



MEDIA RELEASE

YOUTH CONVERSATIONS TO RESUME WITH FOCUS ON PANDEMIC IMPACT

A project capturing the views of young people across the Great South Coast is set to resume with an extra focus on how they are coping with the pandemic.

Youth Conversations has passed the halfway mark in its plans to engage with 1000 young people aged 12-19 and find out how they feel about their education, community and future employment opportunities.

So far, the views of 602 young people have been obtained in face-to-face focus groups and surveys but the project has been in hiatus since late March due to COVID-19.

Beyond the Bell Executive Officer Kate Roache said engagement with young people would resume online this month and would include additional questions about the impact of COVID-19.

Beyond the Bell Great South Coast worked with young people to co-design the project and Youth Affairs Council Victoria (YACVIC) has trained facilitators to engage with young people.

Glenelg, Corangamite and Colac Otway shires have had the greatest engagement so far, with the focus now turning to Moyne, Southern Grampians and Warrnambool. The facilitators are especially interested in speaking with young people that identify as gender diverse and to Indigenous young people.

Young Conversations project coordinator Tatiana Resk Wilson said the process for connecting with young people had been redesigned because of the pandemic.

“The initial questions around education, employment and how they engage in communities are still relevant but the circumstances have changed dramatically,” Ms Resk Wilson said.

“Broader data shows young people are most affected in employment, education, sports and connections to their communities because of the pandemic, and we want to understand what has changed locally for young people, what strategies they use to cope and what they have learnt about themselves,” she said.

A preliminary analysis of the initial findings shows that local opportunities are a strong driver for young people choosing to stay in the region.

“They are seeking more diversity in VCE and VCAL subjects and employment opportunities, including more practical and hands-on learning opportunities,” Ms Resk Wilson said.

“It was also interesting to hear from young people that they want to be in communities that are inclusive, free of judgement and more accepting of diversity.”

Any young person wanting to be involved with the project can contact treskwilson@btb.org.au.