



MARIBYRNONG
YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

CLIMATE CHANGE YOUTH FORUM REPORT:

We acknowledge that we are on traditional lands of the Kulin Nation. We offer our respects to the Elders of these traditional lands, and through them to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples past, present and emerging.

Maribyrnong Youth Services would like to acknowledge the work and contributions of Maribyrnong's Youth Advisory Committee (MYAC) on the forum. We would like to recognise MYAC members for their outstanding contributions throughout the planning and delivery of the forum. Thank you for your continued commitment and dedication to furthering the voices of Maribyrnong's young people across our municipality and beyond.

PROJECT OVERVIEW:

On Wednesday 4th May, 2022, Maribyrnong's Youth Advisory Committee (MYAC) and Maribyrnong City Council Youth Services, hosted Maribyrnong's Climate Change Youth Forum.

The Maribyrnong Climate Change Youth Forum was designed and delivered by MYAC, in partnership with Council's Youth Services, as part of Victoria's Government ENGAGE Program.

The purpose of the forum was to engage young people across Maribyrnong to access information and enable them to voice their experiences and opinions.

The forum was attended by 50 secondary school students, from years 9 and 10, and 7 teachers from across Maribyrnong.

The participating schools were; Maribyrnong College, Caroline Chisholm Catholic College, Footscray High and Western English language School.

ACTIVITIES:

Young people engaged in a range of interactive climate focused activities which included;

Keynote speeches from topic experts and climate activists:

- ***Katta O'Donnel***

A law student who sued the Government for the financial implications of climate change.

- ***Lili Mayer***

From the youth led not for profit activist organisation Schools Strike 4 Climate Change.

Panel discussions which included:

- Council's Climate Emergency Lead Tiffany Harrison, Dr Katitza Marinkovic from University of Melbourne's Young People Climate Change Capital, and both keynote presenters.
- Student led conversations, which were co-facilitated by MYAC members and Youth Services.
- Council officers from the Community Engagement department attended and participated at the forum, to promote Council's Sustainability Learnings Portal.
- An interactive advocacy workshop facilitated by Youth Affairs Council of Victoria (YACVic), Victoria's peak youth advocacy body.

Findings in the report are largely from the student-led conversation component of the forum.



CONSULTATION METHOD:

The student-led conversations were facilitated across individual hour blocks, two student led conversation sessions were held.

As part of the student-led conversations, young people explored four key questions, these questions were discussed with each group. The groups were assigned two facilitators; one MYAC facilitator and one Youth Services facilitator per table.

Groups were provided with butchers papers to record and capture responses.

THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WERE EXPLORED:



What do you already know about climate change?



2. What are the gaps you have identified when it comes to climate change?



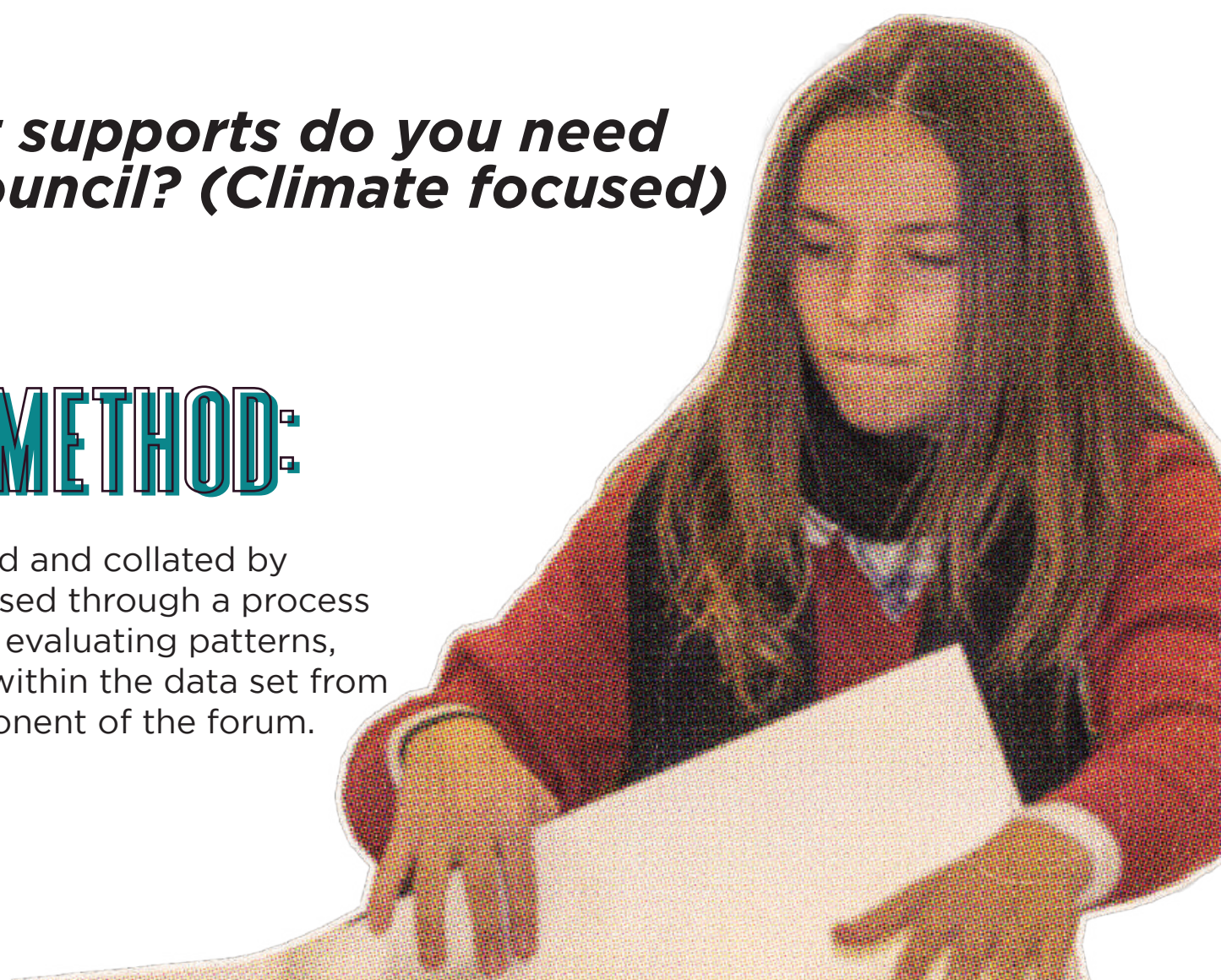
3. What do you want to see happen? (Within your school and community)



4. What supports do you need from Council? (Climate focused)

DATA ANALYSIS METHOD:

The responses were coded, analysed and collated by Youth Services. This data was analysed through a process which included; coding of the data, evaluating patterns, identifying key themes and trends within the data set from the student led conversation component of the forum.



KEY FINDINGS:

1. WHAT DO YOU ALREADY KNOW ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE?

Young people have a solid understanding on climate change, including concerns around the environment, the causes of climate change, and a basic understanding of positive action that could be taken.

They showed a strong understanding of the consequences of climate change, highlighting the impacts of climate change on;



Natural Habitats



***Animals &
Native Wildlife***



Weather



Natural Disasters

Young people highlighted the role of big corporations and companies, manufacturing industries, coal and electricity, transportation and vehicle emissions as the main contributing factors to the global climate crisis.



**CLIMATE CHANGE IS A VERY SERIOUS ISSUE
AS OUR ECOSYSTEM IS AT RISK OF COLLAPSING.**

**WE MUST ACT UPON IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
OR ELSE OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS
WILL HAVE NOTHING LEFT.**



Young people are concerned about climate change and the implications it will have on their future. They expressed worry and fear for their future, urging;

“If we don’t take collective climate action to counter the current climate crisis it will impact us”.

The language frequently used by young people to describe the climate emergency indicated a level of worry and fear, however they also displayed a level of optimism that if appropriate climate action is taken “this crisis can be prevented”.

Young people emphasized the need to; shift towards renewable energy, plant more trees, reduce pollution and protect natural habitats.



Young people are concerned about climate change and the implications it will have on their future. They expressed worry and fear for their future, urging;

“if we don’t take collective climate action to counter the current climate crisis it will impact us”.

The language frequently used by young people to describe the climate emergency indicated a level of worry and fear, however they also displayed a level of optimism that if appropriate climate action is taken “this crisis can be prevented”.

Young people emphasized the need to; shift towards renewable energy, plant more trees, reduce pollution and protect natural habitats.

2. WHAT ARE THE GAPS YOU HAVE IDENTIFIED WHEN IT COMES TO CLIMATE CHANGE?



**SCHOOL CURRICULUM
AVOIDS ISSUES AND
EMBELLISHES STEREOTYPES.**

SCHOOL CURRICULUM:

Young people identified the school curriculum as a significant gap, they feel as if the curriculum currently lacks sufficient climate education.

They are fearful for their future and want to shape the policies and decisions that will define them, but often don't feel informed or empowered enough to do so.

Young people reported they feel that they do not currently receive enough climate information or education at school. Even though young people have a sound understanding on climate change, they identified a knowledge gap and to know how to lead individual climate action. They emphasized the need for improved climate education as part of the school curriculum.

Even though students currently receive some information on climate change, they have expressed the need for more factual and detailed climate information to be taught across the core subject areas.

TEACHER ENGAGEMENT:

Interestingly in a separate discussion, teachers also provided feedback that the current school curriculum was lacking in prioritising climate specific education. Teachers affirmed that there is an appetite for students to learn more, but time and resources are limited.

They suggested that future shortened (2 hours) interactive workshops on climate emergency would be positively received.

Teachers also highlighted Phoenix Youth Centre as a safe, friendly and welcoming environment for young people, expressing a strong desire to utilise the space in the future.

INADEQUATE LEADERSHIP AND CLIMATE EDUCATION AMONG ADULTS:

“ UNIFIED RESPONSE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE SUPPORTED AND AGREED ON BY ADULTS ”

Young people highlighted a disconnect between young people and adults (leadership) when it comes to climate change.

They reported that they feel they're being failed by and let down by leaders, more specifically political leadership. They feel some leaders are not convinced climate change is real and the consequences it will have on the environment.

Young people are calling for increased collaboration between young people and leaders; where their voices, ideas and thoughts contribute to key decisions.

Young people also reported a lack of climate education for adults, including their communities and families.

LACK OF RESOURCES AND FUNDING:

“ LACK OF FUNDING: SCIENCE, EDUCATION, STAFF, SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUAL CHANGE. ”

Young people identified a lack of resources as a key gap. They specified a lack of resources when it comes to climate education, awareness building resources, educational resources and an overall lack of funding.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SEE HAPPEN? (WITHIN YOUR SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY)

“MORE CHALLENGES; OPPORTUNITIES, ENGAGE STUDENT VOICE.”

Young people want to see climate action promoted within their school and wider community. They want to see actions which include awareness building initiatives, educational initiatives which promote individual behaviour change, and more sustainable and eco-friendly resources.



The key actions for schools as identified by young people included:



Improved education on the climate emergency; including what is climate change? (facts), actions to tackle climate change, how to engage in climate activism and how to influence decision making



Establish environment and climate focused groups and networks



More awareness building resources such as posters and guest speakers



Improved waste management at school; coloured bins, recycling and rubbish pick up



Reduced usage of plastics



Sustainable and eco-friendly resources



More trees and green spaces



Recycling clothing; offer second hand uniform options

*The key actions for the community
as identified by young people included:*



**EDUCATION AND
AWARENESS INITIATIVES**



REDUCED PLASTIC USAGE



**SUSTAINABLE AND
ECO-FRIENDLY RESOURCES**



WHAT SUPPORTS DO YOU NEED FROM COUNCIL?



**TAKE THE FIRST STEP -
LEAD BY EXAMPLE.**

**INTRODUCE SUSTAINABLE
IDEAS/OPINIONS AND
SHOW COMMUNITY WHAT TO DO.**



Young people view the role of Council as important and vital, especially to counter such an important issue as the climate emergency.



Provide continued opportunities which promote youth voice and self-advocacy



Continue to work with schools to address major themes as identified by young people

Create more green spaces across municipality



Continue to resource Maribyrnong's Youth Advisory Committee (MYAC)

Provide linkages to other Council departments for resourcing and expertise



Continue the active conversations where young people are interested and engaged

Support student action and networks



Facilitate Information and education sessions on climate change, for young people and their families.

Provide opportunities for small climate specific grants



Take first step and lead by example

The key actions as identified by teachers:

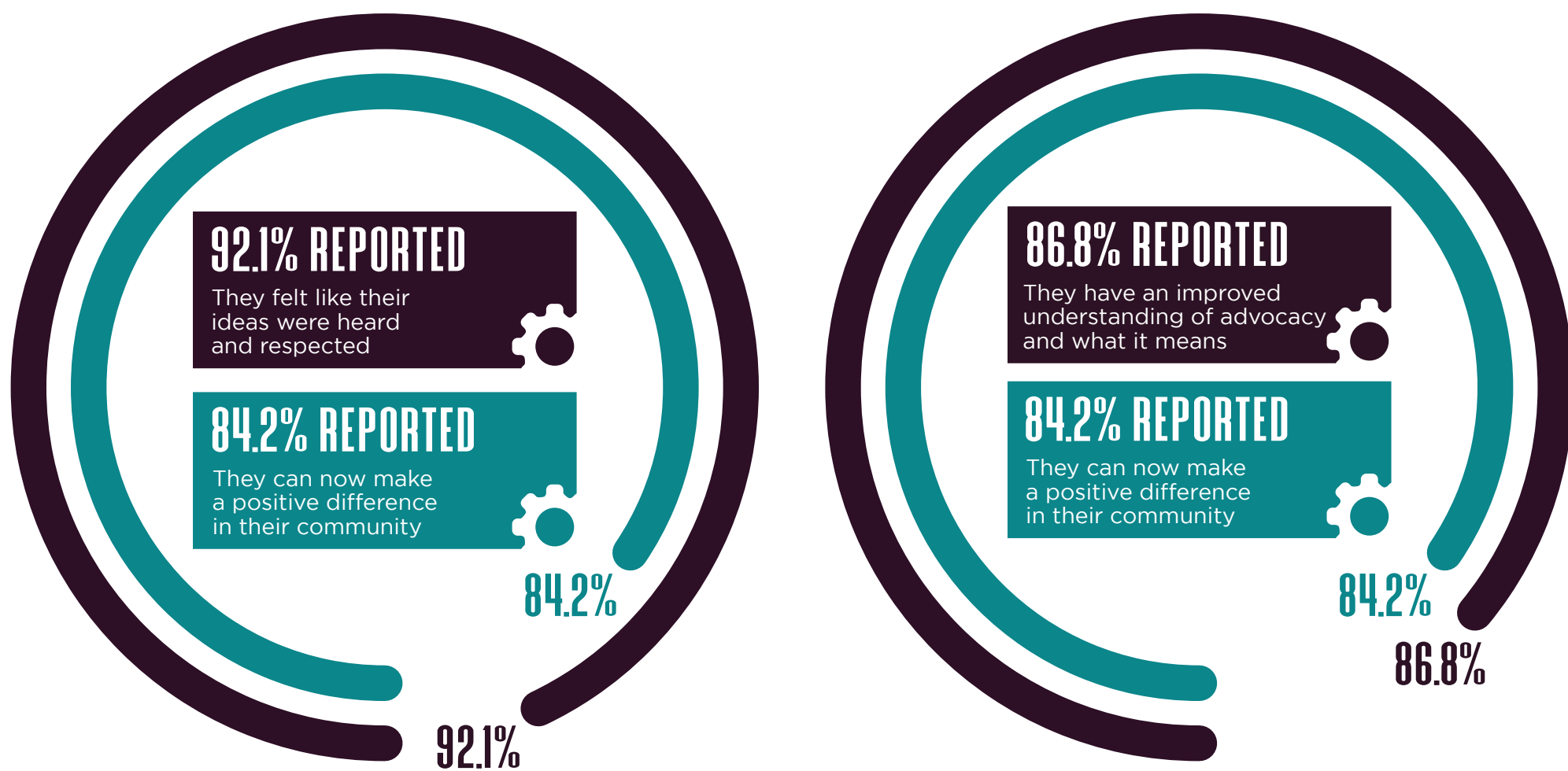


FUTURE SHORTENED (2 HOURS) INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS, FACILITATED BY COUNCIL, ON CLIMATE EMERGENCY WOULD BE POSITIVELY RECEIVED

CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT WITH PHOENIX YOUTH CENTRE A SAFE, WELCOMING AND FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT FOR THEIR STUDENTS



PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK - CLIMATE CHANGE YOUTH FORUM:



“ I ENJOYED THAT PEOPLE ARE ACTUALLY CARING AND TAKING ACTION ON YOUTH ISSUES. ”

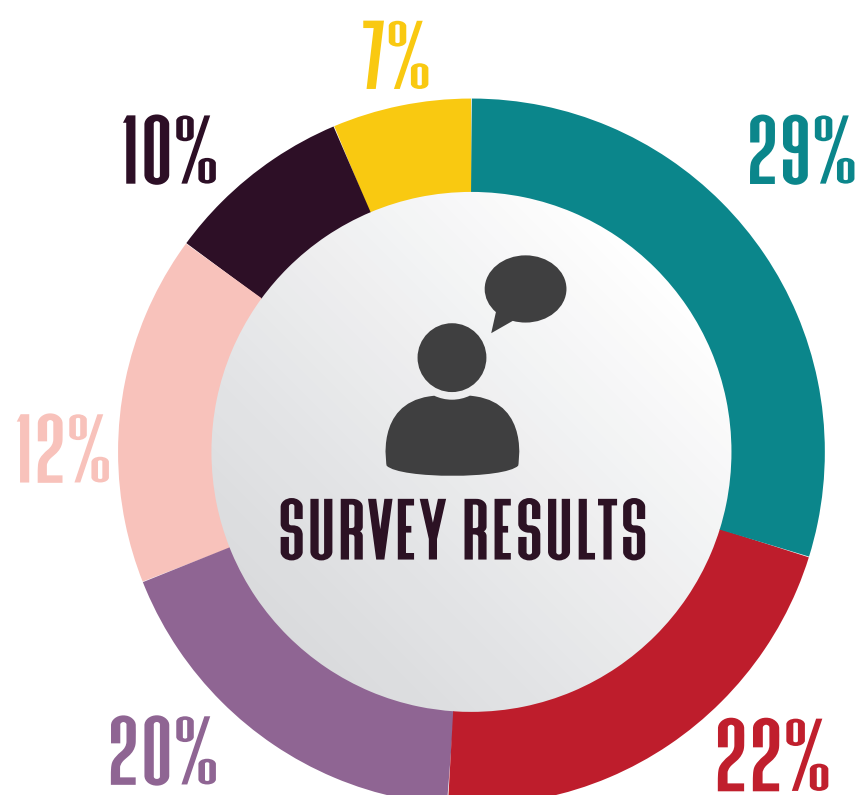
YOUTH FORUM POLL:

As part of the forum, a poll was conducted where young people were asked to vote on the most important issues to them.

Young people voted across six key areas which were identified by young people as being the most prominent issues affecting young people in recent years, as reported in Mission Australia's National Youth Surveys.

Young people voted by placing stickers onto the topic areas most important to them.

The six key areas were;



AUTHORS & CONTRIBUTORS:

Maribyrnong Youth Services *(Co-authors)*

Maribyrnong Youth Advisory Committee Members *(Co-authors)*

Mayor Anthony Tran, Maribyrnong City Council *(Contributor)*

Councillor Jorge Jorquera, Maribyrnong City Council *(Contributor)*

Participating students and teachers from across;

Maribyrnong College, Footscray High School,

Western English Language School and

Caroline Chisholm Catholic College *(Contributors)*

Tiffany Harrison, Maribyrnong Council Climate Emergency
Lead Environmental Services, Panellist and facilitator *(Contributor)*

Dr Kati Marinkovic Chávez, University of Melbourne's
Young People Climate Change Capital *(Contributor)*

Phoebe Quinn, University of Melbourne's
Young People Climate Change Capital *(Contributor)*

Alex Stockton, Maribyrnong Council, Community
Engagement Advisor *(Contributor)*