# What young leaders told us




# Youth Forum Report Card

MARIBYRNONG
YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Maribyrnong Youth

Maribyrnong
CITY COUNCIL

# Maribyrnong Youth Forum Report Card

On Friday 12 June 2026, Maribyrnong City Council's youth services, in partnership with the Maribyrnong Youth Advisory Committee (MYAC), delivered the Maribyrnong Youth Forum at Phoenix Youth Hub. Funded through the Victorian Government's ENGAGE Program, the forum brought together more than 90 attendees, including 50 young leaders from five local high schools and the community, 30 staff and sector representatives, the Mayor of City of Maribyrnong and three Councillors.

Led by MYAC and designed for young people, the forum created a meaningful opportunity for participants to discuss the issues that matter most to them and develop recommendations to help shape future Council priorities.

Participants explored key issues affecting young people in Maribyrnong, including mental health, social isolation, employment, youth crime, physical activity, and inclusion.

Together, participants developed practical and achievable recommendations that will guide the work of Maribyrnong Youth and Council over the next two years. These actions will ensure young people's voices continue to influence decisions and shape the future of Maribyrnong programs and events.

## Panel discussion and topic experts

**Jordan Barr** LGBTQIA+ activist and Triple J Breakfast Host
**Noah Szto** Comedian and Doctor
**Bianca Kendrick** Youth Programs and Policy Advisor, Alanah and Madeline foundation
**Mayor Semra** Mayor, City of Maribyrnong
**Jaymie Moynihan** Western Bulldogs Community Foundation
**Peter Shortis** Cohealth
**Eamonn Dwyer** Parkville Youth Mental Health and Wellbeing Service
**Lana Sheya** North West Jesuit Social Services
**Jonathan Sugumar** MMVLLEN

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For more information on the Maribyrnong Youth Forum findings visit:
www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/youth

## Youth crime

Young people identified lack of positive activities, social isolation and boredom contributes to youth crime. They believe creating more opportunities to connect, learn and participate will help build safer communities.

### Recommendations

**1. Expand affordable youth programs, including sport, arts and mentoring, supported by inclusive and multilingual promotion.**

**2. Increase leadership opportunities through partnerships with schools and local businesses.**

## Employment

Young people shared that finding and keeping local employment can be difficult, especially without experience or qualifications. They want more practical support to build their skills and connect with employment opportunities.

### Recommendations

**1. Expand school-based employment programs for Years 9–10, focusing on job readiness, mentoring and practical skills.**

**2. Advocate for fair and inclusive employment practices, while better promoting local volunteering and job opportunities.**

## Inclusion

Young people want a community where everyone feels welcomed, respected and included. They highlighted the importance of celebrating diversity and removing cultural, language and accessibility barriers.

### Recommendations

**1. Deliver more inclusive community events, including a large multicultural festival.**

**2. Provide language support and inclusion workshops, including disability awareness initiatives such as free Auslan courses.**

## Social isolation

Young people said many of their peers experience loneliness and a lack of connection, affecting their wellbeing, sense of belonging and employability. They want more opportunities to meet others and participate in safe, welcoming spaces.

### Recommendations

**1. Expand accessible programs that support employment skills, study support and grade 6 transition programs.**

## Mental health

Young people highlighted the need for better access to mental health support and more education to help reduce stigma and encourage help-seeking. They want services that are easy to access and responsive to young people's needs.

### Recommendations

**1. Increase promotion of mental health services and provide education for young people and parents.**

**2. Advocate for more local youth mental health services and train teachers to better support young people.**

## Physical activity

Young people said they face barriers to being physically active, including the cost of activities, limited transport, and concerns about safety. They want more affordable and accessible opportunities to be active close to home.

### Recommendations

**1. Increase funding for local sports clubs, social activities and "come and try" programs.**

**2. Improve safety in public spaces such as improved lighting.**

