



City of Whittlesea

Youth Council agenda

Monday 6 July 2026 at 6pm



Council Chamber,
25 Ferres Boulevard, South Morang



**City of
Whittlesea**

Artwork © Mandy Nicholson, 2017



Youth Councillors

Youth Cr Emma Fasciani

Youth Mayor

Youth Cr Gabby Charman

Deputy Youth Mayor

Youth Cr Ahmed Abumeis

Youth Cr Alana Luscombe

Youth Cr Charlize Pommier

Youth Cr Clare Joseph

Youth Cr Caleb Whitehall

Youth Cr Dhyan Bhavsar

Youth Cr Ethan Kosumo

Youth Cr Hemal Sharma

Youth Cr Osama Akkad

Youth Cr Mannat Sooch

Youth Cr Suad Issa

Youth Cr Theresa Yan

Officers

Jacinta Stevens

Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

Justine Smith

Unit Manager Council Governance

Order of Business

1 Opening	4
1.1 Meeting Opening and Introductions.....	4
1.2 Apologies/Absent	4
1.3 Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement	4
1.4 Youth Council Charter.....	4
1.5 Acknowledgements	4
2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest.....	4
3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting/s	4
4 Officers' Reports	5
4.1 Youth Council's Involvement at City of Whittlesea's 2026 Walking Thomastown Event	5
4.2 Youth Council Priorities 2026-2027	8
5 Notices of Motion	20
6 General / Urgent Business	20
7 Closure.....	20

1 Opening

1.1 Meeting Opening and Introductions

The Youth Mayor will open the meeting and welcome everyone in attendance.

1.2 Apologies/Absent

1.3 Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners Statement

The Chair will read the following statement:

“On behalf of Council, I recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.

I would also like to personally acknowledge Elders past, present and emerging.”

1.4 Youth Council Charter

The Chair will read the following statement:

“We the members of the City of Whittlesea Youth Council, commit to advocating for and being the voice of the youth within our municipality. We ensure a safe space for all, to engage in constructive collaboration on matters affecting young people. We aim to empower and foster community connectedness in our youth so they feel valued and supported to achieve their aspirations.”

1.5 Acknowledgements

2 Declarations of Conflict of Interest

3 Confirmation of Minutes of Previous Meeting/s

Recommendation

THAT the Youth Council confirm the Minutes of the Youth Council Meeting held on 1 June 2026, as circulated.

4 Officers' Reports

4.1 Youth Council's Involvement at City of Whittlesea's 2026 Walking Thomastown Event

Director/Executive Manager: Director Community Wellbeing

Report Author: Youth Development Officer

In Attendance: Youth Development Officer

Executive Summary

Walking Thomastown is a key community celebration that showcases local culture, creativity, and belonging through food, performance and public activation.

In 2026, City of Whittlesea Youth Services will once again deliver a dedicated Youth Space as part of this event through the Amplify program, with support from local young people.

The Youth Space will provide an opportunity to engage directly with young people through live performances, interactive activities, and informal conversations. Youth Council will be invited to design and deliver their own engagement activities within the Youth Space, as well as support Youth Services staff to promote programs, services, and participation pathways.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT the Youth Council:

- 1. Attend Walking Thomastown on Saturday 29 August 2026 from 6pm to 9pm, and support Youth Services staff within the Youth Space, including Youth Information Table.**
- 2. Develop and deliver one or more simple engagement activities (for example: conversation prompts, creative activities, or 'Ask a Youth Councillor') that encourage young people, and wider community, to connect with Youth Council and share what matters to them.**
- 3. Assist with engaging young people and the broader community by welcoming attendees, supporting activities and promoting the role and work of Youth Council.**
- 4. Participate in a short debrief session following the event to reflect on key learnings and opportunities for future Youth Council involvement in community events.**

Background / Key Information

The City of Whittlesea Youth Services team has successfully delivered a Youth Space at Walking Thomaston since 2024. This dedicated area provides a welcoming environment for young people to connect, participate in free activities, and engage with local programs and services.

The 2026 Youth Space will include:

- A Youth Stage featuring performances by local young artists;
- A range of interactive and engaging activities for young attendees, including VR; and
- A dedicated area for the Youth Services team to promote their service offerings.

City of Whittlesea Youth Services will engage a working group of young people in the lead up of this event under our Amplify program. This group will help with planning and delivery of key initiatives for the Youth Space, including stage programming and promotion.

Youth Council's involvement in 2026 will focus on visibility, youth-led engagement and leadership development. Youth Council will work alongside Youth Services staff to welcome attendees, support the Youth Information table and deliver engagement activities.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

Youth Council are asked to confirm their participation and engagement by Monday 17 August 2026.

- If voting NO to attending, Youth Council is requested to advise by Monday 3 August 2026.
- If voting YES to attending, Youth Council is asked to confirm:
 - Which members will be present and during what timeframes.
 - How they would prefer to engage with young people.
 - Any specific materials, resources, or support required from Youth Services on the day.

Critical Dates

Week of 3 August 2026 – Decision of Youth Council to be given to Youth Officer

Week of 3 August 2026 – Youth Council to confirm individual attendance

Week of 17 August 2026 – Youth Council to share their activities/activations

Week of 17 August 2026 – Youth Officer to communicate Walking Thomastown Event Pack.

Saturday 29 August 2026 – City of Whittlesea's 2026 Walking Thomastown event.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

Attachments

Nil

4.2 Youth Council Priorities 2026-2027

Director/Executive Manager: Executive Manager Office of Council & CEO

Report Author: Councillor Support Officer

In Attendance: Youth Development Officer
Councillor Support Officer

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to consider and approve the established key priority areas for the 2026-2027 Youth Council term.

The following priorities have been established by Youth Council to guide discussions, advocacy activities, projects and opportunities throughout the 2026–2027 term:

1. Community safety & accessibility
2. Health & wellbeing
3. Education & employment
4. Environment & sustainability
5. Belonging & Connection

Further information on the above list is located within the body of this report.

Officers' Recommendation

THAT the Youth Council approve the Youth Council Priorities 2026-2027.

Background / Key Information

One of the key functions of Youth Council is to provide advice to Council on issues affecting young people within the City of Whittlesea.

To support this role, Youth Council traditionally identifies a number of priority areas to guide its work throughout the term. These priorities help inform advocacy activities, consultations, projects, community engagement opportunities and advice provided to Council.

Youth Council identified the following areas of focus for the term of 2026-2027:

1. Community safety & accessibility

- Cost of living;
- Night-time safety;
- Well-lit public spaces Public transport; and
- Disability inclusion and accessibility.

2. Health & wellbeing

- Mental health;
- Affordable support services;
- Stress management; and
- Vaping, alcohol and drug awareness.

3. Education & employment

- Career opportunities;
- Education and training pathways;
- Entrepreneurship and small businesses;
- Youth voice and leadership; and
- School support and environment.

4. Environment & sustainability

- Reducing litter;
- Greener environments; and
- Protecting Indigenous flora and fauna.

5. Belonging & Connection

- Sport and recreation;
- Multicultural events; and
- Family support and relationships.

Key Findings:

- 62 young people completed the survey.
- Cost of living, community safety and education and study support were the highest ranked priorities.
- 77% of respondents were aged 15-21.

The five priorities reflect the key needs of the community to ensure that people feel safe and have the ability to access public spaces, supporting strong and physical and mental health, and creating clear pathways for education and employment. They also focus on protecting and improving the environment for future generations, while strengthening belonging and connection through inclusive community activities and shared spaces. Together, these priorities aim to build a safe, healthier, more sustainable and more connected community for everyone.

Implementation Strategy

Communication

Youth Councillors were provided with information regarding the previous Youth Council's priority areas at the June Youth Council meeting and the key findings from the Youth Plan consultation process.

Prior to the July 2026 Youth Council meeting, Youth Councillors were encouraged to reflect on the issues, opportunities and challenges currently affecting young people within the City of Whittlesea and identify potential priority areas for the Youth Council term. Youth Councillors endeavoured to consult with peers and other young people within their networks to ensure the priorities they brought forward reflects the broader experiences, needs and aspirations of young people across the municipality.

At the July 2026 Youth Council meeting, Youth Council will consider and approve the priority issues, topics and areas of focus for the 2026–2027 term. Following the moving and seconding of the item, Youth Councillors will have an opportunity to speak to the item and share their views on the proposed priorities.

Critical Dates

July 2026 onwards the priorities that have been officially approved will be used to guide and shape what the Youth Council focuses on during its 2026-2027 term.

Declaration of Conflict of Interest

Under Section 130 of the *Local Government Act 2020* officers providing advice to Council are required to disclose any conflict of interest they have in a matter and explain the nature of the conflict.

The Responsible Officer reviewing this report, having made enquiries with relevant members of staff, reports that no disclosable interests have been raised in relation to this report.

Attachments

1. Youth Priorities Presentation [4.2.1 - 9 pages]

Youth Priorities

COW Youth Council 2026-2027



Run down of priorities



1. Community safety & accessibility

- Cost of living
- Night-time safety
- Well-lit public spaces
- Public transport
- Disability inclusion and accessibility

4. Environment & sustainability

- Reducing litter
- Greener environments
- Protecting Indigenous flora and fauna



2. Health & wellbeing

- Mental health
- Affordable support services
- Stress management
- Vaping, alcohol and drug awareness

5. Belonging & connection

- Sport and recreation
- Multicultural events
- Family support and relationships

3. Education & employment

- Career opportunities
- Education and training pathways
- Entrepreneurship and small businesses
- Youth voice and leadership
- School support and environment



Priority #1 - Community Safety & Accessibility



- **What it is:**
Community safety and accessibility are about ensuring that all the young people can feel safe, included and supported. This includes having access to affordable and reliable public transport, well-lit public spaces, safe environments during the day and night, and community facilities and services that are accessible to everyone, including young people with disability.
- **Why it matters:**
Young people identified community safety and accessibility as their highest priority because it affects their independence, wellbeing, mentality and quality of life. Concerns about the rising cost of living, limited and unaffordable public transport, unsafe areas at night, and poorly lit public spaces, and accessibility barriers can discourage young people from travelling, socialising, studying and participating in community activities. Improving safety and accessibility helps create a more connected, inclusive and confident community where young people feel supported.
- **Key actions:**
 - Improve street lighting in parks, bus stops and public gathering spaces.
 - Advocate for safer, more reliable, and affordable public transport, particularly during evenings and weekends.
 - Support safe walking and cycling routes.
 - Improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of communities and public spaces for young people of all abilities.
- Increase maintenance of footpaths and walking areas to prevent hazards (such as mud or cracks).
Continue consulting with young people to identify local safety and accessibility concerns.



Priority #2 - Health & wellbeing

- **What it is:**

Health and wellbeing is the mental, physical, social, and emotional conditions that enable everyone to live healthy, safe, and fulfilled lives, regardless of health status or ability.

- **Why it matters:**

Health and wellbeing are essential to the quality of life of young people. Access to affordable support services, early intervention, and health education reduce preventable illness and ensures young people can access the services and support they need to thrive. Addressing stress and increasing awareness of vaping, alcohol, and drug use also helps create healthier, safer, and more supportive communities.

- **Key actions:**

Expand access to affordable and youth friendly mental health support services.

Encourage open conversations to reduce stigma surrounding mental health.

Deliver workshops on mindfulness, stress management, relaxation, and study skills.

Support youth-led mental health awareness campaigns.


Promote peer support programs in schools and community spaces.

Share trusted health and wellbeing resources through schools, youth services and social media.

- Advocate for confidential and youth friendly mental health services that allow young people to access support privately, while supporting appropriate involvement of parents or carers where required.

- Increase education and awareness about the risks of vaping, alcohol, and drug use.

Priority #3 - Education & employment



- **What it is:**

Education and employment are about providing young people with the support, opportunities, and resources they need to build a successful future. This includes access to school, university, TAFE, apprenticeships, work experience, training programs, mentoring and job opportunities.

- **Why it matters:**

Education and employment means supporting young people to learn, build skills, gain qualifications and find work that helps them create a strong future. This can include school, TAFE, university, apprenticeships, training, work experience, part-time jobs and career support. It matters because it gives young people confidence, independence and real opportunities for their future. It also helps young people have a voice in decisions that affect them, creates career pathways and supports small businesses by connecting them with local young workers.

- **Key actions:**

Promote equal access to education and training opportunities for all young people.

Deliver workshops on job readiness, resume writing, interview skills and workplace expectations.

Promote education and training pathways, including university, TAFE, apprenticeships, traineeships and scholarships.

Increase access to work experience, volunteering, traineeships, mentoring and employment opportunities.

Encourage youth voice and leadership opportunities within schools and the wider community.

Support young entrepreneurs through business education, mentoring and networking opportunities.

- Support positive and inclusive school environments that promote student wellbeing.

Priority #4 - Environment & sustainability



- **What it is:**
Protecting and enhancing the natural environment through the responsible use of resources, reducing environmental impacts, and addressing climate change. Caring for ecosystems while creating healthy and liveable communities which can thrive both now and in the future.
- **Why it matters:**
Sustainability is vital for the health of our community and our planet, and by involving in sustainable practices allows the support of long-term benefits for our environment.
- **Key actions:**
Promote cleaner spaces, place more bins in the community.
Participate in positive environmental activities such as; tree planting, clean up events.
Protect Indigenous flora and fauna.
Create more green outdoor spaces.
Education in climate change, Climate action.
- Encourage eco-friendly behaviours through advocacy and education.



Priority #5 - Belonging & connection

- **What it is:**

Belonging and connection are about ensuring that young people feel accepted, included and valued within their community. This includes creating opportunities to build positive relationships, strengthen family connections, participate in sport and recreation, and celebrate the diverse cultures that make up our community.

- **Why it matters:**

It matters because many young people within our community are expressing a sense of disconnection from their peers and are finding it hard to belong in spaces and share experiences with others. Connection and belonging are essential to the growth and wellbeing of young people. Strong relationships with family, friends, and the wider community help young people feel safe, supported and understood. It also encourages multiculturalism, promoted inclusion, and helps reduce discrimination, ensuring young people feel heard, valued and like they belong in their community.

- **Key actions:**

Create more youth-lead spaces, programs and events.

Deliver programs that support family support, communication and positive relationships.

Increased opportunity for affordable and accessible sport and recreation activities.

Support multicultural events and initiatives that celebrate diversity and promote inclusion.



Support and endorse Hub and Spoke Model.

Promoting diversity and individuality by providing engagement opportunities designed specifically for various groups within our youth population (eg. culture/pride events, or neurodivergent-friendly spaces).



Conclusion

These five priorities reflect the key needs of our community to ensure that people feel safe and able to access public spaces, supporting strong physical and mental health, and creating clear pathways for education and employment. They also focus on protecting and improving our environment for future generations, while strengthening belonging and connection through inclusive community activities and shared spaces. Together, these priorities aim to build a safer, healthier, more sustainable, and more connected community for everyone.



5 Notices of Motion

No Notices of Motion

6 General / Urgent Business

7 Closure