

**LighthouseProject**  
GREATER SHEPPARTON

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# **ONE THOUSAND CONVERSATIONS**

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NOVEMBER 2018

Revised 2019

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# Foreword

Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project was established to improve the lives and outcomes for children and young people from conception to career in Greater Shepparton. At the core we are a small community organisation – comprising of people with skill sets in leading, facilitating, planning, organising, implementing and measuring change. But the organisation's real strength lies beyond the office in our community with the hundreds of people committed to playing their role in the changes in our community.

Our work has been founded on regular, extensive, respectful listening that has a clear purpose to inform what is needed next. We call this 'deep listening'. In 2015 we asked one thousand local people what young people in Greater Shepparton need in order to thrive. The process was powerful and uncovered a groundswell of concern, ideas and willingness to assist. We used the learnings as well as information gathered from many other sources to develop and drive 18 priority areas. Many were focused on addressing loneliness, isolation and marginalisation. Through our volunteer network, we put hundreds of local volunteers into kinders and schools to help with language, literacy and numeracy. We also opened the Haven, a safe place for youth to gather, make friends, access food, mentors and opportunities, and created new curriculum linking schools to jobs and industry in the region.

With many of the priorities identified by the community now being successfully actioned, this year we decided to go back to the community for another round of listening and responding. Again, we heard about the need for connections of all descriptions – access to opportunity, transport, information, mentors and role models. Young people called for timely, relevant and helpful information about some of the big issues confronting them including careers and employment, as well as personal and social issues such as mental health, and technology.

Young people also urged parents to parent – provide for basic needs of food, shelter and safety, engage in their education, set boundaries and provide a supportive environment in which to evolve and grow.

Lighthouse has created four Leadership Tables that connect and empower 50 committed leaders from across the community to drive the next wave of action. These tables further tap into the groundswell of support and bring a range of new resources from business, organisations and the community sector to the table.

The Leadership Tables are using this powerful community feedback to determine the next set of priority areas for action. Many of these priority areas are focused on being preventative and ensuring young people don't fall through the cracks and require specialist interventions. Under-pinning all of the work is creating connections and a commitment to valuing all children equally.

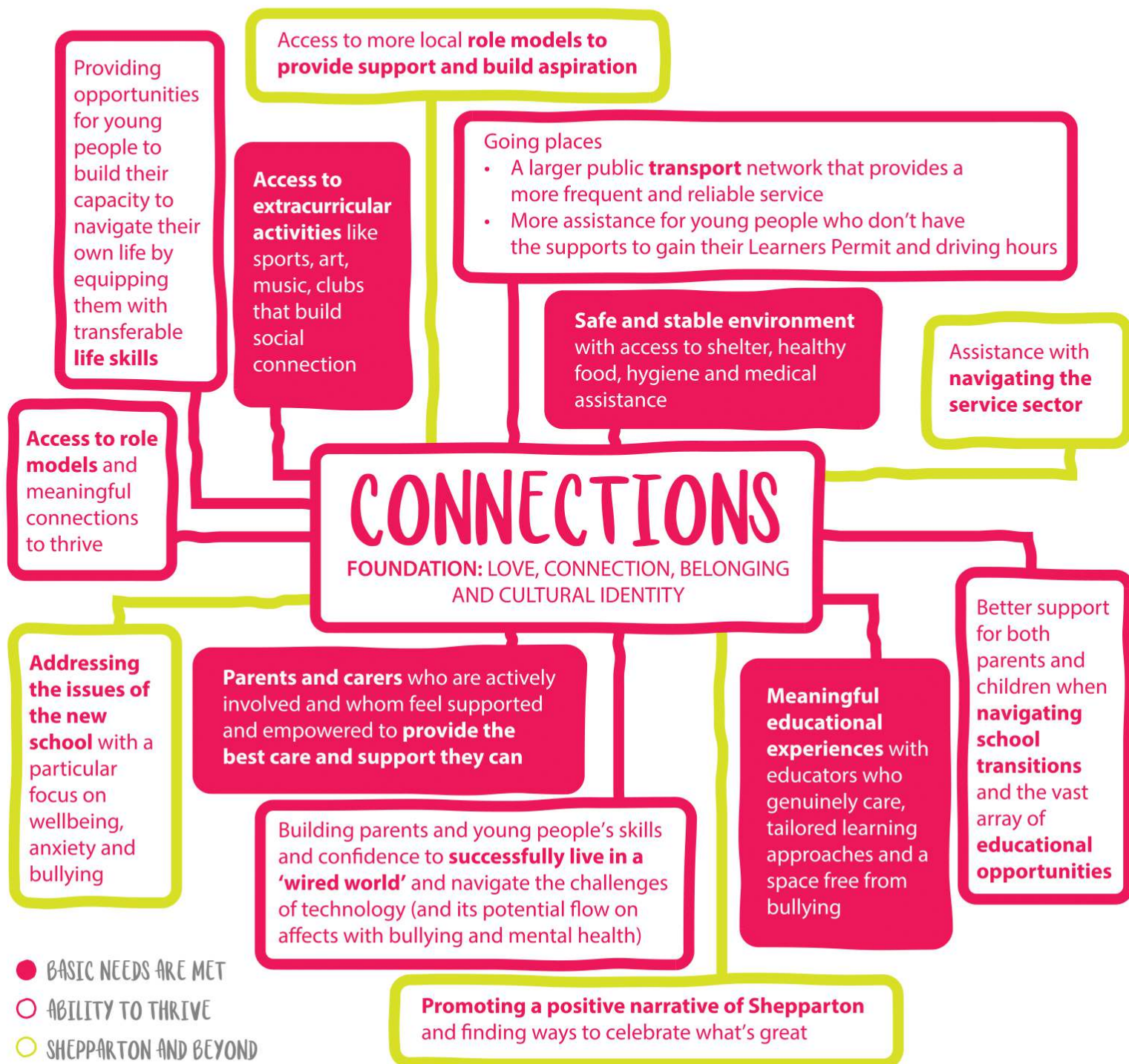
Thank-you to those who contributed to these important conversations and rest assured your views are being taken into account every day in everything we do.



Lisa McKenzie  
**Executive Officer**  
**Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project**

## KEY INSIGHTS

THIS IS THE SECOND ROUND OF CONSULTATION COMPLETED BY LIGHTHOUSE



## SNAPSHOT OF THE PROCESS

DEEP LISTENING IS AT THE HEART OF OUR WORK. THE 2018 CONVERSATIONS BUILD ON THE ORIGINAL 1000 CONVERSATIONS IN 2015. THIS INFORMATION AND OTHER EVIDENCE CONTINUES TO FOCUS OUR COMMUNITY-LED EFFORTS TO DELIVER IMPROVEMENTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (0- 24 YEARS) IN GREATER SHEPPARTON.



We spoke to over 1000 people from all walks of life across our community. Conversations were around kitchen tables, work places, schools, clubs and kinders to name a few. It was clear community members welcomed the opportunity to delve deeply into the wellbeing of our kids.

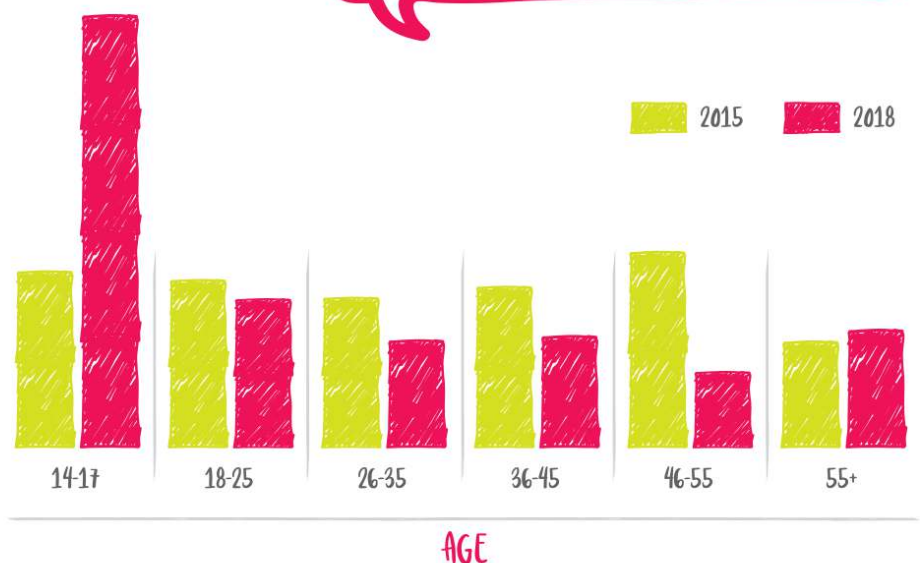
We also captured the voices of twenty-five children aged 2-9years. The 1000 conversation questions were modified to suit younger participants and common themes included; play, the home, community activities, connections and kids healthy behaviours.

### CONSULTATION QUESTIONS:

1. Tell me what you know to be important for raising happy, healthy children who do well at school and go on to study, work and lead productive lives
2. What would it take for every kids to thrive in Greater Shepparton community?
3. What do you think gets in the way?
4. What action do you think is most urgent?

**58% OF PARTICIPANTS ARE AGED 14-25**  
(UP FROM 35% IN 2015)

**57.6% FEMALE AND 40.6% MALE**  
(MALE PARTICIPANTS INCREASED FROM 34% IN 2015)



# Background

## What is Lighthouse?

The Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project (GSLP) is driving improved wellbeing and educational outcomes for young people from conception to career in Greater Shepparton.

The Lighthouse project is not a single program or initiative, nor a traditional institution. It consists of a multitude of partner organisations, hundreds of volunteers and supporters from across the community and from private, not-for-profit and government entities. All are united by a common purpose and shared goals and committed to delivering on the vision that 'Greater Shepparton offers all young people the chance to realise their full potential and thrive'.

The Lighthouse 'Backbone' is a small not-for-profit organisation that provides the support to drive conversations, align priorities and opportunities and turn this into action by building on the great work that is already happening in Greater Shepparton. Since its inception in 2014, the Lighthouse Project has used place-based and collective impact principles as a guide to how it makes decisions, how it works and how it measures impact.

## Why do we listen?

The 1000 Conversations with community identifies the key issues that form the core of the Lighthouse whole-of-community strategy and the priorities to drive improvements for children and young people across Greater Shepparton. We acknowledge that the only way for sustainable change is through working together alongside the community with their needs at the heart of every decision and action we deliver. These conversations follow on from the original 1000 Conversations that were undertaken by GSLP with the Greater Shepparton community in 2015.

Despite the many barriers or hurdles small or large, faced by our people in Greater Shepparton, the 1000 Conversations also identifies the advantages, strengths and latent resources we have at our disposal as a community to tackle these issues. Our region has strong business and industry driving regional growth, investment and economic prosperity. We have an abundance of services available for our young people along with business and community members willing, able and driven to wrap around our young people. The community of Greater Shepparton is perfectly placed and ready to continue to be part of the solution for our young people. We are simply not willing to accept outcomes that fall short for our children and youth, our leaders of tomorrow.

Finally, in many ways participation in the process itself for individuals and communities is an extremely empowering experience. When we as a community simply stop, ask, deeply listen and respond accordingly we are at the same time accepting and validating the experiences or issues faced by our fellow community members. It creates initial readiness for place-based collective responses and activates members of the community to start taking action from the moment the conversation ends.

### Our 3 Obsessions

1. Increase number of children and young people with basic needs met
2. Increase number of children and young people with access and opportunity to community, education and employment
3. Increase number and quality of community connections

### Under-pinning Behaviours

**HEAD:** Using data and strategy to drive change

**HEART:** Listening deeply, using empathy and valuing relationships

**HANDS:** Responding to community need, collective action and being accountable



# The 1000 conversations process

Between March and June 2018, exactly 100 group conversations occurred across the Greater Shepparton region with 1054 community members participating, aged 14 years and above. Conversations lasting approximately one hour were facilitated by a Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project coordinator with a written record taken of the conversations. At each conversation the following four questions were asked -

1. Tell me what you know to be important for raising happy and healthy children who do well at school and go on to study, work and lead productive lives.
2. What would it take for every young person to thrive in the Greater Shepparton community?
3. What do you think gets in the way?
4. What action do you think is most urgent?

A concerted effort was made to ensure our rich and diverse community was well represented in the conversations. Special focus was given to increase participation by males, young people, people with a disability, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and those identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

A separate process called Children's Voices was designed to capture the voices of children under the age of 14 years. The 1000 Conversation's Children's Voices utilised modified questions designed to suit the cohort and their responses were captured through drawing and verbal responses (see Appendix 2). Twenty-five children between two and nine years of age participated in the Children's Voices consultation and common themes included play, the home, community activities, connections and kid's healthy behaviours.

## Who did we hear from?

**1054 Participants**



57.6% were female



40.6% were male

The percentage of males participating increased from the 34% who were part of the 1000 Conversations in 2015 (see Appendix 1).

**100 Conversations**



Participants came from 28 towns within Greater Shepparton Local Government Area.

**58% of participants were aged between 14 - 25 years**

Up from the 2015 1000 Conversations percentage of 35% (see Appendix 1).

**25.1%** of the participants identified themselves as being a Torres Strait Islander, Aboriginal, from a culturally or linguistically diverse background or as having a disability (see Appendix 1).

# What did we hear?

Much of what we heard in response to the questions posed was consistent with what we heard in the first 1000 Conversations consultation. Love, support, having basic needs met, good parenting, access to role models and opportunity prevailed as the consistent factors identified by the participants to assist young people to reach their full potential and thrive. However, there were several new themes reflecting the changing conditions of our operating environment within Greater Shepparton. Emergent themes included; transport; developing life skills; navigating the systems – both the education system and the services sector and the need for transitioning support.

One other significant observation was the focus on education given the announcement of the planned merger of our four government secondary schools into one college. It was evident through the conversations with students and adults alike that the topic of education was at the forefront and the new educational model evoked strong passion from participants. There was an overwhelming sense of opportunity to improve facilities, access and equity, connection to industry and employment, school culture, quality teaching, curriculum and student outcomes and transitions as far as education was concerned.

In a tangible sense the fourth question, what action is most urgent, derived the most specific and actionable responses. This was often where the 'lightbulb moments' occurred. In many cases the answers were unique, filled gaps in what is currently being provided and clearly demonstrated the value of asking the community. Unique problems with very specific solutions, sought by real people with the support of a whole community full of latent resources, will, skills and abilities, passion, care for one another and love – the perfect pre-conditions for change.

Fundamentally, the conversations centered around connections – love, support, access to role models and what that provides to young people. It provides the foundations for being able to succeed; they feel a sense of belonging and cultural identity.

“SUPPORT MUST COME FROM NOT ONLY PARENTS BUT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ALL PEOPLE AROUND THEM”

The following provides the detail of the key themes that emerged from the discussions, ordered under three general themes:



## Basic needs

We heard over and over again that all children and young people need and deserve to have their basic needs met. Basic needs as described by the participants included;

- love;
- water;
- good food and regular meals;
- shelter in a house free from neglect and abuse;
- clothing;
- a safe environment;
- meeting hygiene needs;
- a safe place to sleep;
- stability and support from family; &
- role models or mentors.



“

*"BASIC NEEDS INCLUDE - LOVE AND NURTURING ENVIRONMENT AND MASLOW'S BASIC NEEDS ARE MET. A HOME FREE FROM NEGLECT AND ABUSE"*

*"BASIC NEEDS ARE STABLE AND SAFE ACCOMMODATION"*

*"YOUNG PEOPLE NEED THEIR BASIC NEEDS MET, THEY CAN'T GO TO SCHOOL IF THEY DON'T SLEEP OR EAT"*

”

Disconnection within family units was seen to prevent the creation of a safe and secure foundation to enable young people to thrive. A strong sense of self, instilled belief and aspiration for the future were also given as important factors needed so that young people can achieve success within their lives. The participants felt the opportunity to access mentors and supports outside of the family unit as well as the offering of parenting programs for all parents would be appropriate solutions to assist in ensuring all children and young people have their basic needs met.

### Parents and carers who are actively involved

Parents and carers who are actively involved and whom feel supported and empowered to provide the best care and support they can.

The role of parents and parenting was one of the most regularly mentioned factors that is not only important for raising happy and healthy children but also what would ensure they thrive in Greater Shepparton. Parents that would raise healthy and happy children were described by the participants as being;

- healthy themselves;
- knowing what is needed to raise children;
- valuing education;
- providing structure and direction;
- being open;
- trustworthy, supportive and interested;
- listening; &
- providing room to grow and experience.

“

*"YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE MIDDLE GROUND. STERN WHEN NEEDED BUT LET THEM LEARN MISTAKES"*

*"...ARE PROUD AND OFFER SUPPORT WHERE POSSIBLE"*

”

A few factors about parents were thought to get in the way and mainly fitted into the following themes;

- being a 'helicopter' or 'drone' parent that is constantly monitoring what the child is doing and being too strict resulting in the child not learning how to manage their own lives; &
- not being tough enough and not saying 'no' which means the child doesn't learn boundaries and how to cope with disappointment.

“

*"TOO MUCH COTTON WOOL – NEED TO LET GO"*

*"PARENTS DON'T WANT TO SAY NO, THEY WANT TO BE FRIENDS WITH THEIR KIDS"*

”

There was a general agreement that parents need to be supported as much as their children. They need places to go for support and to build skills. The need for parent education and parent courses was mentioned many times.

“

*"PARENTS NEED TO BE ABLE TO HAVE PEOPLE TO TALK TO WHERE THEY DON'T FEEL EMBARRASSED – THEY GO THROUGH A LOT"*

*"EDUCATE THE PARENTS MORE THAN THE KIDS SO THEY CAN PROVIDE A GOOD ROLE MODEL"*

*"ENGLISH AS ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE KIDS, ESPECIALLY FEMALES – THE GIRLS ARE GETTING KIDS READY FOR SCHOOL AND DOING THE MAJORITY OF THE HOME DUTIES AND ARE THEN ALWAYS TIRED AND LATE FOR SCHOOL"*

”

### Meaningful educational experience with educators

Meaningful educational experience with educators who genuinely care, tailored learning approaches and a space free from bullying.

Young people stated repeatedly the importance of access to quality teachers with a focus on building good relationships with their students.

“

*"QUALITY TEACHERS ARE THE ONES THAT MAKE THE LEARNING INTERESTING AND FUN, THEY TALK TO STUDENTS AS EQUALS AND SHOW MUTUAL RESPECT"*

*"GOOD TEACHERS SHOW UNDERSTANDING, TAKE TIME AND PAY ATTENTION TO STUDENTS, CAN BE FRIENDS NOT JUST PROFESSIONALS, SOME OF MY TEACHERS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT EVEN AFTER THEY FINISH TEACHING ME"*

”

Students valued teachers who are willing to create positive relationships based on mutual respect. In addition, they felt that care and connection beyond simply teaching subject content was a key in creating a more successful engagement with their wider studies. Students respect teachers who support learners as individuals and take the time to get to know them through meaningful conversations.

“TRAUMA, RESILIENCE AND WELL-BEING INFORMED TEACHING PRACTICE EMBED THIS WITH THE TEACHER RATHER THAN SUPPORTING LATE INTERVENTIONS – IT’S LIKE WE WAIT FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE TO CRUMBLE AND THEN WE PUT OUR HANDS UP TO HELP”

“WE NEED INSPIRING EDUCATORS AND POSITIVE INFLUENCES. WE ALL REMEMBER THE CRAPPY TEACHERS, WE ALSO REMEMBER GOOD ONES WHO SHAPED A LOT OF WHAT I WANTED TO DO”

“TEACHERS WHO CAN LET YOU KNOW YOU’VE DONE SOMETHING WRONG WITHOUT EMBARRASSING YOU”

### Access to extra-curricular activities

Young people understand the need for extra-curricular activities and how it helps build social connections within the wider community. They identified the mental release that sport can provide from their current life situation; the decrease in anxiety after exercising, the improvement in wellbeing while engaging in arts activities and how music can positively impact academic performance. They also identified there are opportunities for exercise that are inexpensive now with technology.

“EXTRACURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES ARE WHERE YOU BUILD RELATIONSHIPS, LEARN HOW TO ACT IN SOCIETY, LEARN TO FIT IN AND BUILD RESILIENCE”

“FOOTY IS A RELEASE. YOU CAN FORGET ABOUT YOUR LIFE FOR AN HOUR OR TWO”

Barriers to accessing extracurricular activities included transport issues, the cost of participation and the need for a uniform.

“WE NEED TO FOCUS ON ARTISTIC OUTLETS – NOT JUST SPORT AND EDUCATION. MUSIC AND DRAMA ARE OFTEN ONLY ACCESSIBLE THROUGH SCHOOL BUT AT A HIGH COST”

## Ability To Thrive

Beyond having their basic needs met, we want all our children and young people to realise their full potential and thrive. The community recognises that some things can get in the way of this and highlighted the following as areas for improvement.

### Going places using transport

Transport doesn't just mean public transport, but the wider concept of "getting around". There was an overwhelming outcry for a larger public transport network that provides a more frequent and reliable service and at the same time more assistance for young people who don't have the support to gain their Learners Permit and driving hours.

*"WE NEED GREATER ACCESS TO TRANSPORT – FREQUENCY AND RELIABILITY AND ESPECIALLY CONNECTING THE OUTLYING TOWNS"*

*"GETTING YOUR LEARNERS PERMIT IS VERY DIFFICULT. MANY KIDS DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO A SUPERVISING ADULT AND THE L TO P DRIVER MENTOR PROGRAM RUN LOCALLY HAS A WAITING LIST THAT IS TOO LONG, SO NO ONE CAN ACCESS THE SERVICE"*

The participants recognised that transport is important for work, study, sport and social connection. We heard about the lack of public transport to and from outer-lying areas of Shepparton particularly after hours and on Sundays.

*"LARGE PART OF OUR POPULATION LIVE OUT OF TOWN AND IF THEY MISS THE BUS THEY'RE STUCK AND THEY CAN'T STAY AFTER SCHOOL TO DO EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES"*

*"TRANSPORT IN SHEPP IS RIDICULOUS, THERE ARE NO BUSES ON A SUNDAY AND YOU CAN'T GET TO WORK THE FIRST BUSES ON OTHER DAYS START AT 8:30AM WHICH IS TOO LATE WHEN YOU WORK HOSPITALITY"*

The participants said that the Greater Shepparton community would like transport to be more frequent, safer, flexible, more affordable, free for all students to get to school, reliable and accessible.

*"SAFER TRANSPORT. IF TRANSPORT WAS BETTER, IT WOULD FREE UP PARENTS, SO KIDS COULD GET THERE. PARENTS COULD FEEL SAFE WHEN YOU ARE TRAVELLING ON THE BUS; PARTICULARLY ON FRI NIGHTS AND AFTER HOURS"*

*"NO BUSES ON A SUNDAY IS A MAJOR BARRIER FOR EMPLOYMENT. TAXI'S ARE TOO EXPENSIVE AND THE PROCESS FOR APPROVAL FOR A "TAXI CARD SUBSIDY" IS TOO HARD AND NO ONE EVER GETS FINAL APPROVAL"*

Even within Shepparton, it's hard to get around without a car.

*"TRAVELLING BY BUS AROUND TOWN TAKES TOO LONG, IT'S FASTER TO WALK"*

Transitions support is needed to help navigate school transitions and the vast array of educational opportunities. Children need better support when navigating transitions from primary to secondary school and then secondary school to further study and/or work. It would be useful to better support parents so that their children at school socially and academically ready to start school.

*“WE NEED CONNECTED HUBS TO SUPPORT FAMILIES FROM BIRTH AND ENSURE THE KIDS DON'T TURN UP WITH LOW VOCABULARY AND ARE READY TO START SCHOOL”*

We need to better transition children from primary school to secondary school, so they don't become disengaged from their studies and drop out. It was suggested that this could start earlier than Grade 6. Relationships between parents and primary school teachers is so different to that of secondary teachers. We need to provide better support for both parents and children to cope with the different schooling structures.

*“KIDS NEED TO KNOW THEY ARE GOOD ENOUGH AND THAT THEY ARE ALLOWED TO BE THEMSELVES”*

The participants noted that the transitions post-secondary school needed more focus. For those young people who are not considering going to University, they wanted more support to understand options and pathways.

*“WE (STUDENTS) NEED MORE SUPPORT THAN JUST THE SCHOOL CAREERS COUNCILOR”*

*“CAREER COUNSELORS CAN SOMETIMES CONFUSE US IF WE ARE NOT THINKING OF A UNIVERSITY PATHWAY”*

*“MORE LOCAL BUSINESSES TO OFFER CADETSHIPS – STUDENTS KNOW THEY ARE GETTING PAID TO LEARN AND KNOW THEY WILL HAVE A JOB TO GO TO AT THE END. IT'S A STRONG BUT POORLY UTILIZED MODEL”*

*“ALL TEACHERS NOT JUST CAREERS TEACHERS SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE GOOD ADVICE ABOUT CAREERS AND LOCAL PATHWAYS TO WORK AND STUDY OPTIONS”*

And support to fully understand what it takes to get a job – submitting an application form, participate in an interview and more importantly what it takes to maintain that commitment once they get a job.

*“WE NEED TO LEARN MORE USEFUL STUFF FOR THE WORKPLACE”*

*“IT'S ABOUT NOT ONLY HOW TO GET A JOB, OR GET INTO A COURSE, BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY HOW TO MAINTAIN THAT JOB OR STUDY”*

Building parents' and young people's skills and confidence to successfully live in a 'wired world' and navigate the challenges of technology (and its potential link with bullying and mental health). It is not just young people who are having to manage technology. Parents needed to understand what it's like to live in a world based around technology and not to be ignorant of the issues it brings up.

“PARENTS NEED TO MORE ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN YOUNG PEOPLES' LIVES AND TAKE A GREATER INTEREST. THEY ARE OBLIVIOUS TO HOW YOUNG PEOPLE ARE USING TECHNOLOGY AND THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF OVER CONNECTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE REALITY THAT MANY YOUNG PEOPLE “JUST CAN'T CLOCK OFF”

Participants identified that young people need to understand the implications of using technology on their career prospects and how to conduct themselves. They also need to understand how to use all aspects of technology, not just social media.

“WE NEED EDUCATION AROUND SOCIAL MEDIA AND ITS IMPACT ON JOB PROSPECTS – EMPLOYERS ASKED ME FOR ALL MY PROFILE NAMES – SNAP CHAT ETC WHEN I WAS INTERVIEWED”

“BETTER UNDERSTANDING AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY – EG KIDS CAN USE SNAP CHAT BUT CAN'T WRITE A LETTER AND ATTACH IT TO AN EMAIL”

Understanding the wider role of social media and how to manage it will help young people manage their potential impact on their mental health.

## Life Skills

Equipping young people with transferable skills will build their capacity to navigate their own life. Many young people felt they were not equipped to navigate life successfully and wanted to learn about things like managing their money, how to do taxes, how to change a tyre, how to maintain a job.

Young people felt they were not currently being taught the life skills in school that they require to successfully engage with the community and become the best versions of themselves that they could possibly be. They were very specific and articulate about the types of skills and knowledge that they felt they were missing out on in school. They could also clearly see the relevance of certain skills to ensure they attained better immediate and longer-term life outcomes such as further study, meaningful employment and home ownership.

“YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT BEING TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS THE LIFE SKILLS WE NEED IN ORDER TO SURVIVE LET ALONE THRIVE”

“WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT TAXES, HOW TO DO YOUR TAX RETURN, ABOUT INSURANCES AND WHAT SUPERANNUATION IS, HOW TO GET FINANCE OR A HOUSE MORTGAGE. ALL THE THINGS THAT WE DEEM TO BE USEFUL WE ARE NOT LEARNING CURRENTLY AT SCHOOL”

Barriers identified by young participants included a curriculum that is crowded and does not incorporate life skills well. Also, young participants felt that some teaching staff lacked a variety of life experiences themselves.

Solutions offered by the participants included better incorporation of life skills within educational settings whether in class, during lunch breaks or after school covering topics or areas such as communication skills and building relationships, budgeting, cooking, cleaning, tax, managing time and money, resilience and looking after yourself.

“KIDS NEED TO LEARN HOW TO BUDGET AND PREPARE FOOD FOR THE WEEK. WHEN I WAS A TRUCK DRIVER, I WOULD SEE THE SAME KIDS EVERY DAY AT MACCA'S”

“NEED TO LEARN BETTER HOW TO ADULT. BILLS, MANAGING MONEY, MANAGING EMOTIONS, EVERYTHING REALLY”

“WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT TAXES, HOW TO DO YOU DO TAX RETURN, ABOUT INSURANCES AND WHAT SUPERANNUATION IS, HOW TO GET FINANCE OR A HOUSE MORTGAGE. ALL THE THINGS WE DEEM TO BE USEFUL WE ARE NOT CURRENTLY LEARNING AT SCHOOL”

### Access to role models

Young people need access to positive role models and mentors to feel safe, supported, inspired and connected within our community. The participants used many words to describe a role model for young people, including:

- inspiring;
- takes the time on a regular basis;
- successful;
- loving;
- helps you learn right from wrong;
- gives you support and encouragement; and
- who you feel safe enough to explore your ideas.

The participants thought that role models could be a range of people such as parents, Year 12 students, sport coaches, extended family or outside the family.

“MENTORS CAN BE PEOPLE YOU KNOW, ELITE ATHLETES, YOUR BOSS OR MANAGER OR MANY TIMES THAT ONE TEACHER WHO BELIEVES IN YOU”

“THEY PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE HELPING MOTIVATE YOUNG PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE LIFE GOALS LIKE EARN MONEY, WORK, BUY A CAR OR HOUSE”

The lack of positive role models or mentors and the existence of negative role models - particularly for males - was seen to get in the way. Young people don't necessarily know who they could have as a mentor and how to make a connection.

“ALL CHILDREN DESERVE A SAFETY NET – BUT I GUESS YOU CAN’T MASS PRODUCE SECURITY UNFORTUNATELY”

At Lighthouse we'd like to challenge this notion and provide wrap-around support for all children to have a safety net.

## Shepparton & Beyond

Our children and young people need a solid and supportive base they can always call home. Our community felt that more needed to be done to celebrate our region and called for:

- assistance with navigating the service sector;
- addressing the issues of the new school with a particular focus on wellbeing, anxiety and bullying;
- Access to local role models to provide support and build aspirations through;
  - showcasing employment opportunities and career pathways available right in our back doorstep as well as opportunities beyond;
  - celebrating local youth and their various journey's to success to help build aspirations in the leaders of tomorrow; &
- promoting a positive narrative around Shepparton and finding ways to celebrate what's great.

### Navigating the service sector

Good mental health was identified by the participants as one of the most important things for young people and their parents to have. There is concern about the increasing rates of mental health issues in young people particularly anxiety and depression.

The participants asked for more education around mental health issues and recognition of the importance of accessing support and mental health services as early as possible. They also acknowledged the importance of building and embedding resilience in young people and communication and connection as protective factors against mental health issues.

“BULLYING STARTS AT SCHOOL AND THEN SOMEONE POSTS ONLINE AND EVERYONE JOINS IN. ISOLATION GOES WITH BULLYING - YOU GET ANTI-SOCIAL AND DON'T WANT TO TRY ANYTHING, LEADS TO DEPRESSION AND OTHER MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES”

The participants believed that knowing the available services, how to access them and getting early intervention is important for children, their parents and carers and young people.

“ACCESSING EARLY INTERVENTION WAS KEY TO MY SON'S SUCCESS; I WAS ALSO LUCKY I HAD A FLEXIBLE EMPLOYER SO I COULD TRAVEL AND TAKE HIM TO APPOINTMENTS”

The number and range of individual services gets in the way and there is still an issue about knowing what services are available. Some services are either missing or there are long wait times. Many services are also seen to be not attractive to young people with some creating a stigma or are just too confronting and this impacts on young people accessing the services.

“THERE IS NO CENTRAL PLACE WHERE ALL INFORMATION IS HELD AND REFERRALS CAN BE MADE TO HELP LINK UP PEOPLE TO ACCESS THE SERVICES AND HELP THEY NEED”

“TAKE THE STIGMA AND PAPERWORK OUT OF ACCESSING SERVICES”

Simplifying access and ensuring they are designed specifically for young people was a general suggestion with ideas around having more outreach services in youth spaces or within schools.

“LOCATE GPs AND OTHER SERVICES WITHIN YOUTH SPACES LIKE THE HAVEN OR THE BRIDGE. IT IS CONFRONTING GOING TO A GP CLINIC, WAITING IN THE WAITING ROOM WITH 20 OTHER PEOPLE, HAVING THEM CALL YOUR NAME”

“SCHOOL COUNSELLORS – MORE ACCESS TO IN SCHOOL AS THE STUDENTS SAY IT’S A TWO WEEK WAIT TIME IN SCHOOL AND THREE MONTHS WAIT TIME FOR AN APPOINTMENT AT HEADSPACE”

“SHEPPARTON IS WELL SERVICED FOR SPECIALIZED SERVICES BUT FAMILIES DON’T KNOW ABOUT WHAT IS AVAILABLE AND WHAT THEY CAN ACCESS”

“NAVIGATING THE SYSTEM IS HARD. SUPPORT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE BUT IT’S REALLY HARD TO NAVIGATE AND UNDER AND THE SERVICE ARE 9-5 MONDAY TO FRIDAY WHEN KIDS ARE AT SCHOOL”

“MORE ACCESS TO SERVICES WITHIN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT TO IMPROVE ACCESS – GEARED FOR CAREERS HAS BEEN GREAT”

There was also a suggestion to use technology. This would provide information 24/7 and options for young people and families outside of business hours, to at least understand the available services prior to accessing them.

“CREATE AN APP THAT IS A “ONE STOP SHOP” ASSESSMENT SERVICES THAT QUIZZES YOU ON CAREERS AND BASED ON YOUR OPTIONS OFFERS TRANSITIONS”

Addressing the issues of the new school with a particular focus on wellbeing, anxiety and bullying

Young people are worried about the new school. They felt like their voices have not been heard and they are worried about the impact the structure and management of so many students in one space could have on wellbeing, anxiety and bullying.

The young participants described the need for students to have aspiration for educational outcomes and an environment that fosters strong engagement with their education as key drivers for participation and success. Young people wanted their parents and carers to take an active interest in their education, provide structure and basic resources to participate in school and encourage meaningful and ongoing engagement with their education.

We heard overwhelmingly the community want safe, flexible, engaging and responsive schools and educational options for our young people. It is evident that a ‘one size fits all’ approach is not responsive to the varied learning styles and needs of local students.

“WHAT ABOUT THE SUPER SCHOOL THAT WOULD JUST BE SO HECTIC, WHAT ABOUT THE KIDS LIKE US WITH SOCIAL ANXIETY AND A SCHOOL LIKE THAT DOES NOTHING FOR THE KIDS THAT ARE FALLING THROUGH THE CRACKS”

“WE WANT ACCESS TO AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM THAT IS ENGAGING AND BUILDS YOUNG PEOPLE’S SENSE OF PURPOSE IN THE WORLD”

### Access to more local role models to provide support and build aspirations

The importance of role models was highlighted throughout the consultation process. Role models can showcase the employment opportunities and career pathways available right on our back doorstep as well as opportunities beyond. They can also be a way of celebrating local youth and their various journeys to success to help build aspiration in the leaders of tomorrow.

The participants identified concerns around the fact many young people within the community do not transition into meaningful employment. The participants voiced their understanding of the benefits that come from a thriving region where more people can positively contribute to society through either work and or volunteering.

“MENTORS ASSIST AS THEY OFFER INSPIRATION TO PUSH THROUGH AND GIVE YOU THE INSPIRATION TO KEEP TRYING TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS”

“EVERY CHILD HAS POTENTIAL, IT’S ABOUT SUPPORTING THEM WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE AROUND THEM TO UNLOCK THAT POTENTIAL”

“NOT EVERYONE HAS A ROLE MODEL. WE NEED PEOPLE OUT THERE TO BE THE ROLE MODELS FOR KIDS WHO DON’T LEAVE THEM AS THEY’RE GROWING UP”

“ROLE MODELS WHOM ARE COMMITTED TO SOMETHING, OPEN MINDED, KIND, TAKE THE TIME AND ARE SUCCESSFUL ACT AS INSPIRATION”

“MENTORS ARE VERY IMPORTANT AS PARENT CAN’T SUPPORTS KIDS ALONE”

“CHILDREN NEED ROLE MODELS OF WHAT HAPPINESS, SUCCESS AND PEOPLE ENJOYING PRODUCTIVE LIFE LOOKS LIKE”

“ROLE MODELS PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE HELPING MOTIVATE YOUNG PEOPLE TO ACHIEVE LIFE GOALS LIKE EARN MONEY, WORK, BUY A CAR OR A HOUSE”

“I GREW UP SEEING MY GRAN AND PARENTS WORKING SO I ALSO GREW UP KNOW THAT YOU SHOULD WORK”

The participants also stated many enabling factors we have at our disposal or that could be strengthened to combat the barriers present. These factors included participating in more work experience and greater community support of work experience placements, participating in volunteering activities, access to career advisors and practitioners, improvements in access to transport and access to assistance with obtaining a driver's license.

“

*“WE NEED MORE WORK EXPERIENCE OPPORTUNITIES”*

*“NO BUSES ON A SUNDAY IS A MAJOR BARRIER FOR EMPLOYMENT”*

*“MORE UNDERSTANDING ABOUT HOW TO TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT - INTERVIEW PREP, DRESS, CHEWING GUM, PUTTING A RESUME TOGETHER, WHAT QUESTIONS TO EXPECT, HOW TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS”*

*“WE NEED MORE BUSINESSES OFFERING WORK EXPERIENCE TO YOUNG PEOPLE TO INCREASE LOCAL EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS”*

”

Many community and local employer participants felt strongly that there were so many great employment opportunities that were currently not being filled locally. A disconnect between the aspiration for and the access to these local jobs is evident within the region.

“

*“EMPLOYMENT. THERE'S ALWAYS EMPLOYMENT HERE”*

*“KIDS NEED TO KNOW YOU DON'T NECESSARILY NEED TO GO TO UNI - LOTS OF PRESSURE ON KIDS TO DO THIS. WE NEED LOTS OF PEOPLE IN JOBS LIKE AGED CARE WHICH REQUIRE CERTIFICATION QUALIFICATIONS”*

*“IF YOU WANT TO START AT THE BOTTOM THERE'S ALWAYS JOBS”*

*“KEEP ENCOURAGING PHENOMENAL TRADIES - WE HAVE SO MANY GREAT ONES AND THEY OFFER YOUNG PEOPLE JOBS - WILLING TO GIVE KIDS A GO”*

”

Barriers to gaining and sustaining employment were stated as:

- lack of access to public transport, not having a driver's license and no mentor to get learner driver hours completed;
- costs associated with private transport;
- lack of work experience opportunities;
- more access to career advice in schools;
- a lack of work ethic; &
- of value placed on work experience and work within the family or home.

Solutions provided by the participants included better linkages between business and industry employment opportunities and the schools and young people. Programs or access to mentoring that can lift the aspirations of young people towards working, especially if they come from a household where they are not exposed to working parents or carers. Stronger pathways for learning whilst on the job, for example increased opportunities for school-based apprenticeships and traineeships, were suggested as being helpful to gaining future employment. Finally, more opportunities for increased 'work tasters', work experience and work placement for young people were seen to help them to better transition to meaningful future employment.

The participants spoke of a negative image that Greater Shepparton endures which gets in the way of young people thriving. An image of drugs, not being safe, homelessness and lack of aspiration.

“A CULTURE OF NOT WANTING TO DREAM BIGGER - LACK OF BELIEF IN BEING ABLE TO ACHIEVE GOALS”

“WE NEED TO PUT IMPORTANCE ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE. WE NEED TO CELEBRATE THOSE THINGS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE, NOT JUST ACADEMICS”

“YOUNG PEOPLE GENERALLY IN MANY TOWNS HAVE A NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TO THEIR TOWN ALWAYS BORED WITH NOTHING TO DO”

“A LOT OF PEOPLE DOWN PLAY SHEPPARTON AND DOWNGRADE IT - STIGMA AND IMAGE PEOPLE THINK SHEPP HAS BUT 'IT'S A LENS WE PAINT ON OUR OWN TOWN”

People talked of wanting to feel safe in their community and the deep desire for the Greater Shepparton community to be recognised and celebrated for the great things it has to offer.

“MEDIA TO SHOW SHEPP IN A GOOD LIGHT - KEEP GROWING SHEPP PROUD”

“NEWS IS SPREAD BY INSTAGRAM AND SNAPCHAT. TARGET INFORMATION TO CERTAIN GROUPS FOR A POSITIVE CAMPAIGN TO TALK ABOUT SHEPPARTON”

“BE ASPIRATION FOCUSED RATHER THAN DEFICIT FOCUSED WHEN WORKING WITH AND SPEAKING ABOUT OUR LOCAL YOUNG PEOPLE”

“WE NEED LOCAL SUCCESS STORIES TOLD THAT KIDS CAN RELATE TO AND ASPIRE TO.”

“THERE ARE LOTS OF SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE FROM SHEPPARTON WE NEED TO SHARE THEIR STORIES MORE”

Showcasing Greater Shepparton in a positive light will help to lift so many aspects of our community that can lay the foundations for our children and young people to see they are supported to thrive.

# What to form here?


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This report is designed to be used for public reporting, decision-making and action by our wider community and community leaders.

For Lighthouse, the 1000 Conversations community consultation deeply informs the whole of community strategy that Lighthouse has developed on behalf of the community. The findings inform the work of our Collaborative Leadership Tables (including Youth Table), steer our current volunteer efforts and extensive offering in kindergarten, primary and secondary schools and shape the design and content of all new initiatives and collaborations.

Importantly, we will also use the findings of 1000 Conversations to offer insights to service providers, educators, government, funders and the like to help shift resources and endeavors to better support young people and their families and to inform policy and decision-making to improve wellbeing and outcomes.

Lighthouse welcomes ideas and input from the community and businesses to address the issues identified. To share your thoughts please contact Lisa McKenzie the Executive Officer.

 [lmckenzie@gsllp.com.au](mailto:lmckenzie@gsllp.com.au)  0427 212 651

# Appendix 1

## Who did we hear from?

1000 Conversations Demographic Information

A comparison between 2015 - 2018

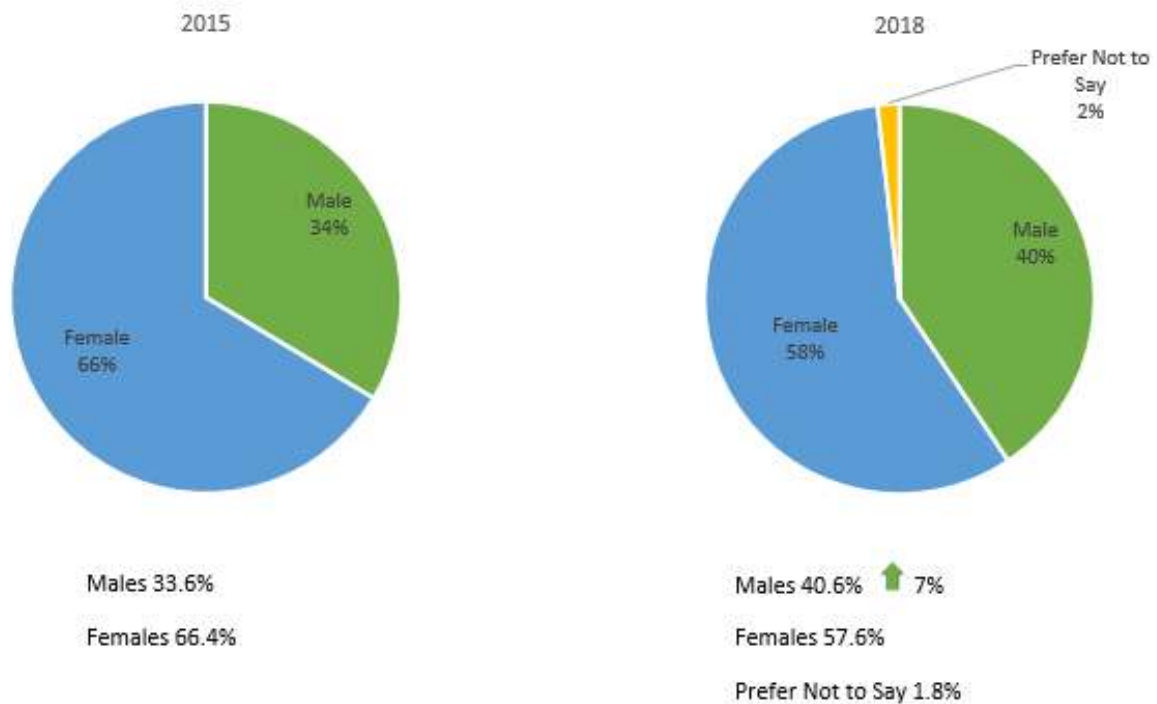


Figure 1: Sex of participants involved in the 2015 and 2018 1000 Conversations

Age Breakdown

A comparison between 2015 - 2018

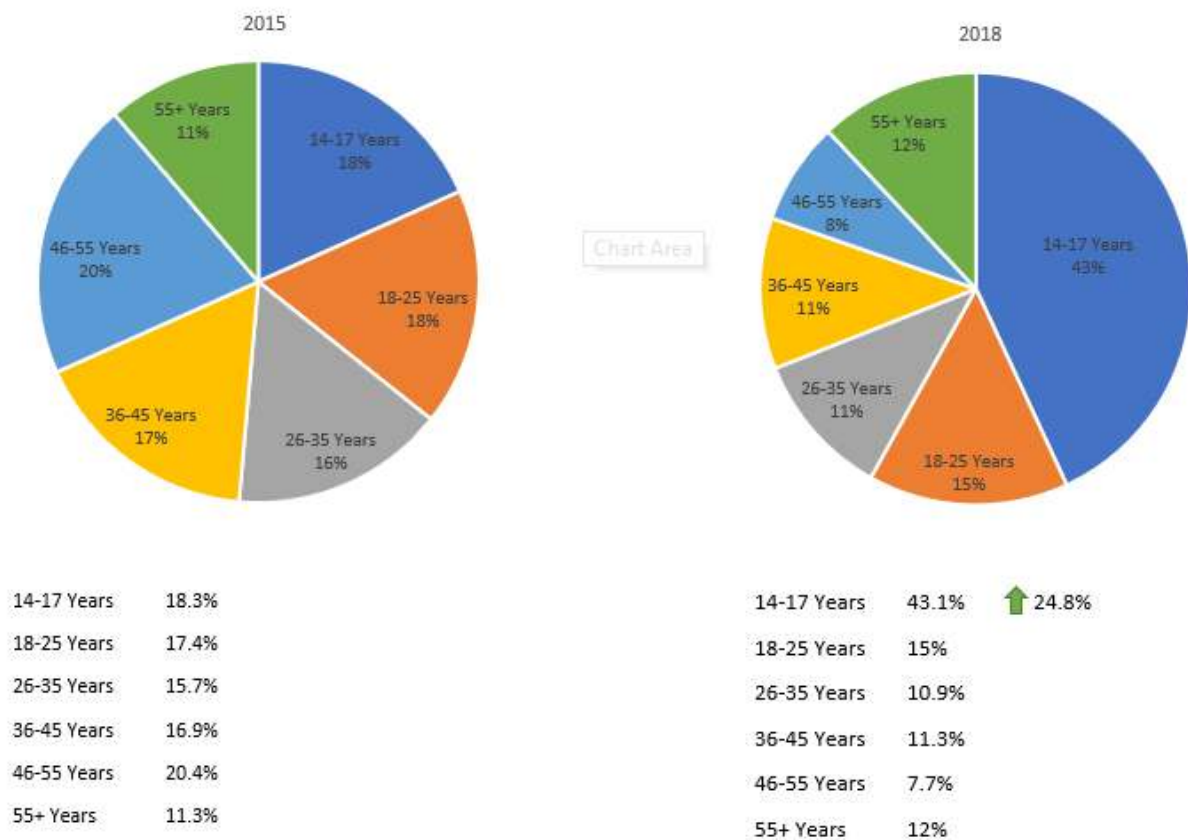


Figure 2: Age distribution of the participants involved in the 2015 and 2018 1000 Conversations

## Participant Diversity

Do you identify with any of the following?

2018

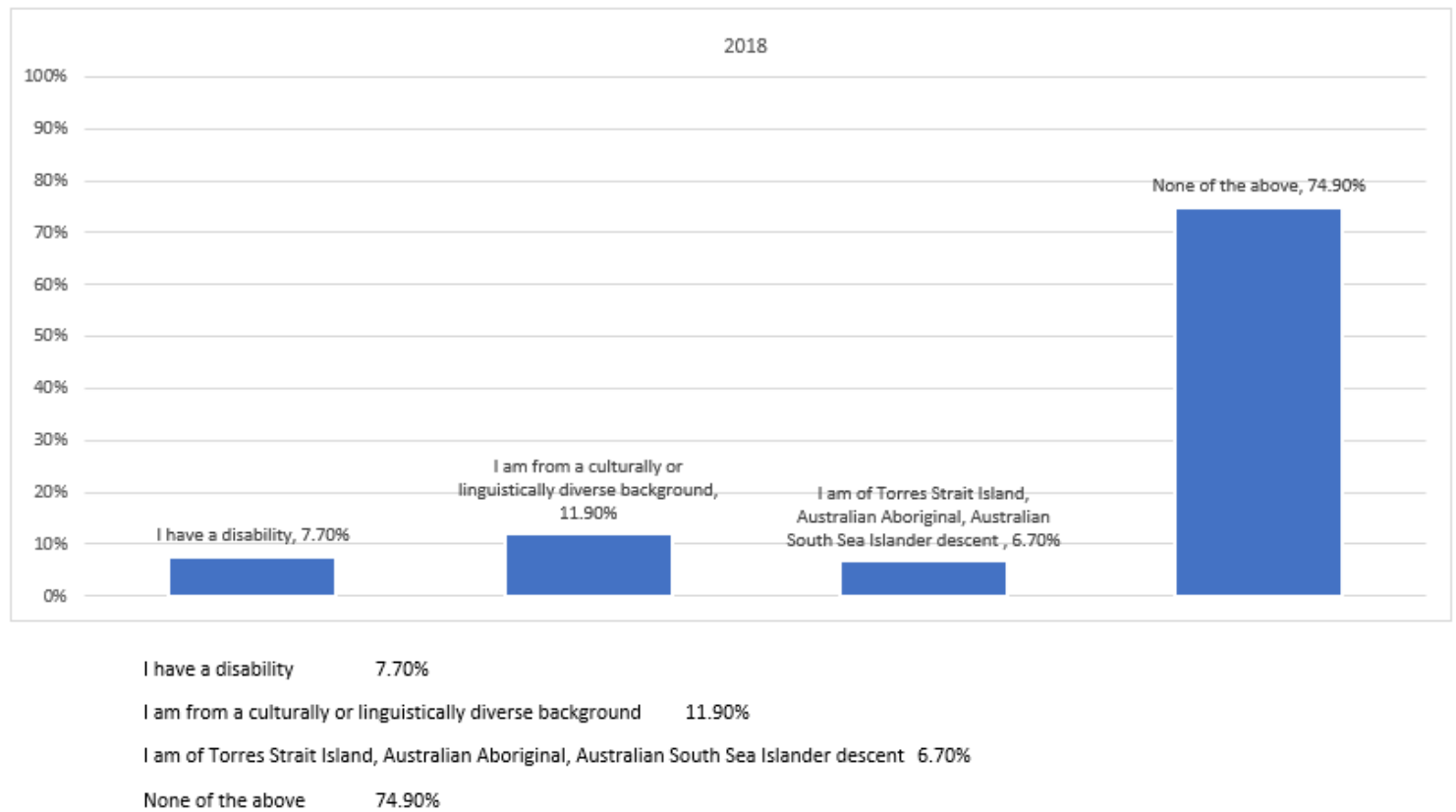


Figure 3: Participant diversity in 2018 1000 Conversations

## Access, Connection and Opportunity

Internet, Housing and Transport

A comparison between 2015 - 2018

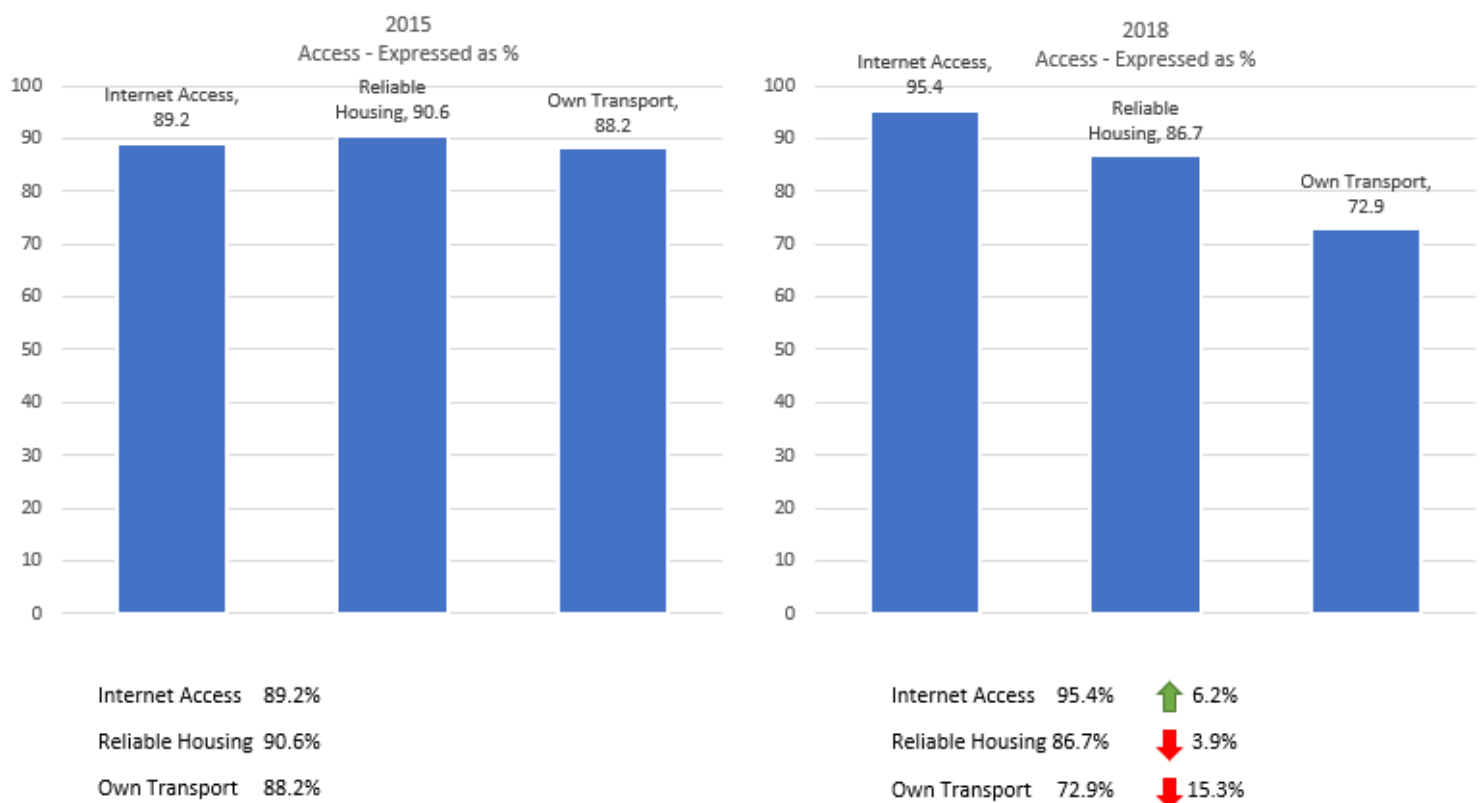


Figure 4: Participant access to internet, housing and transport in 2015 and 2018 1000 Conversations

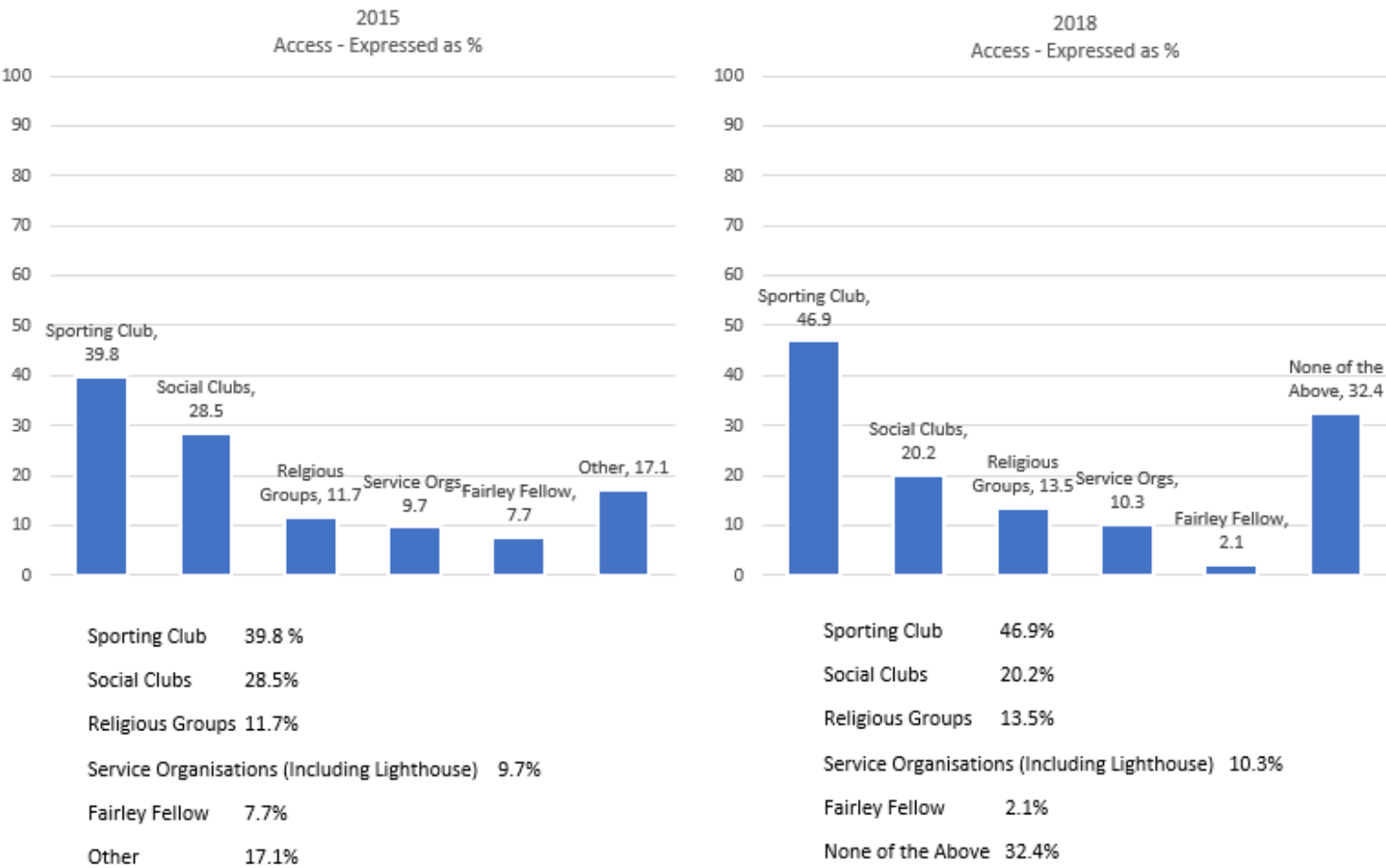


Figure 5: Participant involvement in community groups in 2015 and 2018 1000 Conversations

# Appendix 2

## 1000 Conversations Children's Voices Response Summary

### 1. What makes you happy?

#### People

- My mum
- Seeing other people happy and smiling
- My dad tickles me
- Other people making silly faces
- Going out with my family
- Being with friends, family and pets

#### Environment

- Rainbows
- Sun
- Smelling flowers
- Home
- When I'm in bed

#### Symbols & Colours

- Love hearts
- Colours: Yellow, Red, Pink

#### Playing

- Playing games (basketball, ping pong)
- Reading books, numbers and letters
- Drawing
- Playing outside
- Cuddling toys

#### Other

- When I smile
- When I get presents
- When I eat marshmallow

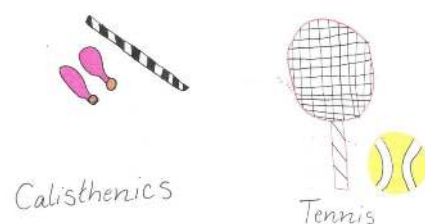


### 2.a What do you do that is fun at home?

- Playing outside (trampoline, playground, swimming, running and playing chasey, basketball)
- Playing inside (puzzles, pretend kitchen)
- Doing things with family and pets

### 2.b What do you do that's fun outside your home/in the community?

- Organised sport (Swimming, Netball, Tennis, Dance)
- Go to Splash Park, Go Jump, Bowling
- Go to Melbourne
- Go to cafes and restaurants
- Riding my bike, going walking (exploring the river)
- Visiting friends
- Going shopping



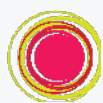
### 3. How can all kids be healthy?

- Eating and drinking healthy (fruit, vegetables, water)
- Exercising (walking, running, trampoline, dancing, playing outside)
- Personal hygiene (washing your hair, brushing your teeth)
- Go to doctor and dentist (take medication when you are sick)
- Family and friends



### 4. Sometimes children are not happy. Why might this be?

- They are hurt physically or emotionally (someone has been mean to them or
- they have done something wrong and feel bad)
- When I am lonely and don't have any friends.



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