

THE CITY OF  
GREATER GEELONG

**YOUTH COUNCIL  
PRESENTATION TO COUNCIL**

Tuesday 9 June 2020



**DEPUTY JUNIOR MAYOR – ASHLEY  
DELANEY**

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# Contents

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<b>Deputy Junior Mayor's Message</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Introduction .....	3
Purpose .....	3
What We Have Achieved In The Past Two Months .....	3
Youth Council Recommendations .....	4
Our Priorities For The Next Two Months .....	5
Conclusion .....	5

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# Deputy Junior Mayor's Message

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## INTRODUCTION

Before I begin, I would like to acknowledge the Wadawurrung people, the traditional owners of this land, and pay my respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, as well as acknowledging all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people present this evening. Good evening Mayor Stephanie Asher, Greater Geelong Councillors and directors, Youth Councillors and the gallery.

## PURPOSE

My name is Ashley Delaney, I am the Deputy Junior Mayor for the City of Greater Geelong. Tonight, I will outline the progress and achievements of the Youth Council since our last report. These last few months have looked very different for all of us and I am happy to say the Youth Council were still able to meet virtually during this challenging time. This has allowed us to complete all the expectations and goals the Youth Council would usually discuss and accomplish in our monthly meetings.

## WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED IN THE PAST TWO MONTHS

### April meeting held via zoom

Our April meeting was unable to be conducted like our past meeting, although this did not stop our youth councillors. This meeting was held via zoom and was a great success for our first digital meeting. We were able to get through our agenda with no problems and we were lucky enough to have two presentations about the Aldershot Reserve Concept Plan and Council's Social Infrastructure Plan. The youth councillors were able to provide advice that focussed on helping young people in our community benefit from these plans as much as possible.

### Voting completed by the Youth Council

Over the last few months one of the roles of the Youth Council was to vote on the Native Vegetation Mascot naming competition. This was a great success with many entries from the community and some fantastic name ideas. The Youth Council voted 'Owlfred' as the winning name. Our Junior Mayor Farzana and I were extended the opportunity to virtually meet and congratulate the winner. The Youth Council also got to vote on The Youth Postcard Project, which was another great initiative. The winning postcard design will be sent to isolated members in our community, hopefully bringing joy in a time of much uncertainty and hardship. There were many great designs created by the young people of our city and it was wonderful to see so many young people wanting to send messages of hope and love to those who need it.

### Connecting with the Community

The Youth Council have discussed ways to communicate and engage with the community. We are excited to use the youth engagement app, which will be a great way for us to get feedback, opinions and information from the young people we are representing. The app's main focus at the moment is to ask young people about how they are coping with COVID-19 and what they think is needed during the recovery phase. An action arising from the Youth Council's April meeting was to provide suggested ideas and questions to ask on the app.

The Youth Council Instagram account has recently been created with plans to produce content to engage with the Geelong Community. The account will promote the Youth Council's current priorities and we also hope to post ideas on how to keep active and busy through this time to help our young people who are feeling isolated and uncertain. The account will be another engagement tool for the Youth Council to utilise during and beyond the COVID-19 situation. It would be our most effective form of communication to engage with a large number of young people, hopefully meaning we can reach a lot more of the Geelong community.

## Geelong Youth Awards

One of the many privileges that the Youth Council have had is the chance to be involved in choosing the categories for the 2020 Geelong Youth Awards. The Youth Council chose six award categories including:

- Young Educator
- Equality Award
- Leadership/Positive Role Model
- Diverse Cultural Contribution
- Arts & Music
- Disability inclusion award

These categories were voted with the priorities and views of the Youth Council. The award categories represent the young people that play their part in making the Geelong community innovative and inclusive. Our Youth Council have been busy promoting the Youth Awards to young people across the Region and have been provided opportunities to promote the awards in the media with the Junior Mayor being interviewed by the Pulse community radio station and the Deputy Junior Mayor recording a voice over advertisement used to promote the awards on The Pulse.

## YOUTH COUNCIL FEEDBACK

### Social infrastructure

An interesting and concerning point was made at our April meeting regarding the lack of social infrastructure in the Geelong community that is fully dedicated to our youth. The fOrT "is a regional facility that provides free programs and a safe space for young people to relax, socialise and interact with other young people in the community." It is located in the Windermere ward and is the City's only fully dedicated youth infrastructure. It was brought forward by Youth Council members the importance of The fOrT and the benefits we would see if there was an increase in youth infrastructure in the Geelong community. Youth Council were impressed by the Cities draft Social Infrastructure Plan and agree that there should be additional dedicated and Integrated Youth Drop In Spaces across the municipality.

#### **Youth Council advocates that:**

- Council invest in the creation of 'fOrT'-like facilitates in all Council Wards across the Geelong Local Government Area.

## Mental health

We acknowledge the amazing work done to date by the Council. Mental health is a major issue in not only our community but the world today. It is an issue that the Youth Council is very passionate about and is one of our priorities for 2020. We feel that there needs to be more done in the community regarding mental health acknowledgement and understanding for young people. The Council's Youth Development Unit provide a suite of Mental Health First Aid courses that have been rolled out in some Geelong secondary schools and we see this as a great start to improving this issue, but we do feel that it is crucial for all schools in Geelong to have this program to see the true benefits. We do understand that there is only a limited amount of staff trained to deliver this course and ask if there is an opportunity for more staff to be trained over the coming months as we feel, after restrictions are lifted, that mental health will be a critical issue for young people.

### **Youth Council advocates that:**

- Additional Youth Development Staff are trained in Mental Health First Aid programs.
- Council publicly encourages all schools take up the opportunity provided by Council as a matter of urgency.

## **OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE NEXT TWO MONTHS**

It is important that we continue to do as much as we can in these times of uncertainty. Our focus will be to continue to collaborate with more young people and to utilise the digital engagement tools that we have available to us. The Youth Council will continue to meet monthly to discuss ideas, proposals and provide advice to Council to better the Geelong community and help have a positive impact. We will continue to learn from those around us and share our thoughts through the Councillor Connect Mentoring Program sessions.

## **CONCLUSION**

To conclude, the Geelong Youth Council have been working very hard over the last two months and have faced challenges regarding COVID-19 but we have been able to work through these together.

The next report to council will be on Tuesday 25 August with another update on our work, achievements and potential proposals we may have. Thank you.