

What's Important to YOUth

Final Report

Organisation Contact Details

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Organisation Information

Mission Australia (MA) is a non-denominational Christian community service organisation that has been helping people to regain their independence for over 155 years. Independence is something all individuals strive for, but life rarely turns out as planned. Mission Australia has learnt the reasons behind a loss of independence and the paths to regaining it are different for everyone. This understanding informs the way MA works to achieve the goal of reducing homelessness and strengthening communities across Australia. MA offers a wide range of integrated solutions over the long term, through homelessness initiatives and affordable housing, family support, employment and skills development, as well as early learning and youth services.

The targeted cohorts MA has engaged to participate in the Youth Consultations include those who are residing in, or have recently exited Out-of-Home-Care, young people in, or exiting the Youth Justice System, Aboriginal Young People and young people from a refugee or Pacific Islander background. MA delivers a range of programs for these cohorts of young people across Victoria. These include:

Springboard, an intensive case management support program to assist young people aged 16 to 18 years in residential out-of-home care and up to 21 years who have left residential care, to gain secure long-term employment by re-engaging with appropriate education, training and/or supported employment opportunities. MA currently delivers Springboard across the Southern and Northern Metropolitan Regions of Melbourne.

WorkOut delivers an individualised, responsive and assertive service facilitating quality sustainable training and employment outcomes for young people within Youth Justice Custodial Services across Victoria. The service is an integral support for young people exiting custody as part of their case planning. WorkOut staff and Youth Justice Custodial Services Coordinators work in collaboration to ensure there are no gaps that a young person can slip through, and that together they provide comprehensive and consolidated case planning and case management processes.

Social Enterprises (Synergy Repairs and Charcoal Lane).

Synergy Repairs is a social enterprise based in North Melbourne that offers customers a full suite of smash repair services, while providing on-the-job training and work experience for marginalised youth; notably young people who have had trouble with the law. The program harnesses participants' interest in cars and aims to help them build a career in a field that matches their interests.

Charcoal Lane is a social enterprise in Fitzroy that combines a restaurant specialising in native flavours with a comprehensive training program for young people who have experienced vocational and non-vocational barriers to employment. Charcoal Lane enables Aboriginal and other young people to gain both accredited hospitality qualifications and professional experience within a supportive developmental environment. On completing traineeships at the restaurant, young people are well prepared to move into careers in hospitality, or other industries.

Recommendations

To enable the achievement of the whole-of-government youth policy draft objectives, a primary focus on ensuring all young people have access to affordable and suitable housing is pivotal. Without stable accommodation, addressing other barriers young people face such as alcohol and other drugs, mental health, disengagement from education and training and unemployment proves increasingly difficult. Mission Australia's homeless policy outlines a range of strategies to address homelessness. Within the homelessness action plan, there are two actions relating to addressing youth homelessness. *'Young people experiencing family conflict are still significantly over-represented in the homeless population. Proven early intervention models should be expanded – especially family engagement services like Reconnect (which works with young people and their families in flexible ways, including counselling, mediation and practical support) and place-based models such as the Ryde Project (which works with schools to identify and support young people at risk).* The second identifies that a 'zero tolerance' approach should be adopted to people becoming homeless when they exit state care including hospitals and drug and alcohol facilities, correction facilities, detention centres and mental health institutions, as well as young people in the out of home care system. Supports need to be provided to people well before they exit institutions and governments should be held accountable for these outcomes over the medium term. (Mission Australia, Homelessness Policy 2015)

The data collected from the consultations clearly demonstrate that alcohol and other drugs (AOD) is considered to be an extremely important key theme. A total of 76% of participants, in particular young people in youth justice custodial precincts, identified AOD within their top three issues. A large number of participants identified that it proves difficult to access rehabilitation and detox facilities due to lengthy waiting lists. A key recommendation is to increase resources in this area, particularly in regional Victoria. Earlier this year, the ABC released comments from a leading youth health agency that identified there are not enough treatment services in Victoria to deal with the demand. A detox service in Ballarat, has four beds and caters for the whole of south-west Victoria. (ABC news 20 April 2015)

Another area considered to be one of the most important key themes from the consultations was education. 64% of participants identified education within their top three issues. As such, a key recommendation is to reinstate and/or provide successful assertive outreach models to ensure disengaged young people are supported to re-engage with, and remain engaged in education. The YACVic, Submission to the Education State, July 2015, identified that each year 10,000 young Victorians in Years 9-11 leave school and do not go on to any other education or training. Even more vulnerable are those young people who disengage earlier still, some before reaching secondary school. Furthermore, 6,000 young people leave school to enrol in training, only to exit entirely from education within a year. Apprenticeship and traineeship student numbers have dropped by 40% since 2012. (The Education State, Department of Education & Training, Melbourne June 2015)

In addition to addressing educational disengagement in Victoria another key recommendation is to ensure the most disadvantaged youth cohorts, such as those involved in child protection, the out-of-home care system and young people involved in the youth justice system, are supported to access suitable and reputable training qualifications, as well as enhancing opportunities for young people to enter into the labour market. Young people disengaged from mainstream education tend not to receive opportunities to engage in work experience, which play a pivotal role in exposure to employment industries, and equipping young people with the knowledge to make informed decisions regarding their employment pathway.

The cohort of young people Mission Australia facilitated consultations with identified that they do not have the capacity to be involved in working alongside government in the development of a whole of government youth policy however, participants strongly supported the idea of young people being involved in this process. Moreover, a number of young people commented that vulnerable and disengaged youth cohorts in addition to mainstream young people should be involved in this process.

A key theme which arose from the consultations included a number of participants commenting on their previous experiences of government policies and strategies relating to young people. Discussions demonstrated that young

people felt there were minimal actions taken with regard to government strategies to improve issues faced by young people. Participants felt very strongly with regard to receiving communication and/or documentation relating to the progress and outcomes of the objectives within the whole-of-government youth policy.

We have deliberately kept the language used in the key themes section below as close to the language used by those involved in the consultations.

Methodology

MA conducted 11 consultations. Of these, 6 were focus groups and the remaining 5 were conducted through one-to-one interviews. There were a total of 50 young people who participated in the consultations. The 6 focus group consultations occurred at;

Melbourne Youth Justice Centre (Parkville) – 2 groups with a total of 16 young people.

Malmsbury Youth Justice Centre – 1 group with a total of 8 young people

Charcoal Lane Restaurant – 1 group with a total of 7 young people

Synergy Repairs – 1 group with a total of 5 young people

Work for the Dole Program – 1 group with a total of 9 young people.

One-to-one interviews were conducted with a total of 5 Springboard Clients. These one-to-one interviews were conducted at the Mission Australia Dandenong Office.

Additional participant data is located in the table at the end of this section.

The consultations were facilitated by one of MA's training facilitators. The employee has vast experience in facilitating group workshops with vulnerable and disengaged young people, as well as having a background in youth work. During the three youth justice centre consultations, a Mission Australia case manager was also present to support the facilitator as well as collate the responses young people provided during these consultations. The expertise of the MA staff member involved in the consultations aided in the engagement of young people's participation. Moreover, the facilitator ensured a safe, friendly and inclusive environment to allow participants to feel at ease. Chairs were set up in a circle arrangement, to encourage open communication. Prior to commencement of the consultation questions, the facilitator also ensured that each young person involved had a good understanding of why they were there and who would have access to the responses they were providing. Furthermore, the facilitator offered encouragement around the level of involvement they wanted to have during the consultations. Butchers paper, stickers and highlighters were the main materials utilised in each of the consultations.

List of questions used in group and one-to-one consultations.

1. With 1 being the most important, how important are these issues to you (Education, Employment, Training, Mental Health, Alcohol & Drugs, Discrimination, Housing and Transport). – The 8 issues were written on butcher's paper and stuck on the walls of room where the consultation took place. Young people were provided with 8 stickers, numbered 1 through to 8 and asked to place one sticker on each of the butcher's paper.
2. Think about the issue you selected as the most important issue to you. Why do you think this is the most important issue?
3. Is there anything else you want to tell us about these issues?
Sub Questions & Questions to Prompt discussion in relation to Q. 3
4. What was your favourite thing about school? What was your least favourite thing? What could have been better?

5. Has anyone attended training programs at TAFE or Registered Training Organisations? If yes, were these different to going to school? How? Do you think attending TAFE or an RTO has helped you become more employable?
6. Do you think it is hard or easy for young people to find work?
7. Has anyone had problems, or a friend, had problems trying to access housing in the past? What challenges do you find within the housing system? What are the biggest issues in accessing accommodation?
8. What works well with the current public transport system? Do you think there could be improvements to Victoria's public transport system?
9. What are the major issues relating to the overall issue of Drugs and Alcohol?
10. Does anyone know how to access support for mental health concerns for themselves or a friend? Is it an easy process to access support for someone with a mental health issue? Could improvements be made to accessing mental health supports?
11. Do you think people are discriminated against due to their age, religion, race, colour, stereotypes, gender preferences and/or size? Why do you think this happens? Is it a particular stereotype that discriminates against another? What can we do about it? What can the police and/or government do about it?
12. Are there other issues that are important to you that are not on the list?
13. Thinking about all of the issues, which would you like to see government taking action on? This could be in the form of changing the law, offering new or better programs or services, or doing things differently.
14. What do you think the government could do to tackle the issues you identified above?
15. Consider the draft vision for the Youth Policy: *To maximise the opportunities for young people 12 – 24 years to realise their potential and improve outcomes, particularly for those whose disadvantaged and disengaged or facing particular challenges.* Do you agree with this vision? If not, do you have ideas on what to make different?
16. Consider the following objectives for the youth policy:
 - *Young People are heard*
 - *Have the opportunity to participate in education, training and employment to secure their economic future*
 - *Are supported early to address emerging challenges*
 - *Feel a sense of belonging, safety and connection with their families, culture, local communities and civic society*
 - *Are given a fair go not matter their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, health, religion, mental health status or whether they live in a rural or regional location.*
17. Do you agree with the above objectives? If not, do you have ideas on what to make different?
18. What do you think is the most important action that the government should take for each of these objectives?
19. What other objectives do you think should be included?
20. What are some actions that could be included in the new youth policy?
21. What youth programs or policy are currently working well?
22. What youth programs or policy could be improved on?
23. Would you be interested in working alongside government to tackle youth issues?
24. In what ways would you be interested in working alongside government? For example;
 - Input into policies and programs*
 - Participate on advisory groups*
 - Work with community organisations*
 - Take action with your friends/community/school*
 - Other*
25. What would make the biggest difference to you to make sure your experience of your current situation (out of home care or youth justice) does not define the rest of your life.
26. For discussions with young aboriginal people, we will be asking what they think needs to be done to make service provision more culturally sensitive to their needs and more effective.

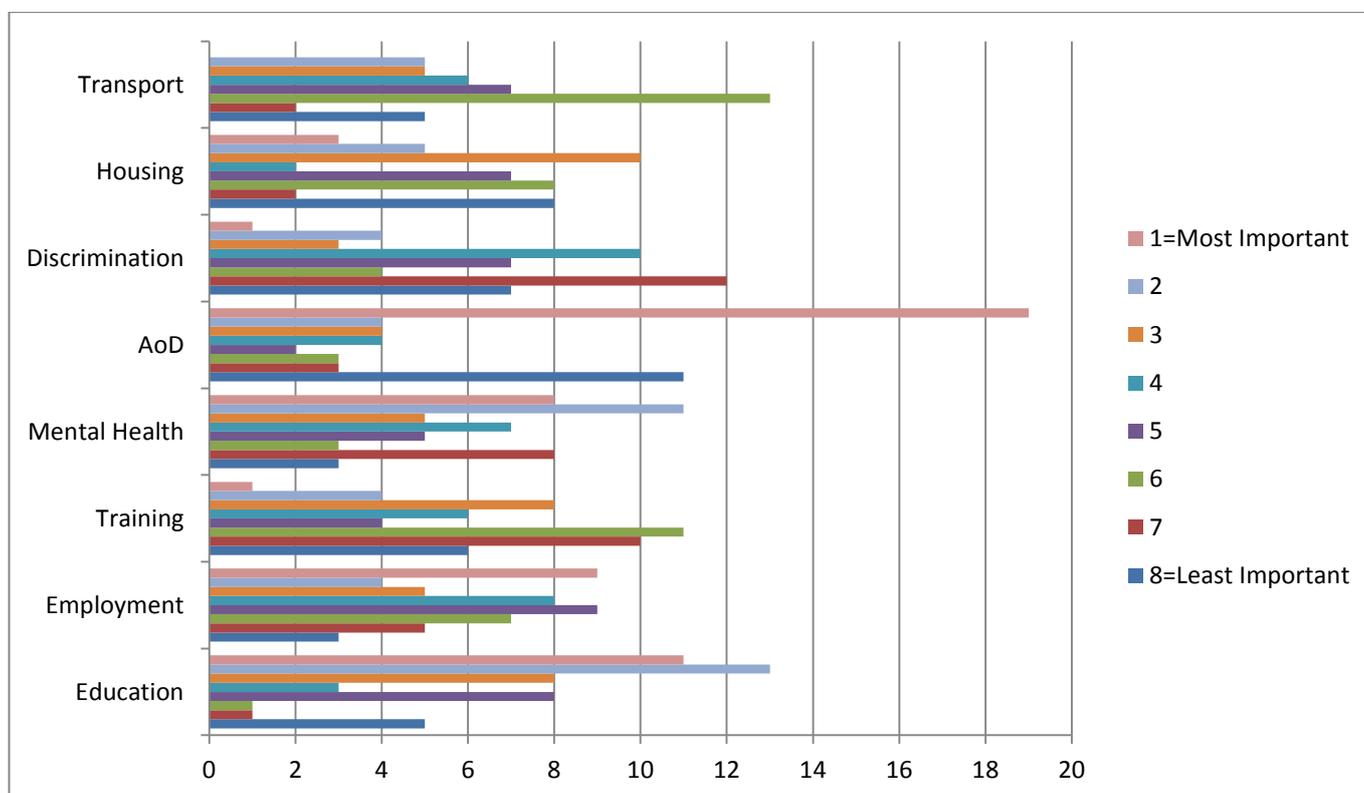
During the consultations, some of the questions required further explanation if the young people did not quite understand what they were being asked. Conversation prompts were also utilised as needed, if young people were not responding to a question.

Data – Participant Information

	Method	Total number participants	Age range	Gender	Cultural background Description	Location
Focus groups	6	45	15 – 23 years	13 – F 32 – M	Australian born CALD New Zealand Indigenous	R R - 7 M - 30 GC - 8
One-to-one interviews	5	5	18-23 years	4 – F 1 - M	Australian born New Zealand	R R - 0 M - 5 GC - 0
Support with Online surveys	0	0	-	0 – F 0 - M	-	R R - 0 M - 0 GC - 0
Total	11	50		17 – F 33 - M	Australian born - 30 CALD – 7 Aboriginal – 10 New Zealand- 3	Regional Rural - 7 Metropolitan - 35 Growth Corridor - 8

Outcomes – Key Findings

The table below details the responses of all 50 participants in relation to the most important (number 1) to the least important (number 8) of the 8 different focus areas.



The above results demonstrate that 19 participants (38%) identified Alcohol and other Drugs as the most important issue, whilst 11 participants (22%) identified it as the least important issue. 76% of clients with a disclosed Youth Justice background rated AOD in their top three issues

Education was also considered as an important issue, with a total of 32 participants (64%) ranking Education as number 1, 2 or 3.

Followed closely behind education, the key focus areas of mental health and employment were also considered as important issues. Almost 50% of participants ranked mental health (48%) and employment (46%) with either a number 1, 2 or 3.

Despite participants expressing a number of issues with public transport, Transport was the only key focus area which not one participant ranked as the most important issue.

100% of participants who have been involved or are currently involved in the out-of-home care system (Residential Care), rated housing in their top four issues.

50% of Indigenous participants noted the key theme of discrimination to be an important issue. These participants identified that they would like to see improvement of discrimination law and public awareness.

Key themes which received a cumulative ranking of 6, 7 or 8 (the least important) included;

Training – 54%

Housing – 36%

Discrimination – 32%

Public transport – 28%

Key Themes

<p>What is important to young people?</p>	<p>Themes derived from conversations about each issue included;</p> <p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having VCAL as an option is important as it involves a work experience component and helps you to obtain better qualifications • Naplan testing is too hard • Often young people are kicked out of school too soon, and not given any chances • There were some comments made around the Parkville School identifying that it is beneficial they have smaller class sizes, however a number of participants from Parkville Youth Justice Precinct identified that the Parkville school is used to make clients look busy, and that the education side of things is too easy because it's not mainstream education • Education is extremely important. Having schools that provide good education over a vast range of subjects helps to create an education population and lowers crime rates • Schools focus more on test scores than actual learning and teaching. Young people are left feeling stressed about their grades • Competing all the way through school is important for young people to help them get a job • The more education you have, the more likely you are to succeed • Often young people are kicked out of school too soon, and they are not given any chances to change their behaviour • Some participants identified that they prefer to make the choice to attend school and do not enjoy it when they are forced to go • School can be boring and it is more appealing to 'wag' school and 'hang out with friends' <p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There needs to be more 'hands-on' training made available • Not being able to afford TAFE is an issue • Some participants believe that there are plenty of courses in the community, but people need to want to do them • Some participants identified they were not aware of financial assistance for TAFE
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courses such as VET Fee Help

Employment

- Having a criminal record makes it difficult to obtain employment
- There were a number of participants who identified that are not enough jobs for everyone
- Most employers are now looking for people who have completed Yr. 12, even for entry level jobs
- A common theme identified by participants related to thoughts that employers prefer to employ younger people because they do not have to pay them as much
- There needs to be more paid work for young people over the age of 21. This is important for young people in order to support themselves, pay bills and to have no debts
- It can be very stressful finding work and if you do not have support with finding work, 'you start giving up on life'
- One participant stated 'if the government stopped hiring part time workers, maybe people would be able to survive better if they were working full time'.

Alcohol and Drugs

- There were a large number of participants who identified that the drug 'ICE' is a big issue. Comments included; 'ICE takes your life', and 'ICE is a big issue in the community'
- People commit crimes when using drugs
- 18 years is a good legal drinking age
- Alcohol is too easy to obtain, under 18's can obtain it
- A number of participants identified that there should be more detox & rehab facilities to decrease current lengthy waiting lists. They also discussed how it is difficult to 'get into' a detox or rehab facility without the assistance of a support worker
- There should be a 'crackdown' on drug dealers to make drugs harder to obtain
- Participants reported that they would see a doctor, research the internet or Facebook to find out about detox and rehab facilities
- Some participants identified that AoD issues escalate quickly; 'One friend starts using, then the rest of the friendship group start using'
- 'The government need to offer AoD programs and youth programs that are enjoyable and will get youth off the streets'
- A number of participants identified that Drug and Alcohol education is very important
- Of the New Zealand participants, it was discussed that 'alcohol is a big part of Islander culture, it doesn't matter if there is a big event, people drink anyway'

Housing

- There is a shortage of affordable and suitable housing in Victoria
- Living in residential units is bad, but can be good when they are taken out for activities
- Friends are not allowed at residential units which can be detrimental to friendships
- Too many homeless young people, which increases criminal acts such as stealing to obtain money
- If you have money you can live anywhere – 'money is power'
- Private rental is not affordable for young people
- If you are a young person and do not have a child it is very difficult to get into Transitional Housing
- Housing prices (both buying and renting) are too high. This issue is a major cause for the large number of homeless people

- People who are receiving Centrelink payments should have their rent reduced
- There are a lot of young people who are at risk of being homeless. There are also a lot of young people sleeping under bridges
- Housing needs to be affordable and support provided to assist with developing independent living skills
- There are not enough affordable housing options for young people, and a number of participants identified that there is a shortage of houses in Victoria
- Share Houses are sometimes the only option and there are lots of young people who would prefer to live by themselves
- 'I believe it is important for young people to have more help with rental payments if they don't live at home and create more opportunities for young people to be able to buy or rent a house. Prices of housing and rental are too high and it would increase the number of homeless people as a result.'
- Need to give people who are on the dole cheaper rent
- Private rental is not affordable for young people
- You are only able to stay in a THM for a maximum of 2 years

Mental Health

- Some people cannot access medication due to not having any money
- One participant identified that you can't do anything to change your mental health, you are born with it
- Young people were able to identify services that you can access if you have mental health issues such as Headspace, Beyond Blue and Life Line
- Some young people identified that the only reason they attend counselling is because it is a condition of their order
- A small number of participants identified that young people self-medicate to improve their mental health by using drugs and alcohol
- A number of participants identified that too many young people commit suicide

Discrimination

- Police Officers discriminate against young people too often. Some participants from Parkville Youth Justice Precinct talked of being assaulted by Police
- People assume you are bad because of how you talk, dress, being young and being with a group of people
- Often young people are 'watched' in stores as staff assume they are going to steal
- There is too much racism in Australia
- Young people discriminate particularly against gay males
- Discrimination affects everyone
- Discrimination is an important issue because it impacts people's mental health as well as how people behave towards other people
- Participants identified that the reasons people discriminate include politics, boredom and jealousy

Transport

- Participants from the Parkville and Malmsbury Youth Justice Precincts identified that stealing cars is more appealing than catching public transport
- Trains/Buses often run late and this causes 'big issues like being late for court and then being remanded because of it'
- Some young people expressed concern that often bus drivers, drive straight past them at the bus stop because of how they dress and look, assuming they won't have a ticket
- Bus routes are in the right spots but when they are late, this causes issues
- There were a number of comments made by participants regarding the cost of public transport. These comments included; 'It should be cheaper for people that do not have a job', 'students should have access to free public transport, and 'public

	<p>transport is too expensive'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was consensus amongst a number of participants that the Myki system is not working. One participant identified that public transport in Victoria should adopt the public transport model that Perth has • A number of participants felt that the current process where fines are charged on the sport is unfair and needs to change
<p>Draft vision</p>	<p><i>To maximise the opportunities for young people 12 to 24 years to realise their potential and improve outcomes, particularly for those who are disadvantaged and disengaged or facing particular challenges.</i></p> <p>All 50 participants involved in the consultations (100%), agreed with the draft vision. Some participants identified that rather than the phrase 'to realise their potential', they would prefer it to read 'to learn what their full potential could be'.</p>
<p>Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young people are heard • Have the opportunity to participate in education, training and employment to secure their economic future • Are supported early address emerging challenges • Feel a sense of belonging, safety and connection with their families, culture, local communities and civic society • Are given a fair go no matter their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, health, religion, mental health status or whether they live in a rural or regional location. 	<p>Comment on young people's view of the draft objectives. Do they agree with these? Do they have other objectives they would like the youth policy to include?</p> <p>All 50 (100%) participants involved in the consultations agreed with the draft objectives, however, there were large number of young people which did not understand the term 'civic society' as stated in the third objective. The second objective listed 'Have the opportunity to participate in education, training and employment to secure their economic future' was considered to be the most important objective by the majority of young people involved in the consultations. A small group of young people identified that it will be hard to support young people in the early stages because young people do not readily ask for help.</p> <p>Additional objectives young people feel should be included are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To create better opportunities for young people • To keep youth off the streets • To give more rights to young people • To improve the health and safety of young people • To eliminate bullying in schools
<p>Actions for the new whole-of-government youth policy</p>	<p>What are some actions young people have identified that could be included in the new youth policy? / Thinking about all of the issues, which would you like to see government taking action on</p> <p>The actions young people identified that could be included in the new youth policy and/or the issues they would like see government taking action on included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased awareness around discrimination • No deregulation of university fees • Better sex education in schools • Keep guns and other weapons illegal • Stop wasting money on sports, arts and schemes that make the government look good • Have longer prime ministers so those issues can actually be focused on • Make changes to Centrelink and the law around minimum wages. Increase you allowance and minimum wages • Legalising gay marriage • Offering more work experience to young people so they can have a better understanding of employment, which can help them obtaining in employment in

	<p>the future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier access to services for indigenous people • Teaching indigenous culture in primary and secondary schools • Creating a youth policy which has youth members on the board • Create stricter laws around discrimination • Providing young people will support worker to help young people develop their independent living skills • To provide opportunities/forums for young people’s voices/opinions to be heard. Some participants identified that doing surveys/consultations similar to this one are a good way for young people to be heard • To ensure all young people are provided with a chance to participate, not just those who are in mainstream or private schooling
<p>Existing government youth-related policies and programs and service provision for young people</p>	<p>Your report should include any opinions or views that young people had regarding existing youth services or policies. Comments could include what they consider to be good youth services and what could be improved.</p> <p>The youth programs/services young people considered to be good included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Springboard • MOIRA (housing services) • TaskForce (AOD services) • Synergy (Mission Australia) • Working for the Dole programs • Rehab/Detox • YSAS • My Place in Pakenham <p>The following youth programs/services were ones young people felt could be improved;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trauma counselling • Residential Care • NEAMI • Detox facilities – they are good, but there needs to be more of them • Y-Stop Dandenong • Job Active Providers/Agencies – they don’t help you find employment. They just put you into Work for the Dole Programs • Work for the Dole Programs – there should be more of these available so young people can attend closer to where they live. They don’t help you with obtaining employment • The government changes to the Drug and Alcohol system • Support groups for mental illness to be advertised so people know about them
<p>The potential for co-design of Victorian policies and programs affecting young</p>	<p>Would young people like to be involved in the co-design of the youth policy and or other government programs and policies? How have young people expressed their desire to work with government on policies and programs?</p>

people	Of the 50 participants, many participants strongly expressed the importance of different cohorts of young people working alongside government and having input into policies and programs, however they did not feel they had the capacity to commit their involvement in this process
Other themes that you would like to include	<p>Discuss any other themes or issues that young people have identified and a key issue for them that may not be described above.</p> <p>Other themes or issues participants identified through the consultations included;</p> <p>Financial stress – the cost of living is too high</p> <p>Environmental issues and the impact these will have in the future</p> <p>Community Involvement – Lack of young people’s involvement in the community, in particular, involvement in sporting and/or extra-curricular activities, specifically young people who are disengaged from education</p> <p>Physical Health – discussions focussed on obesity, healthy eating and exercise</p>
Q. ‘What would make the biggest different to you to make sure your experience of your current situation (i.e. out-of-home care or youth justice) does not define the rest of your life?’	<p>Responses from participants to this question included;</p> <p>‘Time in a Youth Justice centre will define a person’s future. It is harder to get a job when you have a criminal record’.</p> <p>‘Being in custody is a learning experience, because young people appreciate what they have lost, such as their family.</p> <p>‘Being exited into homelessness when you turn 18 years and leave residential care is a big issue’.</p> <p>‘Young people need to stop hanging out with other resi kids and break away from those circles’.</p>

Conclusion

The consultations conducted by Mission Australia involved the participation of 50 young people from a range of different backgrounds and circumstances including, young people on custodial sentences, young people in out-of-home care, indigenous young people and young people disengaged from education, training and/or employment. Through consulting with a broad group of young people, it was evident that their views and thoughts on the key themes differed greatly based on their current and previous situations and experiences. For example, the majority of young people within the Youth Justice Precincts (Parkville and Malmsbury), viewed Alcohol and other Drugs to be an extremely important issue to focus on, whilst young people in out-of-home care viewed homelessness to be the most important issue.

Mission Australia’s experience in working with some of the most vulnerable and disengaged young people in Victoria, in particular young people involved in and or exiting youth justice precincts and out-of-home care it is an unfortunate reality whereby many of these young people exit into homelessness. Addressing youth homelessness through the provision of access to suitable and affordable accommodation options for young people is viewed to be a priority for the government to consider in the development of a whole of government youth policy. Supporting young people to overcome other barriers they are facing including Drug and Alcohol, youth justice, mental health and disengagement from education, training and employment is greatly improved when young people are in stable housing.

The key themes of alcohol and other drugs as well as education were also viewed by the young people involved in the consultations to be important areas to address in the whole of government youth policy. Discussions with young people in relation to the theme of alcohol and other drugs highlighted the difficulties young people experience with regard to accessing detox and rehabilitation facilities within a reasonable timeframe to overcome alcohol and/or drug addictions. Of the 50 young people involved in the consultations almost all had been disengaged from education at some point, and expressed negative experiences in mainstream schooling. It is imperative to ensure appropriate programs and supports are provided to assist the large numbers of disengaged Victorian young people to reengage with education and training.

References;

1. Mission Australia, Homelessness Policy 2015
2. ABC news website: <http://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2015-04-20/national-ice-taskforce-urged-to-address-health/6404830?site=southwestvic>
3. The YACVic, Submission to the Education State, July 2015
4. The Education State, Department of Education & Training, Melbourne June 2015