

City of Port Lincoln

YOUTH ACTION PLAN

2026-2031

BACKGROUND REPORT

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Barngarla People, the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the City of Port Lincoln rests and their continuing connection to land, sea, culture, and community.

We pay our respects to Elders, past, present, and emerging, and we extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in our community.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement of Country	1
1. Introduction	2
2. Strategy Context.....	3
3. Shaping the Youth Action Plan	4
4. About Port Lincoln – Community Snapshot.....	5
5. What We Heard – Community Insights	6
6. What We Are Doing – Council Assets and Programs.....	9
6.1 Youth Coordinator	9
6.2 Outdoor Spaces Supporting Youth Activity	9
6.2 Port Lincoln Library	10
6.4 Arts, Culture, and Events.....	10
6.5 Youth Volunteering (18+)	10
6.6 Youth Awards	11
6.7 Port Lincoln Leisure Centre	11
6.8 Grant Funding.....	11
6.9 Children’s University	11
6.10 Buildings and Facilities.....	11
6.11 Civic Engagement, Education and Career Pathways	11
6.12 Advocacy.....	11
6.13 Youth Collective.....	12
7. Trends	12
8. Strategic Directions – Context for Youth Action.....	12
Appendix A	14

1. Introduction

The Youth Background Report (Report) outlines insights and evidence about young people aged 5-18 in Port Lincoln. It provides a foundation for the City of Port Lincoln's (Council) Youth Action Plan (the Plan) by summarising community demographics, engagement outcomes, existing services, and trends that affect youth wellbeing and participation.

The report is informed by Council's Strategic Directions Plan 2025-2034, community consultation, and state and national frameworks. During the recent review of the Strategic Directions Plan, one priority strongly emerged, the need to better define Council's role in the youth space. This reflects a growing recognition that local government plays an important part in creating places and opportunities where young people feel welcome, valued, connected, and heard.

The Plan will clarify how Council will act as:

- **A provider** of youth-friendly spaces, programs, and information.
- **A collaborator** working with schools, community organisations, youth groups, and service providers.
- **An advocate** championing youth wellbeing, highlighting emerging needs, and seeking partnerships and investment.

The Plan ensures that youth voices are embedded into Council decision-making, and that Council services, programs, and public spaces are shaped with young people's wellbeing and development in mind. While the Plan focuses on young people aged 5-18, it also acknowledges the importance of early years (0-5) and young adults (19-24), who benefit from broader community services, recreation spaces, and support available in Port Lincoln.

In scope:

- Young people aged 5-18
- Council-owned facilities, programs, events and information
- Partnerships with local youth organisations
- Advocacy to state and federal government
- Youth engagement activities

Out of scope (but still important):

- Specialist services such as case management or counselling
- Major capital works (addressed through other Council strategies)
- Service delivery for the 0-5 and 19-24 age groups (support through partnership and advocacy rather than direct delivery)

This report establishes an evidence base for the development of the Plan by outlining local demographics, youth engagement insights, existing Council services and emerging trends affecting young people. It responds to a clear message from the community and the Strategic Directions Plan 2025-2034 review, that Council's role in the youth space must be better defined.

2. Strategy Context

The Plan is informed by a combination of Council's Strategic Directions Plan 2025-2034 and key state and national frameworks, that prioritise youth wellbeing, connection, participation and long-term development. These frameworks help align local actions with broader directions for South Australia's young people.

Strategic Directions Plan 2025–2034

The Report aligns with Council's broader strategic priorities, particularly the commitment: *"A safe and liveable community that provides an opportunity for children and young people to reach their potential."*

Strategic Action 2.4 specifically references the engagement, support, and empowerment of youth through development and resourcing of a Youth Action Plan.

Other related Council strategies supporting youth include:

- Sport and Recreation Strategy 2023–2027
- Volunteer Management Plan 2025–2030
- Open Space Strategy 2021–2026
- Southern Eyre Peninsula Regional Public Health Plan 2023–2028
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2021–2025
- Reconciliation Action Plan
- Walking and Cycling Strategy 2026–2036.

State and National Frameworks

Key frameworks shaping Council's understanding of youth needs:

- **SA Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People (birth–18)** – emphasises wellbeing, safety, education, preparation for adulthood, and culturally informed support.
- **South Australian Youth Action Plan 2025–2028 (12–24 years)** – highlights mental health, connection to services, recreation, transition to adulthood, housing pressures, and participation.
- **The Office for Youth – Engage! Strategy** – strengthens youth participation in government decision-making and ensures youth voices are heard.
- **The Office of Youth – Digital Youth Hub** – an online resource that helps young people with practical life and work skills, such as getting a tax file number and preparing a resume.
- **Mission Australia Youth Survey 2025** – identifies national youth concerns including cost of living, mental health, safety, and environmental issues.

Why This Matters Locally:

Referencing these frameworks ensures that Council's Plan:

- Reflects local needs while supporting broader systemic goals.
- Complements the work of community organisations and agencies.
- Informs Council advocacy in areas beyond its direct scope (e.g., mental health, housing, transport).

3. Shaping the Youth Action Plan

The Plan has been shaped by Council's commitment to supporting young people in Port Lincoln, local insights and state-level priorities. It brings together the voices of young people, families, schools, service providers, and community organisation to ensure Council's actions are grounded in real experiences and emerging needs.

Defining Council's Role

Through the Strategic Directions Plan 2025-2034 review and consultation with the community, Council identified the need to clearly define its role in the youth space. The Plan confirms that Council's contribution occurs across three complementary roles:

- **Provider:** Delivering Council-owned facilities, programs, activities, and information that support youth safety, participation, wellbeing, and connection.
- **Collaborator:** Working with schools, youth services, sporting clubs, cultural organisations, community groups, and government agencies to strengthening the overall system of support for young people in Port Lincoln.
- **Advocator:** Championing youth needs where Council is not the direct provider, particularly in areas such as mental health, transport, housing, and cost of living pressures.

These roles provide a framework for prioritising actions, allocating resources, and partnering with others across the community.

The role of the Youth Collective

Port Lincoln benefits from a strong network of organisations supporting young people, coordinated through the Youth Collective. This network includes:

- Youth service providers
- Schools
- Community organisations
- Government agencies
- Health providers.

Council is actively involved in the Youth Collective, which plays a key role in shaping local priorities, sharing information, identifying gaps, and building a coordinated approach to youth support. The Plan complements this work by:

- Strengthening collaboration and communication
- Supporting coordinated, service delivery
- Raising shared priorities through advocacy
- Promoting a consistent vision for youth wellbeing across the community.

Support Services Available to Young People

Council works closely with a range of local organisations that support young people. In Port Lincoln, there is a broad range of services available, including mental health and wellbeing support, education and study assistance, employment support, and apprenticeship and traineeship pathways.

Below is a list of service providers that support young people, however the list is not exhaustive:

- **West Coast Youth and Community Support** – Mental health, counselling, and practical support for young people aged 12–25.
- **Headspace** – Mental health and wellbeing support for young people aged 12–25, including help with work and study.
- **Country and Outback Health** – Mental health, support coordination, and allied health services for young people.
- **Career Employment Group** – Supports young people into traineeships, apprenticeships, and short training courses.
- **Carers SA** – Support for young people aged 25 and under who care for someone with illness, disability, or age-related needs.
- **KWY** - working with community to achieve their vision for Aboriginal peoples to thrive through being culturally strong, empowered, and safe.

Scope of the Youth Action Plan

The Plan will represent Council’s 5-year commitment to supporting an environment where young people aged 5-18 can connect, create, and thrive. It focuses on the spaces, programs and experiences that shape young people’s daily lives, parks, ovals, libraries, sport centres, trails, community venues and public events.

The Plan aims to:

- Improve and further activate places where young people gather
- Strengthen participation in recreation, culture, learning, and community life
- Build youth voice into Council decision-making and the design and activation of Council spaces
- Support long-term collaboration across local youth services
- Ensure Council spaces and programs are welcoming, accessible, and inclusive
- Celebrate young people’s ideas, identities, and leadership.

4. About Port Lincoln – Community Snapshot

Port Lincoln is home to a diverse, active, and socially engaged youth population. Key statistics:

Metric	Value
Total population (estimated as at June 2024)	15,037
Young people aged 5–9 (%)	6.2%
Young people aged 10-14 (%)	6.3%
Young people aged 15-19 (%)	6.1%
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents	6.6%
Number of young people born overseas (5–18)	76
Languages spoken at home other than English	4.4%

Metric	Value
15–19-year-olds engaged in work or study	74%
Volunteers (15+)	18.9%
Primary carers, supporting family or loved ones	5.3%
People needing daily assistance (15+)	10.3%
Sports voucher redemptions (2025)	1,962**

Sources:

Australian Bureau Statistics – Region Summary: Port Lincoln

***Office for Recreation, Sport and Racing (sports voucher data)*

Insights

Port Lincoln’s youth community is culturally diverse, socially engaged, and active. These indicators highlight the importance of inclusive planning, culturally safe environments and accessible opportunities.

5. What We Heard – Community Insights

Extensive engagement with the Port Lincoln community informed the development of the Plan. Consultation provided a clear picture of local strengths, challenges and priorities, ensuring the Plan reflects the lived experiences of young people and those who support them.

Consultation overview

To develop the Plan, Council undertook a multi-layered engagement process, including:

- 23 meetings with local services providers, schools, government agencies, and community organisations
- A Youth Survey generating 223 responses
- Continued engagement through the Youth Collective.

This comprehensive approach allowed Council to identify key issues affecting young people, highlight service gaps, and pinpoint opportunities for action.

Key Themes and Gaps Identified

Stakeholder Insights

Stakeholders consistently highlighted:

- Long wait times for mental health support
- Youth homelessness and overcrowding
- Need for more accessible driving lessons and final assessment times
- Limited AOD (Alcohol and Other Drug) services for young people under 12
- Need for more accessible recreational activities
- Limited culturally safe support options
- Low awareness of available services.

School Insights

Schools emphasised:

- Housing shortages for young people leaving home or care
- Difficulty accessing timely mental health support
- Limited gambling awareness education
- High cost of driving training and lack of after-hours public transport
- Few programs for young people aged 18-24.

Service Provider Insights

Service providers noted:

- Challenges keeping young people engaged
- Limited resources for positive recreation
- Ongoing need for homelessness and crisis support.

Assessment of this feedback indicated that many of the challenges and barriers highlighted are outside Council's role and scope. Council will continue to play an advocacy role in areas such as mental health and crisis support.

Youth Survey Overview

The Youth Survey ran from 17 October 2025 to 6 November 2025, generating 223 responses, reflecting strong interest from young people across the community.

Council promoted the survey to 42 organisations, including service providers and youth-focused groups, through email, outreach networks, and in-person drop-ins with hard-copy versions to maximise accessibility. To broaden reach, the survey was also distributed to three high schools and five primary schools, both electronically and through hand-delivered copies to ensure visibility and inclusiveness across diverse youth settings.

The survey explored:

- Mode of transport
- Popular spaces and activities
- Participation in clubs and groups
- Views on Council spaces and programs.

Mayoral Engagement

On 4 November 2025, the Mayor visited the Port Lincoln Primary School to speak directly with students about the survey, discuss its purpose, and support them as they completed it in class. This hands-on engagement helped strengthen understanding and encouraged meaningful participation.

Feedback from a local primary school

“Thank you so much for dropping in and providing our students with the opportunity to have a say, we really appreciate it. We love fostering student voice here at PLPS, so I know many teachers will gladly schedule some time to complete the survey with their classes. We're passionate about our community and hope to support our students to become active members who care about the decisions made around the spaces they love so this initiative is fantastic!”

Key Findings

Demographics

- Most respondents were aged 11–13, with a balanced gender distribution (56% male, 42% female).
- The majority completed the survey independently.

Transport & Mobility

- Young people most commonly get around by being dropped off (67%), walking (49%).
- During the day, most attend primary school (51%) or high school (41%).

Popular Spaces

- The Foreshore (54%), Leisure Centre (52%), and parks/ovals (44%) were the most visited spaces.
- 49% use Council spaces a few times per week.

Spare Time

- Top activities include hanging out with friends (76%), sport (66%), and video games (60%).

Clubs & Groups Participation

- 70% participate in local clubs or groups.
- 73% feel positive about their involvement, citing friendship, community, and physical activity.

Youth Perceptions of Council Spaces

Feedback from young people about local spaces was largely positive or neutral, with 67% expressing positive views and 31% offering neutral comments.

From the open-ended responses, several key themes emerged:

- **Social Gathering & Connection:**
Young people value open spaces as places to connect with friends and family, relax and spend time together.
- **Outdoor Environments & Recreation:**
Respondents highlighted enjoying outdoor areas and the recreational activities available within these spaces.
- **Maintenance & Facility Conditions:**
Feedback on maintenance was mixed:
 - Some young people noted that many spaces are well maintained and pleasant to use.
 - Others raised concerns about run-down areas, litter, and the need for cleaner toilet facilities.
- **Accessibility**
Accessibility for young people with disabilities was rated “kind of/somewhat easy” by 38%.

What Young People Love About Council Spaces

- “Everything about it.”
- “I love the basketball court because I like shooting goals.”

- “Nice shady spots to rest.”
- “Fun places to go with family and friends.”

Areas for Improvement

Young people suggested the following for improvement:

- Fix the BMX track or add a pump track
- More “chill spaces” for older youth
- Creative and exercise equipment
- More shade, seating, and drink fountains

Some concerns were raised regarding graffiti, vandalism, and cleanliness, which has been shared with Council’s Property and Facilities department.

Refer Appendix A – Survey Results

Feedback received confirmed Council’s role relative to the provision of fit for purpose community spaces that are appealing to young people.

6. What We Are Doing – Council Assets and Programs

Council continues to invest in facilities, programs, and partnerships that support young peoples’ wellbeing, development and inclusion. The initiatives below form the foundation of Council’s ongoing commitment and provide the context for the Plan.

6.1 Youth Coordinator

We have engaged a Youth Coordinator to support the activation of council spaces for young people, foster collaborative partnerships and advocate for young people on challenges and systemic barriers that fall outside Council’s direct scope and resourcing.

6.2 Outdoor Spaces Supporting Youth Activity

Council maintains a diverse network of high-quality public spaces that encourage safe, active and social recreation for young people, including:

- 14 playgrounds
- 7 BBQ areas
- Parnkalla Trail, a 22 km coastal walking trail
- A safe swimming enclosure with lockers, showers and ramp access
- The community BMX and skate park
- Key sporting facilities, including:
 - Centenary Oval
 - Kirton Point
 - Poole Oval
 - Tennis Courts
 - Ravensdale Sporting Complex.

These free and accessible spaces provide opportunities for physical activity, social connection, and engagement with the natural coastal environment. They also act as the backdrop for youth-led social sporting, and recreational activities.

6.3 Port Lincoln Library

The Port Lincoln Library operates as a key community hub for all the community including our young people, offering programs and services that promote learning, creativity, and social engagement:

- LEGO Club, STEM Club, Storytime, School Holiday Programs
- Toy Library
- Access to free WI-FI
- Dedicated quiet study spaces
- Literacy packs and early childhood learning resources.

These initiatives support early learning, digital literacy and information education for children and young adults.

6.4 Arts, Culture, and Events

Nautilus Arts Centre

The Nautilus Arts Centre (NAC) provides a broad range of arts and cultural experiences, including youth appropriate theatre, music, and visual exhibitions. The NAC also supports local artists through its gallery and gift shop.

Community Events

Council delivers and supports accessible, low-cost events that encourage participation, celebration and connection among children, young people, and families.

Tunarama

We hold the Tunarama festival in January each year. A free to attend festival that has a range of events and activities for young people.

ArtEyrea

Council, in partnership with Country Arts SA, employ an Arts and Cultural Facilitator (Facilitator). The Facilitator works with schools, community groups, and young artists to provide opportunities and deliver youth-focused creative programs. These initiatives foster artistic skill development, self-expression, and cultural engagement, providing platforms for young people to contribute to community arts projects.

6.5 Youth Volunteering (18+)

Council provides volunteering opportunities for young adults to gain skills, confidence and experience, with roles available across:

- Mill Cottage
- Port Lincoln Library
- Nautilus Arts Centre
- Cruise Ship Program.

Volunteer participation supports pathways to employment, leadership and civic engagement.

6.6 Youth Awards

Council sponsors and presents an annual award to a graduating Year 12 Student from each of the secondary schools located within Port Lincoln who have shown outstanding leadership and service to the community. We also present the Young Citizen of the Year award, and the annual Port Lincoln Art Prize event includes the Youth Category.

6.7 Port Lincoln Leisure Centre

Council owns the Port Lincoln Leisure Centre, an important facility where young people gather to learn to swim, play sport and connect with each other.

6.8 Grant Funding

Council provides funding to West Coast Youth and Community Support for programs and events such as the annual Snag and Roll Skate Park Event. We also support other organisations such as sporting groups to deliver programs and initiatives to support young people to participate.

6.9 Children's University

Council supports the Children's University, with the Port Lincoln Library being a Learning Destination, and Mayor Mislov has been appointed as an Ambassador for Children's University.

6.10 Buildings and Facilities

Council owns a range of facilities that are leased by organisations who provide services to the community including youth. These include Flinders Theatre (local cinema) and the UniHub Facility. Council worked collaboratively with UniHub to bring this much needed tertiary education facility to the region, reducing the requirement for our young people to have to travel to Adelaide and beyond for study. We provide a space to West Coast Youth and Community Support for their Youth Hub facility, a youth-friendly, accessible space for young people to gather

6.11 Civic Engagement, Education and Career Pathways

We regularly host visits from local school groups to educate students on the role of Council and attend events and initiatives such as expos to promote career opportunities in local government.

We have included the provision of a Council employee trainee program into our Enterprise Agreement to implement a Council trainee program for candidates aged 15 to 21.

6.12 Advocacy

We undertake advocacy and lobbying of key government departments and other bodies on behalf of young people. For example, together with CEG we lobbied the SA Skills Commission for additional financial support for youth undertaking traineeships and apprenticeships for costs associated with travelling to Adelaide. We have also supported local organisations such as West Coast Youth and Community Support lobby for funding for initiatives such as the community night bus that provides safe transport home for young people.

6.13 Youth Collective

We are a part of the Youth Collective, a collaborative network of youth service providers, schools, community groups and government agencies, coordinated and actively supported by Council.

Monthly meetings focus on:

- Sharing insights and sector updates
- Coordinating resources and activities
- Identifying service gaps and emerging needs
- Strengthening collaboration across organisations.

The Youth Collective underpins a coordinated, partnership-based approach to youth wellbeing, which the Plan builds upon.

7. Trends

Insights from consultation, state and national frameworks, and local data, indicate emerging trends affecting young people in Port Lincoln:

- **Mental Health and Wellbeing:** Long wait times for services, rising anxiety, and stress linked to education and life transitions.
- **Housing and Cost of Living Pressures:** Shortages of affordable housing for youth leaving home, combined with financial pressures impacting participation in activities.
- **Transition to Adulthood:** Limited access to driving lessons, after-hours transport, and life skills programs.
- **Participation and Engagement:** Young people value social spaces, sports creative programs, and opportunities for leadership.
- **Youth Voice and Inclusion:** Feedback highlights the importance of culturally safe spaces, accessible facilities, and opportunities to contribute to community decision-making.
- **Community Assets:** Libraries, arts centres, trails, parks, and recreational facilities provide critical venues for engagement, learning and connection.

These trends provide the evidence base that underpins Council's strategic direction and planned actions.

Sources:

Mission Australia Report 2025: [Youth Survey 2025 - SA.pdf](#)

South Australian Youth Action Plan: [South Australia's Youth Action Plan 2024-2027](#)

South Australia's Outcome Framework for Children and Young People: [Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People](#)

Engage! Strategy: [240430 Office-For-Youth Strategy-Doc Digital.pdf](#)

Council's Youth Action Plan Survey (Appendix A)

8. Strategic Directions – Context for Youth Action

The Plan will be guided by the three key focus areas, reflecting Council's roles as a provider, collaborator, and advocate. These focus areas ensure Council's actions respond to local needs, emerging issues and community priorities.

1. Activating Council Spaces, Facilities and programs

Council will work to make public spaces more welcoming, inclusive, and youth-friendly, including:

- Exploring opportunities to improve the accessibility, inclusivity and safety of Council spaces.
- Exploring opportunities to enhance informal gathering places for social connection and play.
- Supporting youth-focused programs and activities in Council spaces.

2. Collaborating with Local Organisations

Council will continue to strengthen partnerships across schools, youth services, clubs and community groups to:

- Identify shared priorities.
- Support coordinated, wrap-around programs.
- Participate actively in the Youth Collective and broader cross-sector collaboration.

3. Advocating for Resources and Emerging Needs

Council will continue to champion youth needs in areas beyond its direct scope, including:

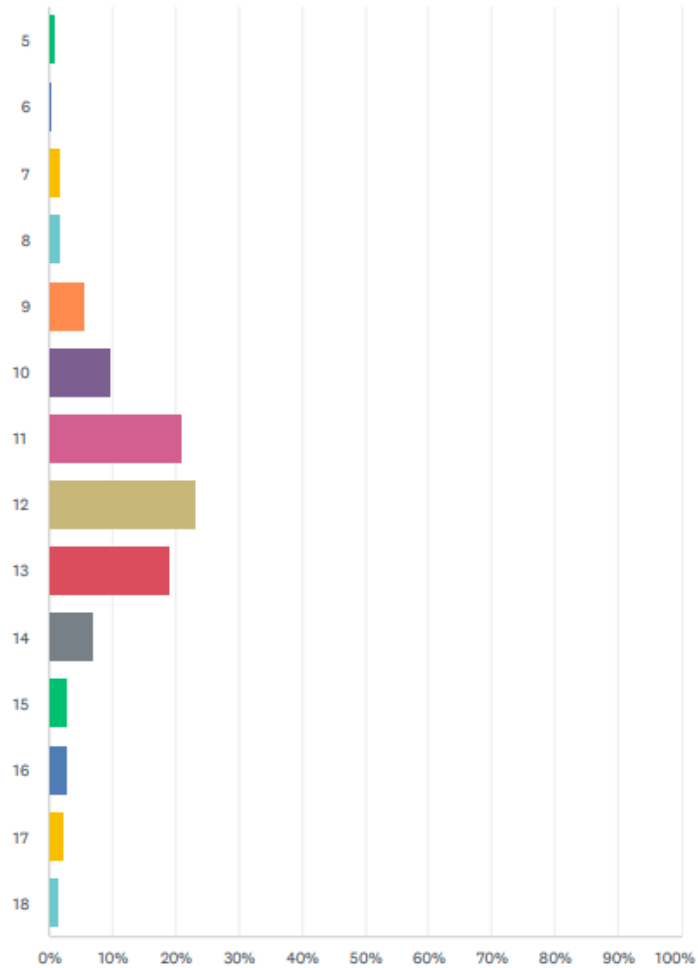
- Mental health, housing, transport and life skills.
- Increased investment from state and federal governments.
- Innovative, community-led programs responding to emerging issues.
- Ensuring youth voices are included in regional and state-level planning.

By linking evidence from the Background Report to these focus areas, Council can ensure its Youth Action Plan is responsive, collaborative and strategically targeted to benefit young people across Port Lincoln.

Appendix A

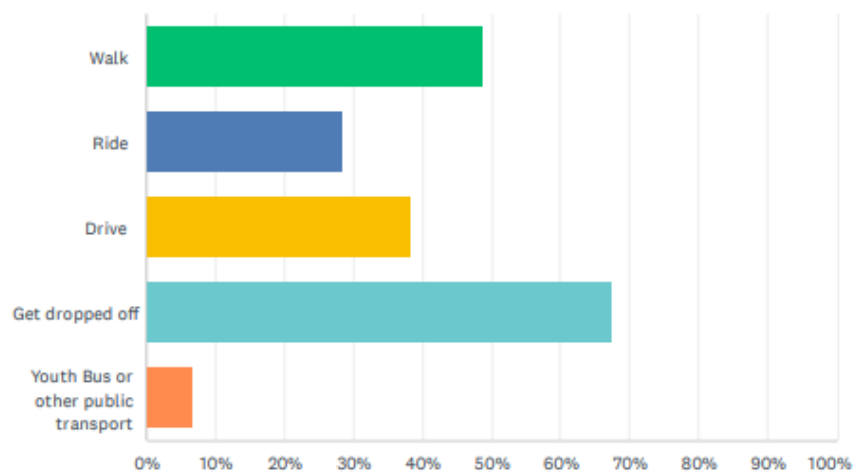
Q2 How old are you or the young person you are responding for?

Answered: 215 Skipped: 8



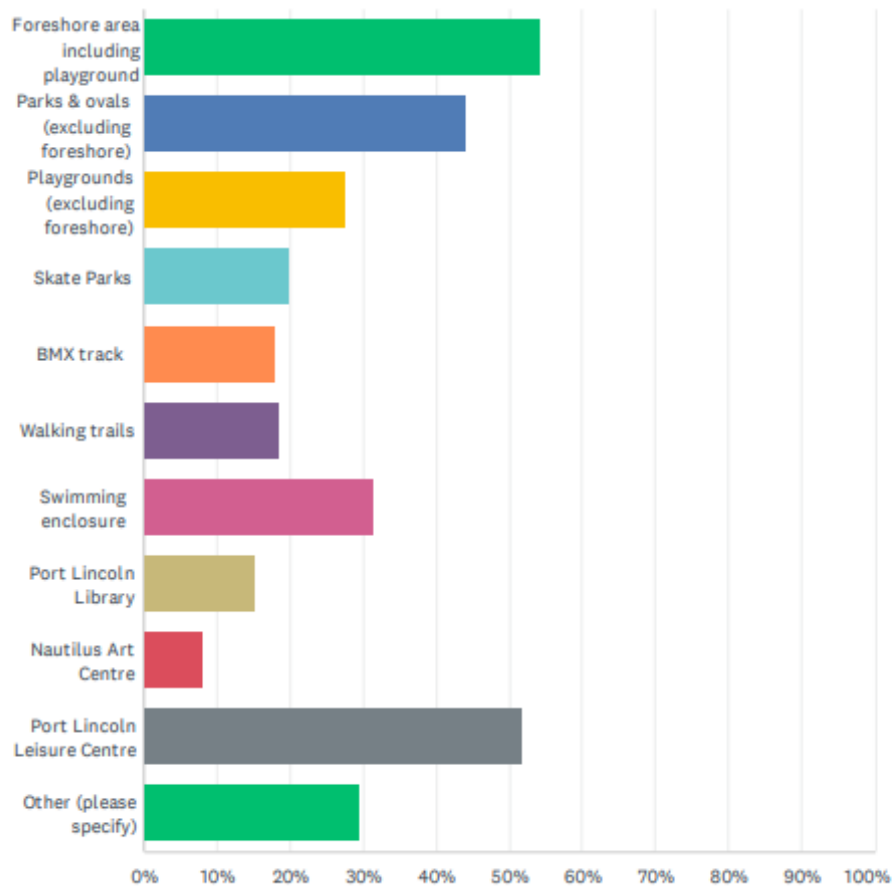
Q4 How do you usually get around? (Tick all that apply)

Answered: 221 Skipped: 2



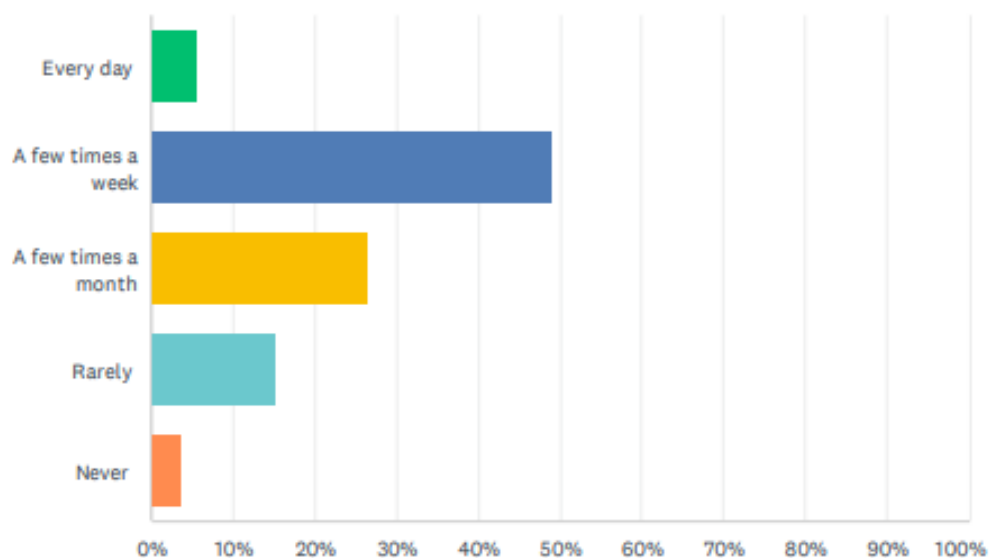
Q6 Which spaces and places do you like to visit the most? (Tick all that apply)

Answered: 222 Skipped: 1



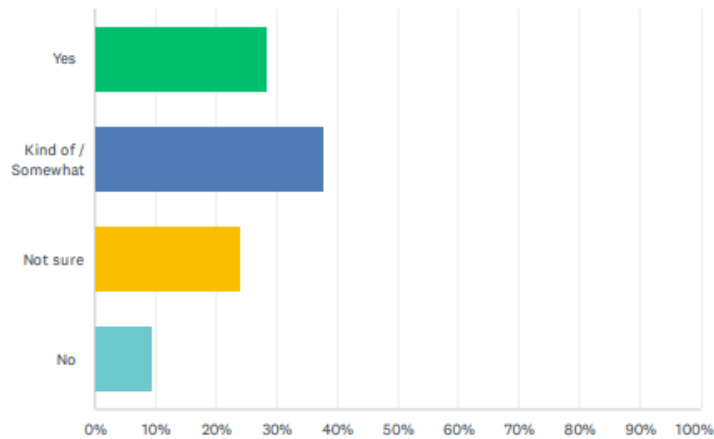
Q7 How often do you use these Council spaces and places?

Answered: 220 Skipped: 3



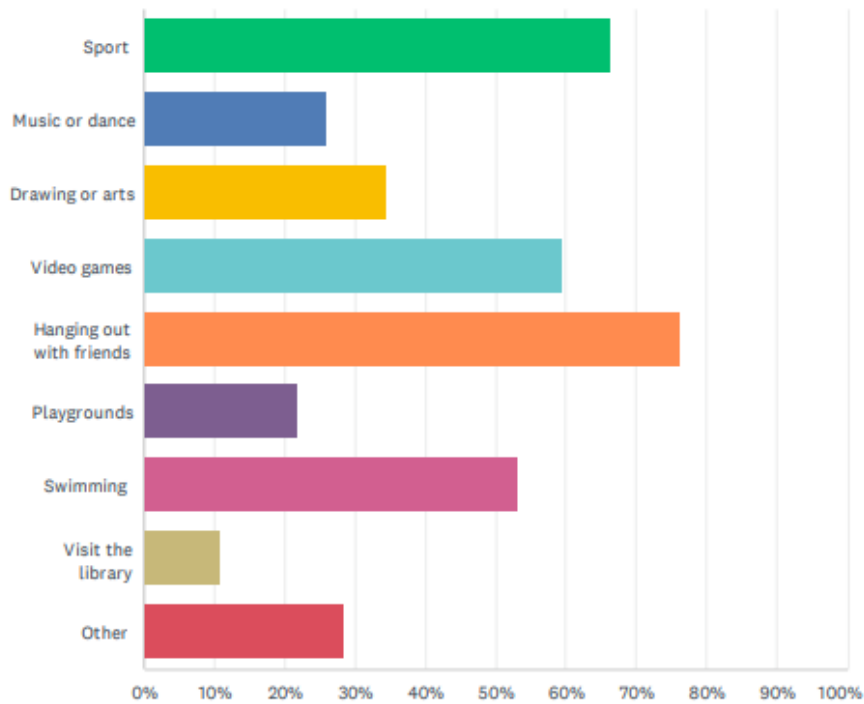
Q10 Do you think the spaces and places in your area are easy to use and welcoming for young people with disabilities?

Answered: 220 Skipped: 3



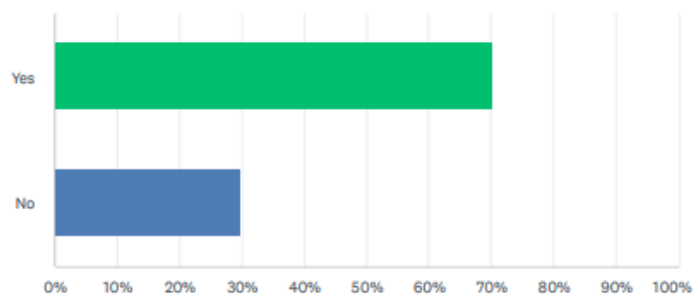
Q11 What things do you love doing in your spare time? (Tick all that apply)

Answered: 220 Skipped: 3



Q12 Are you part of a local club or group (e.g., netball, football, dance, scouts etc)

Answered: 214 Skipped: 9



CONTACT

For further information on the
Youth Action Plan 2026-2031
Background Report
contact the Council Administration Office:

Council Administration

Level One, Civic Centre

60 Tasman Terrace, Port Lincoln SA 5606

PO Box 1787, Port Lincoln SA 5606

Telephone: 08 8621 2300

Email: plcc@plcc.sa.gov.au

Website: www.portlincoln.sa.gov.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/cityofportlincoln

