole of community approach to ensuring equitable outcomes for all young people, Council partners with community organizations and other levels of government to deliver community interventions. Some of our key partners include:

- Local schools and post-secondary education providers
- Local youth services
- Sport and Recreation Organisations
- Arts Organisations
- VicHealth
- YacVic



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- Creative Victoria
- Sport and Recreation Victoria
- DHHS
- Victoria police

What may change over the next five years?

- Whilst it is clear that young people have been disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic it is uncertain what impact this will have in the medium term.

References

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