

Learnings from a Youth Social Connection Co-Design Project

Melton Health Promotion Forum

May 2025

A vibrant, safe and liveable City accessible to all



Acknowledgement of Country

Melton City Council acknowledges Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples living and working in Melton.

Council recognises the people of the Kulin Nations as the original custodians of the land now known as City of Melton.

On behalf of the municipality, Council pays respect to their Elders, past, present, and future.

Project Goal

Sustainably increase social connection and mental wellbeing for young people aged 12-18, in the City of Melton, through youth co-design of existing Council programs and facilities

Project Partners

Young
Communities
team

Libraries team

cohealth

African Youth
Initiative

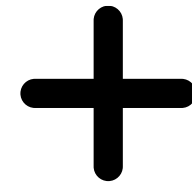
NWMPHN



**x1 focus group with
Burmese youth**

27 Burmese youth aged 12 to 18
years

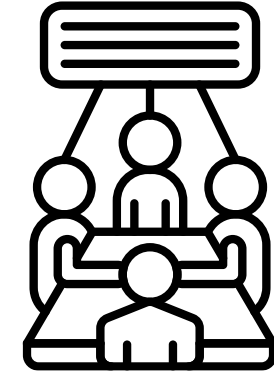
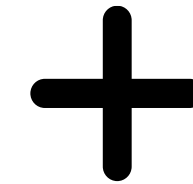
x1 Burmese Bicultural Worker from
cohealth



**x1 focus group with
South Sudanese youth**

26 South Sudanese youth aged 11
to 18 years

x2 South Sudanese Bicultural
Workers from AYI



**x1 final co-design workshop with a mix of
participants from both focus groups**

30 youth aged 12 to 18 years

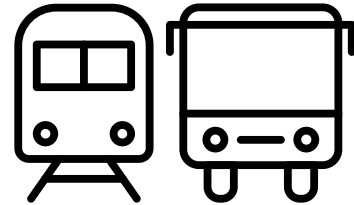
x3 Bicultural Workers

Focus Group Findings

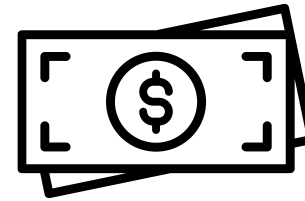
Barriers to Social Inclusion



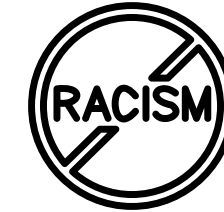
lack of cultural and religious safety



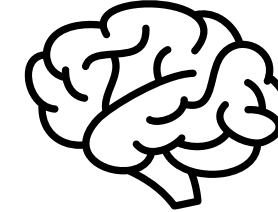
lack of adequate public transport



lack of money and job opportunities



racism and discrimination



mental health issues

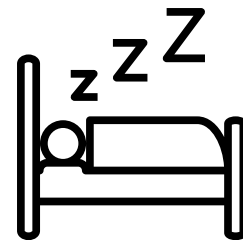
Impact of Social Exclusion



feeling tired, sluggish and drained



poor mental health



sleep issues



isolation



developing trust issues



feeling misunderstood and confused

Recommendations for City of Melton Libraries

Finding

Recommendation

Participants have misconceptions about libraries and their services



Develop a targeted promotion campaign/intervention for young people to educate their peers aged 12-18 and parents/guardians about what the City of Melton libraries can offer

Participants would like to see a diversified range of workshops



Design a series of culturally accessible workshops for young people aged 12-18 that discuss career pathways and opportunities, finances (taxes, managing money, running small businesses and financial abuse) and coding/IT

Participants dislike completing surveys at the end of workshops or events



Use surveys sparingly to evaluate youth workshops and programs

Recommendations for Melton Youth Centre

Finding

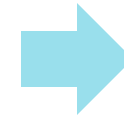
Recommendation

Participants generally do not know that the Melton Youth Centre exists or what programs are offered



Develop a school promotion intervention that involves young people, youth peer champions, parents/guardians and schoolteachers to deliver information about the Melton Youth Centre in schools

Participants would like culturally specific spaces and programs delivered through Melton Youth Centre



Provide South Sudanese and Burmese-specific youth programs at the Melton Youth Centre, such as traditional Burmese dancing

Participants would like more engagement with family members on youth issues



Provide workshops or programs that youth can attend with their family members to increase family-knowledge of youth issues

Recommendations for City of Melton Plans, Strategies and Programs

Finding

Burmese and South Sudanese communities do not discuss mental health and parents may not understand youth mental health issues



Council should work with CALD communities to increase parent/guardian/family understanding of youth mental health issues and begin to breakdown cultural stigma surrounding mental health

Increasing cultural accessibility of programs and events by providing interpreters and translated materials



Council should apply a cultural accessibility lens to all programs and events and strongly consider using interpreters and translated materials to improve cultural safety and community engagement



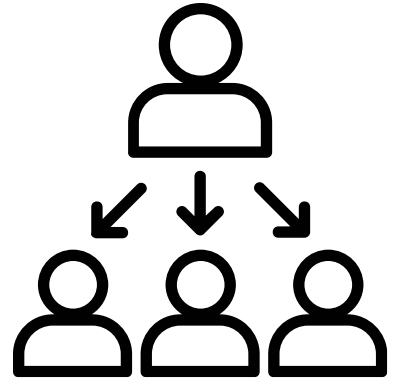
Council should strongly consider partnering with a Bicultural Worker during the design, delivery and evaluation of relevant community projects to increase cultural safety, relevance and engagement with community

Local transportation options are inadequate, and this greatly impacts how socially included and connected youth feel



Council should continue strong advocacy efforts to increase public transport access across the City of Melton

Factors Influencing Data Collection



Not representative



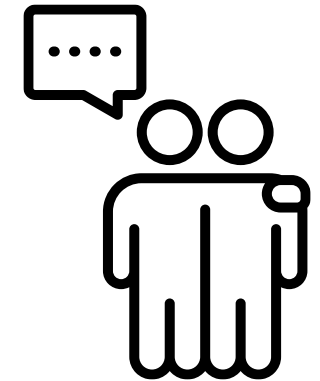
All participants were students and engaged with education system



Gender imbalance



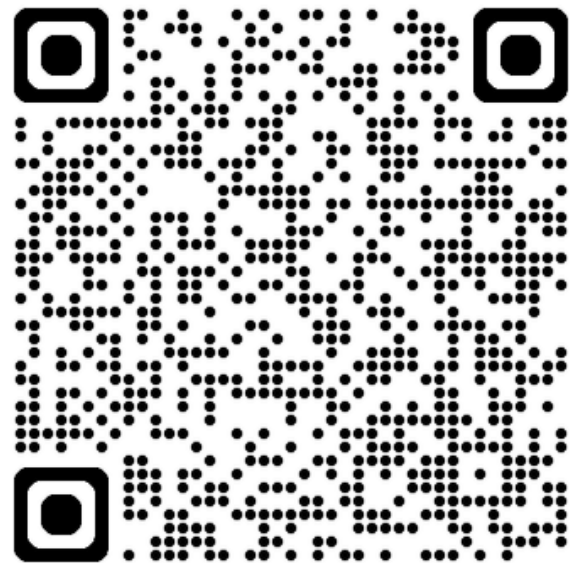
Limited engagement with participants under the age of 15



Peer influence

Importance of Bicultural Workers

When working with culturally specific communities, Council should partner with a Bicultural Worker for project planning, delivery and evaluation to increase cultural safety and community engagement (budget permitting)



cohealth's 'Working Together' guide for employers and Bicultural Workers to navigate complexities of BCWs working in their communities

Next Steps

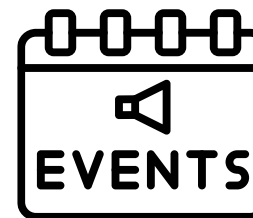
Youth Co-Designed Awareness Campaign



Youth Working Group with x10 young people aged between 16 - 18 years

Develop youth co-design campaign to increase awareness of youth programs offered through Council libraries, youth centre and community centres

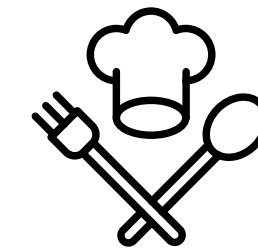
Burmese Youth Co-Designed Event



Youth Working Group + Burmese Bicultural Worker

Co-design and deliver a culturally accessible event or program at Melton Youth Centre that connects Burmese youth and families to the Centre

Connecting to Culture Workshops with Headspace



Headspace + AYI

Pilot program to promote intergenerational dialogue in the South Sudanese community and reduce barriers to accessing mental health support

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