

New Youth Centre

Community Engagement Summary Report – 14 April – 8 May 2026

Bayside City Council

Executive Summary

Between April and May 2026, Council undertook community engagement to inform the fit-out and furnishing of the future Youth Centre at Highett Common. Approximately 145 participants contributed through a mix of online and face-to-face activities, with around 95% of contributions from young people aged 10–25 years.

Participants were asked to share their preferences for the look, feel and functionality of the space. Across visual preference activities, an ideas board and online engagement, young people contributed 168 ideas relating to design, atmosphere, facilities and activities.

To support participation from the target audience, a competition was implemented as part of the engagement. This approach was successful in encouraging contributions from young people, ensuring the feedback received strongly reflects the views of the intended users of the space.

Key themes included a strong preference for comfortable, lounge-style spaces; warm and adaptable lighting; gaming and recreation opportunities; quiet and sensory-friendly areas; and connections to nature through plants and natural light. Participants also highlighted the importance of creative, music and learning spaces, as well as practical amenities such as drinking fountains, storage and accessible features.

Overall, the consultation shows a clear desire for a Youth Centre that is welcoming, modern, flexible and inclusive—supporting social connection, recreation, creativity, learning and wellbeing.

1 Background

This document provides a summary of community and youth service staff feedback on the future design for the new youth centre located at a new development at Highett Common.

Council sought feedback on the desired look and feel of the future Youth Centre. The feedback received will help inform the detailed design, fit-out and furnishing of the space.

1.1 About Peterson Youth Centre

Youth Services currently operates from Peterson Youth Centre, located within Peterson Reserve in Highett. The centre was established by the local community for young people in the early 1960s and has served as an important hub for youth programs and activities for many years.

Peterson Reserve also includes football and cricket clubrooms, which are currently in the planning and design phase for redevelopment.

1.2 About the new youth centre

With the redevelopment at Peterson Reserve, consideration was given to the future of the Youth Centre. During the planning process a decision was made to relocate the Youth Centre to Highett Common, within a new community precinct.

As the building footprint and overall layout of the Highett Common development has already been determined, the size and location of the Youth Centre cannot be changed at this stage. The purpose of this consultation was therefore to gather feedback on the look, feel, fit-out and furnishings of the space.

The new Youth Centre will include:

- A main activity space with a movable room divider
- An open kitchen
- Office space for up to four staff
- Two storage rooms
- Two smaller multi-purpose rooms suitable for meetings, consultations or sensory use
- A podcast room, operated by Bayside Libraries

This consultation sought to understand how young people and the community would like these spaces to look, feel and function in the future.

2 Consultation process

2.1 Consultation purpose

The purpose of this consultation was to:

- Gather feedback on the desired look, feel and functionality of the future Youth Centre, with a particular focus on the views of local young people aged under 25 and current users of Youth Services programs and Peterson Youth Centre.
- Understand the features, activities, facilities and design elements that young people would like to see incorporated into the new space.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for young people and the community to influence the fit-out, furnishings and design outcomes for the future Youth Centre.
- Ensure the new Youth Centre reflects the needs, preferences and aspirations of the young people who will use the space.

2.2 Consultation methodology

Community engagement was undertaken between 14 April and 8 May 2026 to inform the design and fit-out of the new Youth Centre. Approximately 145 people participated.

A range of tools were used including a participatory budgeting “fund it” tool to select preferred design aspects, and an online ideas board. All tools were replicated for the in-person engagement sessions on site including a dotmocracy and ideas board.

The tools and techniques selected for this project were informed by the project content, stakeholders and type of feedback sought. For this engagement, tools were selected to provide transparent, instantly visible results and ease of use for young people.

Details	Activity
14 April – 8 May 1498 views	**Have Your Say website project page**

1040 visitors	Online engagement through *Have Your Say*, including a fund it tool, gathering ideas board and opportunity to ask a question to the project team. 45 contributors
14 April – 8 May 22 contributors 110 contributors	**Onsite community drop-in sessions** • Peterson Youth Centre Friday 24 April 3 - 5:30pm • Peterson Youth Centre Friday 1 May 3 – 5:30pm • Sandringham Library Tuesday 5 May 3:30 – 4:30pm **Youth Services Program consultations** • School lunchtime sessions x 4 sessions • School Holiday Activities x 2 sessions • FriYays Drop In x 2 • Boombox Events Committee • Bayside Youth Ambassadors • CONNECT Program
Engagement tools included:	• Fund it / dotmocracy (Approximately 145 contributors) • Ideas board (Approximately 145 contributors)

Note: During face-to-face engagement activities, participants could provide feedback either on paper or through the online *Have Your Say* platform. Therefore, contribution figures may overlap across engagement methods

Key tools for communicating the project

- Email notifications to Have Your Say members
- Direct engagement with youth organisations and schools
- Social media posts targeting young people and parents
- Website news story and inclusion in This Week in Bayside
- Posters and flyers distributed through youth-focused venues

3 Participant profile

The consultation was highly successful in reaching its target audience of young people. Participants aged **10–25** represented approximately **95%** of all contributions received, demonstrating that the consultation successfully reached its intended audience. A small number of children under 10 years also participated through library-based activities and at FriYays Drop-In pick-up sessions. No adults participated in the face-to-face engagement activities.

The strong representation of young people ensured that the feedback collected reflects the views, interests and priorities of those most likely to use the future Youth Centre. As a result,

the findings provide a robust evidence base to inform the design and development of a youth-focused facility.

Participant data for the Have Your Say contributions was not collected.

4 Consultation findings

The following section summarises the key themes which arose in community feedback on new youth centre at Highett Common.

4.1 Dotmocracy / Fund It

Participants were provided with 10 points (dots) to allocate across images of six different youth centres. This exercise was designed to identify the visual styles, design elements and overall "look and feel" that most appealed to young people. Participants could distribute their points across multiple images or allocate all points to a single image, allowing preferences and priorities to be identified and compared.

Youth centre images to choose from	Description	Paper	Online	Total
	Soft furnishings with neutral and vibrant colours (Mornington Peninsula Youth Space)	292	37	**329**
	Boho Organic (Kingston Youth Services – Platform 81)	287	19	**306**

	Industrial design, hard straight lines and stark colours (Midland Youth Centre WA)	259	23	**282**
	Neon and dark (Mornington Peninsula Youth Space)	180	32	**212**
	Modern industrial using colour and sharp lines (Boroondara Youth Hub)	117	26	**143**
	Modern, organic and minimalist (Dakabin Youth Hub QLD)	131	25	**156**
Total		**Paper**	**Online**	**Total**

		1266	**162**	**1428**

The highest-ranked images featured comfortable furnishings, softer colours and natural elements. While industrial and contemporary styles also received support, participants generally preferred spaces that felt welcoming, comfortable and youth-friendly rather than formal or institutional.

4.2 Ideas board

A total of 168 ideas were contributed through the Ideas Board. After consolidating duplicate and similar responses, approximately 75–90 unique ideas were identified and grouped into 20 broader themes and suggestions to support analysis and reporting.

Participants were able to submit ideas online, where suggestions could receive likes from other community members. These likes have been included as an indicator of community support and are reflected in the "Total Support" column in the table below.

Young people shared a diverse range of ideas in response to the prompt about the desired look and feel of the future Youth Centre. While many suggestions focused on the overall design, atmosphere and aesthetics of the space, participants also identified activities, games, facilities and amenities they would like to see included.

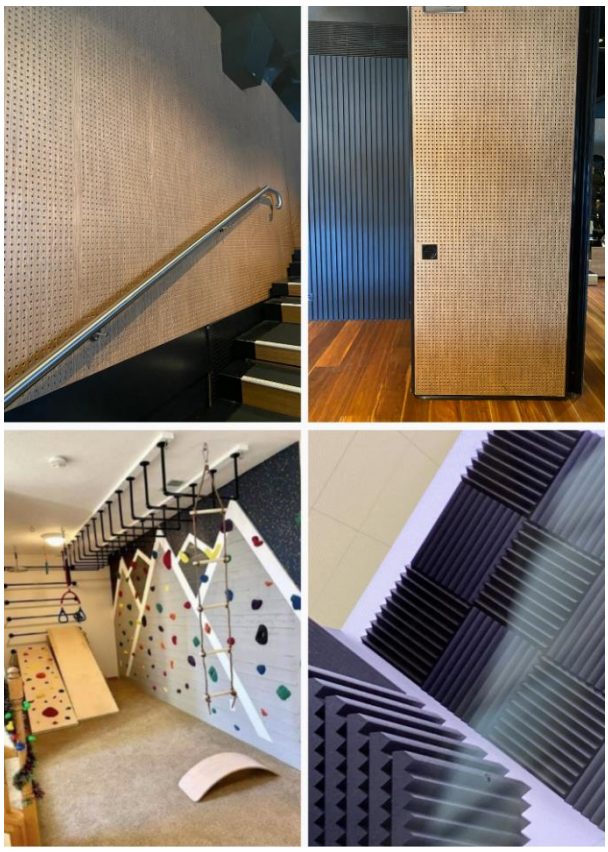
The feedback demonstrated thoughtful consideration of how different spaces could function. For example, some participants suggested incorporating colourful neon lighting into gaming or sensory rooms, while using warm, dimmable or pendant lighting in communal areas to create a comfortable, welcoming and inclusive environment.

Rank	Suggestions	# Ideas	Likes	Total Support
1	Beanbags, couches, cushions, hammocks, lounge spaces	35+	0	35+
2	Warm lighting, fairy lights, festoon lights, natural light, neon lights, LED lighting	30+	3	33+
3	Gaming rooms, Nintendo Switch, gaming PCs, consoles, arcade games, Xbox	18+	1	19+
4	Quiet rooms, sensory rooms, calm corners, sensory-friendly spaces	15+	2	17+
5	Pool table	12+	0	12+
6	Plants, greenery, indoor plants, natural elements	12+	0	12+
7	Study spaces, library, reading areas, books	10+	0	10+
8	Art rooms, art corners, creative spaces, artwork displays	9+	0	9+
9	Music rooms, instruments, piano, speakers, music spaces	9+	0	9+
10	Table tennis / ping pong	8+	0	8+

11	Food, snack bar, café-style area, kitchen facilities	8+	0	8+
12	Fidgets and sensory tools	7+	1	8+
13	Drinking fountains, water stations, Zip Tap, water coolers	7+	0	7+
14	Bag storage, bike parking, scooter parking, hooks	6+	0	6+
15	Flexible spaces, movable furniture, sliding walls	6+	0	6+
16	Outdoor seating area, community garden, planter boxes, herbs & vegetables	4+	1	5+
17	Accessibility features, ramps, braille, translations	4+	0	4+
18	Air hockey	3+	0	3+
19	Foosball	2+	0	2+
20	Climbing spaces	1	2	3

4.3 Photo submissions

A small number of participants shared photo examples through the online consultation and during face-to-face engagement activities. While photo submissions represented a relatively small proportion of overall contributions, they reinforced themes identified through the broader consultation, including comfortable seating, welcoming lighting, modern design elements, gaming spaces and connections to nature. The images provided useful visual examples of the desired look and feel of the future Youth Centre. A few examples of submissions are below.



5 Youth Services team feedback

While young people focused on the look, feel and activities of the future Youth Centre, the Youth Services team identified several practical features that will be important to the day-to-day operation, safety and usability of the space, which may not have been identified by young people, including:

- **Bag storage hooks** for school bags.
- **Sign-in desk or space** to support visitor management and centre operations.
- **Bike and scooter storage** to encourage active transport and provide secure parking.
- **Reliable Wi-Fi access** throughout the facility.
- **Accessible power outlets and charging points** for phones, laptops and other devices.
- **Good visibility of the main activity space from the office** to support passive supervision and staff safety.
- **A doorbell or intercom system at entry points** to assist with security and access management.
- **Projector or screen** for video games, team meetings and presentations.
- **Accessible drinking fountain and bottle refill station** to provide convenient access to water and reduce reliance on shared or disposable cups.
- **Dimmable, warm lighting** to create a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere and avoid the harsh feel often associated with office-style lighting.

These features complement the ideas provided by young people and will help ensure the Youth Centre is practical, safe, accessible and easy to use for both visitors and staff.

6 Project Evaluation

The consultation successfully engaged the intended audience, with approximately 95% of participants aged 10–25 years. This outcome was supported by a targeted engagement approach, including the use of a competition, which was effective in attracting participation from young people and ensuring feedback was representative of the primary user group.

Through a combination of online and face-to-face engagement, participants provided clear and consistent insights into the desired design and function of the future Youth Centre.

Feedback aligned strongly across all engagement methods, with participants emphasising the importance of comfortable, lounge-style spaces; adaptable and welcoming lighting; gaming and recreation opportunities; quiet and sensory-friendly areas; and connections to nature. Creative, music and study spaces were also identified as key priorities, alongside practical amenities such as drinking fountains, storage and accessible design features.

Overall, the findings demonstrate a clear preference for a Youth Centre that is safe, modern, flexible, accessible and welcoming. These insights provide a strong evidence base to inform the detailed design, fit-out and furnishing of the future Youth Centre at Highett Common.