



**Tell us what
YOUTHink!**

**Youth Speak Survey
Report 2020**



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We wish to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters of the Shire, the people of the Yuin nation and pay our respect to elder's past, present and emerging.

About the Survey

Youth Speak 2020

Purpose

The Youth Speak Survey aims to identify the values, aspirations and issues of concern to young people. The Youth Survey was developed by Bega Valley Shire Council together with the inter-agency youth collaboration to strengthen our capacity to support and advocate for young people living in the Bega Valley.

Council objectives for the survey included:

- identify a relevant, productive channel for ongoing capture of youth voice (12 – 25 years old) in Bega Valley,
- collect current youth input for ideas, wants and needs, both focused around bushfire recovery and into the future, and
- identify youth members interested in participating in future forums or consultations.

Participation

In June 2020, 269 young people aged 12 to 25 years participated in the Youth Speak Survey. This represents approximately 5% of young people living in the Bega Valley based on 2016 Census Data.

Areas of focus

As well as collecting valuable socio-demographic data, the 2020 Youth Survey sought to capture the views and perspectives of young people on a broad range of issues.

Topics covered by the survey included education and employment, perceived barriers to achieving post-school plans, participation in community activities, young people's voice within their community general wellbeing, values and concerns, preferred ways of communicating, as well as feelings about the future.

A significant section of the survey also explored young people's ideas for youth led projects. The survey also sought a commitment for young people to be involved in planning a youth forum to help progress youth led ideas within the community.

Methodology

Young people were comprehensively engaged through diverse channels and networks including schools, tertiary education, community and sporting organisations, agencies delivering youth services and through Bega Valley Shire Council young employees.

All surveys were completed online with social media and email distribution both key avenues for survey distribution.

This Report

This report contains an executive summary, a summary of findings for each question and key recommendations.

Please note that the percentages in all tables, figures and text throughout the report are rounded up to the nearest whole number and may not necessarily total 100%. Not all respondents answered all survey questions; the data presented for each question are for those who responded. Care needs to be taken when interpreting and generalising the results.

We recognise young people – each with their own background, experiences, culture and values are behind the numbers, words and figures in this report. We recognise that the measures in this report reflect only part and not the whole story of these young people's lives.

**Tell us what
YOUTHink!**



Tell us what YOUTHink!

Bega Valley Shire Council conducted its first annual survey of young people aged 12 - 25 in June 2020. This year's survey had a special focus on young people's voice, bushfire recovery and youth led projects.

269
RESPONDENTS
aged 12-25 years



Top 3 most important issues in Bega Valley today...

MENTAL HEALTH 60%
ALCOHOL & DRUGS 44%
BULLYING 36%

Top 3 barriers to achieving post school goals

- Lack of jobs **58%**
- Lack of higher education **54%**
- Mental health **26%**



Young people were asked if they felt they could bring an idea or concern to Council. 61% weren't confident they could have a say in public affairs.

Top 3 project ideas for the Bega Valley

- Improved sporting facilities
- Dedicated youth spaces
- More youth activities and events

The % of young people identifying BUSHFIRE RECOVERY as an issue of importance is 18%



One in five young people (20%) plan to leave the Bega Valley in order to achieve their study/work goals.

"I would love for there to be more spaces such as parks for young people to hang out together, I would also like to see more cultural facilities that helps educate young people, a better skate park/smoothier paths would be awesome."

"We need to chat about other ways to connect with the youth in the Valley. It's been a tough year for everyone and young people especially need a voice in these crazy times."

Young people were asked how they would like to communicate with Council on youth issues.

Most would like to hear about Council communications through school or university networks (43%)



Most would like to send an email to Council (43%)



46 people put their hand up to be involved in a Youth Forum to progress ideas and projects for the future.

"The Valley is massively lacking a "youth" platform for music and arts. I know so many people are desperate for it!"

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- ✓ **Young people should be supported to remain engaged** in education and transition to further education and employment
- ✓ **Schools need to be resourced** to prevent and combat bullying and to deliver more targeted drug and alcohol education
- ✓ **Investment is required in improved mental health supports** for young people with a focus on prevention and early intervention
- ✓ **Young people's voices need to be included** when forming evidence-based policies and in the co-design of programs for young people



If you would like to connect with us regarding the Youth Speak Survey



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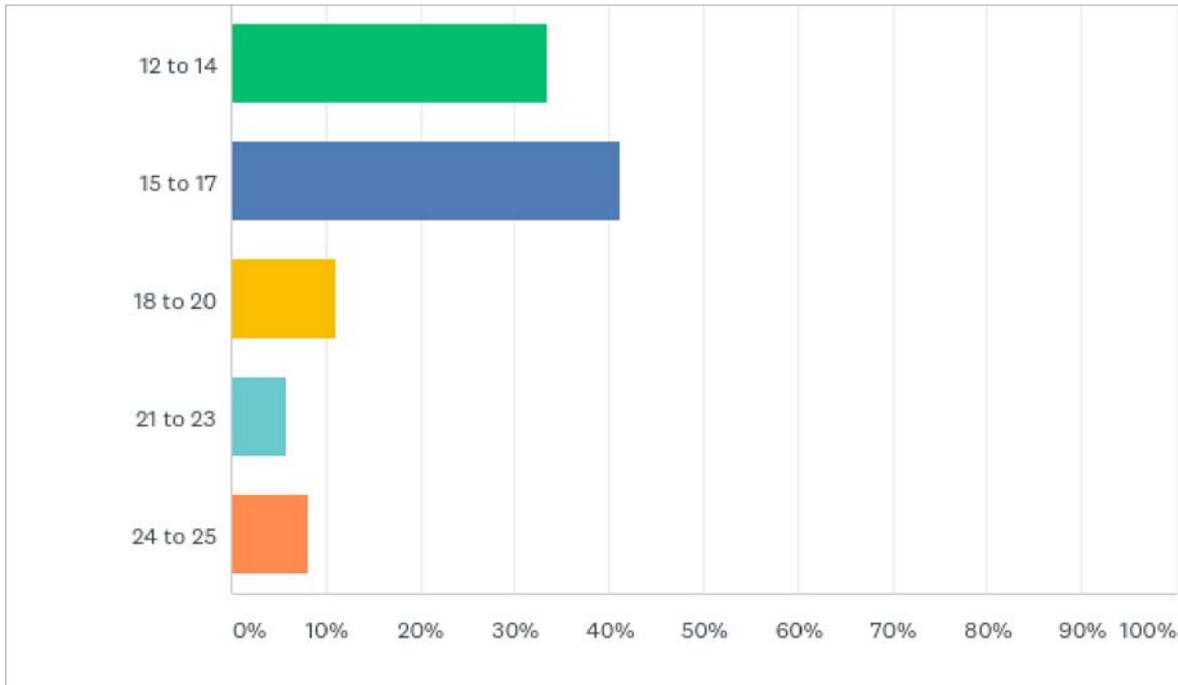
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Survey Results

Profile of respondents

Age Distribution

Most respondents were aged between 12 to 17 followed by 12 to 14. This could indicate a high percentage of students attending secondary schools receiving the survey.

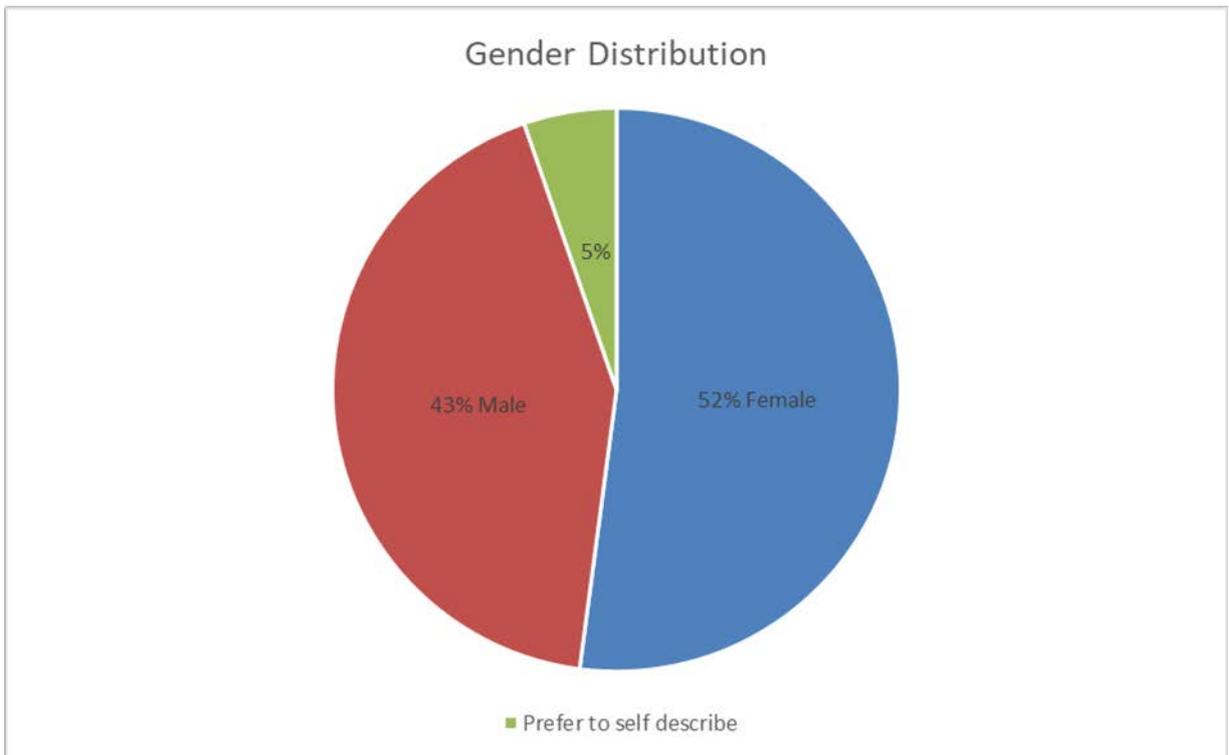


Geographic Distribution

Young people across all suburbs in the Bega Valley Shire were encouraged to complete the survey. The highest numbers of responses came from young people living in Bega (15%), Merimbula (12%), Eden (11%) and Tura Beach (10%) however a wide spread of localities were represented.

Gender Distribution

Around 52% of respondents were female and 43% were male. There were 5% of respondents who preferred to self-describe.

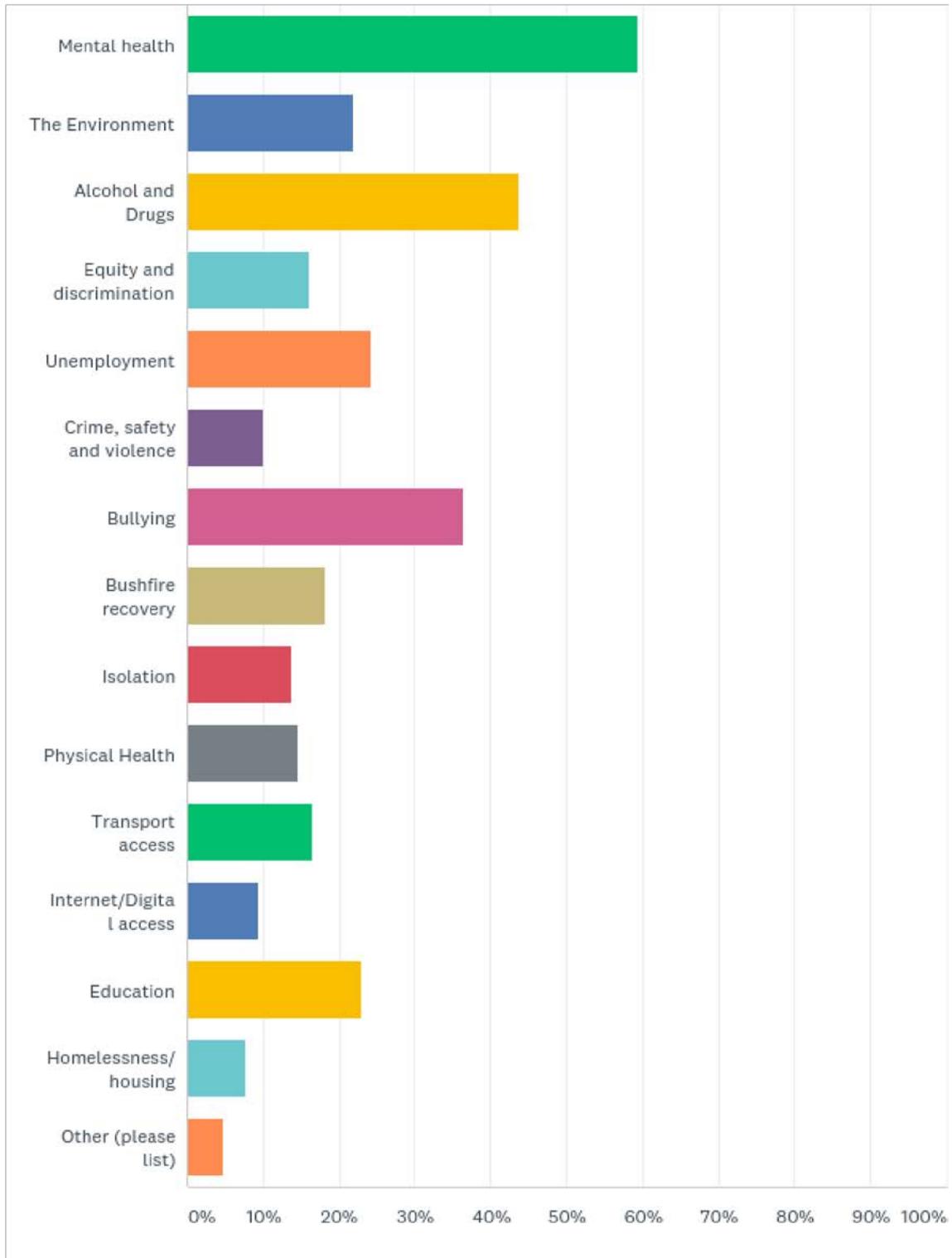


Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 12 (5%) respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

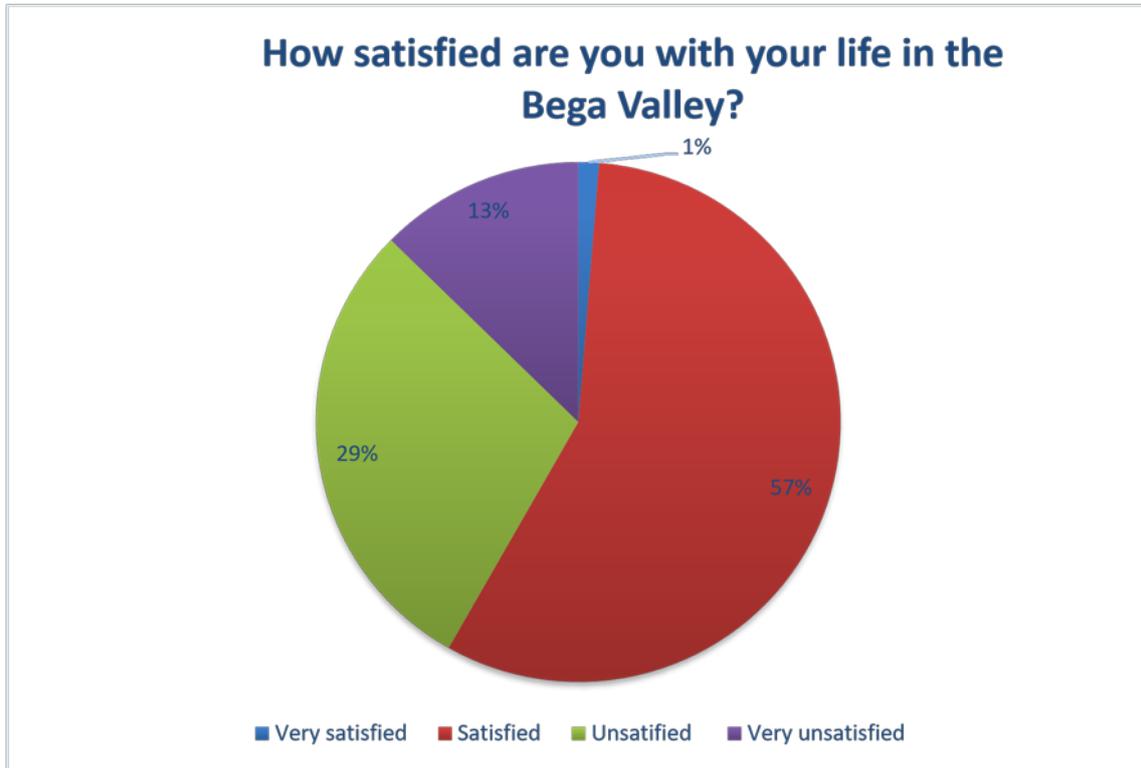
Important Issues

The three most important issues nominated by respondents that they believe face young people in the Bega Valley today are mental Health (60%) drugs and/or alcohol (44%) and bullying (36%).

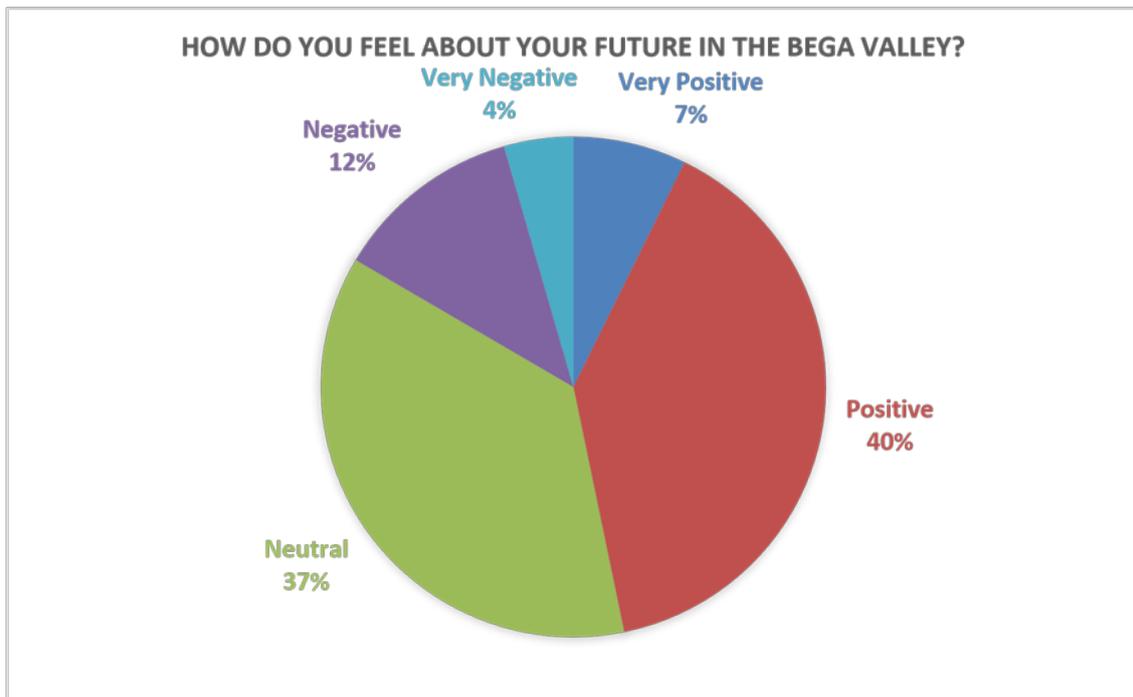


Feelings about now and the future

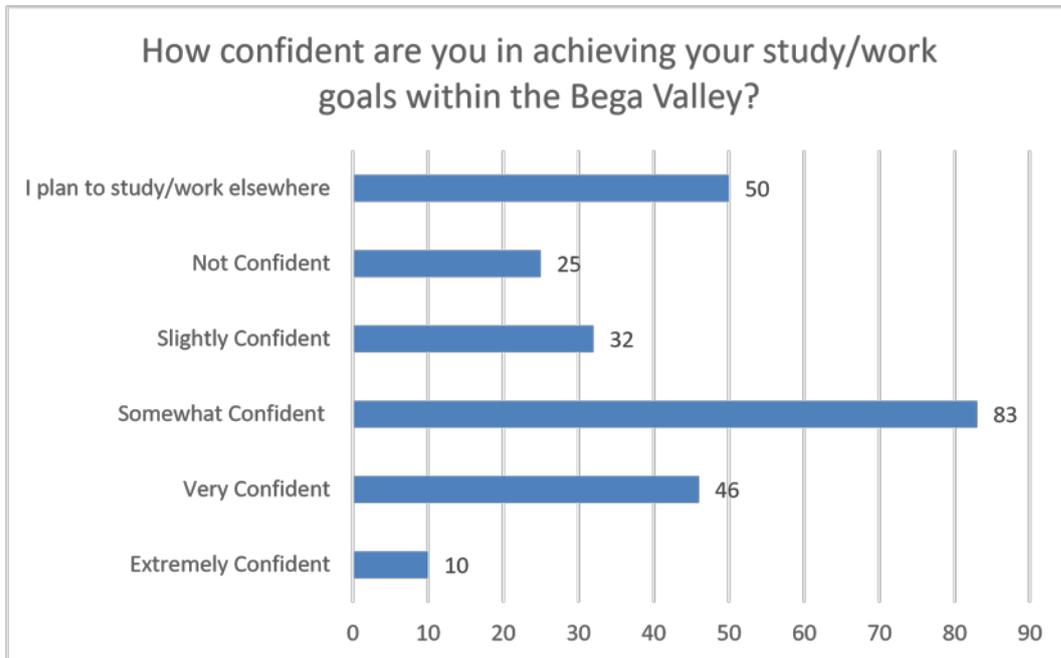
Most respondents reported feeling satisfied (57%) with their life in the Bega Valley however (42%) reported feeling either unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.



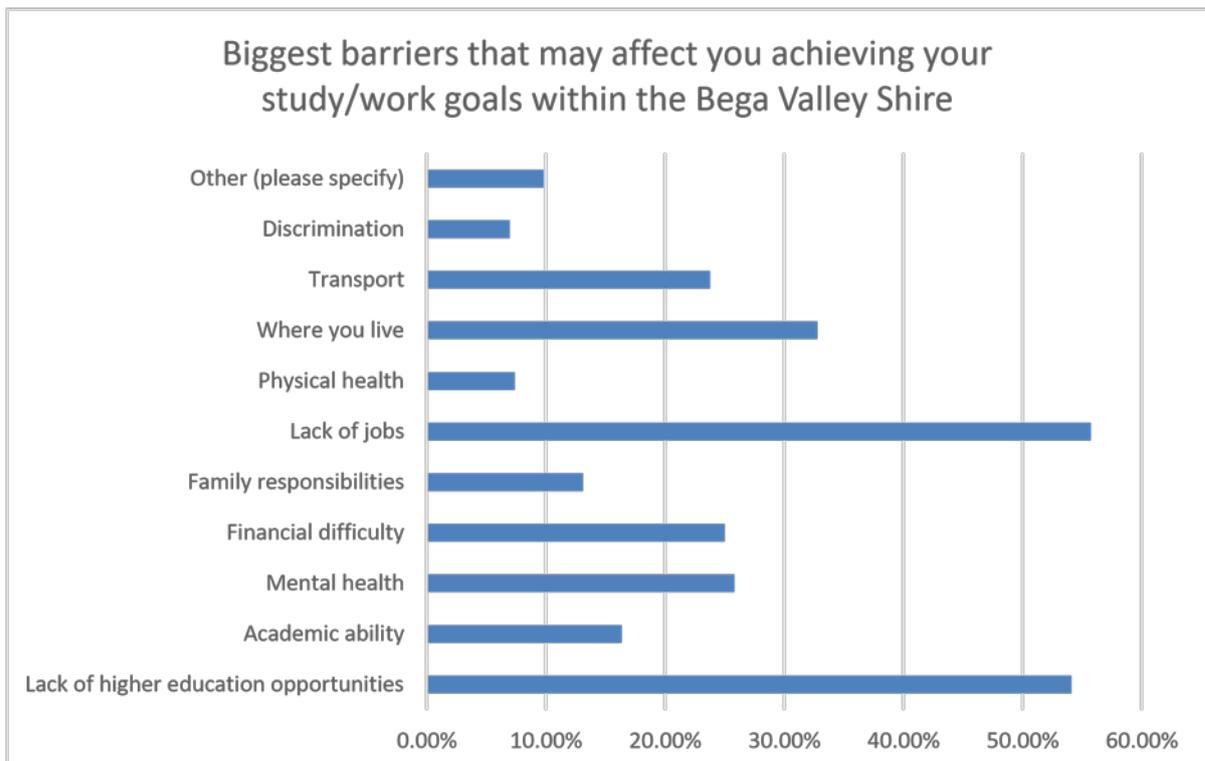
40% of respondents feel positive about their future in the Bega Valley whereas 37% feel neutral about their future in the Bega Valley.



Most respondents (34%) are somewhat confident in achieving study and/or work goals within the Bega Valley. However, 50 young people or (20%) of respondents plan to study or work elsewhere.

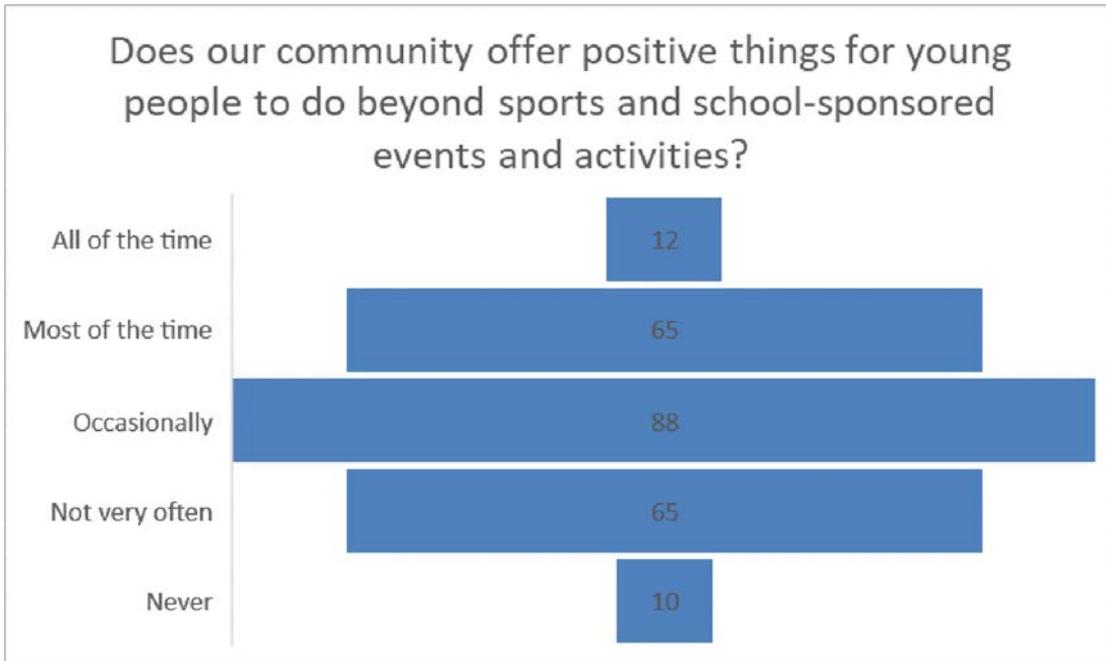


The three biggest barriers that respondents feel may affect achieving study/work goals are lack of jobs (56%), lack of higher education opportunities (54%) and where you live (33%)

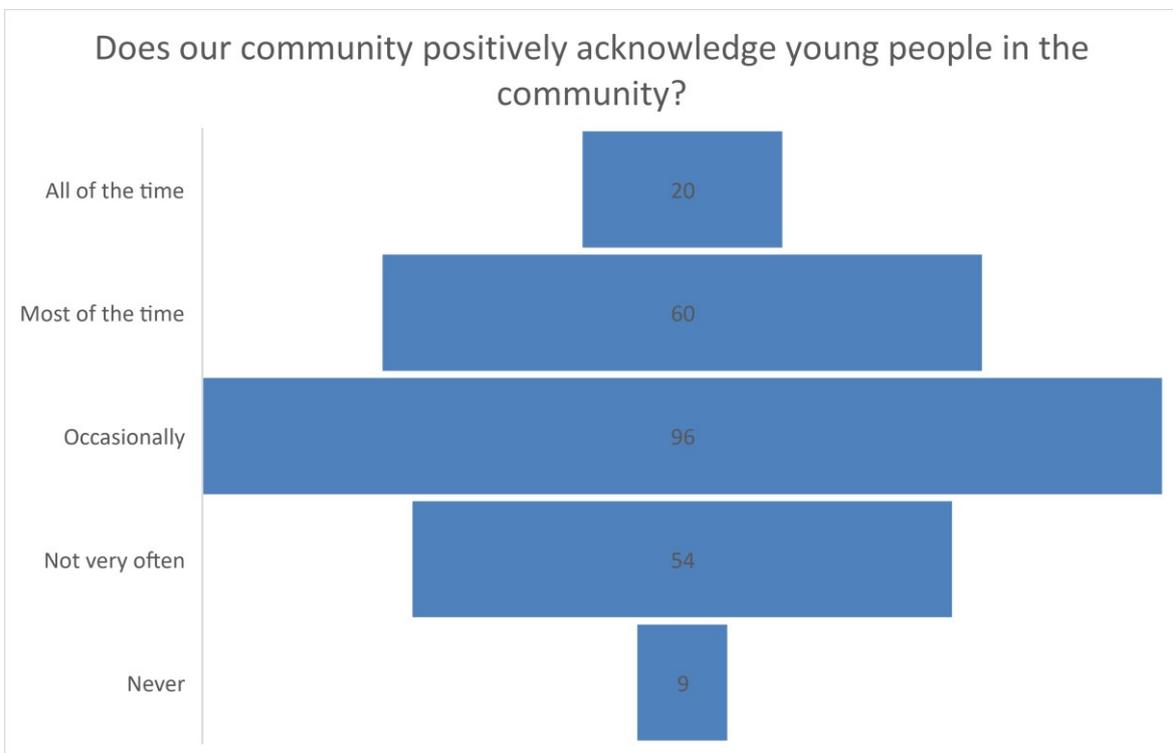


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Most respondents feel that our community offers positive things for young people to do beyond sports and school sponsored events and activities occasionally, with equal numbers feeling not very often versus most of the time.

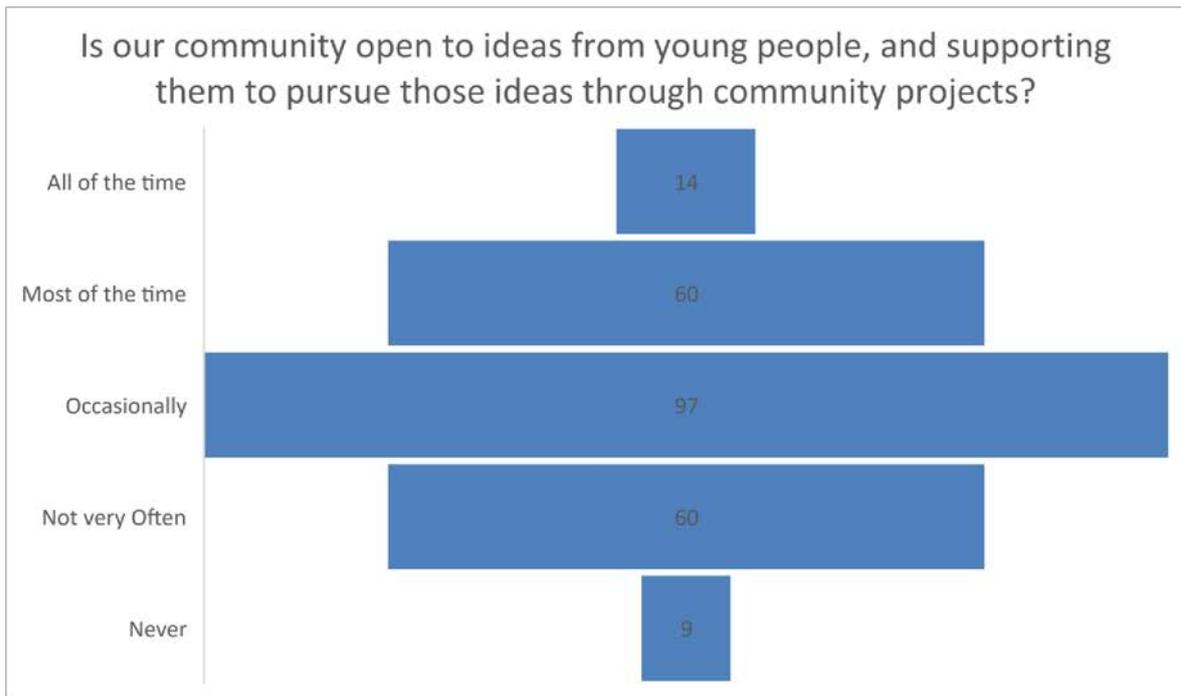


Most respondents feel that our community only occasionally positively acknowledges young people in the community.

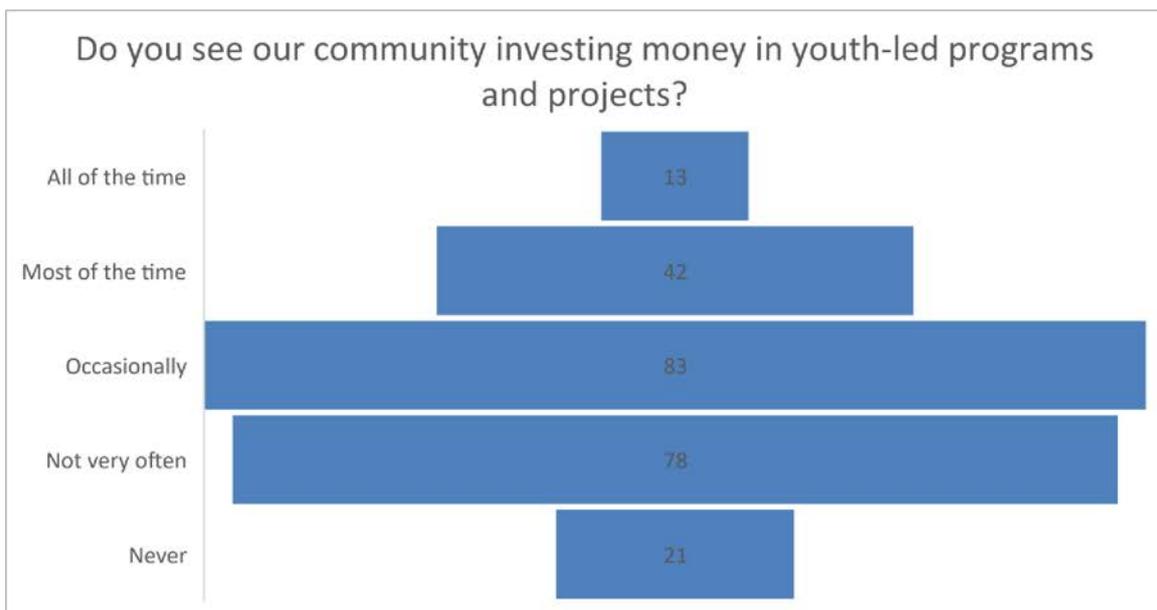


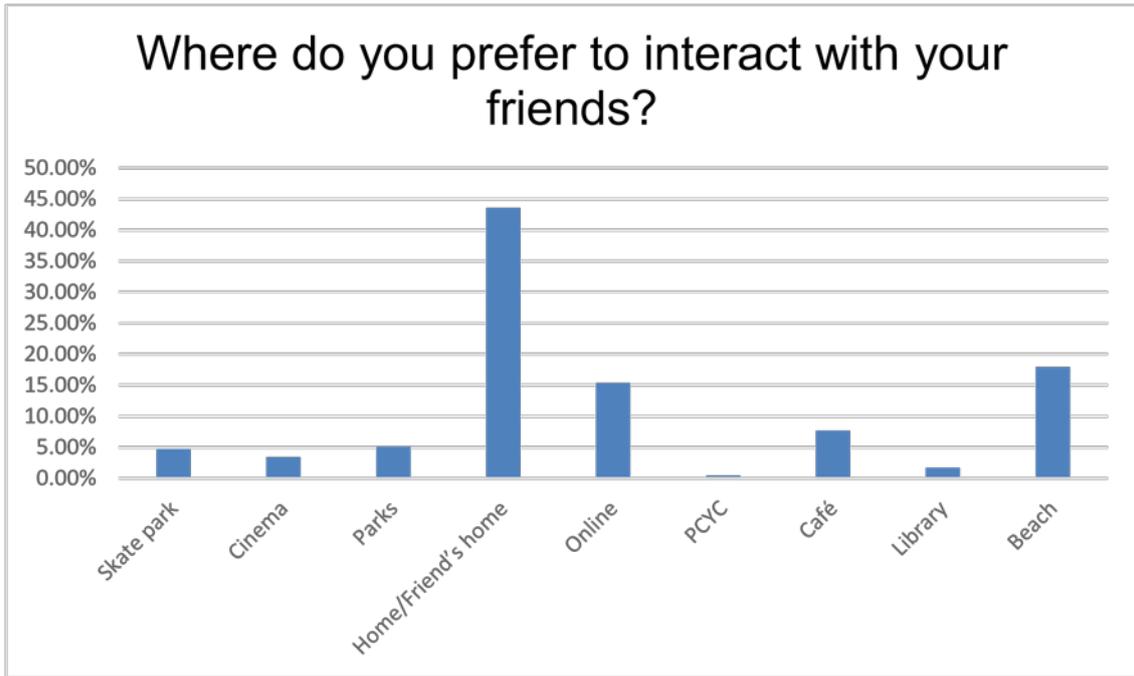
Section heading

Most respondents feel our community is only occasionally open to ideas from young people and supporting them to pursue those ideas through community projects.



Most of respondents see community investing money in youth-led programs and project either occasionally or not very often.





The most popular place to hang out with friends is at home or friends place (44%) followed by the beach and then online.

Youth Led Project Ideas

Young people were asked to nominate projects that they would you like to see happen in the Bega Valley Shire in the future. Approximately 200 project ideas were identified.

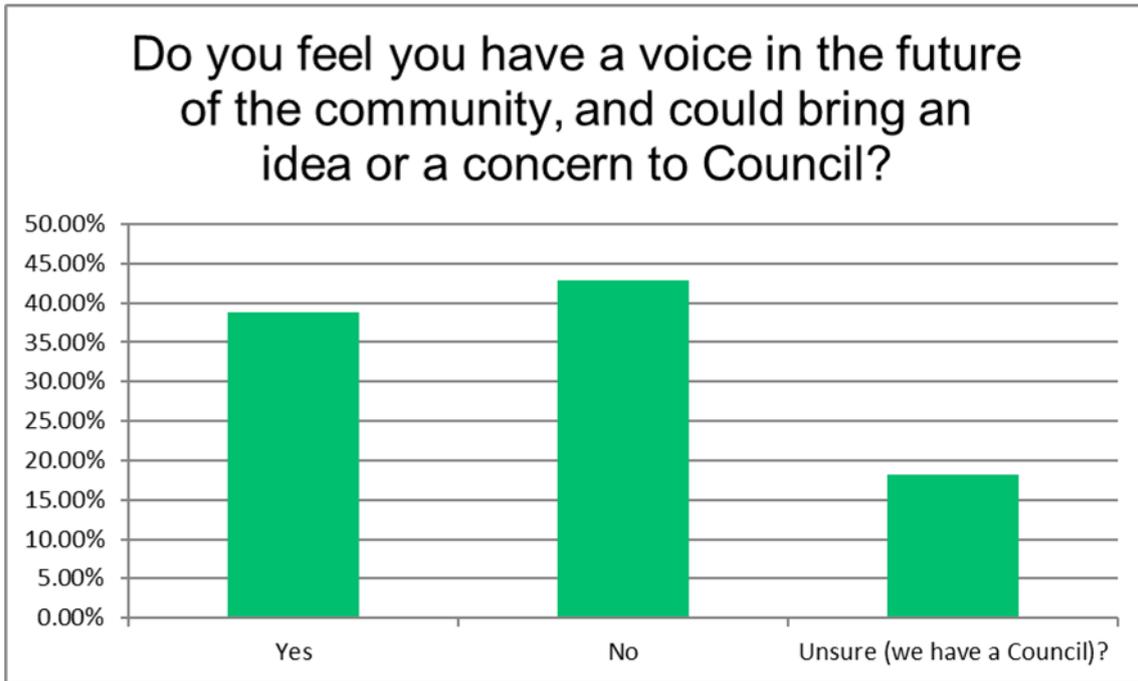
The three most popular ideas are:

1. Improved sporting facilities especially better skate parks
2. More youth gathering spaces to hang out with friends
3. More activities and events for young people especially around music, arts and culture.

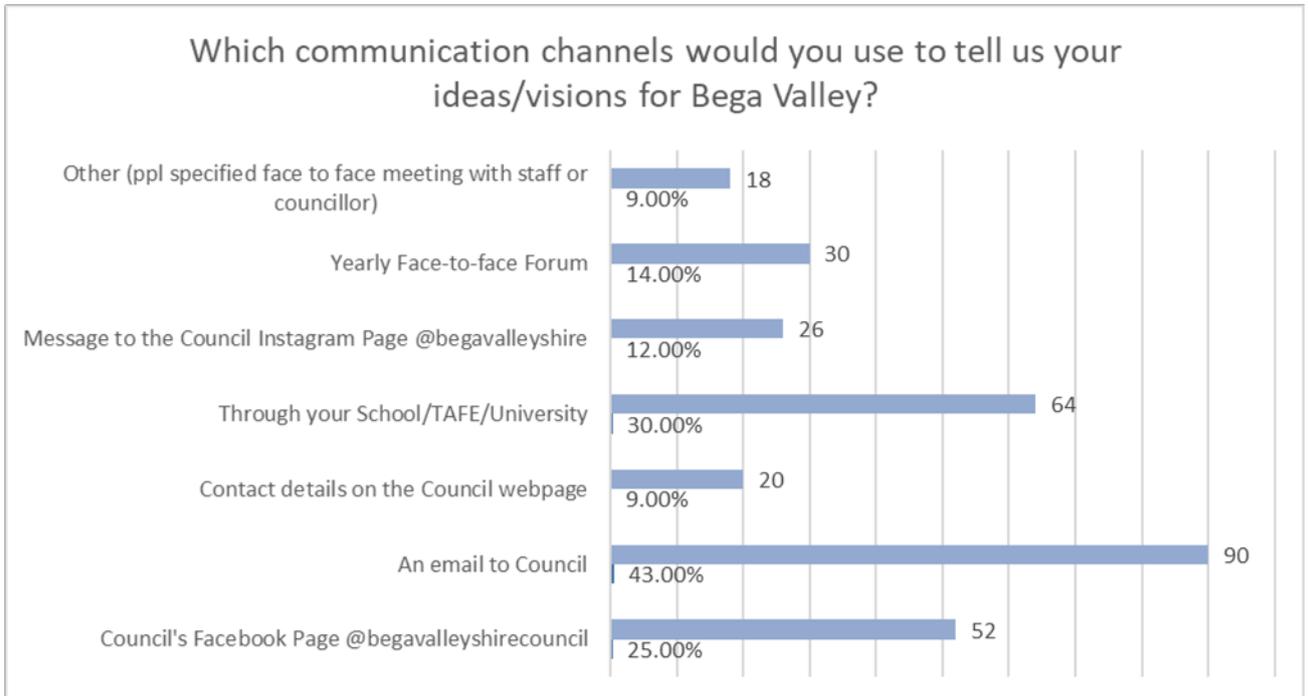
The full list of these ideas will be presented at a Youth Intra Agency meeting in August 2020 for further development. In additional 64 respondents wish to help organise a Youth Forum in 2020 to begin to take these ideas forward into the future.

Please see Appendix 1 For full list of Youth Led Project Ideas

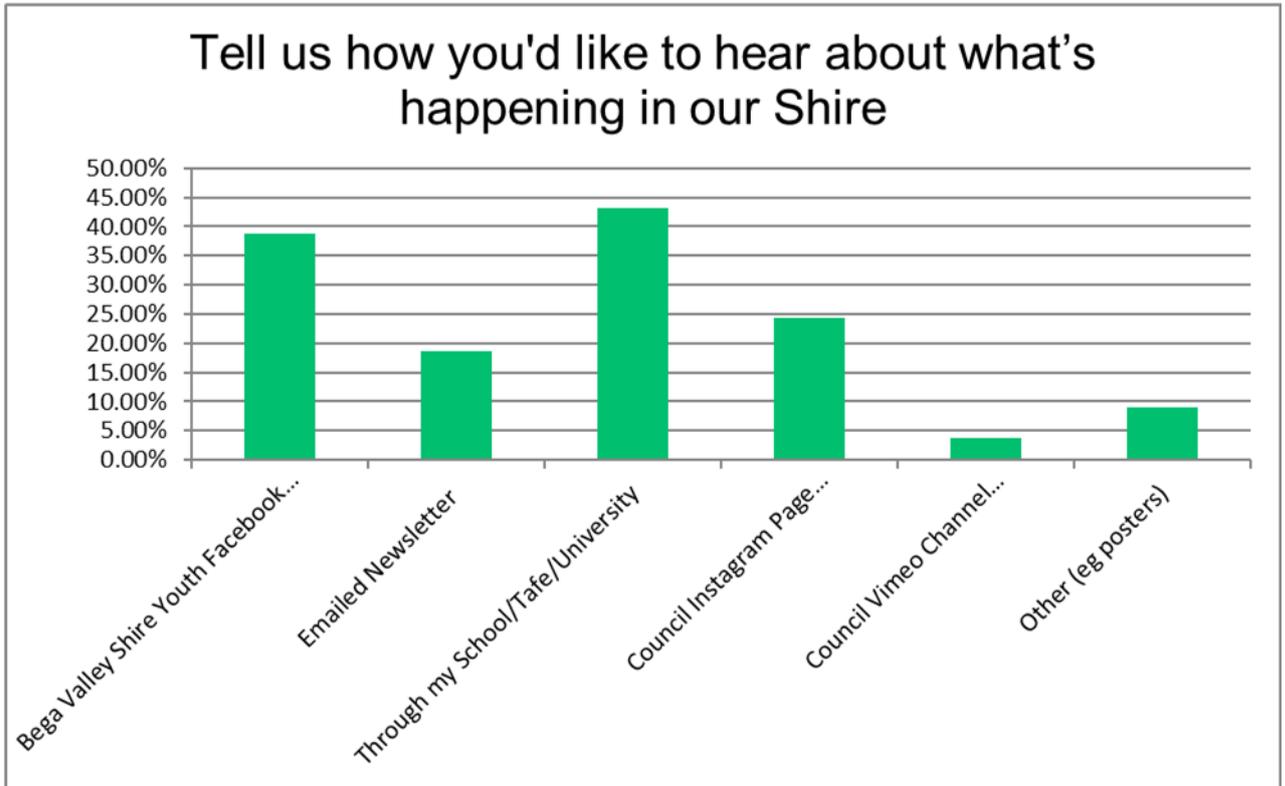
Most respondents do not feel confident that they could bring an idea or concern to Council.



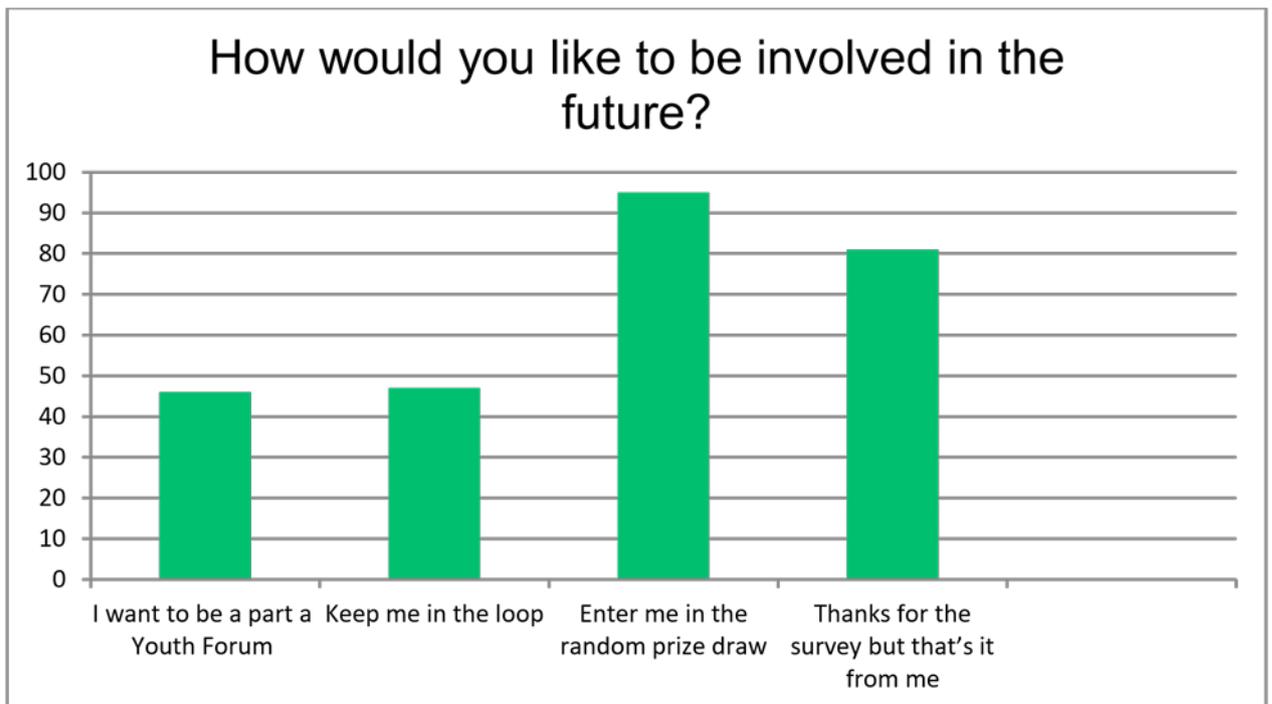
The most preferred communication channels for respondents to use to share idea and visions for Bega Valley are an email to council or through school, tafe and university.



The most popular way respondents would like to hear about what's happening in the Bega Valley is through their school, tafe or university followed by a Bega Valley Shire face book page.



Most survey respondents wanted to win the random prize draw which was an incentive for completing the survey. 46 young people nominated to be a part of planning a Youth Forum in 2020.



Recommendations

- 1. Young people should be supported to remain engaged in education and transition to further education and employment.**
- 2. Greater investment is required in improved mental health supports for young people with a focus on prevention and early intervention.**
- 3. Schools, parents and young people need to be better equipped with resources and strategies to prevent and combat bullying;**
- 4. Schools, parents and young people need to be better educated in strategies to combat drug and alcohol use amongst young people.**
- 5. Young people's voices need to be included when forming evidence-based policies and in the codesign of programs for young people.**

APPENDIX 1 LIST OF YOUTH LED PROJECTS IDENTIFIED

1. **Sports facilities and clubs** were suggested in 59 responses
 - 22 related to a specific town/locality
 - One response suggested 'more sports grounds/skate parks in the smaller localities.'
- Themes across sports facilities and clubs' responses:
 - Skatepark facilities – mentioned in 22 responses. One of these suggested indoor skate facilities. One related, additional response suggested a roller skate rink.
 - Trampolining /Flipout style facility – suggested in 6 responses.
 - Mountain bike facilities – suggested in 4 responses. Three of these specifically related to Eden, 1 to Pambula Pony club area.
 - Basketball facilities – suggested in 4 responses. Two of these related to Merimbula/Fishpen, 1 to Evans Park in Kalaru.
 - Indoor sporting facilities were suggested in 3 responses, including one naming indoor cricket, futsal, laser tag as desired indoor options. An additional response suggested a roller-skating rink.
 - Two responses mentioned development of equine facilities and opportunities.
 - Gym facilities were suggested in 2 responses, one nominating a 'youth gym'.
 - An expanded range of team sports was suggested in one response (e.g. volleyball, softcrosse/lacrosse, spikeball or softball).
 - Other specific sports and clubs suggested (in single responses included): a gun range, boxing club, sky diving, cliff jumping, motor bike track, surf clubs.
2. **Gathering spaces** were suggested in 32 responses.
 - Two responses related to specific areas (one to Bega, one to Eden)
 - A common theme was the suggestion of indoor, or undercover, gathering spaces for young people.
 - Ideas in this category were focused away from sports (and drinking) activities, and included: café-type spaces, areas for eating together, increased mall facilities, games (board, DnD), pool tables, ping pong tables, musical instruments available, drawing/painting, computers available, cultural groups, bookable rooms, inclusion of a small library.
 - One response suggested the pools be set up as communal spaces for hanging out.
 - Concept of a Youth space as a 'second home' (described in detail in one response).
 - Need seen for gathering spaces that are available after school, after 5pm, and are safe.
 - One response suggested 'a gathering place for youth in all bigger towns'.
 - One response mentioned a need for community halls for not for profit groups, including storage area – these are a Council-maintained community asset already present in many localities, though conditions and availability may vary (could be further investigated).
 - Also note alignment with potential for BVSC-operated Youth Space in Bega to be further developed for this purpose

Section heading

3. **Activities and events for young people** were suggested in 30 responses.
 - range of ideas covered.
 - Some included specifically: on weekends/Fri & Saturday nights, for teenagers/specific age groups, free/low cost, to connect people and facilitate socialising.
 - Ideas included:
 - events at local community halls, dance events (e.g. dance-a-thon), movie nights (in localities other than just the movies in Merimbula, drive-in), more markets (e.g. farmers markets), activities (e.g. like Science week), games nights, bigger games venue (like Top Fun)
 - clubs/groups for specific interests e.g. climate action group, mental health support group, cultural/diverse groups, surfing groups, beach volleyball,
 - one response suggested courses for upskilling in practical skills such as fixing household items and needs.
 - festivals and social events e.g. food trucks, eating/food, like Share-the-love, fun gala sporting days, performance opportunities, giant waterslide event down the main street, beach party day, like Bega show.
 - Eight responses specifically mentioned music festivals/concerts – including one suggesting a bush doof.
 - Three responses suggested cinema facilities, e.g. in Bega or outdoors.
 - Transport/accessibility noted as a barrier to attending activities and events.
 - Additional response (to the 30) x describing advertising letting young people know

4. **Arts & cultural facilities & activities** were suggested in 19 responses.
 - This category has some overlap with festivals/events but differs in having primary focus on creative and intellectual aspects.
 - Writing club/competition, intellectual activities, creative outlets like art e.g. local art, community artwork projects e.g. murals (on skate bowl or water tank suggested), community art exhibition/performance space (e.g. performance, installations, presentations), theatre group/drama school (after school or holidays), a music school, music groups, youth dance and performance development opportunities, cultural groups
 - Eden - youth collaboration space (in what was the VIC, once this moves to the wharf) including youth events and space with high school students to work on homework
 - Bega-based theatre group
 - Tathra as location for gallery/presentation space for youth projects.

5. **Parks, nature spaces, beaches** were suggested in 19 responses.
 - Specific aspects commented on included:
 - Green grass and trees
 - For picnics and socialising
 - Well-maintained parks, e.g. Eden, park at Tura, bigger park in Bega
 - Upgraded facilities e.g. ramps at Mitches Jetty and Spencers Park, shelters, picnic tables, benches
 - Environmental aspects important e.g. rehabilitation of land and river systems, support endangered wildlife (e.g. koalas)
 - Pride in beaches, coastal walks

6. **Shops** were mentioned in 10 responses
 - Six responses spoke about wanting more/bigger shops, malls.
 - One mentioned not closing Target in Merimbula
 - Other specific shops mentioned included: more hardware and convenience stores, KFC, Woolworths, rebel Sport, 7-Eleven, Boost.

7. **Roads and transport** were mentioned in 9 responses
 - Five responses suggested better/smoothier transport/roads
 - Specific roads mentioned: tar Kameruka road, upgrades to local roads around Merimbula
 - More frequent and reliable transport system (could apply to public transport, as well as or in addition to roads/private cars)
 - Bike path from Bega to Tathra mentioned in terms of facilitating transport between areas.

8. **School and education** were mentioned in 9 responses.
 - Responses mentioned a range of aspects, including facilities, scholarships and support.

9. **Higher learning** was mentioned in 5 responses. Responses were generally around more opportunities.

10. **Bushfire recovery** was mentioned in 9 responses. Support was generally wanted, but no specifics as to how this might look.

11. **Support services** were raised in 7 responses.
 - Three responses related to a need for mental health support.
 - Two responses mentioned drug and alcohol support.
 - A youth refuge was suggested in one response.
 - One other response suggested equine assisted therapies be more readily available.

12. **Gaming shops and activities** mentioned in 6 responses.

13. **Employment and Career** were mentioned in 5 responses. This was around more opportunities, including for carpenters and trades.

14. **Pool facilities** were mentioned in 5 responses. This included upgrades and remaining open longer.

15. **Bike paths connecting towns** were specifically mentioned in 3 responses.
 - Responses relate to the ideas of:
 - Transport and linking towns
 - Social connection & interaction
 - One response suggested a bike track from Bermagui to Tathra.
 - One response suggested a bike path from Bega to Tathra.
 - One response was general 'bike paths connecting towns.

Section heading

16. **Youth involvement in decision making** and **youth support projects** were mentioned in 3 responses.
17. **Technology access** mentioned in 3 responses
18. **Support for businesses to stay open** mentioned in 3 responses.
19. **Environmental concerns and climate change** were raised in 3 responses. An additional response suggested **more accessible recycling facilities**.
20. **Indigenous acknowledgement** spoken about in 2 responses.
21. **Council rates** were mentioned in 2 responses.
22. **Support and encouragement for girls to play sport** was mentioned in 2 responses.
23. **Tools to address Racism and discrimination** was mentioned in 2 responses.
24. **Drought support** was spoken in 1 response, and another 1 response spoke of increased **weather station facilities**.
25. **Increasing/improving tourist attractions** were suggested in 2 responses, one specifically relating to outside of the summer period.
26. **More STEM and tech focused groups and workshops** were suggested in 2 responses. A further response had detailed suggestions around **expanded library offerings and programs** (ss) e.g. human library, skeleton library, artists in residence, board game library etc.

A number of responses called for **facilities in specific localities**. These included (non-exhaustive):

- Tura Beach – bike/walking paths, skate parks and social areas for young people.
- Kalaru oval (Evans Park) (a) – further development, basketball facilities.
- Eden (c) – gyms, skateparks, mountain bike/bike tracks, basketball courts.
- Merimbula (d) – indoor skatepark, trampolining, skatepark, skate rink basketball, library
- Bega – youth facilities
- Pambula – mountain bike track

END REPORT