

# Draft Children and Young People Action Plan

**Responsible Directorate: Community Development**  
**Authorised By: Council**  
**Date of Adoption: <Date>**  
**Review Date: 2025**  
**Plan Type: Council**

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## **1. Executive Summary - Message to our Community**

Children and young people are tomorrow's future leaders, workforce participants and potential parents. Investing in this age group is vital to ensure they grow and develop to be thriving, happy, healthy adults. Representing approximately one third of the Boroondara community, children and young people are an important cohort that need to be nurtured and supported to meaningfully contribute and participate in the community.

Council is committed to listening to children, young people and parents/caregivers across Boroondara and representing their needs and aspirations in future commitments. In 2017, Council adopted the Boroondara Community Plan 2017-27 (BCP) which was developed following extensive community consultation, eliciting over 11,845 responses. The BCP 2017-27 forms Council's strategic direction and is the foundational framework for this draft Children and Young People Action Plan (the draft Plan).

In early 2020, Officers conducted additional community consultation with children, young people, parents/caregivers and service providers to build on and enhance the learnings from the BCP regarding what is important to them. A number of different methods were used including surveys, focus groups and creative drawing activities to help define the priority areas for action across this life stage.

This consultation identified that children place a high level of importance on caring for the environment and having strong relationships with their families and friends. It also showed that young people in Boroondara are passionate about participating in the community. Despite this, mental health, including increasing levels of psychological distress, social isolation and loneliness still remains a significant issue facing the 0-25 years age group. Building the resilience of children and young people is vital, and Council is committed to strengthening existing partnerships, and building new connections with key partners and agencies to respond to these issues.

Council's commitment to supporting children, young people and their families will continue to be a priority as demonstrated through the development of the draft Plan.

Cr Cynthia Watson  
Mayor of Boroondara, 2020.

## **2. Introduction**

### **2.1 Our Vision for Children and Young People in Boroondara**

The Children and Young People Action Plan (the draft Plan) supports the vision of Council's key strategic document, the Boroondara Community Plan 2017-27 (BCP), for '*A vibrant and inclusive city, meeting the needs and aspirations of its community*'.

The vision of the draft Plan is to strive towards a city where children and young people are valued, happy, healthy and safe and actively participate in our community.

#### **Why 0-25 year olds?**

The draft Plan recognises the importance of the 0-25 years life stage as a critical time in an individual's life where a period of rapid growth and development occurs. It is widely acknowledged amongst national and international evidence that the brain is constantly developing from birth and through into adulthood. Healthy brain development requires caring and supportive family relationships, and a range of engaging and stimulating learning experiences. Access to universal services and additional supports can help to optimise development. Early intervention is paramount to preventing long term consequences and delays in developmental milestones.

Council is committed to supporting children, young people and their families through taking a holistic approach that considers their social, emotional and physical development across the first 25 years of life and beyond. The previous Children and Young People Strategy 2015-19 recognised the importance of addressing the needs of children and young people (0-25 years) collectively in one strategy, acknowledging the journey that families experience as their children grow into young people and then into adults. This approach is important as it allows children, young people and their families to be supported through the various transitions experienced during this time. Addressing the 0-25 years' life stage in one plan also allows Council to incorporate the needs of children in the middle years' (9-12), which are often not addressed or incorporated into younger or older years' plans.

Council plays an integral role in supporting children, young people and families by providing high quality facilities, services and programs that enhance health and wellbeing. By providing a range of health, learning, cultural and environmental experiences, Council strives to contribute to positive development of children and young people.

The draft Plan will focus on delivering on the needs and priorities of Boroondara's children and young people, and their families.

### **2.2 Corporate framework**

As shown in Figure 1, the BCP, which incorporates the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, is Council's key strategic document and describes the 10-year vision and priorities. It guides Council's decision making, and directly informs the Council Plan including the Strategic Resource Plan, annual commitments and strategic indicators, the Municipal Strategic Statement and Council's strategies, plans and policies.



**Figure 1:** Boroondara Corporate Planning Framework

The BCP is structured around seven priority themes with supporting strategic objectives which are outlined below. The draft Plan is informed by these themes.

- **Your Community, Services and Facilities**

Strategic Objective 1: Community services and facilities are high quality, inclusive and meet a variety of needs now and into the future.

- **Your Parks and Green Spaces**

Strategic Objective 2: Inviting and well-utilised community parks and green spaces.

- **The Environment**

Strategic Objective 3: Our natural environment is healthy and sustainable for future generations.

- **Neighbourhood Character and Heritage**

Strategic Objective 4: Protect the heritage and respect the character of the City to maintain amenity and liveability whilst recognising the need for appropriate, well-designed development for future generations.

- **Getting Around Boroondara**

Strategic Objective 5: Travel options that are connected, safe, accessible, environmentally sustainable and well-designed.

- **Your Local Shops and Businesses**

Strategic Objective 6: A vibrant local economy and shops that are accessible, attractive and a centre of community life.

- **Civic Leadership and Governance**

Strategic Objective 7: Ensure that ethical, financial and socially responsible decision making reflect community needs and are based on principles of accountability, transparency, responsiveness and consultation.

The draft Plan will also contribute toward the following health priorities of the BCP

- promoting mental health and social connection
- promoting active living.

The draft Plan plays an important role in guiding Council to ensure the interests and needs of children, young people and their families are considered in the planning, design and delivery of Council facilities, services and programs.

## 2.3 The Nest Action Agenda

The Nest Action Agenda (The Nest) is an evidence based framework developed by the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), which aims to improve the wellbeing of children and youth aged under 25 years of age. It outlines a shared vision for Australia's children and youth where:

*"All young people are loved and safe, have material basics, are healthy, are learning and participating and have a positive sense of identity and culture."*

This vision applies to all Australian children and youth, regardless of age, gender, ability, ethnicity, race and socioeconomic status. The Nest incorporates six domains highlighted in Figure 2, which help to contribute towards a thriving child or young person. These include being loved and safe, the provision of material basics, being healthy, learning, participation and having a positive sense of culture and identity.



<b>Vision</b> All children and youth are loved and safe, have material basics, are healthy, are learning and are participating and have a positive sense of culture and identity.				
<i>Measured by Australia being consistently placed in the top third of OECD countries for comparable indicators of child and youth wellbeing, with the target of 50% of indicators in the top third by 2025 (currently 26%)</i>				
Loved and safe	Material basics	Healthy	Learning	Participating
Positive, supportive family environment	Material wellbeing	Healthy birthweight	Early childhood education participation	Youth feeling able to have a say
Positive parenting practices	Income equality	Immunisation rates	Reduced early childhood developmental vulnerability	Voting enrolment
Positive, trusted peer relationships and communication	Parental employment	Nutrition, activity and healthy weight	Parental engagement in child learning	Use and engagement of technology and social media
Community safety	Youth in employment/training/education	Healthy physical development	Performance in English, Maths and Science (at Year 4 and 15 years)	Involvement in organised activities
Children not placed in care	Internet access	Dental health	School retention rates	Membership of social, community, or civic groups
Youth not in detention	Educational possessions	Good mental health	Youth participation in education	
	Housing amenity and stability	Reduced injury deaths		
		Reductions in teenage pregnancies		
		Reduced substance use		
		Reduced youth violence		
Positive sense of culture and identity				

**Figure 2:** The Nest Action Agenda

**Source:** Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY). (2014) The Nest action agenda: Improving the wellbeing of Australia's children and youth while growing our GDP by over 7%. Canberra. ARACY.

The Nest is a well-renowned framework utilised by other local and state governments across Australia to help inform service planning for children and young people. Council recognises this and will utilise The Nest as a guiding lens towards the development of actions that contribute to thriving children and young people in Boroondara.

A description of each domain including why it is important can be found in Table 1.

<b>Being loved and safe</b>	Being loved and safe embraces positive family relationships and connections with others, along with personal and community safety. Children and youth who are loved and safe are confident, have a strong sense of self-identity, and have high self-esteem. They form secure attachments, have pro-social peer connections, and positive adult role models or mentors which are present in their life. Children and youth who are loved and safe are resilient: they can withstand life's challenges, and respond constructively to setbacks and unanticipated events.
<b>Having material basics</b>	Children and youth who have material basics have access to the things they need to live a 'normal life'. They live in adequate and stable housing, with adequate clothing, healthy food, and clean water, and the materials they need to participate in education and training pathways.
<b>Being healthy</b>	Healthy children and youth have their physical, developmental, psychosocial and mental health needs met. They achieve their optimal developmental trajectories. They have access to services to support their growth and development, and have access to preventative measures to redress any emerging health or developmental concerns.
<b>Learning</b>	Learning is a continuous process throughout life. Children and youth learn through a variety of formal and informal experiences within the classroom and more broadly in their home and in the community. Children and youth who are learning participate in and experience education that enables them to reach their full potential and maximise their life opportunities.
<b>Participating</b>	Participating includes involvement with peers and the community, being able to have a voice and say on matters and, increasingly, access to technology for social connections. In practice, participating means children and youth are supported in expressing their views, having their views taken into account and they are involved in decision-making processes that affect them.
<b>Positive sense of culture and identity</b>	Having a positive sense of culture and identity is central to the wellbeing of children and youth, and is particularly important for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and other culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) children and youth. This outcome includes having a sense of spiritual wellbeing. It underpins and is fundamental to the other Nest child and youth outcome areas, with appropriate measures of a sense of culture and identity to be developed.

**Table 1:** The six outcomes of The Nest

Sourced from page 5 of "The Nest Action Agenda - Improving the wellbeing of Australia's children and youth while growing our GDP by over 7%" by (ARACY, 2014).



### **3. Creating the Children and Young People Action Plan**

The development of the draft Plan involved a number of steps outlined below.

#### **Stage 1: Review and Plan**

A review of the Children and Young People's Strategy 2015-19 was undertaken and found all actions were implemented and a number of key achievements were made. These achievements are detailed in Section 6 of the draft Plan.

Officers developed a plan to ensure all relevant stakeholder groups were consulted through the process in order to receive rich qualitative data. Council's key strategic document, the BCP, informed by the view of nearly 12,000 residents was used as the framework for producing action areas for the draft Plan.

#### **Stage 2: Understanding the Context**

Officers undertook benchmarking of socio-demographically similar and neighbouring Councils' children and young people plans and strategies. The Councils included in the benchmarking were Cities' of Stonnington, Bayside, Glen Eira, Banyule, Manningham, Monash, Whitehorse and Yarra. Benchmarking reaffirmed Council's life stage approach, i.e. 0-25 years', towards the development of the draft Plan.

Desktop research was performed to produce an updated community profile for the 0-25 years' age cohort. This profile included a range of sociodemographic and health and wellbeing statistics. During this stage, a policy review was conducted to source recently published directives or guidelines from the international, national, state and local levels pertaining to children, young people and families. As The Nest comprehensively addresses health and wellbeing of children and young people, it was therefore included as a lens over the BCP 2017-27 in developing the draft Plan.

Finally during this stage, Officers undertook an analysis of the BCP 2017-27 engagement data for parents of children aged 12 years or less and also for young people aged under 15 years and between 15-24 years of age. This analysis informed the creation of the community engagement plan supporting the development of the draft Plan.

#### **Stage 3: Community Engagement - Design and Development**

Undertaking in-depth engagement with children and young people was considered a key requirement of the engagement process, and consequently an emphasis was made to ensure qualitative methods were employed to elicit rich responses. A community engagement plan was developed and implemented between January to April 2020. It involved a number of different activities described in in Section 8.

#### **Stage 4: Action Development**

Following community engagement and analysis of the data, officers began collaborative discussions to ensure a whole of Council approach was adopted to producing actions. Officers also met with service provider agencies through Advisory Committee meetings to review engagement results and discuss future actions. The actions can be found in the attached Implementation Plan.

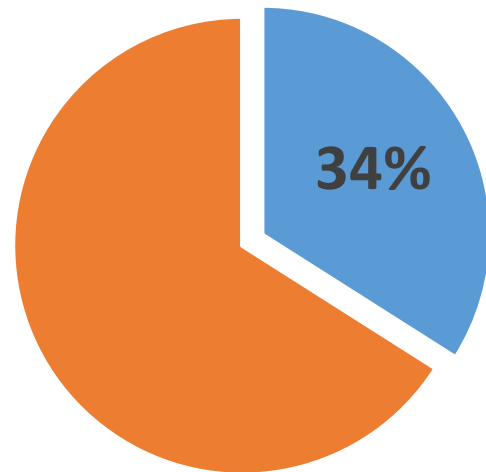
## 4. Background

### 4.1 Community Profile

#### 4.1.1 Population

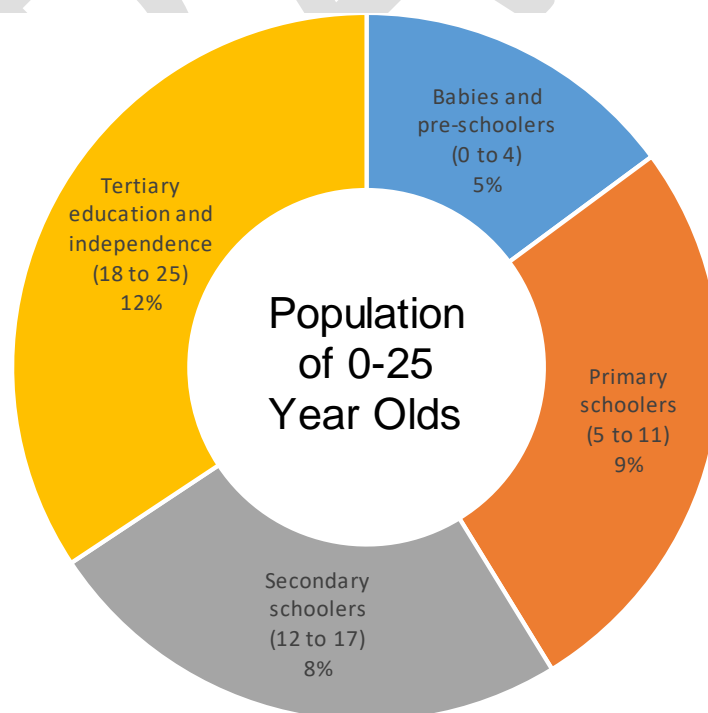
The City of Boroondara Estimated Resident Population in 2019 was 183,199 residents. The total population is expected to grow to 190,352 by 2025.

At the last Census count in 2016, the population of children and young people, aged 0-25 years in Boroondara was 60,813, representing 34% of the total population. The proportion of children and young people is expected to increase to 63,356 in 2025 representing 33% proportion of the total forecasted population. There are also a number of children and young people who travel into Boroondara to study or work on a regular basis.



**Figure 3:** Population proportion of 0-25 years' age group in comparison to the total Boroondara population.

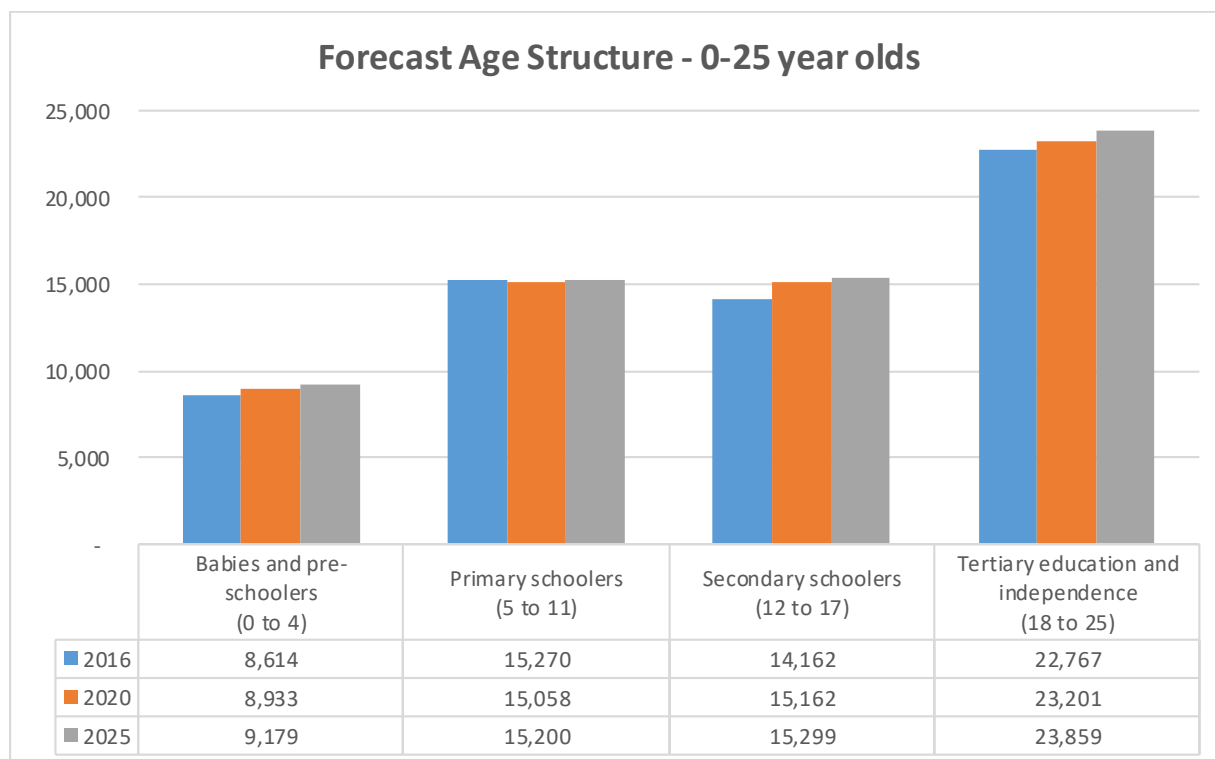
Service age groups, developed by .id Consulting are used in planning to estimate the demand for services during different life stages, and to understand how demand for certain facilities and services changes as the population changes. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of each service age group in Boroondara. Young people, i.e. secondary schoolers and tertiary education and independence comprise 60% of the population aged 0-25 years'.



**Figure 4:** City of Boroondara population 2016 (0-25 years') (Age group as percentage of total Boroondara population in brackets)

Population forecast data from 2020 demonstrates since 2016, there has been a slight increase (1%) in the proportion of secondary school aged young people (12-17 years') across Boroondara. The growth in this service age group is expected to remain constant to 2025, while a 3% increase is expected in the 18-25 years' service age group. As the population of young people increases, it will be important to provide services to meet growing demand.

Figure 5 illustrates how the population is forecasted to change for each of the service age groups.



**Figure 5:** Population forecast change by service age group for 0-25 years'.

Table 2 displays how the population amongst each service age group will change according to the different planning precincts throughout Boroondara. For planning purposes, Council divides the municipality into five precincts to assist with more detailed service planning. The five precincts are represented in Figure 6. The Central and South West precincts are expected to have the highest growth rates over the next five years.

**Table 2:** Precinct population forecast changes across 2020 and 2025

Age Group	Precinct with highest population 2020	Precinct with highest population (2025)	Precinct with highest growth (2020-25)
<b>0-4</b>	South West	South West	Central
<b>5-11</b>	Central	Central	South West
<b>12-17</b>	Central	Central	South West
<b>18-25</b>	South West	South West	Central/South West



**Figure 6:** Council identifies five precincts for planning purposes across Boroondara.

### 4.1.2 Households

Data from the 2016 Census shows 43.1% households in Boroondara had children or young people aged between 0-25 years. Seventeen and a half per cent of households had young children (aged 15 and under), 4.8% mixed age children (one or more children under 15 and one or more children over 15) and 12.8% older children (aged 15 or over). Overall, 35.1% of families were couples with children, and 7.9% were single-parent families.

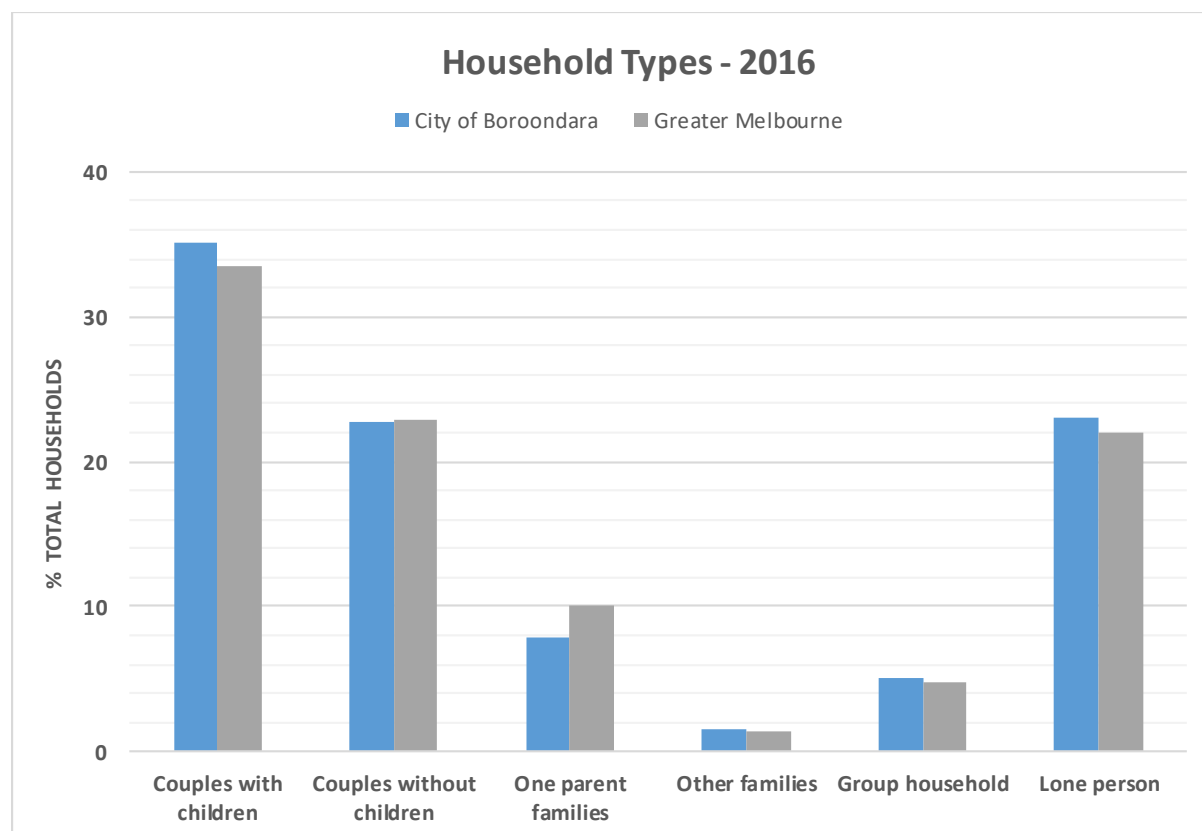


Figure 7: Household types in Boroondara and Greater Melbourne

Group households are often associated with young people living close to education or employment, and indicate a house-sharing arrangement. Group households are common among students and young professionals. In 2016, group households accounted for 5% of household types in Boroondara compared to 4.7% in Greater Melbourne. This proportion ranged from a low of 2.1% in Canterbury to a high of 9.8% in Hawthorn and Hawthorn East.

### 4.1.3 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders

2016 Census data shows that there were 157 children and young people aged 0-25 years' who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, representing 50% of the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population in Boroondara. The highest proportion is aged between 20-25 years old.

### 4.1.4 Cultural Diversity

In 2016, 30.9% of Boroondara residents were born overseas, 24.9% were born in a country where English was not the main language spoken. China, Vietnam, India and Malaysia represent the four main countries where those who are born overseas have immigrated from since 2011. Since 2011, the highest increase has been from people moving from China to Boroondara with over 4,000 new residents recorded at the 2016 Census. The top five

languages spoken at home other than English include Mandarin, Cantonese, Greek, Italian and Vietnamese.

Within the 0-25 years' cohort, proficiency in English changes across the lifespan for those indicating they have a language background other than English. Early in life, i.e. 0-4 years of age there is a higher number of children who speak English not well or not at all, however starting school ameliorates this in later years from 5-19 years of age. English proficiency drops again in the 20-25 years age group which corresponds to young people arriving from overseas for study or employment. This highlights the importance of providing language supports to parents and children in the early years and also to young people arriving from overseas.

Australian Early Development Census (AEDC) 2018 data also shows that since 2012, the proportion of school aged children who are from a language background other than English and who are proficient in English has increased by almost 9%. This indicates an increase in the proportion of multilingual children throughout Boroondara.

#### **4.1.5 Children and Young People with Disabilities**

A need for assistance with daily activities represents a measure of disability in a population. In 2016, 762 (1.25%) children and young people aged 0-25 years' reported requiring assistance with core activities, which is lower compared to Greater Melbourne. The following table shows the breakdown of those requiring assistance with core activities per age group.

**Table 3:** Number of young people under 25 years requiring assistance with core activities

<b>Age Group (Years)</b>	<b>Number requiring assistance</b>
0-4 years	64
5-9 years	202
10-14 years	176
15-19 years	163
20-25 years	157

Preschool Field Officers (PSFOs) support the inclusion and participation of children with additional needs in early years services in funded kindergarten programs. Data from the Preschool Field Officer program in Boroondara shows the top five reasons for kindergartens referring pre-school aged children to the program are for emotional regulation, school readiness, anxiety, disability and attention and concentration.

#### **4.1.6 Parental Workforce Participation and Childcare**

Participation of parents, in particular mothers in the workforce is an indicator of the strength of the local economy and provides important insights into the types of services required, including maternal and child health services and child care services.

The City of Boroondara has a higher proportion of mothers with dependent children in the workforce (71.6%), compared to Greater Melbourne at 66.9%. The proportion of mothers in the workforce was lowest in Deepdene and Balwyn at 65.4% and 67.2% respectively, and highest in Glen Iris and Surrey Hills at 75.7% and 75.1% respectively.

AEDC data also shows since 2012 there has been a 20% increase in the proportion of children attending day care and a 10% increase in the number of grandparents caring for their grandchildren in Boroondara.

## 4.2 Boroondara Children and Young People - Health and Wellbeing

The six domains of the Nest provide a useful framework to capture a snapshot of the health and wellbeing status of children and young people across Boroondara, as collectively these domains contribute to a thriving individual. In this section, data from a range of indicators is presented under each domain. The data in this section has been sourced from a range of sources documented below each table.

### Domain: Loved and Safe

LOVED AND SAFE			
Indicator	Year	Boroondara or Inner Eastern Metropolitan Region	Victoria
<b>Family Violence<sup>1</sup></b>			
No. family violence incidents attend by VicPol where L17 form completed (rate per 100,000 population)	2019	464.6	1253.1
<b>Bullying<sup>2</sup></b>			
Proportion of children who report being bullied (Year 5 & 6) (%)	2018	12.9	15.9
Proportion of children who report being bullied (Year 7 & 9) (%)	2018	12.0	17.5
Proportion of young people who report being bullied recently (%)	2018	44.1 (IEM)	44.7
<b>Safety<sup>2</sup></b>			
Proportion of young people who report having a trusted adult in their lives (%)	2018	71 (IEM)	69.3
Proportion of young people who feel safe (%)	2018	86.3 (IEM)	85.4

*IEM refers to data collected for the Inner Eastern Metropolitan region encompassing Councils including the City of Boroondara, City of Whitehorse, City of Monash, City of Manningham. This is the most localised level data available for these statistics.*

#### Data sources:

1. Crime Statistics Agency, 2019
2. Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System, 2019

Since 2014-15, the rates of family violence have been increasing across the City of Boroondara, although by comparison, are lower compared to the Victorian average. Data from the Inner Eastern metropolitan region of which Boroondara is a part of, details in 2018 approximately one in eight students from years 5 to 9 reported experiencing bullying, with cyber bullying being the main form.

Being safe and having trusted adults is very important for a young person's development. Although above the Victorian average, just 71% young people in the inner eastern metropolitan region reported they had a trusted adult in their lives which is concerning as nearly one third did not have a trusted adult in their lives.

## Domain: Material Basics

MATERIAL BASICS			
Indicator	Year	Boroondara	Victoria
<b>Housing<sup>3</sup></b>			
Proportion of households experiencing housing stress (%)	2016	8.7	11.4
Proportion of households experiencing rental stress (%)	2016	21.5	28.1
<b>Income<sup>3</sup></b>			
Proportion of households on low income <\$650 per week (%)	2016	13.8	18.3
<b>Employment Status (all age groups)<sup>3</sup></b>			
Proportion of persons employed (%)	2016		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employed</li> <li>Unemployed</li> </ul>		94.4 5.6	93.4 6.6
<b>Youth Unemployment Rate<sup>3</sup></b>			
Proportion of young people aged 15-24 years who are unemployed (%)	2016	13.2	15.2
Proportion of young people aged 15-24 years who are disengaged from employment or education (%)	2016	3.2	8.2

### Data Sources:

3. id Consulting, 2016

The City of Boroondara is a socioeconomically advantaged local government area where on average, residents experience high incomes, lower levels of unemployment and housing and rental stress compared to the Victorian average. Despite this, there are pockets of relative disadvantage throughout Boroondara particularly in the north east and south west parts of the municipality.

Overall the youth unemployment rate across Boroondara is slightly below the Victorian average, however Hawthorn has a higher unemployment rate. The proportion of disengaged youth remains lower on average, but areas including Ashburton and Surrey Hills have higher rates at approximately 5%.

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is expected to have a significant impact on housing and rental stress and also unemployment levels which will be further reflected in the next Census in 2021.



## Domain: Healthy

HEALTHY			
Indicator	Year	Boroondara or Inner Eastern Metropolitan Region	Victoria
<b>Breastfeeding<sup>4</sup></b>			
Proportion of infants fully breastfed (%)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At discharge</li> <li>3 months</li> <li>6 months</li> </ul>	2017-18	78.6 61.6 11.5	69.3 49.4 22.0
<b>Immunisation<sup>5</sup></b>			
Proportion of infants and children fully vaccinated (%)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12-15 months</li> <li>24-27 months</li> <li>60-63 months</li> </ul>	2020	94.1 93.0 96.2	94.6 91.2 95.6
<b>Nutrition<sup>2</sup></b>			
Proportion of young people meeting recommended fruit (2 serves) and vegetable (5 serves) recommendations (%)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fruit only</li> <li>Vegetables only</li> <li>Combined</li> </ul>	2018	58.3 (IEM) 2.0 (IEM) 10.0 (IEM)	56.6 2.3 10.8
<b>Physical Activity<sup>(2,6)</sup></b>			
Proportion of young people who do the recommended amount of physical activity everyday (%) <sup>2</sup>	2018	24.2 (IEM)	23.4
Participation of children aged 0-4 years in sport and recreation activities (%) <sup>6</sup>	2016	84.4	-
Participation of children aged 5-14 years in sport and recreation activities (%) <sup>6</sup>	2016	99	-
<b>Electronic Media Use<sup>2</sup></b>			
Proportion of young people spending more than 2 hours a day on media	2018	62.4 (IEM)	64.4
<b>Mental Health<sup>2</sup></b>			
Proportion of young people experiencing high to very high rates of psychological distress (depressive symptoms) (%)	2018	22.4 (IEM)	20.4
<b>Alcohol and Other Drugs<sup>2</sup></b>			
Proportion of young people who have ever smoked cigarettes (%)	2018	8.4 (IEM)	8.0
Proportion of young people reporting ever drinking alcohol (%)	2018	51.5 (IEM)	51.8
Proportion young people who have used marijuana or other illegal drugs (%)	2018	12.1 (IEM)	10.3

*IEM refers to data collected for the Inner Eastern Metropolitan region encompassing Councils including City of Boroondara, City of Whitehorse, City of Monash, City of Manningham. This is the most localised level data available for these statistics.*

**Data Sources:**

2. Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System, 2019
4. Department Health and Human Services, 2019, Maternal and Child Health Service 2017-18 annual reports
5. Australian Immunisation Register, 2020
6. City of Boroondara, 2016, Sport and Recreation Strategy
7. Department Health and Human Services, 2020, Maternal and Child Health Service 2019-20 annual reports.

Children and young people across the City of Boroondara experience similar levels of health and wellbeing compared to their other Victorian counterparts. Breastfeeding and immunisation rates are higher in Boroondara compared to the Victorian average.

Data from the 2019-20 Maternal and Child Health Annual report highlights postnatal depression and anxiety in parents is high within Boroondara. In approximately one fifth, or 17.4% of consultations where mental health was identified as an issue, Maternal and Child Health nurses made referrals to specialist services for further parental emotional support<sup>(7)</sup>.

Similar to other local government areas across Victoria, the proportion of young people consuming the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables is low. Boroondara children and young people have high levels of participation in sport and recreation activities. The proportion of young people achieving the recommended 60 minutes of vigorous activity per day in the inner eastern metropolitan is low, with just under one quarter achieving the recommendations. This presents as an opportunity to address as part of the draft Plan.

Psychological distress amongst young people continues to grow across Victoria. In 2018, 22.4% of young people in the inner eastern metropolitan region reported very high or high levels of psychological distress. It is expected this proportion will grow as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Services and programs that address clinical needs as well as preventative initiatives that decrease loneliness and promote social connections are required to help ameliorate these outcomes.

Consumption of alcohol and use of illicit drugs (AOD) amongst young people in the inner eastern metropolitan region is slightly higher than the Victorian averages. The link between mental health and AOD use is well established.

## Domain: Learning

LEARNING			
Indicator	Year	Boroondara	Victoria
<b>AEDC - Proportion (%) of children developmentally vulnerable at initiation of school<sup>(8)</sup></b>			
Developmentally vulnerable - Physical health	2018	4.9	8.2
Developmentally vulnerable - Social competence	2018	4.8	8.8
Developmentally vulnerable - Emotional maturity	2018	5.1	8.1
Developmentally vulnerable - Language and Cognitive Skills	2018	1.8	6.4
Developmentally vulnerable - Communication skills and general knowledge	2018	4.8	7.4
Developmentally vulnerable - One or more domains	2018	12.9	19.9
Developmentally vulnerable - Two or more domains	2018	5.4	10.1
<b>NAPLAN Results<sup>2</sup></b>			
Students achieving national minimum standards in literacy (reading) (%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 3</li> <li>• Year 5</li> <li>• Year 7</li> <li>• Year 9</li> </ul>	2017	98.1 98.7 98.7 98	95.8 95.2 94.9 92
Students achieving national minimum standards in numeracy (maths) (%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Year 3</li> <li>• Year 5</li> <li>• Year 7</li> <li>• Year 9</li> </ul>	2017	95.8 98.9 99.6 99.2	96 96 96 95.5
<b>Education Engagement<sup>3</sup></b>			
Proportion of young people aged 15-24 years engaged in workforce and/or education (%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fully engaged</li> <li>• Partially engaged</li> <li>• Disengaged</li> </ul>	2016	86.4 6.5 3.2	75.5 10.7 8.2
<b>Victoria Certificate of Education (VCE) completion<sup>9</sup></b>			
Proportion of young people attending schools in Boroondara with satisfactory completion of their VCE	2019	98.9	98.1

### Data Sources:

2. Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System, 2019
3. id Consulting, 2016
8. Australian Early Development Census, 2019
9. Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2020

The 2018 AEDC data for Boroondara shows the proportion of children starting school who are developmentally vulnerable, i.e. children who score in the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile in each domain has increased since 2012. Approximately 13% of children are vulnerable in at least one domain

and 5% vulnerable in two or more domains. The domains where the largest increases in vulnerability have been experienced are the physical health, communication and general knowledge domains. There are a myriad of reasons contributing to these increases including cultural nuances in what aspects of development are important with a preference towards cognitive and language development.

Boroondara families have good access to quality education services for children and young people across the municipality. Currently, 74 organisations offer a kindergarten program in Boroondara spanning across standalone kindergartens, long day care centres and independent schools. Boroondara also has one of the highest concentrations of schools of all Victorian local government areas, with 58 secondary, primary and special education schools, including 12 combined primary and secondary schools.

### Domain: Participating

PARTICIPATING			
Indicator	Year	Kooyong	Victoria
<b>Enrolment to vote<sup>10</sup></b>			
Proportion of young people aged 18-24 years enrolled to vote (%)	2016	77%	75%

**Data source:**

10. Australian Electoral Commission, 2016

Enrolment to vote is deemed an indicator of young people's participation in the community. In 2016, the Kooyong Electoral District contained the majority of suburbs in Boroondara, except for Ashburton and Glen Iris which were in the Higgins Electoral District. The electoral count for the Kooyong Electoral District in 2016 showed 77% of young people aged 18-24 years were enrolled to vote compared to 64% in the Higgins Electoral District.

### Domain: Positive Sense of Identity and Culture

#### Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans/transgender, Intersex, Queer/questioning, Asexual and other diverse sexual orientations and gender identities (LGBTQIA+) Young People:

A 2019 survey<sup>(11)</sup> of 68 young people conducted by Access Health and Community and headspace amongst Boroondara LGBTQIA+ young people found 60% of young people felt safe and supported as an LGBTQIA+ young person in Boroondara. Thirty percent stated they were unsure about being safe and supported.

Young people commented they felt unsafe to identify as LGBTQIA+ in Boroondara as they felt it was dangerous and that their views would not be accepted. Young people also called for more inclusive facilities such as provision of more gender neutral bathrooms in buildings throughout Boroondara.

**Data source:**

11. Access Health and Community (headspace), 2019

## **5. Policy Context**

The draft Plan has been informed by key legislation, policy and research evidence from a range of international, national, state and municipal sources.

### **5.1 International**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989 was ratified in Australia in December 1990. There are four Guiding Principles of the CRC including:

- Respect for the best interests of the child as primary consideration
- The right of survival and development
- The right of all children to express their views freely on all matters affecting them
- The right of all children to enjoy all the rights of the CRC without discrimination of any kind.

The Australian Government reports to the United Nations every five years regarding the CRC and how children in Australia are performing, and what is occurring as a nation to protect children's rights.

### **5.2 National**

There are a number of policy directives that remain in place at a federal level to support the development of children in the early years. These policies include:

- National Reform Agenda (2007)
- National Early Childhood Development Strategy (2009)
- Education and Care Service National Law Act (2010)
- Education and Care Services Regulations (2011)
- The National Quality Framework and National Quality Standards (2012)
- Universal Access to Early Childhood Education.

In 2018, the Child Care Subsidy commenced to replace the previous Child Care Benefit and Rebate. This subsidy provides assistance to families for the cost of child care for a child aged 13 years or younger who is not attending secondary school.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) was introduced in 2016 to support eligible people with intellectual, physical, sensory, cognitive and psychosocial disability. The Early Childhood Intervention approach is available to all children aged under 7 years of age with a developmental delay or disability. The NDIS has been progressively rolled out in services across the municipality in recent years.

There is currently no national policy for young people in Australia.

### **5.3 State**

The Early Years Compact, established in 2017 is a partnership between the Department of Education and Training, Department of Health and Human Services and Local Government represented by the Municipal Association Victoria. This compact strengthens the collaborative relationship between the three partners in planning, development and provision of early years' services.

In 2015 the Victorian Government, launched the Education State to improve education outcomes for children, young people and adults across the State. As part of this, an Early Childhood Reform Plan was adopted to support young children to thrive. In 2018, the Victorian Government announced funding for 15 hours of three year old kindergarten which will be progressively implemented across the State commencing in Boroondara from 2022. Substantial evidence exists that highlights the benefits of two years of early learning which results in improved development outcomes.

In 2016, findings from the Royal Commission into Family Violence in Victoria were released resulting in the Family Violence Rolling Action Plan 2017-20. This Plan outlines 227 recommendations which are currently being addressed to improve outcomes for children, families and young people across the State. The Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme was developed as part of this Plan to enable the sharing of information between authorised organisations to access and manage family violence risk.

The following policy directives are relevant to children, young people and families across Victoria:

- Victorian Charter for Child Friendly Cities and Communities (2013)
- No Jab, no Play (2016)
- Department of Education and Training Strategic Plan (2019-2023)
- Aboriginal Education Plan (2016-26)
- Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019-2023
- Youth Policy - Building Stronger Youth Engagement in Victoria (2016)

In 2019, the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System commenced to conduct a review in to Victoria's mental health system to help Victorians to experience their best mental health now and in the future. Interim findings published in late 2019 recommend further investment in acute treatment for young people attending in-patient settings and to expand suicide prevention programs. Other recommendations included more assertive outreach services and care for children and young people who have self-harmed or are at risk of suicide.

## 5.4 Local

The BCP is Council's strategic framework for planning and reporting for the City of Boroondara. The BCP contains seven priority themes highlighted in Figure 8.

The Children and Young People Strategy (2015) was developed to represent Council's overarching commitment to servicing the needs of children, young people and their families. This Strategy concluded at the end of 2019 and will be superseded by the draft Plan.

Other Council plans and policies that have helped inform the draft Plan include:

- Disability Action Plan (2018-22)
- Multicultural Action Plan (2019-23)
- Add life to Your Years (2019)
- Sport and Recreation Strategy (2016)



Figure 8: Seven priority BCP themes

## **6. Key Achievements of Boroondara's Children and Young People's Strategy 2015-2019**

### **6.1 What we have achieved so far**

The Children and Young People's Strategy 2015-2019 focussed on four themes that guided Council's operations at the time. The following achievements were made under these themes:

#### **Theme 1: Resilient, safe and inclusive community**

- Since 2015, Council has increased the number of programs offered to parents from Chinese speaking backgrounds to meet community needs. The Parent-Child Mother Goose and Mandarin speaking facilitated playgroups have been successfully delivered helping to strengthen attachments between parents/carers and children, and also enhance community connections to reduce the risk of isolation. In 2019, Boroondara Youth partnered with Access Health and Community to deliver the program 'Tuning into Teens' in Mandarin.
- Council has continued to run and partner with other organisations to provide an extensive range of parent information sessions for parents of children and young people across Boroondara. These information sessions have covered a myriad of topics, some of which include dealing with anxiety in children, working with dads, raising colourful and adventurous eaters, tuning into teens, online cyber safety, responding to difficult behaviour, and understanding school refusal.
- In 2019, a number of teams and departments across Council joined together to produce a regular school holiday program booklet that outlined various activities available to families during the school holiday period.
- Since 2017, the Boroondara Youth team has increased engagement with international students attending Swinburne University by being present at orientation week activities to promote Council services and other support services. Swinburne University are now a member of the Boroondara Youth Services Advisory Committee which helps to connect them to their local community.

#### **Theme 2: Liveable, sustainable and health promoting city**

- To continue to support children to learn about road safety, a long term plan for the renewal and upgrade of Kew Traffic School was developed. The party room and shed is being upgraded as part of these works. The road safety education program at Kew Traffic School will also be redeveloped.
- Each year, Council has continued to deliver Walk to School programs and other bike and pedestrian safety initiatives funded by VicHealth and VicRoads to primary school children across Boroondara.

- In 2019, Council received funding from the Victorian Government to implement a 40km/hr speed limit along the Burwood Village Shopping strip. This has improved the safety of the area for pedestrians, cyclists, tram passengers and drivers. Council continues to advocate for the introduction of 40km/hr speed limits to improve community safety across the City.
- In 2018-19, the process of booking and accessing Kew Traffic School was streamlined to make it easier for families to access.
- In 2019, Boroondara WILD was launched to promote families getting out into the parks and gardens across Boroondara.

### **Theme 3: Equitable access for all**

- Council has continued to commit funding and resources for developing new community facilities and renewing and upgrading existing facilities to meet the needs of children, young people and their families now and into the future. Since 2015, the following facilities have been planned, constructed or completed:
  - The Greythorn Hub opened in 2018 combining a range of community service providers including Maternal and Child Health and Greythorn Early Childhood Centre and Kindergarten.
  - The Surrey Hills Preschool and Maternal and Child Health co-located into a new building in 2016 increasing provision for these services to the community.
  - Construction commenced on the new Camberwell Community Centre in 2019 including Maternal and Child Health and sleep and settling services.
  - Council was successful in 2019 in securing a \$1.6 million grant under the Children Facilities Capital Program for the construction of a new community hub housing important early years' services in Canterbury.
- To support at risk young people to stay at school, advocacy to the Victorian State Government for the School Focused Youth Service (SFYS) program has been successful with funding granted until December 2020.
- In 2019, Council was successful in applying for funding for the Transport Accident Commission L2P Learner Driver Mentor program to provide opportunities to young people by assisting them to gain their probationary driver's license.
- In 2019, Council was awarded grant funding under Healthy Equal Youth from the Youth Affairs Council Victoria to develop and run a support network for young people identifying as LGBTQIA+ in Boroondara.

### **Theme 4: Best practice health and wellbeing planning and leadership**

- PSFOs support the inclusion and participation of children with additional needs in early years' services which provide a funded kindergarten program. PSFOs have continued to facilitate a transition network of educators who teach both Kindergartens and prep/foundation classes. In 2019, an additional network was included for Maternal and Child Health nurses and three year old kindergarten teachers. These networks provide opportunities for early years educators to work together to achieve the best outcomes for children; and in addition strengthens partnerships.



- Since 2015, Council has strengthened partnerships with headspace, Access Health and Community, Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre and the Victoria Police Boroondara Youth Resource Officer. The Boroondara Youth Hub is also a site for the continued service provision by JobCo and counselling support from Access Health and Community.
- The Early Years Conference for early childhood educators has been delivered on an annual basis, strengthening partnerships and building the capacity of educators across Boroondara.
- In 2019, planning for an early years' digital hub, Boroondara Families, commenced to provide accessible information and advice for families in one central location. The Boroondara Families digital hub was successfully launched in early 2020. In the fortnight following its launch, Boroondara families had 1,100 visits with most families accessing the website through social media channels.

## 7. Key Findings from the Boroondara Community Plan 2017-27

During the development of the BCP, just under 12,000 Boroondara residents were involved in community engagement activities. Of the 11,845 respondents:

- 372 respondents were aged under 15 years
- 409 respondents were aged 15-24 years
- 1,799 respondents were parents of a child aged less than 12 years of age.

Over 500 children also participated in activities where they shared their ideas about what makes Boroondara a great place to live.

The BCP responses were scanned to identify key themes expressed as being important to children, young people and families in Boroondara. The main findings have been summarised in a snapshot summary, as well as more in-depth responses in Section 7.2. The priorities most important to children, young people and families mainly traversed four themes: **Your Community, Services and Facilities, Your Parks and Green Spaces, The Environment and Getting Around Boroondara.**

### 7.1 Snapshot Summary

The consultation for the BCP revealed that being connected to the community was important to parents, young people and children. Having good relationships with neighbours and family and friends was important as well as supporting more vulnerable members of the community. Parents and young people highly valued access to community facilities and there was a large amount of appreciation expressed for the facilities and service offered throughout Boroondara.

All cohorts showed a high degree of appreciation for parks, green spaces and playgrounds, with a desire to see more local activations and events in these settings. Protecting the environment and implementing environmentally sustainable practices, like recycling, was particularly important to parents and young people.

Feeling safe in the community including personal safety and road safety of pedestrians and cyclists was also of significant importance to parents and young people. Finally, supporting the local economy including local shops and cafes was very important to parents in particular, as it helped to foster community connection.

## 7.2 Findings by BCP theme

### Theme 1: Your Community, Services and Facilities

- A sense of community was important to participants, from parents who expressed general sentiments of valuing “the community” to young people and children who valued their relationships with neighbours, friends and family.
- Access to community facilities including: libraries, pools, recreation centres, playgrounds, skate parks and leisure centres were highly valued by all age cohorts. Children aged 3-13 years of age particularly valued pools, leisure centres and libraries as places where they could “play”, “have fun” and “be active”.
- Parents and young people mentioned the importance of more affordable services, such as childcare, housing and health care services.
- Young people aged 15-24 years of age appreciated the existing community services, particularly free services that catered to youth.
- There was a desire to see more events and sporting facilities that young people could engage with, such as events in the park, pool activities and street parks as well as infrastructure for sports such as cricket, football and netball.
- A sense of safety and security was often mentioned in a general sense but also specifically in relation to road safety and personal safety in the evening.
- While not exclusive to this cohort, young people aged 15-24 years of age particularly mentioned the importance of supporting and celebrating the diversity within our community such as culture, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religious affiliation and age.
- Providing services and taking direct action which supports vulnerable members of our community such as refugees, the homeless community and the elderly were mentioned as important for all age groups, even young children.

### Theme 2: Your Parks and Green Spaces

- Children, young adults and parents valued the green spaces and parks, including their associated amenities such as playgrounds and walking trails.
- Green spaces and big “open spaces” more generally were also valued by the community.
- There was an expressed desire to see more and different amenities in these spaces such as shaded areas, complex playgrounds, rubbish bins, toilets and sporting facilities.
- Young people in particular would like to see these spaces activated with events.

### Theme 3: The Environment

- A clean, green and well maintained environment was valued by respondents of all ages.
- The natural environment of flora and fauna was particularly valued and many residents commented on the importance of preserving, maintaining and cultivating the trees, gardens and local wildlife in Boroondara.
- There was also concern about the environment in relation to climate change. Children made comments such as “make the planet clean”, while young adults and parents emphasised the importance of implementing environmentally sustainable practices such as renewable energy.
- A clean environment was often affiliated with good waste management amenities such as recycling.

#### **Theme 4: Neighbourhood Character & Heritage**

- Participants appreciated the maintenance and attention dedicated towards ensuring streets were clean and aesthetically pleasing.
- Preservation of the neighbourhood character was important.
- Ensuring development was consistent with the character of the area was important but notably unsatisfactory to many parents and young people. Many participants commented on the “inappropriate development” that was becoming increasingly prevalent and saw it as Council’s role to enforce appropriate restrictions.

#### **Theme 5: Getting Around Boroondara**

- Road safety, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists was of concern for all age cohorts, even children.
- Participants suggested improvements to both road and footpath infrastructure, such as speed limit restrictions, pedestrian crossings and bike lanes.
- Commuter safety when walking and catching public transport was also important. Notably, parents commented on the importance of children’s safe access to schools.
- Participants and particularly young people, desired improvements to public transport, commenting on its limited frequency and low reliability.
- Road congestion and lack of parking was also mentioned by participants, often unfavourably.
- Better infrastructure for cyclists was also encouraged and ranged from bike lanes on the roads for commuters to bike paths through parks for leisure.

#### **Theme 6: Your Local Shops and Businesses**

- Supporting the local economy was extremely important to community members.
- Participants valued their local shops and cafes as places to socialise and, specifically for children, as places where they could have fun and spend time with family.
- Parents in particular, desired vibrant shopping strips that fostered community connection, supported local business and promoted neighbourhood experiences.

#### **Theme 7: Civic Leadership and Governance**

- Community leadership was valued by participants as was fair and transparent local government.
- Community members saw the Council as playing an important role in the community, particularly when it comes to the provision and allocation of resources and programs.

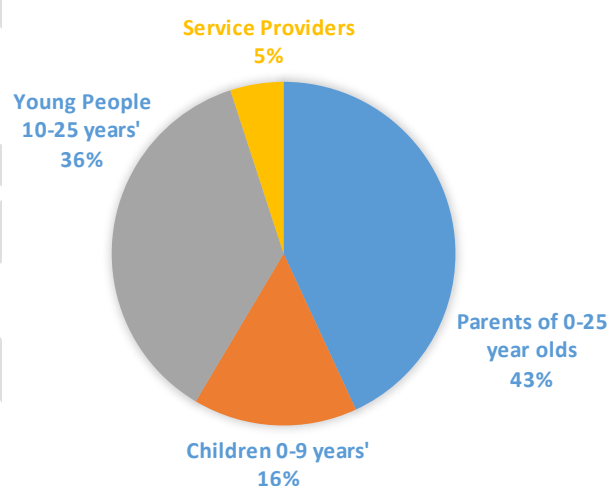
## 8. Community Engagement

From January to April 2020, Officers undertook additional consultation with children, young people and their parents/caregivers across Boroondara to help complement and build on the findings from the BCP. Service providers were also consulted as part of this process.

A range of engagement methods were employed to reach target audience. Creative activities such as Voice Lab from Polyglot Theatre and artist led drawing sessions were held with children under 10 years of age to gather their insights around key areas of the BCP. Voxpops with parents were conducted at events, while focus groups were run with young people to gather more rich qualitative data around how Council can address community needs. Online surveys for both parents/caregivers and young people also captured feedback. Services providing care and support to Boroondara children, families and young people were engaged through interviews and an online survey to help strengthen the data.

The high level findings of the consultation are represented below. Figure 9 shows the breakdown of respondents reached during the consultation. The findings have been summarised as a snapshot in Section 8.1 and also in greater detail in Section 8.2 by consultation target group.

- Almost **1,000** people were reached through the consultation, of which **928** were children, young people and parents/caregivers across Boroondara.
- **151** children aged under 10 years of age took part in creative activities including Voice Lab run by Polyglot Theatre and in art drawing sessions.
- **342** parents/caregivers completed an online survey where **98%** were parents.
- **58%** of young people consulted were aged 10-17 years of age.
- **340** young people completed an online survey with **59%** identifying as female, **36%** male, **2%** as non-binary and **3%** not stating.
- **16** young people took part in **two 1.5 hour** focus groups eliciting in-depth information about the key needs of young people in Boroondara.
- **53** parents or grandparents from Chinese speaking backgrounds were consulted through translated sessions at Balwyn Library and the Greythorn Community Hub.
- **49** service providers, representing organisations across each of the domains of The Nest were interviewed or completed an online survey.



**Figure 9:** breakdown of respondents reached during the Children and Young People Action Plan engagement.

## **8.1 Snapshot summary of 2020 community engagement**

A number of key themes emerged during the community engagement. Many of the results were noted as being consistent with the BCP community consultation results.

This round of community engagement highlighted community participation and connectedness continued to be important for Boroondara parents, young people and children. Parents valued a community where their children could grow up healthy, happy and safe and where diversity and inclusion was supported. Similarly, young people also rated the community as important, while children valued connections and kindness between others. Young people desired more opportunities to participate in civic life with over half expressing they would like to become a volunteer in their local community and have opportunities to contribute to Council decision making.

Parents and young people alike expressed their appreciation for the range of community facilities and services offered across Boroondara. While facilities such as parks and playgrounds, libraries, pools and recreation centres and maternal and child health centres had high levels of usage and awareness; some other facilities and services such as the Boroondara Youth Hub, parent information sessions, arts and cultural centres and school holiday programs had lower levels of both awareness and usage.

Congruent with BCP findings, the environment remained a concern for parents, young people and children. Children believed it was important to protect the environment especially plants and animals, and parents and young people desired more action on climate change and environmental sustainability.

Mental health and family violence continue to be two key health and wellbeing issues for children and young people in Boroondara. With the incidence of both family violence reports and mental illness on the rise, service providers reported the need for more affordable support services to meet the growing demand. Service providers and young people also expressed social isolation was emerging as a key issue for young people adding to increasing levels of loneliness and mental health concerns in this group.

The 2020 consultation also highlighted safety including that road and personal safety were still important issues for young people and parents. Young people felt personal safety in the community was important as well as safety on public transport. Parents of school aged children also commented that bike and pedestrian safety, especially near schools was important to them.

Section 8.2 describes in more detail the key findings under each of the target audiences: children, young people, parents/caregivers and service providers.

## 8.2 What did children, young people, parents/caregivers and service providers in Boroondara tell us?

All community consultation data was collated and analysed. High level findings of the themes that emerged from each target group is summarised below.

### Children:

- Children reported being with friends and family made them the most happy:

*"I like having play dates with my friends, I like playing games with my family because it makes me feel like I'm a lucky person"*

*"Spending time with my family makes me happy"*

- Children reported they liked art and libraries:

*"I love art, its one of my favourite things to do... drawing, its really fun!"*

*"[Art] makes me feel like peaceful, like if I'm stressed it makes me feel better"*

*"...I like to borrow books and look on the catalogue..."*

*"I normally like to browse at books and look for books that I like by the same author..."*

- Caring for the natural environment and animals was the most important issue for children:

*"I would probably invent a way to make electricity that...without polluting the environment"*

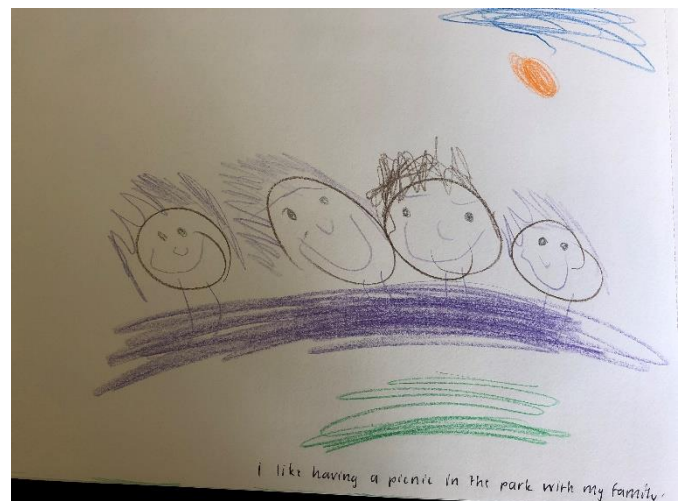
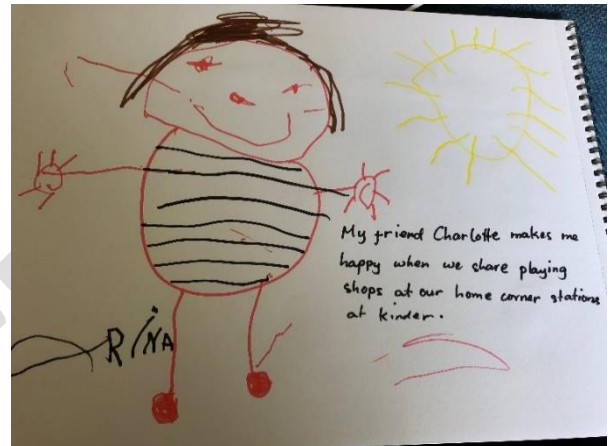
*"Have no plastic in the world so the animals can breathe"*

*"I would make it so people would stop polluting the environment and people would stop cutting down trees"*

- Being kind to each other was also important to children:

*"...everyone would just be happy, and everyone know each other and be kind to each other"*

*"...everyone should be kind to each other!"*



#### *Parents/caregivers:*

- Parents and caregivers reported high levels of awareness and usage of Boroondara parks and playgrounds, libraries, maternal and child health centres and pools and recreation centres. They were also highly appreciative of the services provided by Council to the community.
- Around 25% reported low levels of awareness of some community facilities and services including parent information sessions, arts and cultural centres, school holiday programs and the Boroondara Youth Hub.
- One in six parents reported they desired local services and programs to be offered after hours and on weekends to cater for full time working parents. Parents also expressed they would like to see more family activities that traversed multiple age groups so the whole family could get involved.
- Parents would like more information about the range of playgroups offered throughout Boroondara.
- Just over half of parents/caregivers stated they would like to see more family friendly events in Boroondara parks and playgrounds.
- Parents expressed concern about bike and pedestrian safety in Boroondara, particularly around primary schools. There were calls to advocate to improve accessibility of public transport throughout the municipality.
- Addressing climate change and encouraging environmentally sustainable practices was reported as being important to parents.
- Parents described they would like to see a future for their children where they are well educated, happy, healthy, safe and resilient, accepting of diversity and having a strong connection to their community.
- One third of survey respondents reported they spoke a language other than English at home. There were suggestions to increase the provision of services and programs that are offered in more languages.

#### *Young people:*

- Young people reported high levels of awareness and usage of Boroondara parks and green spaces, libraries and pools and recreation centres.
- Lower levels of community facility and service awareness were seen for other Council services including the Boroondara Youth Hub and all associated programs, arts and cultural centres and the Junction Skate Park.
- Young people suggested that increased advertising and promotion of the services and programs available for youth in Boroondara would help to increase awareness and usage.
- 54% of young people stated they are not currently a volunteer, but were interested in volunteering in the future. Helping those in need of assistance and caring for the environment were key areas of interest.
- Over 50% of young people surveyed were involved in a sports club at least once a week. Involvement in other community groups like church groups, art/theatre and music groups was much lower.
- Over two thirds of young people reported that personal safety and the environment, i.e. addressing climate change, were two areas that are very important to them. Just over half stated community connections and inclusion and diversity were also very important.
- 96% of young people reported mental health was a key health issue for their age group.
- 31% of young people responding to the survey stated they spoke a language other than English at home.
- Lack of employment opportunities for young people across Boroondara was a concern raised during the consultation.
- Young people desired the opportunity to be more involved in Council matters.



*Service providers:*

- Family violence remains a key issue affecting children, families and young people across Boroondara with the incidence of reporting on the rise, particularly within CALD communities.
- Mental health remains a significant health issue affecting children, families and young people across Boroondara:
  - Service providers noted children are now presenting for stress and anxiety type concerns at a much younger age.
  - There are increasing levels of anxiety and depression presentations for first time parents.
  - There is a lack of adequate and affordable supports and services available to deliver therapeutic treatment for families and young people.
- The middle years, i.e. ages 6-10 years', presents as a significant service gap area as there is a lack of government funding to address education, health and wellbeing concerns in this cohort.
- Vulnerability amongst children and families in particular is increasing across Boroondara due to high levels of financial stress resulting in limited service access for those experiencing financial disadvantage.
- Service providers working with children and families have noted an increase in the numbers of grandparents now caring for their grandchildren. Adequate supports need to be provided to this group.
- There are a lack of employment opportunities for young people across Boroondara, and in particular a lack of vocational opportunities for young people with disability.

### 8.3 Emerging issues and opportunities

Analysis of the data received from the community, service providers, Council staff and emerging research and policy directives highlighted a number of issues and opportunities to be addressed in the draft Plan.

A summary of the emerging issues and opportunities from community engagement and relevant State policy directives is documented in sections 8.3.1 and 8.3.2 below.

The COVID-19 pandemic was declared in 2020 and has resulted in unprecedented changes to the way society functions. During 2020, Council has adapted its service delivery to provide a range of online services to children, young people and families. Council will seek to continue the provision of these online services in the future, and most importantly is committed to assisting the pandemic recovery and responding to emerging community needs in the 0-25 years' age group.

#### 8.3.1 Summary of findings

A summary of the emerging issues and opportunities for families, early and middle years' as well as young people is represented in Table 4.

**Table 4:** Summary of emerging issues and opportunities

Target Group	Emerging Issues and Opportunities
Families (all ages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There is a high proportion of Boroondara families with both parents in the workforce, resulting in high demand for affordable childcare services. There has been a 20% increase in the proportion of children attending day care since 2012.</li><li>• Service providers have noted a large increase in the number of grandparents providing care to grandchildren in Boroondara.</li><li>• Family violence reports are increasing with 464.6 reports completed per 100,000 population in 2019. This figure has increased from 446.8 in 2018. Service providers also noted an increase in demand for services responding to family violence.</li><li>• Approximately 9% and 21% of households reported housing and rental stress respectively in 2016, with service providers indicating increased levels of financial stress and disadvantage amongst families. This figure is likely to be much higher now due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</li><li>• For the 2019/20 year, approximately one in five consultations where mental health was identified as an issue, Maternal and Child Health nurses made subsequent referrals to specialist services for further parental emotional support.</li><li>• Around 25% of parents and caregivers surveyed reported they were unaware of some Council services and programs for families including: parent information sessions, arts and cultural centres, school holiday programs and the Boroondara Youth Hub.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents desired more local services and programs to be offered after hours or on weekends to better provide for the needs of full time working parents. Family activities and events that catered for children of multiple age groups were also desired. Council will continue to explore opportunities of working with our community partners to provide more flexible options for families.</li> <li>• Parents articulated they would like information about the range of playgroups offered throughout Boroondara.</li> <li>• Just over half of parents/caregivers surveyed stated more free or low cost family friendly events in parks and playgrounds would be beneficial.</li> <li>• Parents expressed concern about bike and pedestrian safety, particularly around primary schools. There were calls to advocate to improve accessibility of public transport throughout the municipality.</li> <li>• Addressing climate change and encouraging environmentally sustainable practices was reported as being important to parents.</li> <li>• Parents from CALD backgrounds desired programs and services to be offered in more languages other than English.</li> </ul>
Early Years (0-5 years of age)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proportion of children starting school who are classified as being “developmentally vulnerable” by the AEDC has been increasing across Boroondara since 2012. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Approximately 13% are developmentally vulnerable in one or more domains</li> <li>○ Approximately 5% are developmentally vulnerable in two or more domains.</li> <li>○ The physical health and communication skills and general knowledge domains represent the two largest growths in vulnerability.</li> <li>○ Investment in children’s health and wellbeing and building communication skills is required across Boroondara.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Almost 80% of infants are fully breastfed at discharge from hospital dropping to 62% at 3 months of age, highlighting the importance of breastfeeding support services available through Maternal and Child Health services.</li> <li>• High participation rates in sport and recreation activities amongst young children with 85% being involved.</li> <li>• Children expressed concerns about caring for the environment and protecting our plants and animals throughout the consultation.</li> <li>• Having strong relationships with family and friends was voiced as being important to young children.</li> </ul>
Middle Years (6-9 years of age)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A large service gap for the middle years’ cohort exists due to insufficient funding from State and Federal governments to address education, health and wellbeing concerns.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a very high educational achievement amongst Boroondara children (Year 3) across literacy and numeracy standards.</li> <li>• Children expressed concerns about caring for the environment and protecting our plants and wildlife.</li> <li>• Having strong relationships with family and friends was voiced as being important to children.</li> <li>• Looking after vulnerable community members such as older adults, homeless people and refugees was important to children.</li> </ul>
Young people (10-25 years of age)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health is the most significant health and wellbeing issue for young people with 96% young people surveyed stating it was very important or important.</li> <li>• Rates of psychological distress (depressive symptoms) are increasing with 22.4% young people reporting high or very high levels (data from Inner Eastern Metropolitan region).</li> <li>• Only 25% of young people undertake the recommended amount of physical activity per day (data from Inner Eastern Metropolitan region).</li> <li>• Use of electronic media is high amongst young people with 62.4% spending more than 2 hours a day on media (data from Inner Eastern Metropolitan region).</li> <li>• 12.1% of young people report having used marijuana or other illegal drugs, which is higher than the Victorian average of 10.3% (data from Inner Eastern Metropolitan region). Recent data is not available at local government area level.</li> <li>• There is very high educational achievement amongst Boroondara young people (Years' 5, 7, 9) across literacy and numeracy standards.</li> <li>• Young people and service providers reported a lack of suitable employment opportunities for their age group during community consultation.</li> <li>• 60% of young people identifying as LGBTQIA+ felt safe and supported in Boroondara.</li> <li>• Only 30% of young people surveyed were aware of the Boroondara Youth Hub and associated programs and committees, representing an opportunity to increase awareness and usage of these services.</li> <li>• Celebrating and accepting diversity is important to young people.</li> <li>• The environment and addressing climate change was deemed very important or important to 92% of young people surveyed.</li> <li>• Young people desire more activations of parks and green spaces with free activities.</li> <li>• 92% of young people surveyed felt personal safety and road safety was very important or important to them.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Young people identified the need for more support during the transition from school to tertiary education and work to help attenuate social isolation and loneliness.</li><li>• 54% of young people surveyed reported they are not currently a volunteer but would like to become a volunteer in community service roles or caring for the environment.</li><li>• Through focus groups, young people stated they would like more opportunities to be more involved in Council decision making.</li></ul>
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### 8.3.2 BCP Theme

#### Theme 1: Your Community, Services and Facilities

- Council service awareness and usage was inconsistent amongst parents and young people. Service barriers were identified amongst parents with some noting there was limited advertising and promotion of what was available to them. Also one in six parents called for local services to be offered after hours and on weekends to better cater for full time working parents in Boroondara.
- There is currently an insufficient number of three year old Kindergarten places across Boroondara kindergartens. This requires further research and preparation before implementation of funded three year old kindergarten commences in 2022.
- Young people expressed cost and transport access presented as barriers to accessing services, therefore demonstrating a need to expand the range of youth programming across the municipality and build new and strengthen existing partnerships.
- Inadequate peer support networks for vulnerable young people, particularly those identifying as LGBTIQ+, are available in Boroondara to allow these young people to feel safe and connected to their community.
- Neighbourhood houses across Boroondara have capacity to increase their provision of services to children, young people and parents/caregivers, which would result in benefits to the community through increased opportunities to connect locally.
- Limited opportunities for young people to be involved in civic life across the municipality.
- There is a need to recognise the achievements and contributions of young people, and service providers supporting young people in Boroondara.
- It is perceived there are limited opportunities for students, particularly those of tertiary education age, to be physically active across the City.
- Placemaking projects within Boroondara require continued input from children, young people and families to ensure these projects are fit for purpose for this target group.

#### Theme 2: Your Parks and Greens Spaces

- Parents and caregivers desire more family friendly events and activities across Boroondara parks, green spaces and playgrounds to promote getting active and making new connections with local residents.
- Parents and children would like to see more creative and challenging play spaces for children, and those that have greater focus on sensory play.

#### Theme 3: The Environment

- Children, parents/caregivers and young people would like to see an increase in the provision of programming that addresses different aspects of environmental sustainability.
- There are limited opportunities for young people to be involved in actively caring for the natural environment across Boroondara.

#### Theme 5: Getting Around Boroondara

- Bike and pedestrian safety continue to be key issues of concern for parents/caregivers, who desire more efforts to address bike and pedestrian safety especially around primary schools.
- Road safety including monitoring of speed limits of cars around primary schools is a concern for parents.

### **Theme 6: Your Local Shops and Businesses**

- There are a lack of employment opportunities in local businesses for young people throughout Boroondara, particularly young people with disability.

### **Theme 7: Civic Leadership and Governance**

- There are limited opportunities for young people to have a voice and contribute meaningfully to Council priorities and actions.
- There is a need to increase the range of experiences for young people to engage with Council using online and digital engagement platforms.

### **8.3.3 Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic**

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic emerged worldwide. This has resulted in unprecedented changes to the way society functions, and the health and economic ramifications will be experienced by the community for months to come. Adverse effects to health and wellbeing, particularly mental health are expected to worsen. Also, economic forecasts predict high levels of unemployment, including youth unemployment, resulting in significant challenges for the community.

During 2020, Council adapted its service delivery to provide a range of online services to children, young people and families. Council will seek to continue the provision of these online services in the future.

Council is committed to monitoring the emerging needs of children, young people and families as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in the short, medium and long term. Council recognises the need to be agile and nimble in developing strategies for how we will respond to needs in the community in order to facilitate the recovery process.

## 9. Implementation and Evaluation

Council is committed to addressing the needs and priorities of children, young people and families in Boroondara. Council will work with a range of community partners that service these age groups to implement actions that address their needs and priorities. The emerging issues identified in Section 8.3 have formed the basis of the development of the action plan in **Appendix 1**.

The draft Plan acknowledges other Council strategies and plans that address the needs of children, young people and families.

A separate evaluation framework will be produced to monitor the implementation and impact of the draft Plan.

## 10. Accountabilities

For all queries or feedback regarding this Plan, please use the contact details for the responsible department below.

Department Contact	Contact Number	Contact email
Stephanie Leggett Strategic Projects, Partnerships and Planning Officer	03 9278 4517	stephanie.leggett@boroondara.vic.gov.au

## 11. References

1. Crime Statistics Agency, 2019
2. Victorian Child and Adolescent Monitoring System, 2019
3. id Consulting, 2016
4. Department Health and Human Services, 2019, Maternal and Child Health Service 2017-18 annual reports
5. Australian Immunisation Register, 2020
6. City of Boroondara, 2016, Sport and Recreation Strategy
7. Department Health and Human Services, 2020, Maternal and Child Health Service 2019-20 annual reports
8. Australian Early Development Census, 2019
9. Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, 2020
10. Australian Electoral Commission, 2016
11. Access Health and Community (headspace), 2019

## 12. Related Documents

- Boroondara Community Plan (2017-27)
- Children and Young People Strategy (2015-19)
- Disability Action Plan (2018-22)
- Multicultural Action Plan (2019-23)
- Add life to Your Years (2019)
- Sport and Recreation Strategy (2016)
- Boroondara Annual Report (2018-19)
- The Nest Action Agenda (ARACY, 2014)



## **Appendix 1 - Action Plan Table**

(refer to Attachment 2 for action table)

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