



COLLINGWOOD YOUTH SURVEY REPORT November 2006

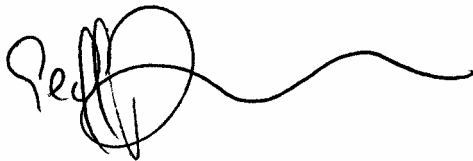
Foreword

North Yarra Community Health first opened Youth Space on the Collingwood housing estate in May 2003. This drop-in facility for young people aged 11 – 18 years, living in Collingwood public housing, has gone from strength to strength with increased numbers of young people attending and participating in activities, and, since 2005, an additional half-time youth worker provided by the City of Yarra Youth Services.

This Survey was made possible through a City of Yarra Community Grant to North Yarra Community Health and is based on similar surveys used in other Neighbourhood Renewal areas.

Youth Space is a very successful local youth program. It is a focal gathering point for young people living in and around the Collingwood housing estate. Young people of diverse cultural backgrounds have access to activities and enjoy one another's company. Youth Space provides a bridge for many young people to link with other key services and supports such as schools, sporting activities, local amenities, Centrelink, family support and more.

Youth Space is a wonderful working example of genuine 'partnership in action' between North Yarra Community Health and City of Yarra.



Geoff Barbour
President
Board of Management
North Yarra Community Health



Jackie M Fristacky
Mayor
City of Yarra

Executive Summary

The Collingwood Youth Survey provides a snapshot of issues that impact the lives of young people in the Collingwood Neighbourhood Renewal area. The results of a survey of 33 young people indicate that young people in the area:

- generally like where they live and feel that it is a friendly place to live
- are happiest with their friends and entertainment
- feel safe in their schools, mainly due to the fences and gates around the schools and the presence and support of teachers
- value the Collingwood Youth Space and would like it to be open more often
- want to be involved in their community (over a third of survey participants indicated they would like to be a part of a group to discuss the issues in the survey).

Introduction

Young people and children make up more than a quarter of our community but they are rarely given an opportunity to express their views or have a say about issues that affect their lives. Nor do young people often get a real opportunity to participate in making their community a better place to live.

The Collingwood Youth Survey was undertaken by North Yarra Community Health (NYCH) with the assistance of a Community Grant from the City of Yarra and the generous assistance of staff from Yarra Youth Services who helped NYCH to administer the survey. The aim of the survey was to help understand the issues that impact on the lives of young people living in the Collingwood area.

The Collingwood Youth Survey (referred to as the Survey throughout the report) was conducted in May 2006, and was based on a similar survey run in the Broadmeadows Neighbourhood Renewal Area during 2005. The Survey gave young people living in the area a chance to talk about their lives, their perspectives on their community, the challenges they face and how they can become more involved in practical activities and decision making within their neighbourhood. Topics in the Survey included:

- factors impacting on young people's well-being
- young people's perception of their communities – Are they safe? Are there services and facilities young people need?
- changes that have helped make communities a better place for young people to live
- priorities for further change.

Methodology

Young people between 11-18 years living in public housing in Collingwood were targeted for the Survey. A \$20 gift voucher was made available to each young person that participated, and advertisements of enlarged \$20 notes publicised the Survey. Written parental consent to participate was required for young people up to 16 years.

Three staff, one from North Yarra Community Health and two from Yarra Youth Services administered the Survey. Flyers advertised the Survey on noticeboards at Collingwood Housing estate and on the local public housing Grassroots website. Three Neighbourhood

Renewal working groups (Health and Wellbeing; Crime and Safety; and Employment, Learning and Enterprise) were informed about the Survey and the process. Classroom contact was made with young people beforehand at Collingwood College. By arrangement with school personnel, school breaks were used at Collingwood College and St. Joseph's Primary School for young people to participate.

Refer to the Appendix for a copy of the Survey used.

Profile of Participants

A total of 33 young people from the Collingwood Neighbourhood Renewal area were interviewed as part of the Survey. With the estimated number of young people aged 11-18 living within the Neighbourhood Renewal as being just over 130, this represents a response rate of just under 25%. Of those 33 interviewed, 22 live within the highrise, eight in walkups and three in houses in the Collingwood area.

Age and gender

Almost equal numbers of males (17) and females (16) took part in the Survey. Ages ranged from 11 to 18, with the majority aged 11 to 12 years or 15 to 17 years, as shown in the following table.

Age in years	Male	Female	Percentage of Total
11	2	5	21%
12	4	1	15%
13	1	2	9%
14	1	-	3%
15	3	4	21%
16	2	1	9%
17	3	3	18%
18	1	1	3%
Total	17	16	100%

Persons in household

The households in which young people live varied in size from one to eight members, with an average household size of four members.

Persons in Household	Number	Percentage
1	2	6%
2	5	15%
3	7	21%
4	5	15%
5	7	21%
6	5	15%
7	-	-
8	2	6%

Household type

The family type for those who completed the Survey indicates that only 21% lived in a 'traditional' two parent family household. Nearly half of the respondents live with only one parent, with a further 12% living in step family situations. Three respondents live either on their own or with friends and another three live with other relatives such as aunts and uncles.

Family Type	Number	Percentage
Lone parent	16	48%
Two parent	7	21%
Step family	4	12%
Other family	3	9%
No parent/guardian	3	9%

Country of birth and language spoken at home

As shown in the following table, around 60% of young people who took part in the Survey were born in Australia, with around 40% born overseas. Of note is the fact that only five of the 33 respondents indicated that they were 'Australian', whilst the remaining 28 represent a culturally diverse background.

Country of birth	Number	Cultural background	Number
Australia	20	Australian	5
Sudan	3	Vietnamese	5
Liberia	3	Sudanese	4
Somalia	2	Liberian	3
China	2	Chinese	3
Ethiopia	1	Somalian	2
Hong Kong	1	Koori	2
Rarotonga	1	ATSI - Irish	1
		ATSI - Australian	1
		Cook Islands	1
		Cook Islands - Australian	1
		Maltese	1
		Turkish	1
		Chinese - Vietnamese	1
		Vietnamese - Australian	1
		Thai - Maori	1

Those born overseas came from many different countries, with the largest proportion (9%) born in Liberia and Sudan.

Of greater significance was the wide diversity of the cultural background. 12% had an Indigenous Australian background. 21% had Vietnamese heritage and 12% a Chinese background, although in all these cases respondents were born in Australia.

"I love the different cultures and how everyone gets along"

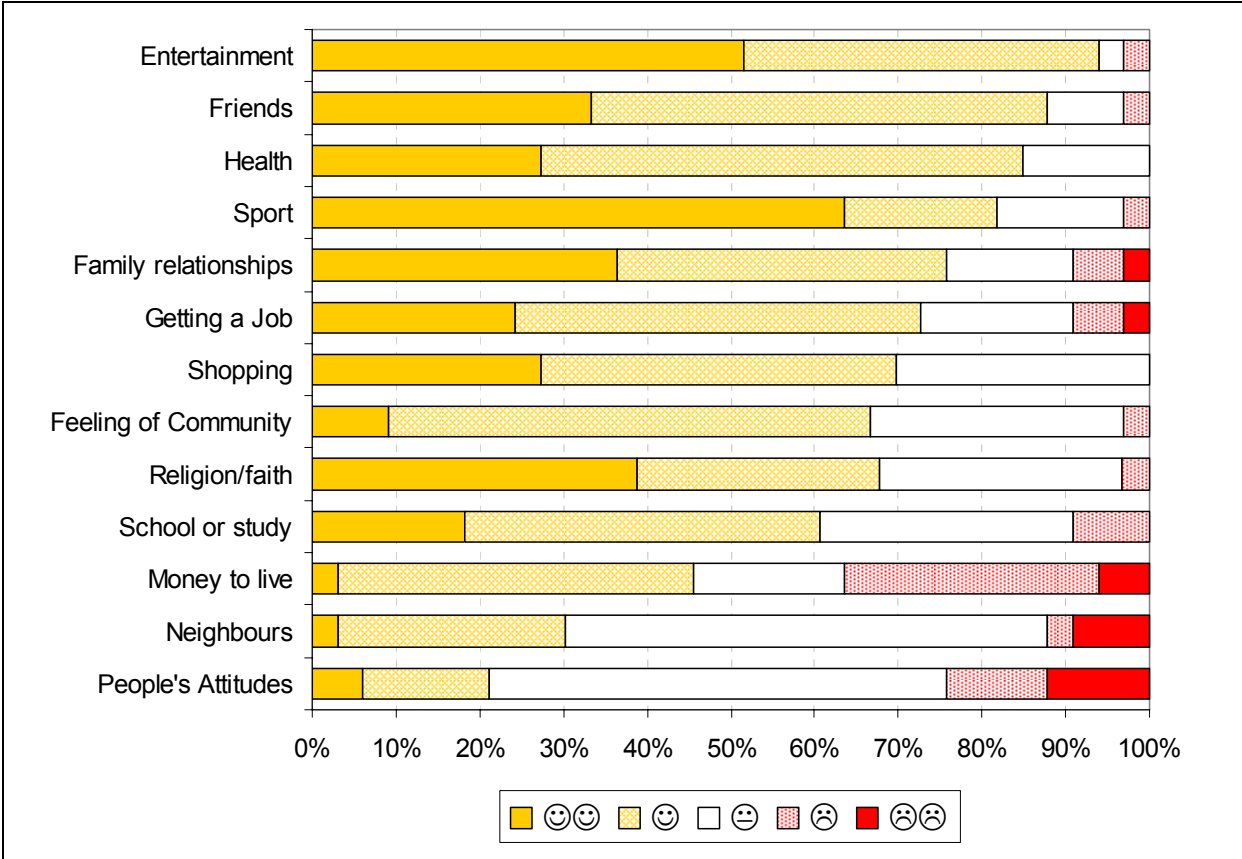
Survey Findings

The key Survey findings centre on the responses to questions about how young people feel about things that affect their lives, the things they do in their spare time, what they think about services in their neighbourhood and how they rate aspects about their community.

How young people feel

The first question on this topic was about what made young people feel happy or sad.

Figure 1: Overall, how do the following things make you feel?



Note: The ratings used for this question were: ☺☺ - Makes me feel very happy ☺ - Makes me feel happy
 ☹ - Does not make me feel happy or sad ☹ - Makes me feel sad ☹☹ - Makes me feel very sad.

Young people in Collingwood rated 'Entertainment' and 'Friends' as the two things that made them the happiest. Over 90% of respondents indicated that entertainment 'makes me feel happy' or 'very happy'. Friends rated just below this at just 88%. Of the aspects that received a lower rating, 'Money to live' had the highest total negative response with over 30% of respondents indicating that this made them 'feel sad' or 'very sad'.

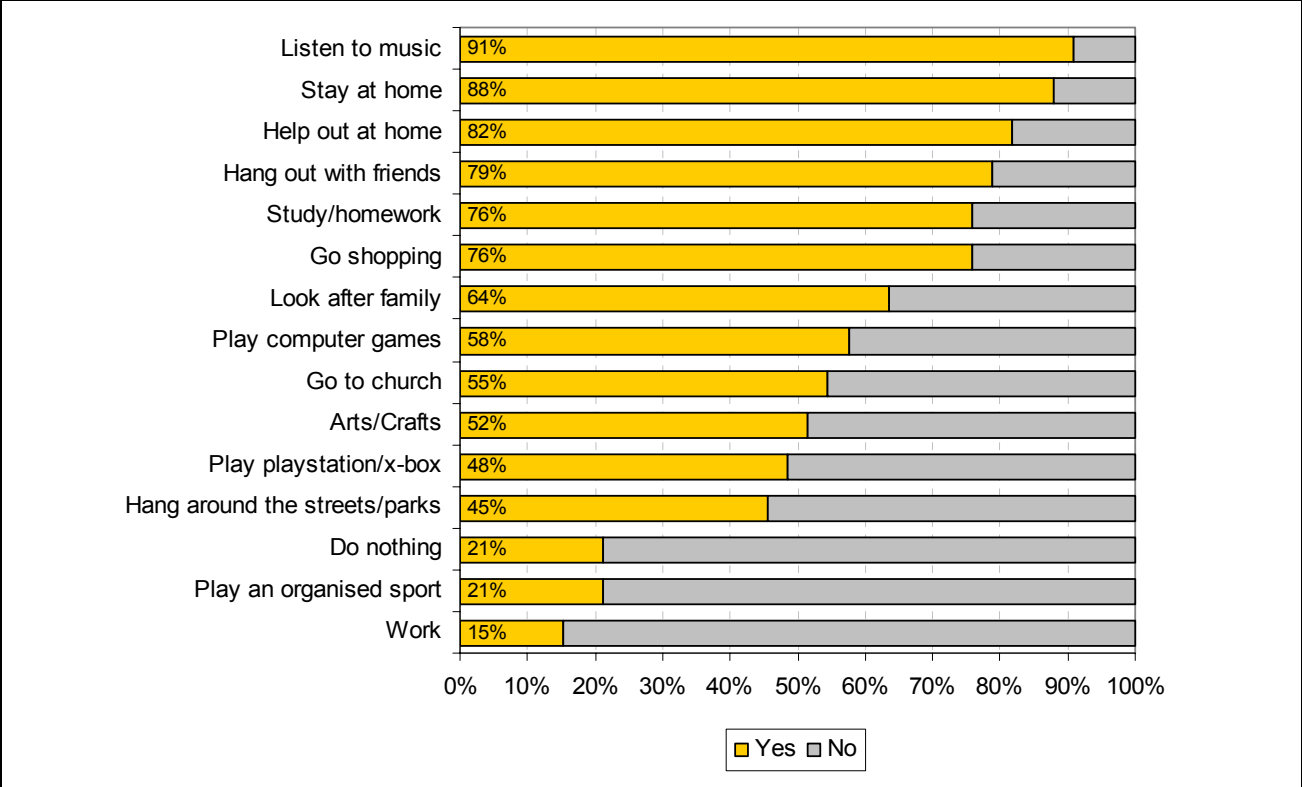
'Sport' received the single highest response for making young people 'feel very happy' (63%), whilst 'People's attitudes' received the single highest negative response, with 12% saying that this made them 'feel very sad'.

What young people do in their spare time

The second Survey question was about what young people did in their spare time.

The results following indicate that the main ways that young people in Collingwood pass their spare time is by listening to music (91%), staying at home (88%) and helping out at home (82%). Only a small proportion of young people undertook some type of work (15%) and 21% stated that they did nothing in their spare time. Whilst only 21% participated in some form of organised sport as a means of passing the time, these respondents indicated that it made them feel very happy, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 2: What do you do in your spare time?

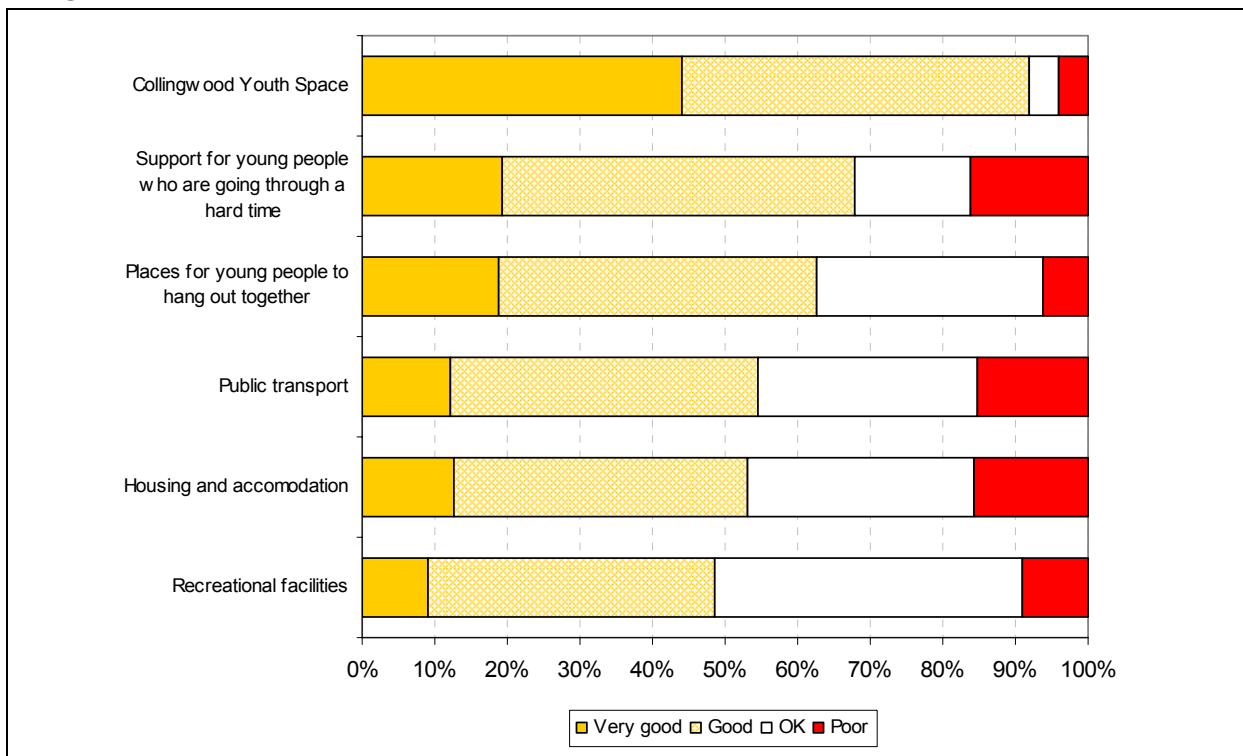


Facilities and services for young people

The next question on the Survey asked about local facilities and services for young people.

The Collingwood Youth Space received extremely positive feedback from respondents, with over 90% of those who answered the question indicating that they thought the facility was either ‘good’ or ‘very good’. Of the 33 young people interviewed, 18 used the space, with over 60% of those being male. Those that didn’t use the Youth Space either did not know about it (five responses) or were too busy to access it (three young people). Two respondents indicated that they were not allowed to use the space due to parental concerns about safety. Five respondents indicated that increasing the hours of operation and the updating the computers of the Youth Space would benefit the young people in the area.

Figure 3: What do you think of the facilities/services for young people in your neighbourhood?



The young people who participated in the survey were generally positive about the facilities in their neighbourhood with all options rating at or over 50% as ‘good’ or ‘very good’.

One of their greatest concerns among young people would appear to be the presence of drug and alcohol use within the area. Fourteen of the 33 respondents made a comment about drug or alcohol usage.

“If I see a drunk person I don’t feel safe.”

“Needles in the park – it’s dangerous.”

“Drugs are around.”

“Stop people taking drugs.”

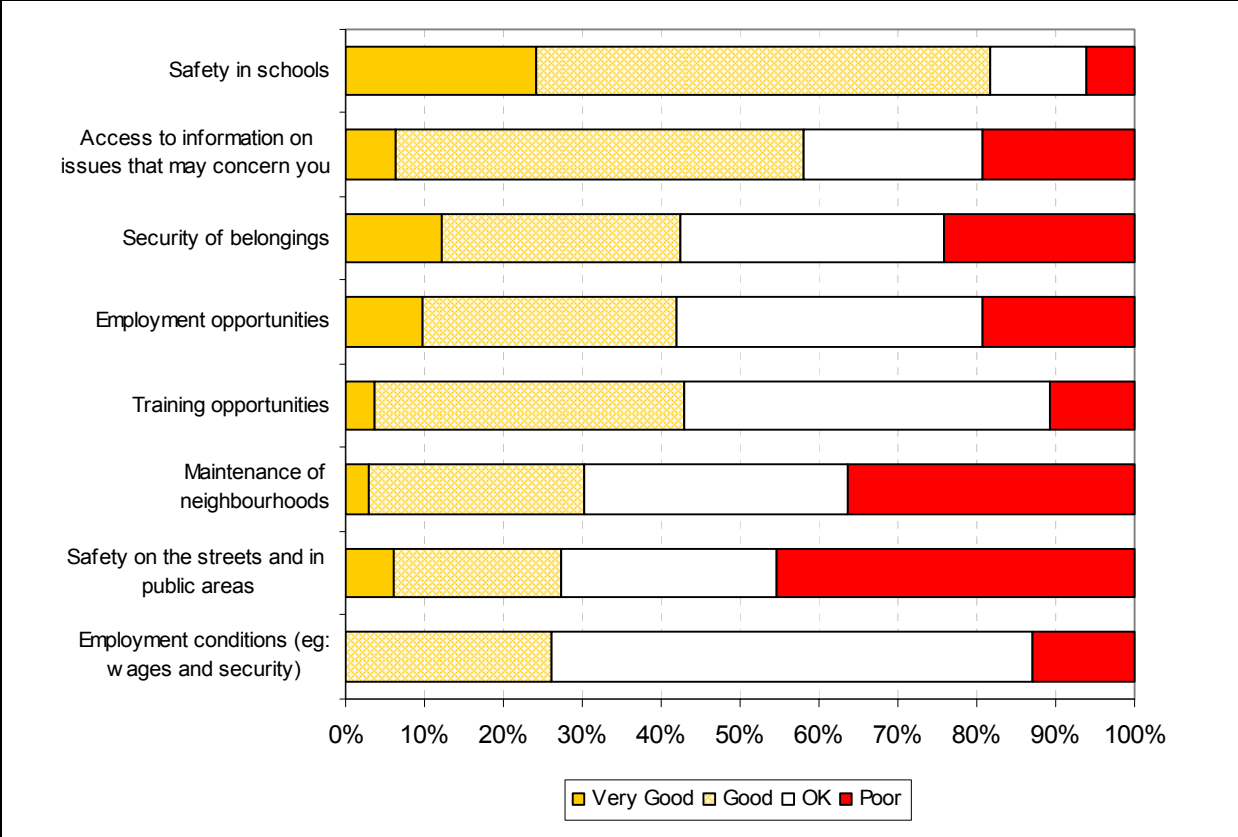
It is worth noting that whilst young people feel that there is adequate support for young people going through a hard time (67%), another 15% felt that the services offered were poor. However, over half of those interviewed indicated that they accessed more informal means of support such as family, teachers, friends and youth workers for advice.

The neighbourhood

The final Survey question rated opportunities and conditions in the neighbourhood.

The young people of Collingwood indicated that they feel safest when at school, with just over 80% rating it as ‘good’ or ‘very good’. This can be contrasted with safety on the streets and in public areas where 46% of respondents indicated that this was ‘poor’. Reasons given by respondents indicate that the presence of teachers, fences and gates helped to make them feel safer at school, but the presence of drunken people and drug users increased their feeling of insecurity in the streets.

Figure 4: How would you rate the following in your neighbourhood?



Young people also said that the cleanliness of the neighbourhood was not satisfactory with the presence of graffiti, syringes and rubbish making the area look unclean. Over 50% of young people rate access to information as ‘good’ to ‘very good’, however nearly 20% felt that it was ‘poor’.

When asked what they would change about their neighbourhood, just under 50% indicated that the safety of the area could be improved. Suggestions on how to make those changes included improving lighting in the area and security checking areas such as stairwells. It is worth noting however, that when asked what has happened to improve your neighbourhood, 6 respondents indicated that security had improved within the area. 33% of respondents indicated a need for improved maintenance of the area, with general cleanliness and maintenance of laundry facilities being of greatest concern. Over 50% indicated that better parks, playgrounds and facilities for young people would benefit the neighbourhood.

On a positive note, when asked “Are there things around your neighbourhood, which you really like and which make you proud to live there?” there were positive responses.

"I feel proud to live there. People look after each other."

"People are nice."

"People at the housing office are nice."

"Friends, meeting new people, the parks are nice."

"People with nice smiles."

"I like it when we have Harvest Festival because it involves everyone and everyone is happy."

Over a third of those interviewed indicated that they would like to be involved in a wider discussion on youth issues in the area. When asked how young people could be more involved, six indicated that meetings or a Youth Reference Group would be beneficial, whilst four responded that undertaking more youth based surveys to ask the youth about issues that affect them would be valuable.

This report has been prepared by I & J Management Services for North Yarra Community Health.

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APPENDIX

Collingwood Youth Survey May 2006

This survey is being undertaken by the City of Yarra and North Yarra Community Health to help us understand the issues that impact on the lives of young people.

Your opinions are important to us. They will help us make improvements to your neighborhood and develop new ways by which the thoughts of young people can be heard.

Any information you give us will be treated in strict confidence. No personal details identifying individuals will be made available publicly or to anyone outside of the project team unless we feel it may cause serious harm to yourself or someone else.

Interviewers please complete the following		
Date of interview:		
Place of interview:		
Initials of interviewers		





1. Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

a) Age		b) Gender	Male / Female
c) How many people live in your household (including yourself)? Who are they - parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents?		d) Were you born in Australia?	Yes/No
e) If born in Australia, are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent?	Yes/No	f) If not born in Australia - What country were you born in?	
g) What is your cultural background? i) What language(s) do you speak at home?		h) If living in Collingwood - do you live in either of the high-rise towers or walk-ups?	High-rise / Walk-ups
i) How long have you lived there?		k) If living in Collingwood - do you have access to a swipe card? Do you have your own key to your flat?	Yes / No Yes / No
l) Are you still at school? - Where?	Yes / No	m) If not at school - When did you leave? - Are you doing any type of study e.g. at TAFE or university Yes / No
n) Are you working? Where do you work? Doing what?	Yes - full-time Yes - part time Yes - casual No	o) If <u>not</u> a student (e.g. at school, TAFE etc) and <u>not</u> in work What are your main activities e.g. looking for work, caring for children?	

2. Overall how do the following things make you feel?

Please tick one of the spaces below to show how happy or sad each of them makes you feel, most of the time.

	Makes me feel very happy 	Makes me feel happy 	Does not make me feel happy or sad 	Makes me feel sad 	Makes me feel very sad 
Friends					
Family relationships					
Neighbours					
Feeling of community					
People's attitudes					
Money to live					
Getting a job					
Health					
Religion/faith					
Entertainment (e.g. music, food, art)					
School or study					
Shopping					
Sport					
Other: Please specify _____ _____ _____					
Other: Please specify _____ _____ _____					

3. What do you do in your spare time?

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Hang out with friends | <input type="checkbox"/> | Listen to music | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Play an organized sport | <input type="checkbox"/> | Go to church | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Stay at home | <input type="checkbox"/> | Play computer games | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Go shopping | <input type="checkbox"/> | Play playstation / x-box | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Study / homework | <input type="checkbox"/> | Hang around the streets / parks | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Help out at home | <input type="checkbox"/> | Look after brothers /sisters/ family | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Work | <input type="checkbox"/> | Do nothing | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Art / crafts | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify) _____ | |

4. Are there things about your neighbourhood, which you really like and which make you feel proud to live there?

5. What do you think of the following facilities/ services for young people in your neighbourhood?

	Poor	OK	Good	Very good	Why?	
a) Recreational facilities such as leisure centres, bike tracks, skateboarding areas						
b) Places for young people to hang out together						
c) Housing and accommodation						
d) Public transport						
e) Support for young people who are going through a hard time						
f) Collingwood Youth Space					Do you access the Youth Space?	If not, why?

					Yes / No	
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6. How would you rate the following in your neighbourhood?

	Poor	OK	Good	Very good	Why?
a) Maintenance of neighbourhoods (eg, cleanliness, lighting)					
b) Safety in schools					
c) Security of belongings					
d) Safety on the streets and in public areas					
e) Employment opportunities					
f) Training opportunities					
g) Employment conditions (eg, wages and security)					
h) Access to information on issues that concern you					

7. Have there been any changes to your neighbourhood over the last year or so that have made it a better place for young people to live?

8. Are there other ways you think your neighbourhood could be made a better place for young people?

9. If you could change any 3 things about your neighbourhood what would they be?

1.

2.

3.

10. How do you think young people could be involved in making these changes?

11. Please tell us about anything that has not been covered in the survey that is important to you and about which you want to have a say.

12. Would you like to take part in the Collingwood youth reference group to discuss the issues in this survey?

Yes/No

If yes, please fill out your details on the attached form

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey