

# Lara Youth Needs Study



“I have lived in Lara all my life and I have found that every weekend I am travelling out of Lara and to other suburbs to go to things like bowling and basketball but even worse to buy stuff like CD’s and to use the library cos we don’t have these things in Lara.”

**Male 13 yrs**

“We need a school in Lara. I catch the bus to Geelong High - we are always later to school and later than everyone else getting home. That’s unfair - just because we live in Lara.”

**Female 13 yrs**

“I believe the youth of Lara (me) need somewhere we can hang out and have fun rather than creating a bad name for ourselves when we sit out the front of a shop or being too loud in an area just because we are trying to have some fun. A venue like a skatepark or an entertainment place would be good examples to prevent us from getting a worse name in the future.”

**Male 15 yrs**

CHAPTER 1

# METHODOLOGY

## **METHODOLOGY :**

The methodology is based on the overarching aim of the project, which is to identify the key priority needs of young people living in Lara and surrounding area in such a way that recommendations for action will lead to the co-ordinated development of a range of services for young people aged 10 to 24 years.

The methodology of this study can be broken into three distinct stages:

1. Initial Project Development
2. Project Activation
3. Project Conclusion.

## **INITIAL PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**

The initial development of the project in August 1999 involved five stages:

1. Establish the Lara Youth Needs Reference Group
2. Finalise all plans
3. Situational analysis
4. Establish web page
5. Develop youth consultants.

### **ESTABLISH THE LARA YOUTH NEEDS REFERENCE GROUP**

The City of Greater Geelong Youth Services Unit identified and contacts a range of people from the following areas:

1. Stakeholders from Lara
2. Other agencies with an interest
3. City of Greater Geelong staff from associated Units.

The Group first met on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October, 1999. The membership of the group was:

- Cr Bill Aitken – City of Greater Geelong
- Rene Peters – Lara Action and Lions Club
- Anne Chirnside – General Practitioner
- Ralph Shanahan – Lara Sporting Club Inc.
- Tom Van Etten – Department of Human Services
- Sen. Cons. Mark Delaforce – Victoria Police, Lara
- David Burke – City of Greater Geelong Youth Services Unit
- Sue McKay – City of Greater Geelong Youth Services

The Reference Group played an integral role in the development of the project and applied local and regional knowledge to monitoring the project. The Reference Group also played a critical role in the “workshopping” of recommendations.

## **FINALISE ALL PLANS**

The Reference Group reviewed and finalise all plans in consultation with the staff working on the project. This initial process was used to clarify objectives, processes and required outcomes.

## **SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS**

A brief overview of demography and local issues was developed and served as both useful background for the staff and youth consultants and was published on the web page for general information.

## **ESTABLISH WEB PAGE**

A young person was contracted to develop the concept for a web page to connect with those young people in Lara who are computer savvy. The theme chosen was that of a bus stop / information stop / input stop. The idea was to feature the locally identifiable bus stops in the town and ask young people to stop and think about their input.

## **DEVELOP YOUTH CONSULTANTS**

Following media publicity two young people, who live in Lara, were engaged as youth consultants. This strategy was to ensure that employment and skills were provided by the project and that the project remained real and relevant to young people.

The youth consultants were trained in areas such as:

- Introduction, overview of the study
- Confident communication
- Open ended questioning
- Survey techniques.

## **PROJECT ACTIVATION**

The activation of the project was developed through the following activities:

1. Launch the project
2. Promotion of the web page
3. Deliver a range of surveys/workshops
4. Conduct a range of focus groups
5. Deliver a parent survey – this did not take place due to resourcing
6. Produce a video – this did not take place due to resourcing.

### **LAUNCH THE PROJECT**

The project was publicly launched on Friday the 29<sup>th</sup> of October, 1999 at the Community Centre in Waverley Road. The launch involved skating and blading, bands and food from 7:00 to 9:00pm. The launch was well attended by around 100 young people and around 35 adults, including representatives from Lara Lions who acted as marshals. The launch was used as an opportunity to talk with young people and distribute flyers regarding the project.

### **PROMOTION OF THE WEB PAGE**

Promotional materials regarding the availability of the web page were made available at the launch and throughout the project.

### **DELIVER A RANGE OF SURVEYS / WORKSHOPS**

The range of surveys delivered through the project were:

- Open ended surveys from young people aged 13 to 17. These surveys were open ended and involved young people thinking about the advantages and disadvantages of living within the area, the broad needs of young people and some specific issues regarding actions and outcomes.
- Workshops with primary school aged young people –11 and 12 year olds . The workshop format, using open ended questions, was interactive and directed towards young people creating a future vision for the area.
- A formal survey, collated by the Research, Planning and Development Unit within the City of Greater Geelong. This formal survey asked people to rate participation in activities, barriers to access, desired activities, access arrangements and usage of services.
- In addition, a workshop with the staff was held immediately following the study period to bring together impressions and ideas from the whole project.

### **CONDUCT A RANGE OF FOCUS GROUPS**

Community consultation workshops were held with two community groups which have a stake in the planning and delivery of services to young people. These workshops were used as broad ranging discussion forums to collect information and ideas from adults with a critical understanding of the needs of young people.

## **DELIVER A PARENT SURVEY**

A parent survey was not delivered during this project. Whilst a parent survey would have provided a further perspective to the whole project time and staffing constraints conspired against the inclusion of this initiative.

## **PRODUCE A VIDEO**

During the initial development stage of the project it was envisaged that a group with skills in video production may be available to participate. It was felt that a video featuring young people discussing the future of the town would add a further dimension to the whole project. The eventual lack of availability of a skilled group forced the abandonment of this element of the project.

## **PROJECT CONCLUSION**

This Research and Development project was intended to deliver a documented outcome of recommendations. Thus the conclusion of the project has been envisaged in four stages:

1. Collate information
2. Develop recommendations
3. Publish final documentation
4. Implement recommendations.

### **COLLATE INFORMATION**

An objective consultant, who had not participated in the activation stage of the project, collated the information from all sources. This included the analysis of the informal surveys, consideration of the formal survey, analysis of feedback from the community workshops and workshopping ideas with the staff who had implemented the project. This information was published in a document titled "Data", which was made available to the Reference Group to assist with the development of recommendations. The "Data" document is included in this document as the next chapter.

### **DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS**

The involvement of the Reference Group was seen as critical to the development of the recommendations. A workshop was held on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2000, following the distribution of the Data document. This workshop was facilitated by the consultant responsible for collating the data. During the workshop Reference Group members mapped the key issues arising from the study and developed recommendations for each key issue. These are documented in the final chapter of this document.

### **PUBLISH FINAL DOCUMENTATION**

The development of the final documentation has been a combined effort of the consultant and key City of Greater Geelong Youth Services Unit staff. It is intended that the documentation be available in three forms:

1. This final report – to be made generally available
2. A set of detailed appendices – to be used as a further resource
3. A summary document of four pages for wide distribution.

### **IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

The implementation of recommendations is a process arising from the publication of this report, response by the community, response by the City of Greater Geelong and the availability of resources.

It is envisaged that the recommendations act as a blue print for phased, long term community development and service delivery activity within Lara and the surrounding area.

CHAPTER 2

# DATA

## DATA :

This chapter contains the information collected from a wide range of sources during the project. In general terms the information success related to three themes:

- Determining the issues that are most important to young people
- Determining the needs of young people
- Identifying strategies for addressing these needs.

The information sources used are as follows:

1. Surveys from young people aged 13 to 17 ( total of 153 surveys )
2. Workshops with Primary School aged young people aged 11 and 12 ( 90 young people )
3. Community consultation workshops ( 2 workshops held )
4. Formal Survey analysed by the City of Greater Geelong Research, Planning and Development Unit ( 182 surveys ).
5. Feedback from the staff who have collected the information.

## YOUNG PEOPLE 13 TO 17 :

There are 631 young people aged between 13 and 17 inclusive living in the Lara area (ABS Census, 1996) Of this group 153 young people completed open ended surveys. The questions were presented without options – thus the participants have generated the ideas raised.

| Number of surveys completed: |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |       |
|------------------------------|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|-------|
| Age >                        | 13 |   | 14 |    | 15 |    | 16 |   | 17 |    | ?  | Total |
| Sex>                         | F  | M | F  | M  | F  | M  | F  | M | F  | M  | ?  |       |
| Number of surveys            | 6  | 9 | 13 | 20 | 10 | 29 | 7  | 9 | 3  | 12 | 35 | 153   |

It is noted that a significant gender and age bias is present within this sample group. Of a total of 153 survey collated there were 39 from young women, 79 from young men and 35 surveys where the sex is unknown. A significant proportion of the participants are aged 14 and 15 years. These biases can be explained by a lack of control over the availability of participants as this was managed by the schools involved. Reference Group members and other readers are advised to regard the results of this survey with considerable caution. Reference Group members were encouraged to think in terms of "themes" rather than attempted empirical results.

The data from this survey follows:

| What are the most important issues for you as a young person living in Lara? |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |   |    |       |
|--|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|---|----|-------|
| Age >  | 13 |   | 14 |    | 15 |    | 16 |   | 17 |   | ?  | Total |
| Sex>   | F  | M | F  | M  | F  | M  | F  | M | F  | M | ?  |       |
| Boredom  | 1  | 3 | 6  | 8  | 4  | 7  | 3  |   | 3  | 4 | 11 | 50    |
| Safety   | 2  | 2 | 1  | 11 | 6  | 7  | 2  | 5 | 3  | 7 | 8  | 54    |
| Entertainment  |    | 2 | 5  | 4  | 2  | 4  |    | 1 |    |   | 3  | 21    |
| Not like Corio   |    |   |    |    |    | 2  | 2  | 1 |    | 3 |    | 8     |
| Public transport & isolation   |    |   | 3  | 6  | 2  | 7  | 2  | 4 |    | 4 | 7  | 36    |
| Lack of facilities   |    | 2 | 3  | 5  |    | 18 |    | 2 |    | 1 | 3  | 34    |
| Employment   |    | 3 |    | 1  |    | 1  |    |   |    | 2 | 1  | 8     |
| Spaces to meet   |    |   | 3  | 5  | 5  | 7  | 6  | 4 | 2  |   | 3  | 35    |
| Having fun   | 3  |   |    |    |    | 3  |    |   |    |   | 1  | 7     |
| Upgrading the facilities   |    |   |    |    |    | 1  |    |   |    | 4 |    | 5     |
| Recreation   | 2  |   |    |    | 2  | 5  |    |   |    | 4 |    | 13    |
| Environmental issues   |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |   | 1  | 1     |
| Health services  |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |   |    | 1 | 1  | 2     |
| Having a High School   |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |   | 1  | 1     |
| Drug use   |    |   |    |    |    |    | 1  |   |    |   |    | 1     |
| A way out  |    |   |    |    |    |    |    | 1 |    |   |    | 1     |
| Belonging  |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |   | 2  |   |    | 2     |
| Socialising  | 3  |   |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |   |    | 3     |

Key features:

- Safety was a key concern across all age groups
- Boredom was noted as a significant issue
- A lack of public transport and the resulting isolation was listed as significant
- The lack of available spaces for young people to meet was noted
- The lack of facilities within the town was noted
- A lack of entertainment opportunities was also noted.

| What do you think the needs of young people are in the Lara area? |    |   |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |    |    |       |
|---|----|---|----|---|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|-------|
| Age >   | 13 |   | 14 |   | 15 |    | 16 |   | 17 |    | ?  | Total |
| Sex>  | F  | M | F  | M | F  | M  | F  | M | F  | M  | ?  |       |
| Pool upgrade, including gym                                       | 1  | 4 | 4  | 7 | 5  | 12 | 1  | 2 | 2  | 2  | 6  | 46    |
| Library   |    | 1 |    |   | 2  | 3  | 1  | 2 | 1  |    | 2  | 12    |
| Skate park  | 2  | 3 | 3  | 8 | 4  | 18 | 8  | 7 | 1  | 5  | 10 | 66    |
| Upgrade existing facilities                                       |    | 3 | 4  | 4 | 1  | 6  | 1  | 2 |    | 1  | 15 | 37    |
| Walking & bike paths  |    |   |    | 1 | 1  | 5  | 1  | 2 |    |    |    | 10    |
| Fast food shops!  | 2  | 3 | 6  | 5 | 4  | 5  | 3  | 5 |    | 10 |    | 43    |
| Entertainment   |    | 3 | 5  | 4 | 4  | 6  |    |   |    |    | 9  | 31    |
| Cinema  |    | 4 | 3  | 2 | 2  | 3  | 1  | 1 |    |    | 4  | 20    |
| Music / dance   | 1  | 2 | 4  | 3 | 1  |    | 2  |   |    |    |    | 13    |
| Local sport clubs   |    | 1 |    | 3 | 1  |    |    | 4 |    |    | 1  | 10    |
| Access to facilities  |    |   | 7  | 5 |    | 1  | 3  | 3 | 1  | 5  |    | 25    |
| Transport   |    |   | 2  | 1 | 2  | 1  | 1  | 1 |    | 5  | 1  | 14    |
| High school in Lara   |    |   | 1  | 4 | 2  | 4  |    | 2 |    |    |    | 14    |
| Employment  |    |   |    | 1 |    | 2  |    | 2 |    | 2  | 3  | 10    |
| Go Kart   |    | 4 |    | 1 |    |    |    |   |    |    |    | 5     |
| Basketball courts   | 1  |   |    |   |    |    |    |   |    | 2  |    | 3     |
| Recreation  |    |   |    |   | 4  | 5  |    |   |    |    | 3  | 12    |
| Monorail  |    |   |    |   |    | 1  |    |   |    |    |    | 1     |
| Spaces to meet  |    | 1 |    |   | 3  |    |    |   |    |    | 7  | 11    |
| Information   |    |   |    |   |    |    |    | 1 |    |    |    | 1     |
| Counselling / support   |    |   |    |   |    |    | 1  |   |    |    |    | 1     |
| Camps   |    |   |    |   |    |    | 1  |   |    |    |    | 1     |
| Community doctor  |    | 1 |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |    | 1  | 2     |
| Video arcade  |    | 3 |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |    |    | 3     |
| Trout farm  |    | 2 |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |    |    | 2     |
| Police  |    | 1 |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |    |    | 1     |
| Bowling   |    | 3 |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |    |    | 3     |

Key features:

- The need for a skate park was the most significant issue highlighted
- The need to upgrade the pool, including a gym, was the second most significant issue
- A demand for fast food shops was significant
- A suggestion to upgrade existing facilities was a key issue
- Means to increase access to facilities was an issue.

| What things do you think would help meet these needs for the young people living in Lara? |    |   |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |   |   |       |
|---|----|---|----|---|----|----|----|---|----|---|---|-------|
| Age >   | 13 |   | 14 |   | 15 |    | 16 |   | 17 |   | ? | Total |
| Sex>  | F  | M | F  | M | F  | M  | F  | M | F  | M | ? |       |
| Petitions   | 1  |   |    |   | 2  |    |    |   |    |   |   | 3     |
| Surveys   |    |   |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |   | 1 | 1     |
| Fundraising   | 1  | 1 | 2  | 5 | 6  | 8  | 1  | 2 |    | 1 | 5 | 32    |
| Lobbying  |    |   |    |   |    | 1  | 1  | 1 |    | 1 | 2 | 6     |
| Community Involvement   | 1  | 1 |    | 1 | 2  | 5  |    |   |    | 1 | 3 | 14    |
| Youth Workers   |    |   | 1  | 1 |    |    | 1  |   |    |   |   | 3     |
| Input from young people   |    |   |    | 3 |    | 2  | 1  |   |    |   |   | 6     |
| Building facilities   |    | 1 |    |   | 2  | 10 |    |   |    |   |   | 13    |
| Community newspaper   |    |   |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |   | 2 | 2     |
| Spaces for young people   |    |   |    |   |    |    |    |   |    |   | 1 | 1     |
| Input from parents  |    |   |    |   |    |    | 1  |   |    |   |   | 1     |
| Police numbers  |    |   |    |   |    |    |    |   | 1  |   |   | 1     |
| Advertising   |    |   | 2  |   |    |    |    |   |    |   |   | 2     |

Key features:

- Fundraising was highlighted as the most significant means of addressing needs
- The involvement of the community was noted as a significant factor
- The need to build facilities was raised as a significant strategy.

| Would you like to be involved in an ongoing group of young people who look at the needs of young people living in Lara? |    |   |    |    |    |    |    |   |    |   |   |       |
|---|----|---|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|---|---|-------|
| Age >   | 13 |   | 14 |    | 15 |    | 16 |   | 17 |   | ? | Total |
| Sex>  | F  | M | F  | M  | F  | M  | F  | M | F  | M | ? |       |
| Name supplied   | 3  | 6 | 8  | 11 | 6  | 15 | 3  | 1 | 2  | 4 | 2 | 61    |

A total of 61 young people surveyed have provided contact details and expressed an interest in participating in further strategies to address the needs of young people living in Lara and the surrounding areas.

**WORKSHOPS WITH SCHOOLS:**

Three workshops involving some 90 Years 5 and 6 primary school students – aged 11 and 12 - were held. The groups were run as open ended sessions based on the following questions:

- What activities do you currently do?
- What activities would you like to do?
- Why can't you do these activities now?
- What are the needs of young people living in Lara?
- How can we meet these needs?
- If you had a problem who would you ask for assistance?
- What problems do you seek assistance about?
- Imagine you could change something about Lara – what would it be?

The ideas and issues raised in the workshops are summarised as:

### **WHAT ACTIVITIES DO YOU CURRENTLY DO?**

- Skating
- Bike riding
- Tennis / Netball
- Music & discos
- Cricket / football
- Hanging out with friends
- BMX riding
- Horse riding
- Swimming
- Movies
- Walking

### **WHAT ACTIVITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO?**

- Skate boarding
- Rollerblading
- Movies
- Bike riding
- Library
- Go to parks
- Time zone
- Shopping
- Sport
- Disco
- McDonalds

### **WHY CAN'T YOU DO THESE ACTIVITIES NOW?**

Need to fix up or build facilities such as:

- Equestrian Park
- Soccer ground and club
- Basketball stadium
- BMX track
- Swimming pool
- Walking tracks
- Motor bike track
- Big playground
- Surf shop
- Library

There is also a lack of transport.

There is also a problem of the train track dividing the town.

## WHAT ARE THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE LIVING IN LARA?

- Increase recreation options
- Transport
- Upgrade facilities, tennis club, football ground, pool
- Entertainment, underage disco at the Community Centre
- Youth group
- Arts facility
- Need a skate park
- No high school
- Upgrade the pool, too costly, not accessible
- Fast food outlets
- Library

## HOW CAN WE MEET THESE NEEDS?

- Upgrade the pool – shelter over pool
- Encourage business to provide part time jobs
- Involve the whole community
- Build facilities like skate park and arts centre
- Raise funds

## WHO HELPS YOU WHEN YOU NEED TO FIND OUT ABOUT THINGS?

- Parents
- Information centre
- Librarian
- Police
- Friends
- Teachers
- Kids Help Line
- Internet
- Family

## WHAT THINGS DO YOU TALK TO THEM ABOUT?

- School work
- Problems at home
- School problems
- Safety
- Advice
- Direction

## IMAGINE YOU COULD CHANGE SOMETHING ABOUT LARA – WHAT WOULD IT BE?

- Underage music events
- Build a skate park
- Develop a space to young people to meet
- Local sporting groups
- Beautify Lara
- Build a high school
- Upgrade the pool
- Develop a shopping centre
- Safer traffic conditions
- More bike tracks
- Develop a cinema

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:

Two workshops were held with key groups: Lara Baptist Youth Group and the Lara Action group.

The outcomes of these workshops can be summarised as:

### WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MAIN ISSUES IMPACTING ON YOUNG PEOPLE?

- Boredom and a lack of things to do
- Lack of entertainment
- Lack of skate park in the area
- Services from Geelong are not available in Lara
- Employment options for young people
- Lack of a high school
- The limitations of public transport
- Lack of recreation options
- Lack of activity programs for after school and week ends

### WHAT STRATEGIES OR ACTIONS COULD HELP TO MEET THESE NEEDS?

- Improve co-ordination of Council resources for Lara
- Improve mechanisms for the people of Lara to have input into Council decisions
- Improved co-ordination of resources of groups such as Lions, youth groups etc.
- Developing meeting spaces for young people
- Developing youth activities within the community
- Improving bus shelters
- School crossing attendants
- Upgrading the pool, including improving costs and hours of access
- Better bike paths
- Building a skate park
- Resurfacing the football park
- Building a library near the shops
- Building bike, walking and rollerblading path ways
- Having local sporting competitions – at present have to go out of Lara for sports such as basketball.

**FORMAL SURVEY:**

The formal survey consisted of a computer generated form, which posed a series of questions and sought a "tick the box" response. This approach was used to seek a further view of the central themes regarding needs and issues for young people. In a sense the formal survey was designed to be compared with the opened ended surveys which were "workshopped" with young people.

Some 182 survey forms were analysed by the City of Greater Geelong Research, Planning and Development Unit. Further details of this survey are available as appendices.

| Survey respondents by age and sex. |                   |                   |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                                    | Male              | Female            |
| Age                                | % of total sample | % of total sample |
| 11-13                              | 26.3              | 34.5              |
| 14-15                              | 48.3              | 36.5              |
| 16-17                              | 13.6              | 23.6              |
| 17+                                | 11.9              | 5.5               |
| Total                              | 100.0             | 100.0             |

It is again noted that a significant gender and age bias is present in this sample. A significant proportion of respondents were males aged 14-15 – 48% of all males involved. These biases can be explained by a lack of control over the availability of participants as this was managed by the schools. Reference Group members and other readers are advised to regard the results with considerable caution. The results of this survey are best considered as "themes". Outcomes of the survey are summarised below:

| If the following were available would you use them? (Complete sample) |  |
|---|--|
| Most likely to use  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swimming Pool - 20.6% (Need to consider seasonal variable (December distribution) in this level of response)</li> <li>Skating facilities – 16.6% (Significant bias towards 14-15 yr old boys)</li> <li>Sporting Grounds – 15.6%</li> <li>Libraries – 10.4%</li> </ul> |
| Least likely to use   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Net ball courts – 5.8% (Impact of small number of female respondents)</li> <li>Parks and Gardens - 9.2%</li> <li>Basket ball courts – 9.9%</li> <li>Libraries – 10.4%</li> <li>Tennis Courts – 12.0%</li> </ul>   |

Key features:

- Swimming pool, skating facilities and Sporting Grounds rated most highly.
- Young people were least likely to use the Tennis Courts, Library and Basketball Courts.

| If the following were available would you use them? ( By sex ) |   |
|--|---|
| Females only: Most likely to use                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swimming Pool - 21.6% (Need to consider seasonal variable (December distribution) in this level of response)</li> <li>Libraries – 14.1%</li> <li>Skating facilities – 13.1%</li> <li>Parks and Gardens – 11.6%</li> <li>Tennis Courts – 11.6%</li> </ul> |
| Males only: Most likely to use                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Swimming Pool – 20.0% (Need to consider seasonal variable (December distribution) in this level of response)</li> <li>Sporting Grounds – 18.3%</li> <li>Skating facilities – 18.3% (Significant bias towards 14-15 yr old boys)</li> </ul>               |

Key features:

- Both young women and young men noted an interest in using the Swimming Pool
- Young women were more likely to use the Library than Skating, Parks and Tennis Court facilities
- Young men were more likely to use Sporting and Skating facilities.

| What stops you from accessing recreational/leisure and youth services? (Complete sample) |                   |
|--|-------------------|
|  | % of total sample |
| Facilities not available   | 21.9              |
| Disability   | -                 |
| Lack of information  | 5.5               |
| No time/too busy   | 7.2               |
| Safety/Security  | 2.5               |
| Transport  | 16.3              |
| Nobody to go with  | 5.9               |
| Weather  | 5.9               |
| Too far from home  | 16.8              |
| Cost/Expense   | 8.5               |
| Parent availability  | 6.4               |
| Other  | 3.0               |
| Total  | 100.0             |

Questions of access are of considerable importance. This table describes the barriers to access for any form of service. Key features:

- The lack of available facilities was the most prevalent barrier
- Distance from home was a further significant barrier
- Transport issues were noted as a similar barrier to distance
- The cost / expense of an activity was also noted.

| What stops you from accessing recreational/leisure and youth services by recreation based in Lara?<br>(Complete sample) |                   |
|---|-------------------|
|   | % of total sample |
| Facilities not available  | 21.7              |
| Disability  | -                 |
| Lack of information   | 5.5               |
| No time/too busy  | 7.7               |
| Safety/Security   | 2.6               |
| Transport   | 16.6              |
| Nobody to go with   | 5.1               |
| Weather   | 5.5               |
| To far from home  | 15.3              |
| Cost/Expense  | 8.9               |
| Parent availability   | 7.7               |
| Other   | 3.4               |
| Total   | 100.0             |

The question of barriers to accessing local facilities and services in Lara was also noted. Key features:

- Lack of available facilities was the most significant barrier
- Transport and distance from home were also noted.

| Have you used any of the services listed below in the past 12 months? (Complete sample) |                        |
|---|------------------------|
|   | As a % of total sample |
| Health service specific to young people   | 62.0                   |
| Family Doctor   | 86.2                   |
| Community Health centre   | 68.1                   |
| Dentist   | 81.8                   |
| Youth/Social worker   | 63.7                   |
| Services for people with disabilities   | 63.7                   |
| Youth information Service   | 60.4                   |
| Police  | 67.5                   |
| Public transport  |                        |
| Other   | 26.3                   |

NB: Question re Public transport usage not available due to the need to re key data manually.

"Have you used any of the services listed below in the past 12 months" by "can you indicate where?"  
 (Complete sample)

|   | Lara                   | Geelong                | Melbourne              | Another Place          | Have Not used these services |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
|   | As a % of total sample | As a % of total sample | As a % of total sample | As a % of total sample | As a % of total sample       |
| Health service specific to young people | 14.2                   | 18.6                   |                        | 3.5                    | 63.7                         |
| Family Doctor                           | 67.5                   | 25.5                   |                        | 0.6                    | 6.4                          |
| Community Health centre                 | 25.8                   | 24.2                   |                        | 4.0                    | 46.0                         |
| Dentist                                 | 26.2                   | 52.3                   | 4.0                    | 7.4                    | 10.1                         |
| Youth/Social worker                     | 6.9                    | 13.8                   | 1.7                    | 3.4                    | 74.1                         |
| Services for people with disabilities   | 6.0                    | 7.8                    |                        | 3.4                    | 82.8                         |
| Youth information Service               | 4.5                    | 15.5                   | 0.9                    | 0.9                    | 72.2                         |
| Police                                  | 36.6                   | 17.9                   | 2.4                    | 2.4                    | 40.7                         |
| Public transport                        |                        |                        |                        |                        |                              |
| Other                                   | 25.0                   | 12.5                   |                        | 8.3                    | 54.2                         |

NB: Question re Public transport usage not available due to the need to re key data manually.

Questions related to the usage of services were of interest throughout the study. The results of the table above are particularly interesting, as the following "services" do not specifically exist in Lara:

- Health service specifically for young people
- Community Health Centre
- Youth /Social Worker
- Services for people with disabilities
- Youth information service.

One interpretation of this finding is that young people may require additional information regarding the services that are available both in Lara and the Municipality at large.

| Of the needs listed below how important to you are they? ( Complete sample by sex )                   |                      |                      |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|
|   | % as an Indexed Mean | % as an Indexed Mean |
|   | Male                 | Female               |
| Feeling safe and secure at home   | 83.0                 | 93.0                 |
| Feeling safe and secure walking, riding etc   | 79.0                 | 91.0                 |
| Feeling safe and secure at recreational activities and at school                                      | 75.0                 | 87.0                 |
| Having access to youth health services  | 68.0                 | 79.0                 |
| Having access to support services   | 63.0                 | 80.0                 |
| Having access to non public transport   | 77.0                 | 81.0                 |
| Having access to public transport   | 86.0                 | 91.0                 |
| Having access to recreation/ leisure activities not related to school                                 | 84.0                 | 83.0                 |
| Having access to information on (Entertainment/recreation, health services, employment opportunities) | 80.0                 | 77.0                 |

This question of "importance" was used to gauge overall priorities. Key features:

- Having access to public transport was particularly important
- Feeling safe and secure at home and whilst moving around Lara was also important
- Having access to "non school" based activities was also a priority.

## STAFF FEEDBACK:

Staff of the City of Greater Geelong Youth Services Unit conducted all of the activities throughout this project and, during the process, have spoken with many people such as young people, teachers, community leaders and individuals. The staff have identified a series of key themes which have recurred throughout the process:

1. The identity of Lara
2. The involvement of young people
3. Building of new facilities
4. Upgrading of existing facilities
5. Development of youth spaces
6. Safety and young people
7. Employment and young people
8. Transport for young people.

The impressions of staff can be summarised as:

### THE IDENTITY OF LARA

Young people have discussed a dilemma arising from the fact that Lara is "different". This appears to relate to the fact that Lara is separate from Geelong and the northern suburbs of Corio.

The scenic and semi rural nature of the town is appreciated by young people but this asset comes at a price – an absence of facilities and services.

There seems to be quite a strong comparison made between Lara and Corio:

- **"We don't want to be joined to Corio"** – we like being separate
- **"Things go to Corio because of the problems there"** - we don't have the problems but we want the things, like a good pool, high school, library, sporting facilities
- **"No-one cares about Lara – just look at the pool"**.

Lara is thought to lack an identity as it does not have a surf culture, a city feel or even a suburban feel. One of the reasons for wanting a skate park is the perception that a really good skate facility would generate an identity for the town.

This lack of identity is clearly a factor in the migration of young people once independent transport has been obtained at 18 years of age.

## THE INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Some 40% of the young people surveyed have indicated that they would like to participate in a group to further address the needs of the town. This impressive number is indicative of a positive interest on the part of young people.

Young people are clearly asking to be involved in the solutions.

Other projects in the municipality have highlighted the benefits of directly involving young people in planning processes by ensuring a stronger sense of "ownership" of facilities and services.

Any projects that arise from this needs analysis process would be warmly received by young people who would want to be directly involved. It can be safely assumed that young people would be willing to participate in the planning of projects such as:

- Design of a skate park
- Development of social activities and use of the Community Centre
- Fundraising activities
- Upgrading of the pool: design, art works, planning shading etc
- Design of improved street lighting
- Development of bike tracks.

## BUILDING OF NEW FACILITIES

The response to the proposed skate park has been continuously emphasised throughout the process. There is overwhelming support for the skate park as:

- A place for young people to go
- An identifiable feature of the town
- An outlet for sport and recreation.

Young people have also signalled their interest in participating in the design and development of the facility.

## UPGRADING OF EXISTING FACILITIES

The poor maintenance and development of existing facilities in the area were identified by young people as an indicator that "nobody cares".

Many young people were very clear that they "would use it more if it were better". The key existing facilities in need of reconsideration appear to be:

- The swimming pool
- Tennis courts
- BMX track
- Austin Park
- Community Centre
- Toilets in Austin Park
- Bus shelters
- Football and netball areas
- Bike paths.

Redevelopment of these facilities included both improvement to the physical asset and a re-thinking of the way in which the facility is managed. Young people have discussed access issues such as:

- Increasing hours of operation / availability
- Decreasing the cost of access
- Improving levels of supervision and support to increase usage.

For example: Young people have mentioned that the basketball court is not accessible at weekends and after school hours because there is no system in place for security and supervision.

Young people have clearly indicated their willingness to participate in planning for increased access and usage of these existing facilities.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH SPACES**

Young people have spoken of a need for a space in which they can meet and socialise. This arises from a lack of safe, useable open space and the limited shopping area in the town.

Many projects across the municipality have highlighted the desire of young people to feel some ownership and connection with a local place. These places can be open space, pools, sporting facilities, youth groups, shopping areas and the like.

The staff have linked many conversations with the need for a skate park, use of the Community Centre, improved access to sporting activities and safer street lighting with the drive to identify and use shared youth spaces.

Young people have clearly signalled that they would like to participate in further planning of youth spaces in the area.

## **SAFETY AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Young people have surprised the staff by highlighting a series of safety concerns. Underpinning these concerns is the view that "Lara is a country town – not like Corio" and the knowledge that police services are available from Corio and Geelong in the evenings.

Young people have demonstrated an attitude that their town could / should be safer. They have also raised a series of suggestions to tangibly improve the safety of the area, including:

- Improved street lighting as the train is the only form of public transport in the late afternoon / evening
- Street lighting across the town
- Improved bike paths to cross the town, as the facilities are spread across the town
- Facilities to get bikes and rollerbladers off the roadways
- Having crossing supervisors available when the high school buses arrive in town – the supervisors leave after the primary school students have left school for the day.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Employment is a pathway to independence and adulthood. Like many smaller centres employment opportunities are limited to a handful of retail outlets. The lack of transport to employment opportunities of Geelong is a further barrier facing young people.

One of the reasons for young people seeking the availability of fast food outlets in the town is the perception that they involve part time jobs for young people.

Young people have demonstrated an awareness of the lack of employment opportunities and assume that employment takes place after independent transport is obtained.

## **TRANSPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.**

Young people have identified a range of difficulties with public transport, including:

- The network of bus stops involves poor location
- The lack of frequency and breadth of hours of operation – buses stop at 4pm
- The train is the only transport in the evening
- The train station has inadequate lighting and should be safety audited
- There is no access to community buses in the town.

CHAPTER 3

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The recommendations developed by the Reference Group comprise two types:

1. The overarching theme of identity
2. Specific areas for attention:
  - New facilities
  - Upgrading existing facilities
  - Information for young people
  - Youth Spaces
  - Safety concerns
  - Employment information
  - Transport options / Community bus.

## **CONTEXT:**

A significant theme noted throughout the study was a reference to “the identity of Lara”. Young people spoke of a lack of identity as Lara is neither a country town nor a suburb. Lara was also seen to be lacking a focus such as a surf culture, a city centre or major industry. A link was also made between a lack of identity and pride in the town.

This issue of identity can be summarised in two comments:

**“No-one cares about Lara –just look at the pool”**

and

**“We don’t want to become just another suburb.”**

The Reference Group have been mindful of this context and have recognised an important opportunity to involve young people in mapping, identifying and writing the future identity of the area, in partnership with other groups.

Many of the recommendations below are directly geared towards creating opportunities for the whole community to develop this identity. The role of young people in this process is a recurring and fundamental approach taken in the framing of these recommendations.

## OVERVIEW OF ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the City of Greater Geelong Youth Services and local groups consider providing resources to groups of young people seeking to be actively involved in the positive development of the social, cultural and physical future of the Lara area.
  - That the City of Greater Geelong proceed directly with a process to involve young people in the design and development of a skate park which will provide an identifiable place for young people to go in Lara.
  - That the Geelong Regional Library Corporation consider the feasibility of establishing a library branch in Lara as part of the current branch network review.
  - That local groups within the community approach the Department of Education with a view to advancing the discussion regarding a secondary school in Lara.
  - That a range of activities to upgrade existing facilities take place:
    - Pool / gym
    - Austin Park
    - Bike paths
    - Football / netball grounds
    - Primary School multi purpose facility
    - Community Centre
    - Bus shelters
    - Tennis courts
    - BMX track
    - Expanded fast food outlets
    - Clock tower feature
  - That the groups of young people developed through this broad collaborative initiative consider the information needs of young people.
  - That groups such as:
    - The City of Greater Geelong
    - The Courthouse Project
    - Parents
    - Victoria Police
    - Service Clubs
    - Youth Groups
    - Community Centre
- work collaboratively with young people to develop a wide range of flexible and evolving youth events and spaces.
- That a range of activities be considered to improve safety of young people:
    - Street lighting
    - Bike paths
    - Pedestrian facilities
    - Public telephones
  - That the Community Centre and Chamber of Commerce consider the feasibility of publishing information regarding available employment in the Lara Happenings in order to ensure that young people were better informed of the jobs that are available in the town.
  - That the City of Greater Geelong Transport Strategy process involving consultants and transport providers consider developing a pilot project which would involve young people in the development of transport options.
  - That local community groups consider a short term project to work with young people to establish the feasibility of operating a community bus within the town.

**DIAGRAM OF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**AS AN INITIAL ACTION:** DEVELOPMENT BY CITY OF GREATER GEELONG YOUTH SERVICES AND LOCAL GROUPS OF A CONSULTATIVE GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE SEEKING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE LONG TERM FUTURE OF

**COLLABORATIVE PROCESS**

|  |                                      |   |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|
|  | <b>NEW FACILITIES</b>                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skate park</li> <li>• Library Branch</li> <li>• Secondary School</li> </ul>  |
|  | <b>UPGRADING EXISTING FACILITIES</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pool / Gym</li> <li>• Austin Park</li> <li>• Bike paths</li> <li>• Football / Netball</li> <li>• Multi purpose facility</li> <li>• Community Centre</li> <li>• Bus Shelters</li> <li>• Tennis Courts</li> <li>• BMX track</li> <li>• Fast food outlets</li> <li>• Clock tower feature</li> </ul> |
|  | <b>INFORMATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information regarding events and support services</li> </ul>   |
|  | <b>YOUTH SPACES</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skate park</li> <li>• Library activities</li> <li>• Entertainment activities</li> <li>• Fast food outlets</li> </ul>   |
|  | <b>SAFETY CONCERNS</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Street lightning</li> <li>• Bike paths</li> <li>• Pedestrian facilities</li> <li>• Public telephones</li> </ul>  |
|  | <b>EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lara Happenings</li> </ul>   |
|  | <b>TRANSPORT OPTIONS</b>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilot program</li> </ul>   |
|  | <b>COMMUNITY BUS</b>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feasibility study</li> </ul>   |

**RECOMMENDED IMPLEMENTATION:**

The recommendations arising from this process are broad, reflecting both a complex range of needs and a degree of creative energy developed during the project. The shape of the recommendations, however, provides us with an opportunity to phase in the actions and initiatives. This opportunity arises from the overarching recommendation to establish, support and maintain a consultative group of young people. Fundamental to the success of this group is the critical issue of "ownership". If the actions arising from this project are owned by the young people involved the likelihood of long term success is greatly enhanced.

Consequently the proposed phasing of recommendations is as follows:

| PHASE:   | ACTION:   | RESOURCES:   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>PHASE # 1</b><br>For immediate action, from April to December 2000. | 1. Establishment of <b>GROUPS OF YOUNG PEOPLE</b> seeking to be actively involved in the positive development of the social, cultural and physical future of the area.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Greater Geelong Youth Services Unit</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> </ul>                                    |
|  | 2. Groups of young people to become immediately involved in the development of the proposed <b>SKATE PARK</b> .   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Greater Geelong</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> </ul>  |
|  | 3. Groups of young people to become immediately involved in considerations regarding the upgrade of the <b>POOL AND GYM</b> .   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Greater Geelong</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> </ul>  |
|  | 4. Groups of young people to become immediately involved in a planning project to improve <b>BIKE PATHS</b> .   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Greater Geelong</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> </ul>  |
|  | 5. Groups of young people to become immediately involved in the planning of <b>YOUTH SPACES</b> .   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Greater Geelong</li> <li>• Community Centre</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> </ul>                            |
|  | 6. Improvement of information regarding local <b>EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES</b> by investigating a section of the Lara Happenings as an employment guide.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Centre</li> <li>• Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>• Local Groups</li> </ul>                                |
|  | 7. Undertake a feasibility study to establish the viability of a <b>COMMUNITY BUS</b> .   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Groups</li> </ul>   |
| <b>PHASE # 2</b><br>Beginning December 2000                            | 1. <b>REVIEW</b> the project by seeking input from young people as to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress of the project</li> <li>• The future priorities for action</li> <li>• Preferred structures and processes.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groups of young people</li> <li>• City of Greater Geelong Youth Services Unit</li> <li>• Local Groups.</li> </ul> |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <p><b>PHASE # 3</b><br/>Beginning<br/>February<br/>2001 for a<br/>period of two<br/>years.</p> | <p>1. <b>MAINTAIN AND SUPPORT</b> the groups of young people to achieve their own objectives using this report as a guide and a resource.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All participants.</li></ul> |
|--|---|---|

RECOMMENDATIONS:

**INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE**

A consistent theme throughout the consultation has been the issue of greater involvement of young people in the determination of the future cultural and physical attributes of the area.

Young people have "offered" to contribute their time and energy to positive projects in the town. Some 40% of the 163 young people surveyed in the informal survey process registered their interest to become involved in some form of on going process.

Reference Group members have devoted considerable energy to developing a framework for the involvement of young people in determining the future of the area. Reference Group members recognise that involving young people requires a commitment to genuine consultation and a sustained collaborative structure. The following process is recommended.

RECOMMENDATION:

**That the City of Greater Geelong Youth Services and local groups consider providing resources to groups of young people seeking to be actively involved in the positive development of the social, cultural and physical future of the Lara area.**

ACTION PLAN:

1. The City of Greater Geelong Youth Services and local groups develop a leadership structure based on the following cycle:
  - a) Sound consultative structures
  - b) Strategies to assist with planning process
  - c) Action oriented implementation practices
  - d) A range of management activities
  - e) Repeat of above.
2. Groups in the area who may wish to participate in this process include:
  - City of Greater Geelong Units such as Planning and Recreation
  - Community Centre
  - Sport and Recreation Clubs
  - Service Clubs
  - The Victoria Police
  - Lara Action
  - Retailers
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Volunteer Groups
  - Returned Services League.
3. Groups involved in this collaborative structure work towards involving young people in a wide range of practical activities that enhance the development of a positive future for the area.
4. Local groups can also work on the ongoing improvement of information regarding events and support services.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

## **BUILDING OF NEW FACILITIES**

The development of a proposed skate park has been a theme throughout the consultation and there is widespread support amongst young people for the project to proceed. Reference Group members recommend that this project be acted upon urgently.

Young people have gone further than just asking for a skate park by seeking to use the project to achieve the following objectives:

- To design and develop a place for young people to go
- To design an identifiable feature of the town
- To provide a further opportunity for sport and recreation.

Young people have signalled a desire to participate in the design and development of this project.

### RECOMMENDATION:

**That the City of Greater Geelong proceed directly with a process to involve young people in the design and development of a skate park which will provide an identifiable place for young people to go in Lara.**

Young people have also been aware of the need for a public library within the town. This resource would be a valuable social and academic resource for the whole area.

### RECOMMENDATION:

**That the Geelong Regional Library Corporation consider the feasibility of establishing a library branch in Lara as part of the current branch network review.**

Young people have also been aware of the long standing debate regarding a secondary school in the town. The provision of a secondary school would assist young people to develop an identity within the town whilst increasing schooling options.

### RECOMMENDATION:

**That local groups within the community approach the Department of Education with a view to advancing the discussion regarding a secondary school in Lara.**

### ACTION PLAN:

The recommendations above would be developed in collaboration with young people who seek to play a role in the design, development and management of these facilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

**UPGRADING OF EXISTING FACILITIES**

Young people have highlighted a range of existing facilities within the area that could be better utilised if the facilities were upgraded. Reference Group members recommend the following facilities for consideration:

RECOMMENDATION:

That a range of activities to upgrade existing facilities take place:

| FACILITY:                             | ACTION:  | INVOLVING:  |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| POOL / GYM                            | Upgrade to physical facilities   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Greater Geelong</li> </ul>   |
| AUSTIN PARK                           | Upgrade to toilets and the park  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Greater Geelong</li> <li>• Lions Club</li> </ul>   |
| BIKE PATHS                            | Improvement of paths and extension of the current path network                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Greater Geelong</li> <li>• VicRoads</li> </ul>   |
| FOOTBALL / NETBALL GROUNDS            | Improvement to the facility  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Greater Geelong</li> <li>• Sports Club</li> </ul>  |
| PRIMARY SCHOOL MULTI PURPOSE FACILITY | Improvement to the management of the facility to increase hours of access for young people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Greater Geelong</li> <li>• Primary School Council</li> <li>• Victoria Police</li> <li>• Service Clubs</li> <li>• Community Centre</li> </ul> |
| COMMUNITY CENTRE                      | Further development of activities within the Centre  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Centre</li> <li>• City of Greater Geelong</li> </ul>   |
| BUS SHELTERS                          | Improvement to the bus shelters  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Greater Geelong</li> <li>• Bus Proprietors</li> </ul>  |
| TENNIS COURTS                         | Improvements to the courts and facilities  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Greater Geelong</li> <li>• Tennis Club Community</li> </ul>  |
| BMX TRACK                             | Improvement of the facility  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Greater Geelong</li> </ul>   |
| EXPANDED FAST FOOD OUTLETS            | Expansion to provide a service and create jobs   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retailers</li> <li>• Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>  |
| CLOCK TOWER FEATURE                   | Community arts project involving young people  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Greater Geelong</li> <li>• Service Clubs</li> <li>• Community Groups</li> </ul>  |

ACTION PLAN:

1. Establishment of the groups of young people who seek to participate in the planning, development and management of these facilities
2. Development of partnerships between young people and the groups associated with these facilities
3. Development of collaborative processes to undertake the required upgrading.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

**INFORMATION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

The City of Greater Geelong Youth Services Unit staff who have been working on the Lara Youth Needs Study have noted the extent to which young people are unaware of the support services available within the region.

The term "support services" is generally used to refer to agencies that provide:

- Acute health services
- Primary health services – such as health information
- Counselling – both formal and informal
- Information and referral support
- Services relating to housing and homelessness
- Financial support
- Employment and job preparedness programs.

Survey results have also demonstrated that young people are either unaware of these services or are confused about their availability.

There would appear to be two broad approaches to address this situation.

The first would be to address issues of transport, in order that young people have improved access to available services outside of Lara – this is addressed under other recommendations.

The second approach involves developing an improved mechanism to inform young people of the services that are available.

One of the benefits of the Reference Group recommendation to establish and support collaborative groups of young people is that these groups are in a position to address this ongoing and significant issue.

RECOMMENDATION:

**That the groups of young people developed through this broad collaborative initiative consider the information needs of young people.**

ACTION PLAN:

1. Establishment of the collaborative groups of young people seeking to develop a wide range of activities for the area
2. The City of Greater Geelong Youth Services Unit staff to present the idea of undertaking information activities
3. Young people consider the following action plan:
  - Determine the information needs of young people
  - Develop a range of information strategies
  - Deliver and facilitate a series of information strategies
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of information activities.



RECOMMENDATIONS:

**DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH SPACES**

Young people have highlighted a need for the development of youth spaces in the town. Rather than specifying a need for a "drop in centre" young people have pointed to a range of responses to this issue.

Opportunities to create youth spaces include:

- Varied uses of a skate park area
- A range of activities taking place through a library branch
- Entertainment activities in venues such as halls and Community Centre
- The opportunities to meet at fast food outlets
- A range of uses at facilities such as the pool, BMX track, sporting clubs.

Reference Group members felt that maximising these opportunities would involve working with groups of young people, in collaboration with those community groups who can provide assistance, to develop a range of responses.

RECOMMENDATION:

That groups such as:

- The City of Greater Geelong
- The Courthouse Project
- Parents
- Victoria Police
- Service Clubs
- Youth Groups
- Community Centre

work collaboratively with young people to develop a wide range of flexible and evolving youth events and spaces.

ACTION PLAN:

1. Establishment of groups of young people and community groups seeking to develop activities and spaces for young people.
2. The small scale "piloting" of a range of activities to gauge the response by young people to these initiatives
3. The development of longer term structures and processes to ensure that the use of youth spaces changes and evolves.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

**SAFETY AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Young people have highlighted a range of safety issues and demonstrated an attitude that the town could / should be safer.

Reference Group members felt that perceptions of safety need to be recognised and addressed if young people are to make maximum use of the facilities, services and capacities of the town.

RECOMMENDATION:

That a range of activities be considered to improve safety of young people:

| FACILITY / SERVICE:          | ACTION:  | INVOLVING:  |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>STREET LIGHTING</b>       | Improvement of the street lighting around the railway station and the shopping areas.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Powercor</li> </ul>                                    |
| <b>BIKE PATHS</b>            | Improvement to the existing network of bike paths and an extension of the current network to ensure safer movement on bikes around the town.                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Greater Geelong</li> <li>• VicRoads</li> </ul> |
| <b>PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES</b> | Consideration of improved services for pedestrians, particularly when secondary school students arrive in the town after the level crossing staff have completed their duties. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City of Greater Geelong</li> <li>• VicRoads</li> </ul> |
| <b>PUBLIC TELEPHONES</b>     | A reconsideration of the available public telephones in the town.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telstra</li> </ul>                                     |

ACTION PLAN:

1. Establish groups of young people seeking to improve the safety of the town
2. Develop collaborative links between the young people and the responsible groups in the community
3. Develop and implement plans to directly address safety issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

**EMPLOYMENT AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Young people have clearly highlighted a frustration with the lack of employment opportunities within the town.

The Reference Group have taken a particular interest in the needs of those young people who are under 18 and unable to drive to access employment outside of the town. It was noted by the Reference Group that this group of young people are generally seeking part time work. It was also noted that some employers sought young, part time workers from time to time.

The Reference Group have suggested approaching the issue of employment by improving the information between employers and young people. This could be done informally through the "Lara Happenings", published by the Community Centre.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Community Centre and Chamber of Commerce consider the feasibility of publishing information regarding available employment in the Lara Happenings in order to ensure that young people were better informed of the jobs that are available in the town.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

## **TRANSPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Reference Group members were not surprised to see that young people were frustrated by a lack of available, accessible transport in the town.

At present the City of Greater Geelong are developing a municipal wide transport strategy.

### RECOMMENDATION:

That the City of Greater Geelong Transport Strategy process involving consultants and transport providers consider developing a pilot project which would involve young people in the development of transport options.

Members of the Reference Group also considered the need to establish the feasibility of a community bus in the town, which may address a range of the concerns of young people.

### RECOMMENDATION:

That local community groups consider a short term project to work with young people to establish the feasibility of operating a community bus within the town.

## **APPENDICES :**

The following materials and resources are available from:

Sue McKay  
City of Greater Geelong Youth Services  
Phone: 5227 0699  
E-mail: [sue.mckay@geelongcity.vic.gov.au](mailto:sue.mckay@geelongcity.vic.gov.au)

1. All blank survey material used throughout the study
2. Workshop format and materials
3. "Data" report, as used by the Reference Group to workshop recommendations
4. Summary of Data Analysis of the Lara Youth Needs Study – as compiled by the Research, Planning and Development Unit of the City

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