

Community Engagement Report - Appendix 6

Reported to Council 16 December 2019


 Knox
your city


Boronia Renewal - Youth Consultation

Background & Context

Youth Services were approached to conduct a consultation with young people aged 10-25 in order to better understand their views on what they liked and disliked about Boronia today, how they proposed some of these issues could be fixed and what their hopes are for the community of Boronia.

This consultation is part of a wider Boronia Consultation (Boronia Renewal Project), which has been on-going for the past year engaging with and consulting all areas of the community. The Boronia Renewal Project involves reviewing the 10-year-old Boronia Structure Plan along with examining future options for addressing Council's ageing infrastructure.

Methodology

Youth Services approached the Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) for their advice and input on our strategy for engaging with young people in Boronia. We asked the YAC three questions:

1. How would you engage young people aged 10-25?
2. Where would you go to find young people aged 10-25?
3. What would you use to engage young people aged 10-25?

As a group they brainstormed about the best possible ways to engage and ensure we got a strong response from our survey. The YAC fed back lots of ideas about effective engagement with young people, but due to time constraints we weren't able to action everything that was discussed. These were the responses that we were able to action within our timeframe.

1. We were encouraged to pursue three types of engagement:
 - Online survey, promoted through social media channels
 - Face to face consultation with selected community groups, and
 - Pop-up consultations at key areas around Boronia.
2. We were encouraged to run pop-up and face to face consultations at:
 - Knox Leisure Works
 - Boronia Library
 - Knox Carols
 - Boronia Heights Primary School
 - Boronia K-12
3. We were also encouraged to use incentives to increase engagement:
 - For our pop-up's we used a spinning wheel and gave away minor prizes i.e. Lollipops, Leisure works vouchers, board games and cinema tickets.



- We also had three major prizes which every completed survey went in the draw to win. The major prizes were a PlayStation, a \$500 bicycle voucher and a \$200 Ticketek voucher.

We utilized our connection with the YAC and not only included them in the designing of the strategy but also in the delivery of the consultation. On the back of their advice, that they would be more likely to complete a survey if a young person approached them, we used five young people across two of our pop-up consultations. If possible, we would have used them in all of our consultations but due to other commitments this wasn't possible.

Survey design

The data collection tool for this phase of community engagement was a short, self-administered survey open-ended questions. The survey (see Appendix A) comprised of eleven questions, which were aimed at understanding what people most like and dislike about specific parts of Boronia, how things could be improved and young people's hopes for the future of Boronia.

Socio-demographic questions included age, gender, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, and residential location (by suburb). Information related to residential address were not collected due to privacy concerns and potential impacts on youth participation.

Target population group

The primary target group of the survey were young people aged 10 - 25 who live, study, work and play in Boronia. However, because the survey was widely distributed and open to all it was not a requirement that respondents had an immediate connection to Boronia in order to provide their thoughts and opinions.

Survey Sample Summary

In total, we received 265 responses to our survey. In all, 75% of the completed surveys were done by young people living in Knox and the other 25% were people who resided outside of Knox. Of the 75% only 13% were young people who resided in Boronia. The criteria for completing the survey was those who live, work, study or play in Boronia, the high number of responses from those living outside of Boronia highlights the variety of people who use Boronia for its facilities/shops and schools.

The average age was 16 years old.

Results & Analysis

Due to the nature of the survey being open-ended questions, we have narrowed down the young people's responses into commonly occurring themes. Within each question asked we have reported on the top three themes and made special mention to any other themes of note.

Young people were given the choice of the Train Station, Dorset Square and Boronia Park, as to which area of Boronia they wanted to give feedback on. This provided an early indication about what areas mattered most to young people and also gave an idea as to what areas are most frequently used within this demographic. Of the 265 survey responses, the Train Station made up **48%** of responses, Dorset Square made up **23%**, Boronia Park made up **19%** and a further **10%** didn't choose a specific area.

Furthermore, our consultation at Boronia Heights Primary School and Boronia K-12 provided us with another 26 responses. However, these were conducted in a group context rather than an individual survey response.



Train Station

48% of the young people who completed the surveys chose to provide feedback on the Train station. Within those responses there has been certain themes which we have narrowed down into the top three most referenced.

Table 1: What do you like about this area of Boronia?

Key Theme	% Responses	Quotes
Accessible and well connected	36%	<i>"It's easy to get to places from the station and is convenient for locals to get to various stations on the Belgrave line"</i>
Variety of services and shops close by	29%	<i>"I like how there are many services, including shops public transport and a health centre all adjacent to one another"</i>
Station layout	12%	<i>"The enclosed area on the train platform which provides protection from the weather when necessary."</i>

The *accessibility and connectedness* of Boronia Train Station was the most common theme spoken about, with young people also praising the *variety of services and shops close to the station* and the *layout of the station*. Other themes of note was the *presence of PSO's/police* and the *sense of community*.

Table 2: What don't you like about this area of Boronia?

Key Theme	% Responses	Quotes
Challenging people hanging around	32%	<i>"Very dodgy people (can sometimes find used substances etc)"</i>
Poor, worn out facilities and unclean	29%	<i>"I don't like the look of the station. It looks like a dump, some of the facilities don't operate well."</i>
Negative and unsafe feeling environment	20%	<i>"The safety concerns, many times I worry when I pass the area"</i>

The presence of *challenging people hanging around* the station was the most common theme, it's important to note that within this theme there was a frequent reference to *drug users and substances*. Closely following this was *poor, worn out facilities* and *negative and unsafe feeling environment*. Other themes of note was the *lack of security at the station and surrounding areas* and *infrequency of trains*.



Table 3: How would you fix it?

Key Theme	% Responses	Quotes
A larger and more regular presence of proactive security guards, police and/or general train staff	40%	<i>"More police around and to go around instead of sticking together and talking to each other"</i>
Renovate/re- design the area to make it more appealing i.e. green spaces, plants, trees	24%	<i>"By renovating the area to make it look more appealing and more family friendly especially at night time"</i>
Thorough and regular cleaning of the station and its facilities including removing graffiti	15%	<i>"Clean it more often"</i>

A larger and more regular presence of proactive security guards, police and/or general train staff was the most talked about theme in regards to fixing issue around the train station. Renovating/re-designing the area to make it more appealing was also a strong theme as was the thorough and regular cleaning of the station and its facilities. Another theme of note was the increase in frequency of trains and buses.

Table 4: What would you like to see in the future?

Key Theme	% Responses	Quotes
A renovated train station with more modern and functional facilities	23%	<i>"I'd like to see more modern and functional facilities like Ringwood."</i>
A safe environment in and around the station	21%	<i>"A safer, friendlier Boronia"</i>
A more positive community environment	15%	<i>"A more positive environment from the general public"</i>

A renovated train station with modern and functional facilities was the most common theme, closely followed by a safe environment in and around the station after this a more positive community environment. Other themes of note were a cleaner station and surrounding area and more parks, trees and playgrounds.

Dorset Square

23% of the young people who completed the surveys chose to provide feedback on the Dorset Square. Within those responses there has been certain themes which we have narrowed down into the top three most referenced.



Table 5: What do you like about this area of Boronia?

Key Theme	% Responses	Quotes
The variety of shops, restaurants and services	63%	<i>"Variety in the shops and how there are places to eat but also places for entertainment such as movies and bowling"</i>
Shops are close, centrally located and easy to navigate	17%	<i>"Everything is close by"</i>
The nearby parks	13%	<i>"The parks"</i>

The variety of shops, restaurants and services was by far most common theme with 63% of responses relating to this, the central location and the nearby parks were the other most common themes. Another theme to note is the local and friendly people and shop community.

Table 6: What don't you like about this area of Boronia?

Key Theme	% Responses	Quotes
It's messy, old, run down and not being used to its potential	27%	<i>"It looks a little bit run down"</i>
The behaviour and presence of challenging people	20%	<i>"I don't like the drunk people in the area because they yell at everything"</i>
Lack of atmosphere and relevant shops	13%	<i>"Today I visited the Boronia Mall with my Mother. And I thought it certainly missing the atmosphere and shops that could liven the place up"</i>

It's messy, old, run down and not being used to its potential was the most common theme when the question was asked 'what don't you like about this area of Boronia?' Following this is the behavior and presence of challenging people and the lack of atmosphere and relevant shops. Other themes of note was too much traffic and the lack of family activities and public events.

Table 7: How would you fix it?

Key Theme	% Responses	Quotes
Redevelop Dorset Square	33%	<i>"Updating street furniture and greenery in the area - maybe providing more shade areas. Encouraging more events and activities in the area, possibly? I'm not sure what can be done to update the shops!"</i>
More relevant shops	16%	<i>"A few bigger name stores perhaps a chemist warehouse and a Big W or Target. Outdoor dining sort of like Knox ozone could be another idea."</i>
Increase police presence	14%	<i>"More patrols around the area and maybe better lighting for night-time"</i>



Young people pointed towards *the redevelopment of Dorset Square* as the most effective way to fix some of identified issues (see table 6), following this was *more relevant shops* and an *increase in police presence*. Other themes of note was to *redesign the roads*.

Table 8: What would you like to see in the future?

Key Theme	% Responses	Quotes
New and updated shops, relevant for all ages	19%	<i>"A livelier mall with new shops and cafes, public art spaces/areas where pop up events can happen"</i>
More community events	12%	<i>"A nice open space with nice attractions events and performers"</i>
More parks, green spaces and playgrounds	12%	<i>"More parks and playgrounds and BBQ area"</i>

New and updated shops, relevant for all ages was the most common response when young people were asked 'what would they like to see in the future'. Closely following this and with the same percentage of responses was *more community events* and *more parks, green spaces and playgrounds*. Other themes to note were *a hustling and bustling Boronia Mall with a positive community vibe* and *more innovative and engaging entertainment spaces for young people*.

Boronia Park

19% of the young people who completed the surveys chose to provide feedback on the Boronia Park. Within those responses there has been certain themes which we have narrowed down into the top three most referenced.

Table 9: What do you like about this area of Boronia?

Key Theme	% Responses	Quotes
The Park and its facilities, including the playground	43%	<i>"I like its playground and the water fountains. I think they look beautiful"</i>
The sense of community	15%	<i>"I like the friendly sport community"</i>
The Basketball Stadium	13%	<i>Great facility to play basketball</i>

The strongest theme by a significant amount when young people were asked 'what they like about this area of Boronia' was *The Park and its facilities, including the playground*. *The sense of community* and *The Basketball Stadium* were the other two strongest themes. Another theme of note was *the location to food spots and shops*.



Table 10: What don't you like this area of Boronia?

Key Theme	% Responses	Quotes
The rubbish	25%	"I don't like that there's a lot of rubbish everywhere"
The challenging people	25%	"Sometimes there are creepy people who loiter in the area"
Proximity to a busy road	17%	"Dorset road is too busy"

The two strongest themes *the rubbish* and *the challenging people* shared the same percentage of responses with 25% each. The third strongest theme was *proximity to a busy road*. There were no other themes to note in this section.

Table 11: How would you fix it?

Key Theme	% Responses	Quotes
Thorough rubbish clear up	24%	"Clean it up"
Increase the police presence	24%	"Better police services Having more young families move in"
Make it more family friendly	10%	"Make more centres and playgrounds"

Young people pointed towards *thorough rubbish clear up* and the *increase in police presence* as the most effective ways to fix the issues mentioned above (see table 10). Another theme was to *make it more family friendly*, also of note was to *increase the number of centers and playgrounds*. There were no other particular themes of note.

Table 12: What would you like to see in the future?

Key Theme	% Responses	Quotes
Current facilities improved	23%	"Improvements to what is already here"
More age appropriate facilities	19%	"More bigger kids play equipment"
A water park/water feature	8%	"I would like to see some more water features"

Seeing the *current facilities improved* was the most common theme when young people were asked about what they would like to see in the future. Following this was more *age appropriate facilities* and a *water park/water feature*. There were no other particular themes of note.



No Selection

A further 10% of responses were completed without a selected area of Boronia. Within those responses only 9 were partially completed. The relevant responses have been included in the above analysis.

Boronia Heights & Boronia K-12 Consultations

26 young people were approached at Boronia Heights Primary School (14) and Boronia K-12 (12). We engaged them in a group consultation where they were given the opportunity to share their ideas around all three areas of Boronia.

The common themes that came through these consultations were very similar to the results shown above. The balance was evenly spread and were indicative of general responses for this survey as a whole. The more unique responses have been included into the 'ideas of note' section below.

Unique Ideas

Whilst the results above tell the story of what young people are saying about Boronia as a collective, this section highlights some of the more unique ideas and suggestions which weren't represented above but Youth Services acknowledged were worthwhile sharing. The following are all presented in straight quotes from young people.

"Well Melbourne Street Art seems to be attracting people to the city. Why not do something similar at Boronia Mall except make it unique. I do have some ideas about that!"

"More innovative spaces for young people"

"Open aired walkways and family friendly areas"

"Updating street furniture and greenery in the area - maybe providing more shade areas. Encouraging more events and activities in the area, possibly? I'm not sure what can be done to update the shops!"

"A livelier mall with new shops and cafes, public art spaces/areas where pop up events can happen."

"A few bigger name stores perhaps a chemist warehouse and a Big W or Target. Outdoor dining sort of like Knox ozone could be another idea."

"A nice open space with nice attractions events and performers"

"Food festivals, craft festivals, arts and culture events"

"Run public events that bring the community together"

"Encourage new business though lowered or free periods of rent. Redesign spaces with a more open, communal feel."

"Fixing up the buildings and getting better shops in. I use to think the mall would be great if it were just full of handmade products, maybe vegan and wholefood seller's as well and Art studios with art classes would be great inside, even co-op workspaces. Just make it a huge art precinct for the community with a place to learn and a place to buy and sell. I imagine artists working in studios while people watch on or come in to learn a new craft and small businesses work side by side to grow artistically and in a business sense as well and a permanent area of handmade"

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products available with vegan food choices to snack on while everybody works and children can come in and learn hobbies. Maybe even music and gardening. It'd be something the area doesn't have. But of course it'd take a lot of ongoing work and I understand the mall is owned by a lot of private shop holders and convincing could be difficult. "

"I would like to see in the future maybe another elevator for the disabled."

"Organise another youth street art project - have young adults learn more about street art and community development whilst investing themselves in it - where people graffiti, create a canvas, where people litter, make a garden."

"More art, edible gardens and other plants, more youth-made sculptures and other."

"Redevelop it. Move the station underground and use the land above for a park that acts as a new "town square", and then prepare to redevelop immediate surrounding property into mixed use residential/commercial mid-rise buildings."

"More street art and creative pieces/ less likely to be tagged over, employ professional artists, makes spaces more welcome and interesting."

"Sunday Market to be held at Dorset Square."

"Community garden based in a park."

"Events to be held at the park over public holidays."

"More national reserve parks like Old Joe's creek"

"Community and council work together one weekend to fix up the park"

"A dog park"

"A youth gym"

Conclusion

The Boronia Renewal Youth Consultation gathered a positive amount of interest and participation from the youth community over a short period of time. The large number of responses (291 in total) suggests the importance of giving young people a voice in community matters, such as this. Moving forward, we recommend that young people continue to be involved throughout this process and supported to have a voice in the community.



Appendix A



Boronia Renewal – Youth perspective

1. What is your age?

2. What is your gender?

3. Are you of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

4. What suburb do you live in?

5. If Boronia, how long have you lived in Boronia?

6. Would you like to be kept up to date with the Boronia Renewal Project? *(if yes, please write down your email address)*

Please turn over



7. Choose which area you would like to provide feedback for: *(circle one)*

- *Train Station*
- *Dorset Square*
- *Boronia Park*

8. What do you currently like about this area of Boronia?

9. What don't you like about this area of Boronia?

10. How would you fix it?

11. What would you like to see in the future?

***If you would like to be entered into the draw to win some fantastic prizes, please provide some contact details:*

Name:

Phone number: