

Monash Youth Report

Introduction

Monash Youth Ambassadors (YABS) are a group of 20 young people aged 10 – 25 who consult with other young people in the community. Their goal is to hear directly from young people about their concerns and perceptions on current issues, and understand how the City of Monash can respond to these needs. The Monash Youth Ambassadors are supported by Monash Youth Services (MYS) in their quest to ensure that young people have a voice in the local community.

In July 2019, YABS together with MYS developed a short survey (see Appendix 1) which was accessed by over 2500 youth participants who have significant links to the City of Monash. This has been conducted as an annual survey in recent years. The purpose of this consultation was to gain a better understanding of:

- current topics of concern from a community perspective
- personal topics of concern for individuals
- what young people want to learn more about
- what activities they choose to do in their spare time.

Method

The survey was available both in hard copy and online via the monashyouth.org.au website. The survey was distributed by YABS and MYS through a variety of means including:

- secondary school newsletters and online communication portals
- lunchtime Youth Worker outreach sessions at secondary schools
- Monash University residences, clubs and international student services
- Monash Youth Workers Network
- Monash Multicultural and Settlement Services Network
- Monash Interfaith Gathering
- posters and flyers in the local neighbourhood (neighbourhood houses, libraries, aquatics centres, sporting clubs, cafes, restaurants and shops)
- Youth Worker and YABS outreach sessions in local neighbourhoods, at libraries & youth residential support services
- MYS, City of Monash and local community organisations' social media pages.

The data was anonymous and collated by MYS. If participants chose to provide their email address for the purposes of receiving survey results, or entering the prize competition, their personal details would be de-identified from the survey results. (See Appendix 1)

After reviewing data from this survey, YABS selected two of the topics to be explored in further detail via community focus groups. The opportunity was offered throughout religious and cultural youth groups, local community services, sporting groups and youth movements. YABS prepared the session and facilitated focus groups with the following communities:

- Monash Young Person’s Reference Group (ages 14 – 25)
- Girl Guides Mount Waverley (ages 10 – 14)
- Black Flat Rover Crew (ages 18 – 25)
- Open community session in Clayton (ages 10 – 25)

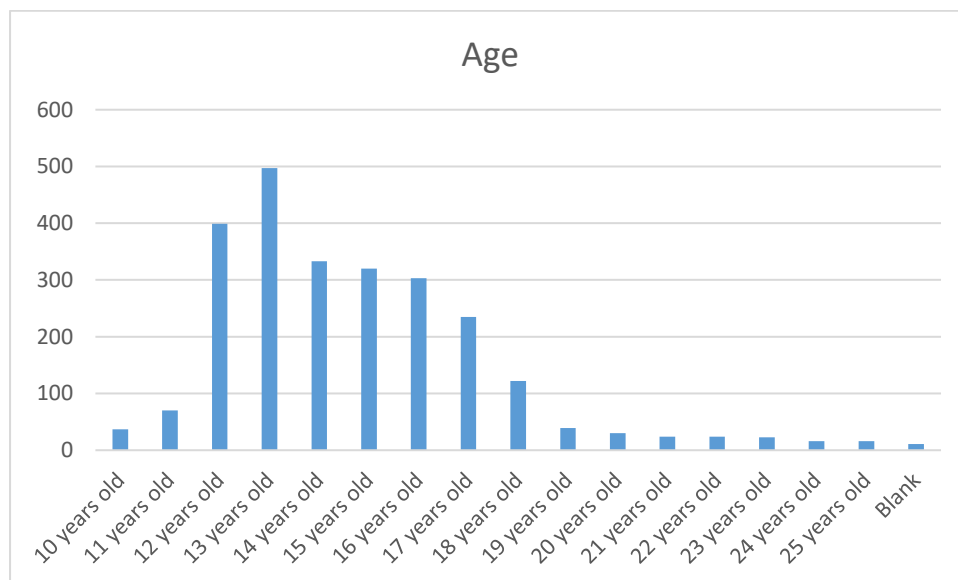
MYS Youth Workers facilitated the same focus group session with YABS, so that their voices were also heard.

The focus group responses were then analysed by YABS who identified the highlighted actions. These actions will be followed through by YABS and MYS or passed on to Council departments for their information.

The focus group activities are explored further at a later stage in this report.

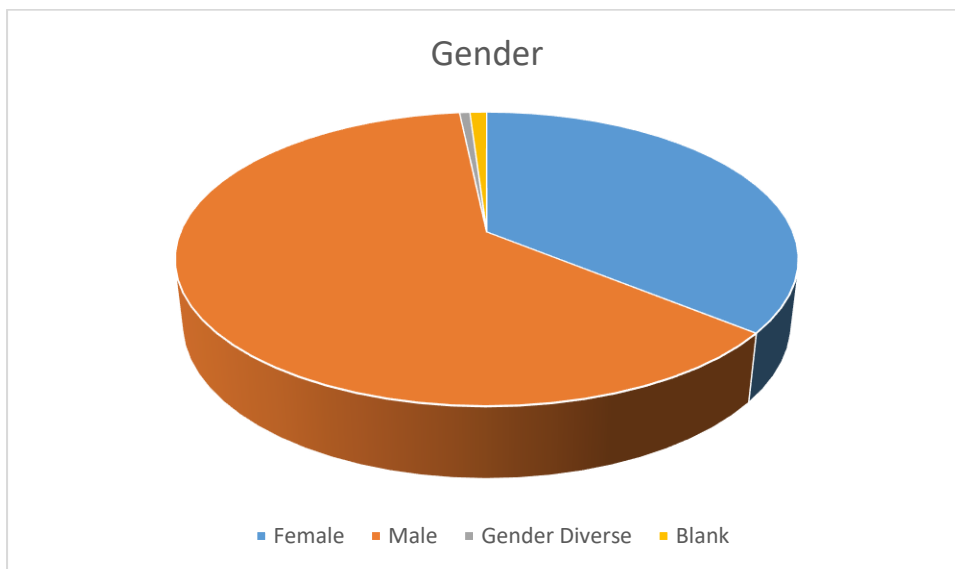
Participants

The dominant age range sits in the secondary education years. Schools are known to play a large role in encouraging students to take the opportunity and participate in the survey.

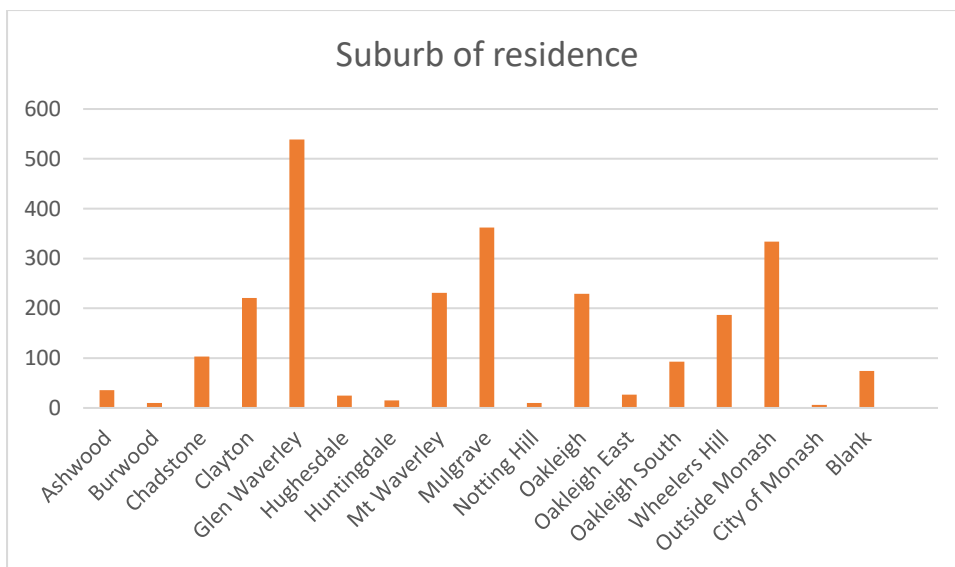


The Monash Youth Survey is a peer-led consultation, therefore it is expected that the bell curve of age would replicate the spread of ages across the YABS group. Students who attend school are more accessible and this is why we see more engagement across the secondary student years. YABS have identified that they wish to access the 18 – 25 age group using alternative methods for future consultations.

This year's survey participants weighted towards people identifying as male in gender. The survey is distributed throughout all 26 secondary level schools in Monash including state, private, catholic and alternative schools. Youth Workers outreach to a variety of schools who consent to the lunchtime session, but careful consideration is taken to spread the sessions across the municipality and balance out single sex schools. As the survey is widely promoted to all schools, there is a risk that a single sex school could have high uptake on the survey. Based on the email addresses provided, it appears that this is the reason for the heavy weight towards male participants. The impact of this gender imbalance has been considered during the data analysis process.

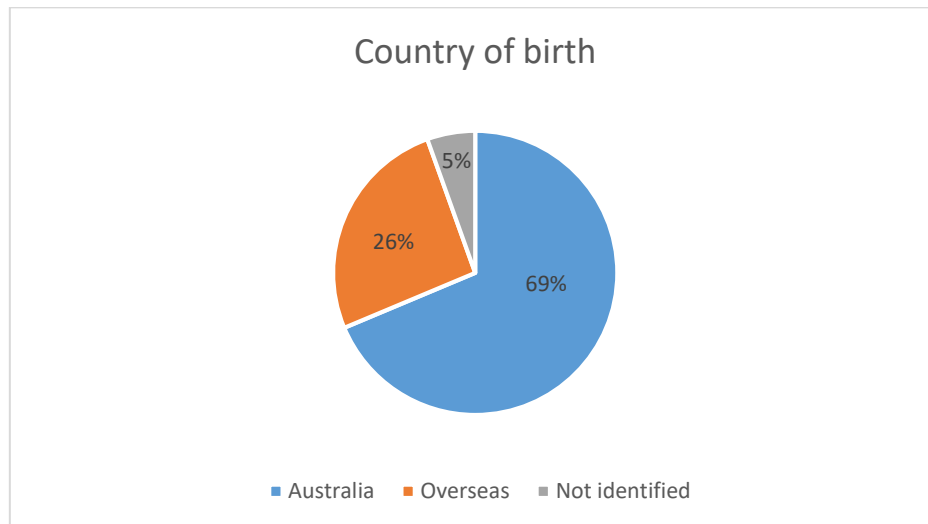


Young people have been accessed from all parts of the municipality.



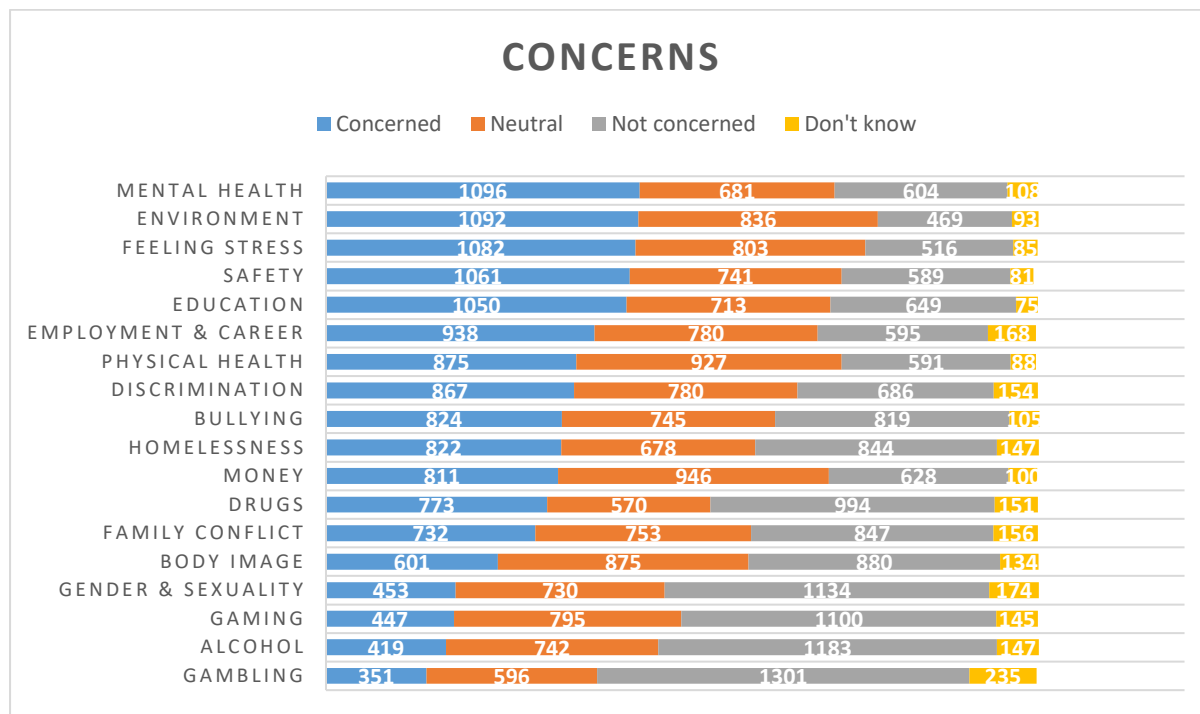
This information highlights the ease of access to those living in the Glen Waverley area. It also confirms that many young people who study, work or play in the City of Monash live in neighbouring local Councils.

The Monash municipality population (Census 2016) identifies that 48.9% of people were born overseas, with 29% arriving since 2011. The Monash Youth Survey captured 26% of participants born overseas. Additionally, the Monash Youth Survey captured a significant audience from Chinese, Indian, Greek and Italian cultural backgrounds, which aligns with the ancestry data from the Census. YABS felt that the respondents were a fair representation of the cultural diversity within the City of Monash.



Topics of concern for the young people of Monash

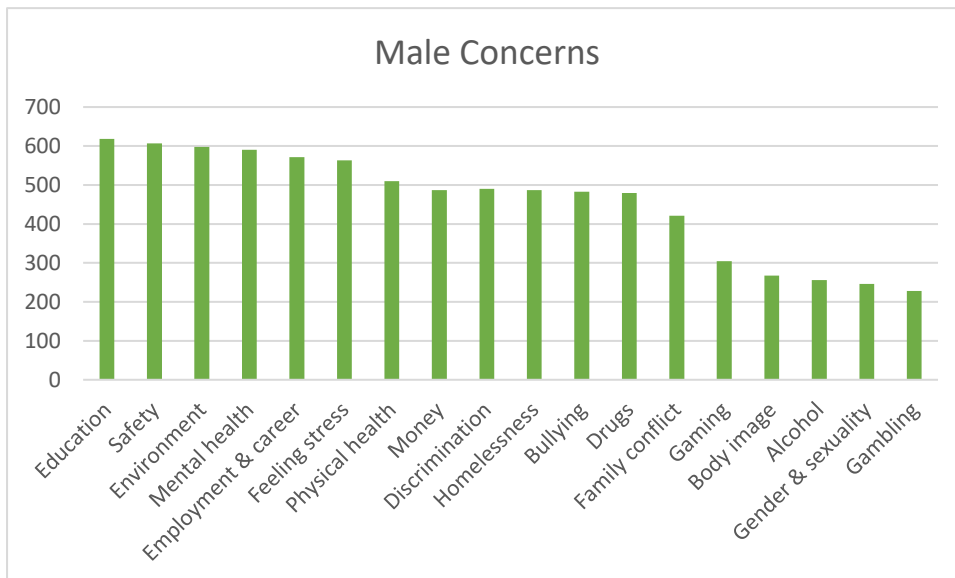
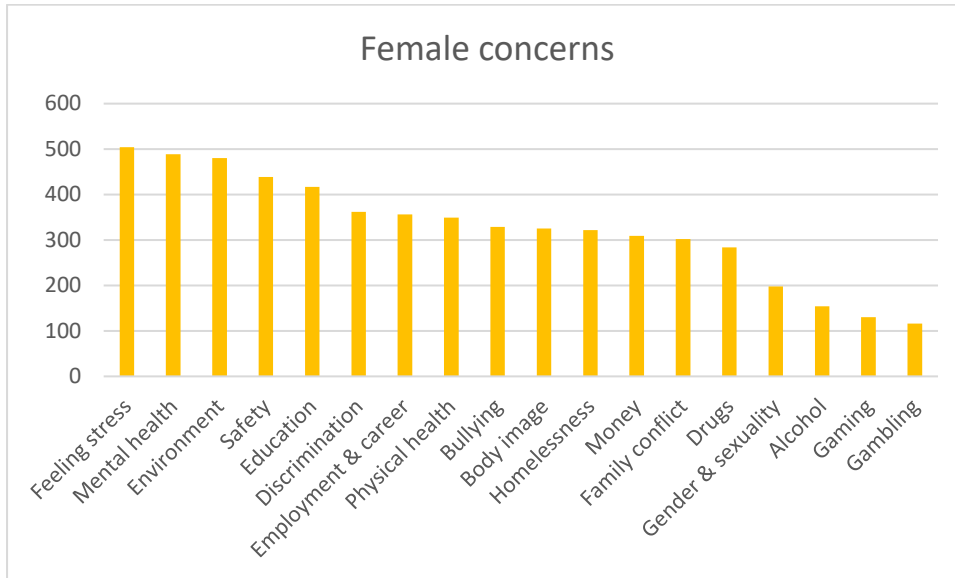
Survey participants were asked to identify in the past year, how concerned they have been about specific youth related topics in their local community.

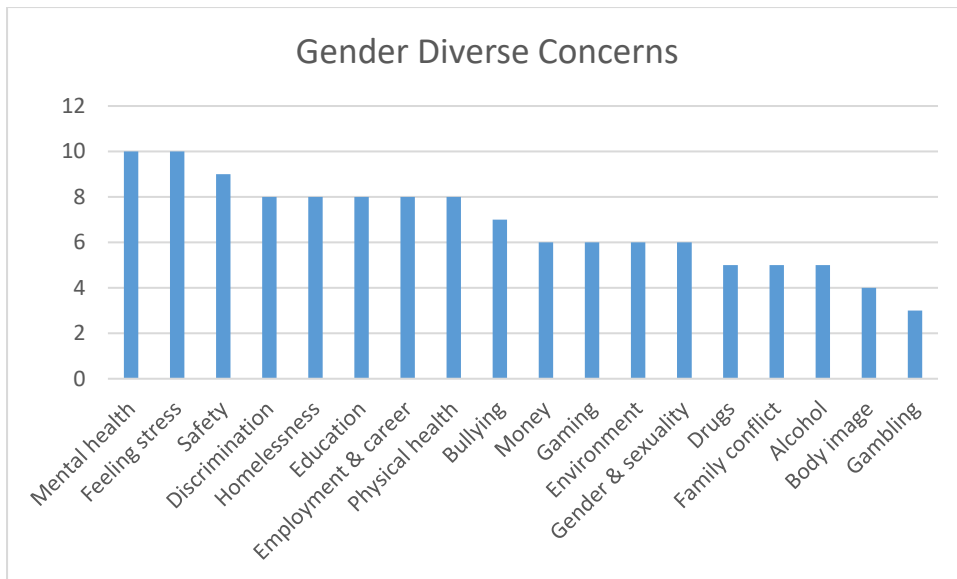


Mental health, feeling stress, education and employment and career continue to be topics of concern for young people and are consistent with recent years data. According to the Better Education website, the City of Monash is home to six of Victoria's top 100 academic schools, based on ATAR scores for 2019. Research completed by MYS and YABS at the 2018 Youth Forum identified that students are feeling increased academic pressure to achieve. This is resulting in increased stress which is in turn affecting their mental and physical health (Appendix 2).

Environment has made a strong step into focus with a significant increase in concern about the topic by young people. Safety was not consulted on in 2018 and the 2019 results signify that it is an important topic for young people in Monash.

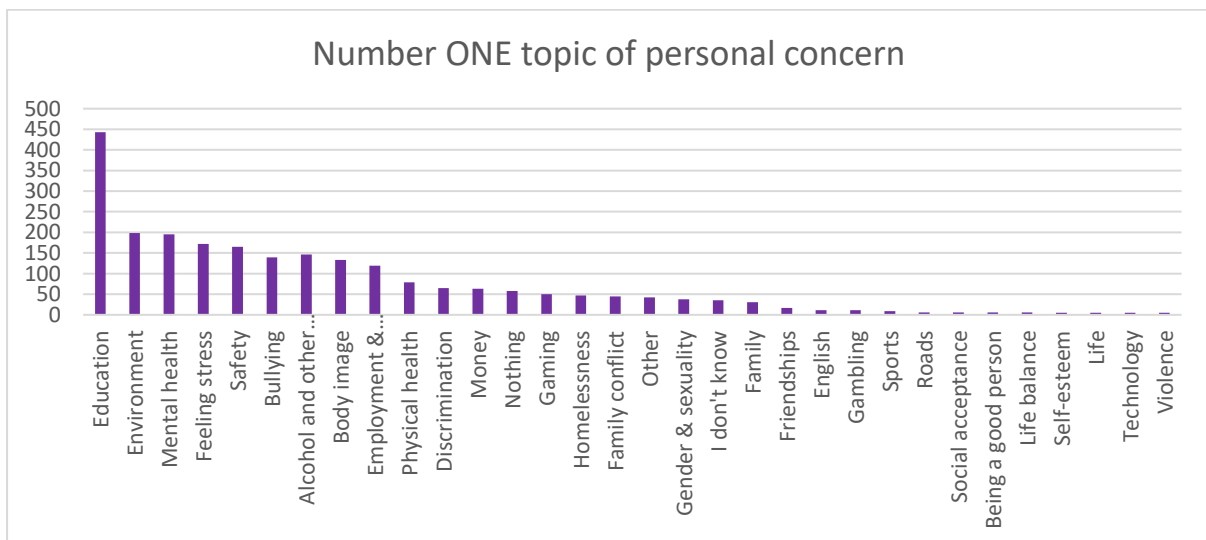
Acknowledging the disparity in responses by gender, the key topics of concern were also separated for analysis. As the following graphs outline, the top topics remain reasonably consistent for all genders.





The data highlights that young women are more concerned about feeling stressed and mental health, whilst young men are more concerned about education and employment and career. Interestingly, this reflects perceived gender stereotypes and could be further explored in relation to gender equality in the community. Participants who identify as gender diverse clearly have increased concerns about discrimination and homelessness. The LGBTQ Homelessness Report by the Gay and Lesbian Foundation of Australia in 2017, discusses that lesbian, gay and bisexual Victorians are twice as likely to experience homelessness due to discrimination or lack of family/community support.

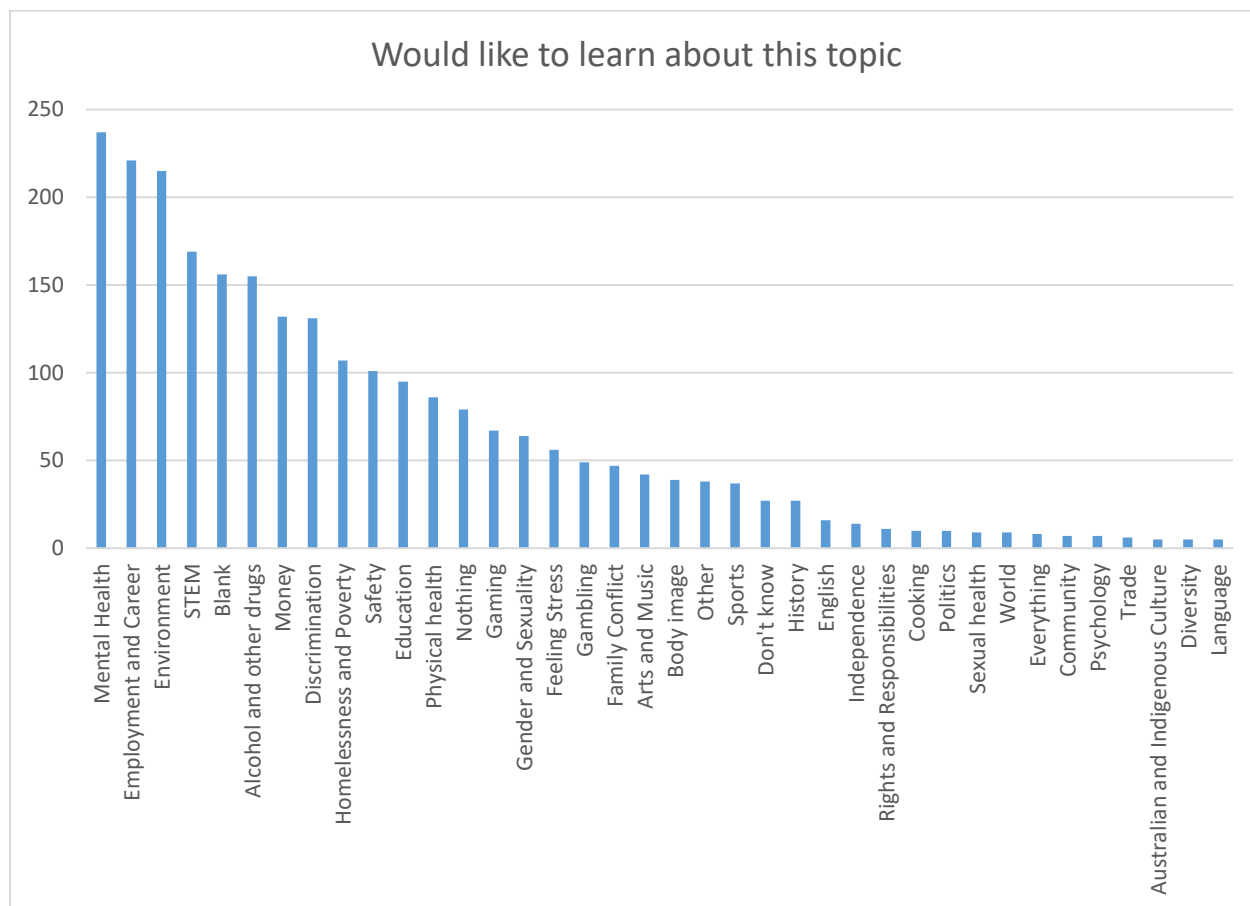
Survey participants were also asked to identify their number one topic of personal concern over the last 12 months.



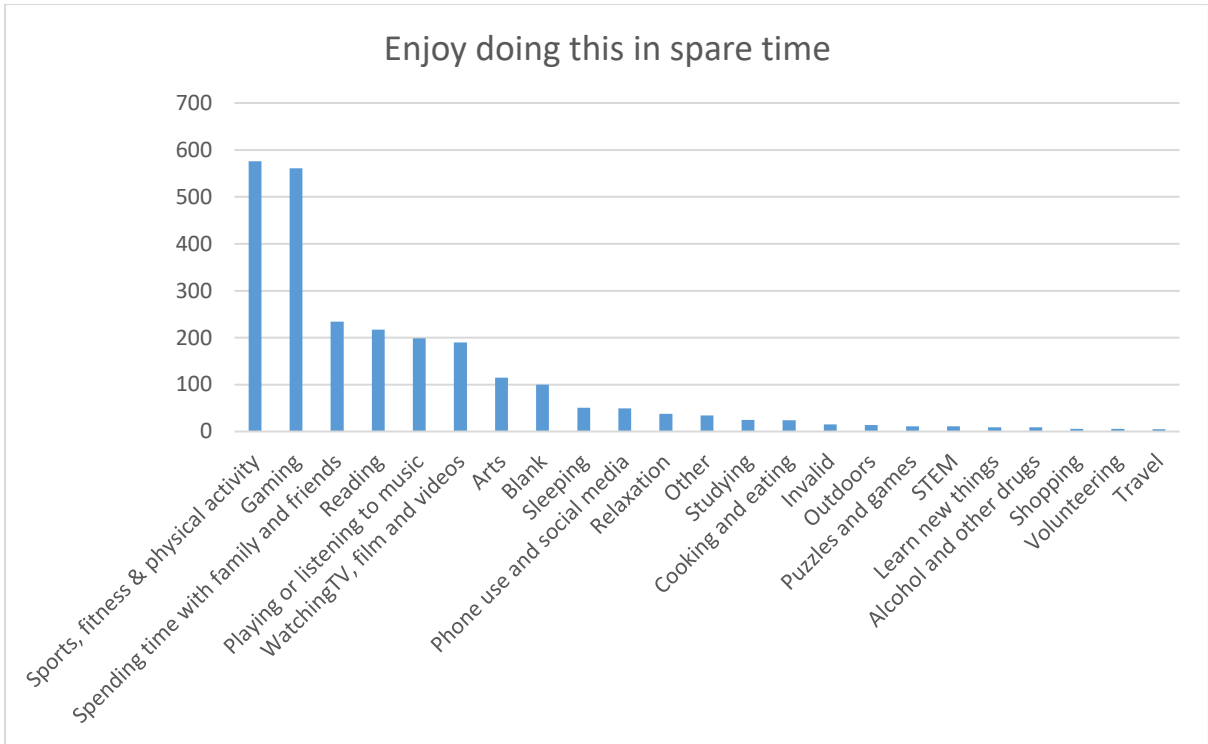
There is a clear consistency between personal experiences and concerns in the community. The significant change here is the impact of educational stress on young people. Responses to the question that were categorised into education included: school, exams & tests, deadlines, assignments, specific subjects, VCE, results and homework. These responses identify the need for increased education around life balance and stress management.

Getting to know young people in Monash

A new question was added to the survey this year, as decided by YABS. They wanted to know what young people wanted to learn more about. With mental health, environment and employment and career high on the list, YABS feel that this is a direction for action in 2020 on these topics of concern.



The survey also explores what young people enjoy doing in their spare time. This year's results show more young people identifying physical activity and gaming as two of their biggest interests.



YABS Analysis of the data

YABS analysed the data with a goal of understanding the direction to take for further work. They concluded that:

- YABS needed to spend more time using this data, exploring and understanding it further. To rush into action mode would be neglectful. YABS decided to spend 2019 working towards understanding the data in order to spend 2020 responding to the needs of the community.
- Mental health is a topic that is already on the radar for the City of Monash. MYS continues to work heavily within the field of mental health. MYS provides continued Youth Worker support, referral and information. MYS is also currently facilitating Teen Mental Health First Aid through schools in Monash, as well as Youth Mental Health First Aid throughout the community. After a long youth led campaign, the Headspace Monash has been confirmed to be established in the next 12 months and will support the Mental Health of young people in the municipality. YABS intends to support these processes wherever possible.
- In 2018, YABS facilitated the Monash Youth Forum and obtained significant information regarding young people's experiences of stress, education, employment and career. Two successful workshops came from this research:
 - A parenting program called 'Promoting Success for your Child' that focussed on supporting young people towards positive educational outcomes whilst maintaining balanced mental health.
 - Job Skills workshop that is facilitated for young people in the community.

YABS concluded that these workshops should continue along with new practices around stress management with young people.

- YABS identified the need to complete further research around the topics of environment and safety. They decided that the topics were general and could incorporate a variety of themes and it was their responsibility to further understand the concerns of young people around these topics. They would facilitate community focus groups enabling young people the opportunity to voice their concerns, needs and ideas in detail.

Environment focus groups

The following is information collated from five separate community focus groups.

Young people who participated in these focus groups, think of the following themes when asked to consider the word 'environment':

- Nature, which is inclusive of plants, animals and landscape
- Waste, pollution and the need for sustainability
- The elements of nature and natural disasters
- The impact of climate change, global warming and its contributors.

They identified the following as their concerns about the environment:

- Climate change, global warming, CO2 emissions and deforestation
- Pollution and waste: air, sea, litter and plastics

- Impact of natural disasters, most specifically bushfires
- Endangered animals and the deterioration of animal habitats
- An inaction of policy on environmental matters.

Young people participating in these focus groups are already engaged in the following activities to help the environment:

- Clean up day and tree planting events
- School environmental groups
- Climate strikes
- Recycling and composting
- Reducing plastic use: Nude Food at school, saying no to straws, reusable cups, bottles and bags.

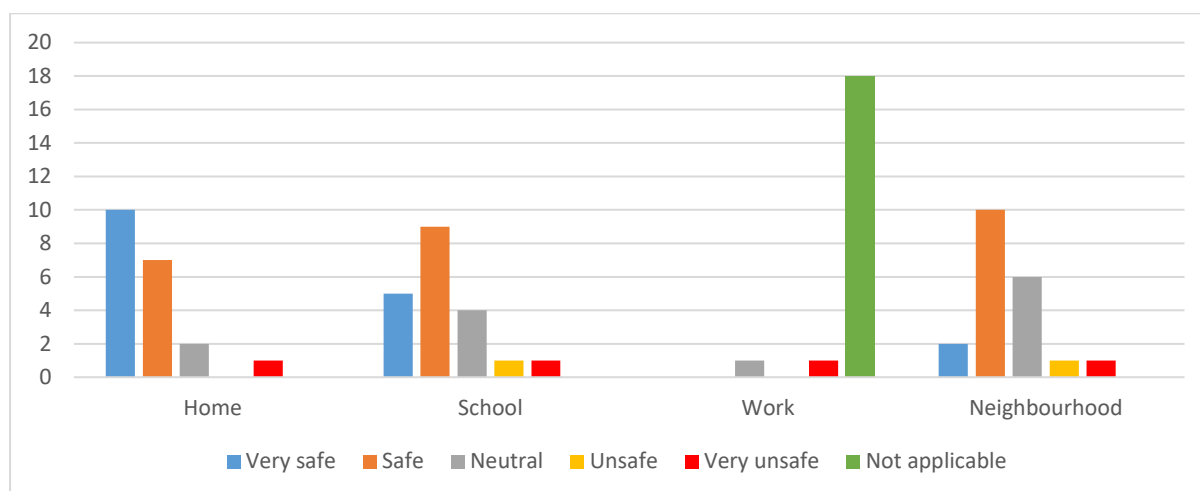
The following **recommendations** were made by young people for the attention of local government and the community:

- More projects and programs to reduce plastics and electronic waste
- Community opportunities for composting
- More education on how to take environmental action on an individual level
- Encouragement for the use of solar panels within the municipality
- Plant more trees and create more natural environments
- Hold more environmental events, such as clean up days and tree planting
- Raise awareness and educate the community in creative ways, using a variety of languages
- Impose water regulations
- Introduce new laws which encourage the community to take responsibility for the environment
- Identify leaders and community champions in Monash to implement action.

Safety focus groups

The following is information collated from two community focus groups.

To establish the audience experience at one of the general community safety focus group of 20 participants, an anonymous quiz was undertaken prior to discussions. 20% of participants identified that they had been victims of crime. The following data also shows how safe young people feel around their community.



Prior to the quiz, MYS Youth Workers provided a trigger warning and support options available to anyone who felt they needed to talk about their personal safety. Once the results had been collated, a follow up announcement was made to the focus group outlining free and confidential support to anyone who has felt unsafe or had concern about their safety.

Young people who participated in these focus groups listed places that they feel safe in Monash, the following were consistently reported as safe environments:

- Libraries
- Home
- Populated areas
- Religious buildings
- Public transport during the daytime
- Schools
- Shopping centres
- Suburbs of Glen Waverley and Mount Waverley.

Young people reported a significant change to their safety awareness after dark. They become more vigilant at night:

- On public transport
- Walking around their suburb (particularly to and from public transport)
- When alone
- When walking past strangers
- Crossing roads (due to dangerous drivers)
- Around people who are alcohol affected
- Taking the rubbish out to the street from their house on bin night.

These participants also report that they take the following actions to feel safer when out in public at night:

- Travel in groups
- Carry their phone
- Notify people of their travel and plan their trip in advance
- Stand tall and confident (even if it's not how they feel)
- Consider their clothing and or/jewellery
- Avoid leaving the house after dark
- Steer clear of people who have been drinking or are acting aggressive.

Young people in the group have experienced or encountered the following safety issues in Monash:

- People (individuals and groups) in the public who are alcohol or drug affected
- Robberies and assaults on the street
- People crossing roads in between traffic
- Road rage, dangerous driving and speeding
- Adults intimidating young people
- Dark streets when walking to public transport
- Sexual assault
- Limited public transport in Mulgrave and Wheelers Hill.

Participants were asked to describe their ideal safe community. The following factors were identified:

- Alcohol and drug free
- Inclusive and safe from discrimination and bullying
- More lights at night
- More police and security presence
- No crime
- A strong community feel and the ability to communicate with your neighbour
- Support for vulnerable people.

The following is a list of recommendations of actions that could be taken to create a safer community:

- Education to challenge stereotypes of vulnerable members of the community
- Better public transport accessibility
- More lighting at night
- Drug and alcohol education throughout the community
- Information about how to stay safe, available in a variety of languages
- Road safety campaign
- Increased security and surveillance in public spaces
- Education for the community on bystander intervention
- Self-defence classes for the community.

Outcomes for YABS

YABS made the decision to focus on 2020 being a year of action. They will call for the support of the community to facilitate community events and/or projects in response to the needs and recommendations identified above. YABS will use education, advocacy and community engagement through a community campaign, launched through social media. YABS have identified that they wish to:

- Develop hands on community projects (offering volunteering opportunities in response to the increased interest in volunteering programs at MYS)
- Educate the community through current and relevant creative measures
- Advocate recommendations through the Monash Youth Committee
- Advocate recommendations to Council Officers in Council’s Sustainability and Community Safety areas.

Outcomes for Monash

As discussed, MYS is already responding to the needs of Monash young people with heavy work in the area of mental health and feeling stressed. MYS will continue to support young people with:

- Free and confidential Youth Worker Support
- Free and confidential information and referral to Monash Youth Hub services
- Support towards the establishment of the Monash Headspace
- Offer Teen and Youth Mental Health First Aid training to Monash Secondary Schools
- Facilitate Youth Mental Health First Aid programs throughout the Monash community.

Additional to the ongoing core work of MYS, the City of Monash will proceed with the following actions in response to community needs identified in this report:

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Responsibility</u>
Employment	Job Skills Workshop	MYS
Environment	Tree planting event	MYS
Feeling stress / Education	Take 5 with MYS Outreach project (during study periods)	MYS
Feeling stress / Education	Promoting success for your child workshop	CYFS
Gender equity	Facilitation of the Young Women’s Leadership Program	CYFS
Gender equity	Development of the Young Men’s Leadership Program	CYFS
Homelessness	Continued homelessness response and support	MYS
Loneliness	Drop in service at the new Euneva space	MYS
Sustainability	Victorian Youth Week sustainability event	YABS

Appendix 1



MONASH YOUTH SURVEY 2019

The results of this survey will contribute to the Monash Youth Action Plan. This document guides the themes and actions that the City of Monash will take in response to the needs of young people in the community.

Age:	Gender:
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Monash suburb you live in or spend most time in:
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Country of birth:	Cultural identity:
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In the past year, how concerned have you been about the following topics in your community?				
	Concerned	Neutral	Not concerned	Don't know
Alcohol	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Body image	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Drugs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment & career	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Discrimination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family conflict	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Feeling stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gambling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gaming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Gender & Sexuality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Homelessness	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mental health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please turn over

Appendix 1

In the past year, what was your number one topic of personal concern?

What is one topic you would like to learn more about?

In your spare time, what do you enjoy doing most?

How do you rate the following facilities and services in the City of Monash?				
	High	OK	Low	Don't Know
Bike & walking paths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Building & development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community festivals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community safety	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Footpaths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Libraries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Monash Gallery of Art	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parks, playgrounds & ovals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pools & recreation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tree removal or planting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Waste & recycling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Do you wish to be contacted with the results and actions of this survey? Yes No

Do you wish to go into the draw to win Beats Studio³ Wireless Headphones? Yes No

Do you wish to receive information about upcoming programs & events? Yes No

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, please provide your email address:

Your email address will be used only for the reasons above which you have ticked and will not be disclosed to any external party without your consent, unless required or authorised by law. If you wish to alter or delete the email address you have supplied here, please contact Monash Youth Services on 9518 3900 or via email at yrcr@monash.vic.gov.au.

Your survey responses will be de-identified from your personal email address at the time of data collation.

Thank you for your time.

Monash Youth Forum

Jordanville Community Centre

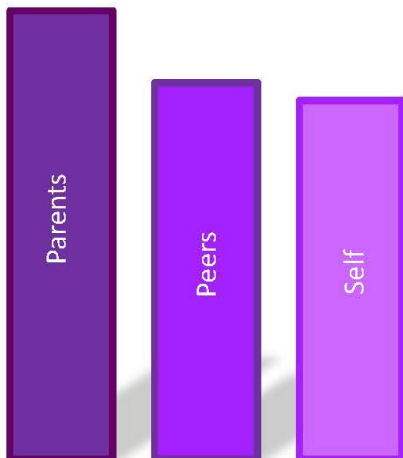
2018



54 students



Students feel the most **pressure** from:



Key causes of **stress** for students:

- 1** Achieving grades and peer competition

Results in school define your future
- 2** Decision making about the future

Being afraid of the wrong choice
- 3** Creating life balance

The struggle between money and happiness
- 4** Pressure and expectations

Not being good enough

Students identified changes in their **physical health** to be the number 1 effect of stress.

- Panic Attacks**
- Weight changes**
- Skin conditions**

The Foundation for Young Australians, New Work Mindset suggests that young people could...

Choose a **job cluster** or skill portfolio based on their **interest** and **strengths** rather than focus on one dream job

Students **want**:

- Continued education about the New Work Mindset
- To open communication lines between students, school staff and parents

The best methods to **share** this information are:

- NEWS: School newsletters
- Social media: Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Snapchat, Twitter
- Assemblies

The **key people** who need to know about the New Work Mindset are:

