[isaac youth unmet needs

snapshot]

Greater
Whitsunday
Communities

ISAAC
REGION
HELPING TO ENERGISE THE WORLD

Isaac Regional Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land within the Isaac region. We recognise their connection to land, sea and community. Council also recognises those whose ongoing efforts to protect and promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures will leave a lasting legacy for future elders and leaders.

Isaac Regional Council offers a wealth of purpose-built facilities for community members to enjoy.

These include swimming pools, sports grounds, and community centres.

Council's Engaged Communities department employs staff who are at the hub of community. Community Relationship Officers in each community support stakeholders and are the coordination point for Council information and touch points.

These officers use their skills to assist with events, outreach and support services to deliver to community. With minor and major grants an integral part of community support, Council is proud to encourage and support applications for individuals, organisations and to assist with activating events and building capacity in each of our communities.

Partnerships through leases with not-for-profit community organisations such as sporting groups and art centres build community spirit and enable a diverse range of activities for all ages. Council has a strong focus on the growing relationship with our traditional owner groups and all First Nations people and acknowledge our role as a stakeholder to them and their culture and country. We are uniquely positioned as the closest level of government to the community and as such, understand the challenges our residents face.

We are at the grass roots of community and our staff and elected members live and work in the region and take pride in being part of such vibrant communities.

Council accepts a responsibility to continuously focus on improving the liveability of our communities and with access to a network of stakeholders can consistently deliver whole of community responses to issues.

We are a trusted source of truth and respect and value our role in the region.

[summary]

Welcome to the Isaac region's Youth Unmet Needs Snapshot.

This important piece of work is to seek out what unmet needs young people aged between 12 and 18 years face in Isaac region's 17 unique communities.

This snapshot is a culmination of feedback Isaac Regional Council has received from the community, in consultation with Greater Whitsunday Communities. The unmet needs uncovered in this snapshot requires a whole of community approach.

It also needs different layers of government, not-for-profit organisations and industry input to help solve these issues through workshops planned in the future.

This will also set the scene to focus on a regional youth summit where young adults will be invited to take part in a collaborative process to address the concerns with stakeholders.

Out of the initial responses from the study it was evident that the youth want to be empowered and use their voice.

[the findings in this snapshot were achieved through ...]

278 youth survey responses

55 parent survey responses

48 young people engaged in focus group discussions

29 service provider survey responses

10 service provider focus groups and one-on-one interviews

[message from Mayor Anne Baker]

Our Isaac youth represent strong social values. They have a level of resilience that sets them apart from the rest of our nation. With this resilience comes its own set of unique challenges.

Our youth make up 33 per cent of the Isaac region's population living in a geographic footprint that is the size of Tasmania.

The rurality of the Isaac region makes it hard for them to access key service providers. It also makes it difficult to meet others in a similar age and demographic.

The opportunities available to youth in regional Australia, including the Isaac region are lower than those available to youth in urban regions.

The Youth Unmet Needs Snapshot was commissioned by Isaac Regional Council to help validate what we already know anecdotally, unearth issues affecting our young people, which are not readily visible, and to shine a light on these.

The snapshot reveals that some of the challenges and barriers that our youth face are present in our 17 diverse communities. It also improves our understanding across all levels of government, essential services, schools, service providers, industry, and the community, enabling us to strive for better outcomes for our young people.

This snapshot is a vehicle that will increase the volume of our young people's voices. It adopts the seven areas of youth wellbeing – health and wellbeing, education and employment, environment, fun and events, support and services, place and space and relationships.

As a parent, a grandparent and as a leader of our community, I have seen first-hand the impacts of the unmet needs on our younger generation.

The wellbeing of our youth is a cause that is very close to my heart.

I commend the vulnerability our young people have displayed in speaking their own truth through their responses in this historic snapshot.

This is a collection of authentic voices describing their personal challenges experienced while living in the Isaac region.

We must hear them and act together. We want our youth to feel seen, heard, empowered, capable, loved, and valued in the Isaac region.

What worries our youth, should worry us all and it should not fall on one set of shoulders.

Council will take this collection of voices to social services, industry, and other levels of government to address the uphill battle of service gaps and barriers and pave a positive path forward.

Council looks forward to continuing this work with our youth because they are our region's future. As a community, we must have the fortitude to acknowledge these shortcomings, problems, and unmet needs.

We must work together as a collective to address barriers.

This is the first step towards meaningful and lasting solutions to empower our youth.

Mayor Anne Baker
Isaac Regional Council

[at a glance]

[our communities]

17 unique communities
They are modern mining, historical, coastal and rural towns

median age 34
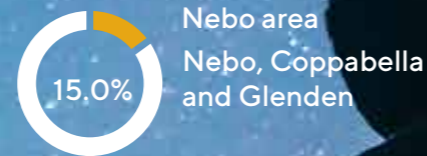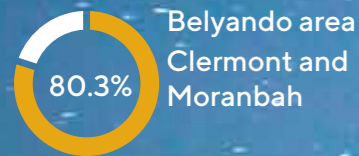
permanent population **20,935**

non-resident population **12,130**

1/3 of our population does not live here, but they enjoy the benefits of our region.

[our youth]

[respondents are from ...]

80.3% Belyando area Clermont and Moranbah

4.7% Broadsound area Middlemount, Dysart and St Lawrence

15.0% Nebo area Nebo, Coppabella and Glenden
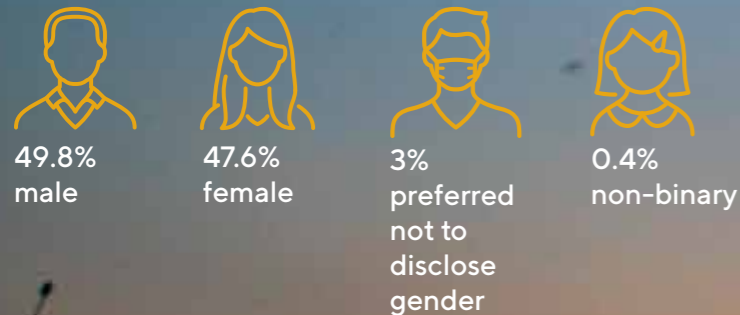
population aged 0-24 years **7,423**

[the study attracted ...]

278 respondents = **108** aged 10-12 years + **170** aged 13-18 years

[respondents identify as...]

49.8% male

47.6% female

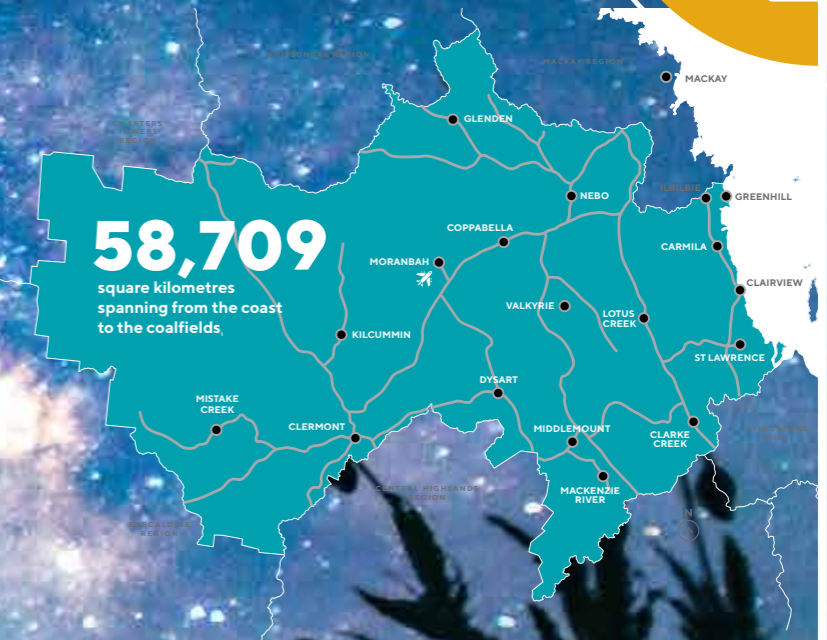**3% preferred not to disclose gender**

0.4% non-binary

Minority groups were well-represented in the study with many young people identifying as Aboriginal (9.3%), Torres Strait Islander (3.7%) or Pacific Islander (3.7%), as culturally and linguistically diverse (8.1%), or as having a disability or a learning difficulty (4.4%) such as dyslexia. A small proportion of young people identified as being of other ethnic origins or as being of diverse gender or sexual identity (7.8%).

[education]

3,478 young people attended school (46.8% of all young people aged 0-24 in the Isaac region)

5 high schools   **19 primary schools**   **10 childcare providers**

58,709 square kilometres spanning from the coast to the coalfields.

Map communities: MACKAY, GLENDEN, NEBO, GREENHILL, COPPABELLA, MORANBAH, CARMILA, CLAIRVIEW, VALKYRIE, LOTUS CREEK, KILCUMMIN, DYSART, ST LAWRENCE, MISTAKE CREEK, CLERMONT, MIDDLEMOUNT, CLARKE CREEK, MACKENZIE RIVER

[crime]

The number of juvenile offenders in the Isaac region **increased** by 69% between 2020-2022

156 juvenile offenders charged with **219** offences

[how many are accessing youth services?]

1,001 young people aged 10-18 being supported monthly

this is through...

1,906 youth support service appointments monthly

this includes...

370 outreach or youth groups

345 general support services

317 mental health support

307 unspecified youth support

155 other health services

111 information or referral services

55 indigenous supports

Less than 50 young people in the Isaac region access services each month for domestic and family violence, disability support, alcohol and drugs, youth justice, legal help, probation and parole, youth emergency accommodation, transport, church service or outreach and brokerage.

[fun and events]

[activities young people do for fun in the Isaac region]

[age group 13-18 said they like to ...]

1. Hang out with friends
2. Play video games
3. Spend time alone
4. Swim
5. Ride bike/skate/scooter
6. Go camping

[age group 10-12 said they like to ...]

1. Hang out with friends
2. Play video games
3. Ride bike/skate/scooter
4. Swim
5. Go camping
6. Spend time alone

Respondents say youth development activities, including sports, arts and cultural events, and the associated facilities, are significantly lacking in small communities throughout the region.

The absence of such activities and facilities aimed at youth engagement, is largely due to issues associated with the local environment and public facilities.

Small, isolated towns with a high proportion of non-residents and a small youth population, tend to attract less funding and demand for youth development activities, events, facilities, and public amenities such as skate parks.

Additionally, smaller youth populations often result in insufficient numbers of young people to form sports teams or meet minimum attendance requirements for proposed activities and workshops.

Most of the activities young people do for fun fall into the category of informal activities rather than formal, organised activities.

Those aged between 13 and 18 years said they were significantly less likely to engage in almost any organised activity compared to the younger group surveyed.

Due to the nature of the employment industries in the region and the associated work rosters, many parents do not have the time to transport their young people to regular training sessions and competitions.

Combined with limited public transport within and between communities, youth participation is not always possible.

[what are the challenges in our communities?]

Small communities lack events and activities for young people.

They are inhibited by:

limited transport options

Parental work rosters prevent youth participation

affordability affects paticipation

school work, part-time work and caring for young siblings prevents participation

[what would help?]

Young people and parents in the region identified several key areas they feel could be improved to better support their development and engagement.

These areas include the provision of a wider variety of sports, art, cultural, and leadership activities, as well as the availability of positive adult role models.

Additionally, young people have called for more affordable activities.

Some have also requested that activities be designed to align with work schedules and better accommodate parents' schedules.

Another issue highlighted is the need for central coordination of activities, as there are often insufficient numbers of volunteers to organise events and activities.

By addressing these concerns, it is hoped that young people in the region can be better supported in their personal and social development, leading to improved wellbeing and greater participation in community life.
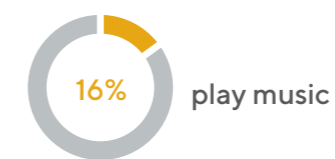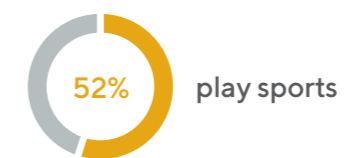
[youth friendly activities and events that young people in the Isaac region would like in their communities]

1. Community and family entertainment such as circuses, fairs, carnivals and shows
2. Sport events
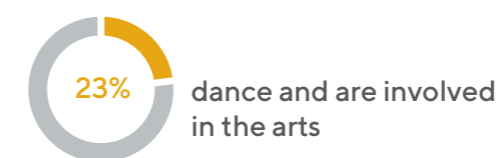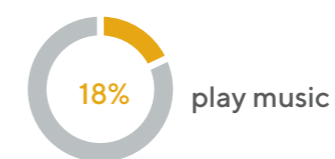3. Concerts and music festivals
4. Upgraded community facilities

[what do parents want for young people?]

1. Organised sport
2. Wider variety of sport
3. Community events
4. Cultural facilities and events
5. Youth groups, events and activities

[organised activities Isaac youth participate in....]

[age group 13-18 said they ...]

52% play sports

25% don't do organised activities

16% play music

10% swim and dance

[age group 10-12 said they ...]

60% play sports

24% swim

18% play music

23% dance and are involved in the arts
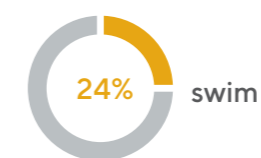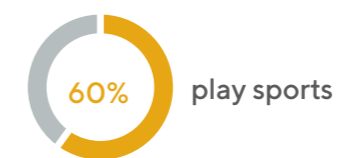
[environment]

Numerous factors can impact a young person's environment.

This includes their home and community environments, as well as their level of engagement and any barriers they may face.

Survey respondents noted that many young people experience overlapping environmental issues.

For instance, problems within the community can affect the home environment, which can then become a barrier to preventing young people from engaging with school, peers, or youth development activities.

Undoubtedly, the size and geographic isolation of many Isaac communities, the types of work available, and the limited number of youth development facilities and activities all have a significant impact on the home environment.

Parents often work long hours or shifts, leaving young people unsupervised for extended periods and creating barriers to youth participation in youth activities.

[challenges]

Small, isolated communities often struggle to attract and retain qualified teachers, health workers and youth support staff, which negatively affects youth education and wellbeing.

Geographic isolation limits friendship and social interactions and removes families from their extended family support networks. The small number of youth-friendly facilities and lack of transport also affect the ability

of young people to participate with peers and within their communities.

[recommendations]

Survey respondents suggested that extending the opening hours of existing facilities and reducing costs for young people would allow for greater access.

This could be accomplished, in part, by providing financial incentives to groups or businesses that run or wish to run youth development activities. Many participants also believed raising awareness of existing events, activities, and facilities would increase youth participation.

The study has compiled recommendations to enhance youth participation in the Isaac area, as outlined in the accompanying table. The expectation is that improving accessibility will increase youth development opportunities and provide young people with better access to support services.

[what's the best thing about living in the Isaac?]

everyone knows each other

small and friendly

amenities and actvities

lots of open space and nature *safe and relaxed*

everything is close and easy to get to

"The **only problem is the distance** from anywhere. It would be **nice to have a community bus** that could be used to organise transport for events or group meetings in other towns."
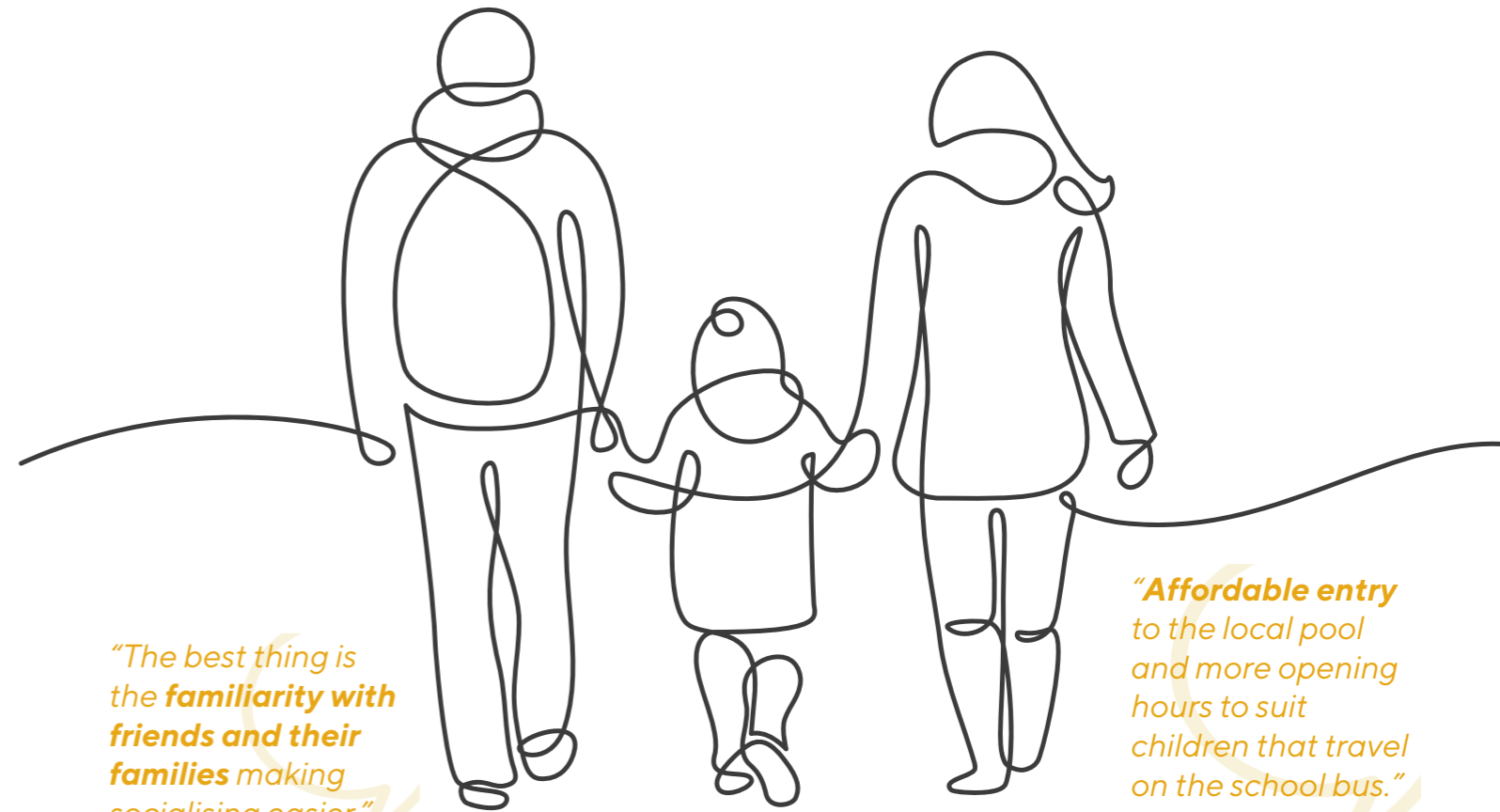
Parent of a 14-year-old, Broadsound area.

[changes that would improve the community]

bigger range of activities and events

Upgraded amenities and facilities

a safer community

events and activities during school holidays

"The best thing is the **familiarity with friends and their families** making socialising easier."

Parents of a 13-year-old, Broadsound area.

*"**Affordable entry** to the local pool and more opening hours to suit children that travel on the school bus."*

Parent, Nebo area.

[suggested changes to local public facilities]

suggested upgrades to existing public facilities

Shade sails or other shade at sports facilities

Motorbike track

Playgrounds (for both younger and older youth)

Pool (including heating, inflatables)

Skate Park

Roads and parking

Air-conditioning in existing gymnastics shed

Improve hiking and running tracks

new public facilities suggested

Mountain bike track or cycling trail

Water parks

Playgrounds (for both younger and older youth)

Parks

Sports grounds and courts

Dam for water sports

accessibility changes

Footpath and walkway upgrades (to improve accessibility and safety)

More transport (within and between towns)

Lighting (to enable night activities and improve safety)

Youth activities, events and facilities accessible to people with disabilities

Free or reduced cost for activities, events and facilities

Improved knowledge of existing activities, events and facilities

Extended opening hours for facilities

Reduced rent for businesses who want to run activities for young people

[education and employment]

[2021 attendance by LGA]

all students   first peoples

central highlands

89%   86%

charters towers

89%   81.3%

isaac region

89%   86.7%

mackay

91%   86.7%

mareeba

87%   77.4%

mount isa

83%   78.2%

whitsunday

90%   85%
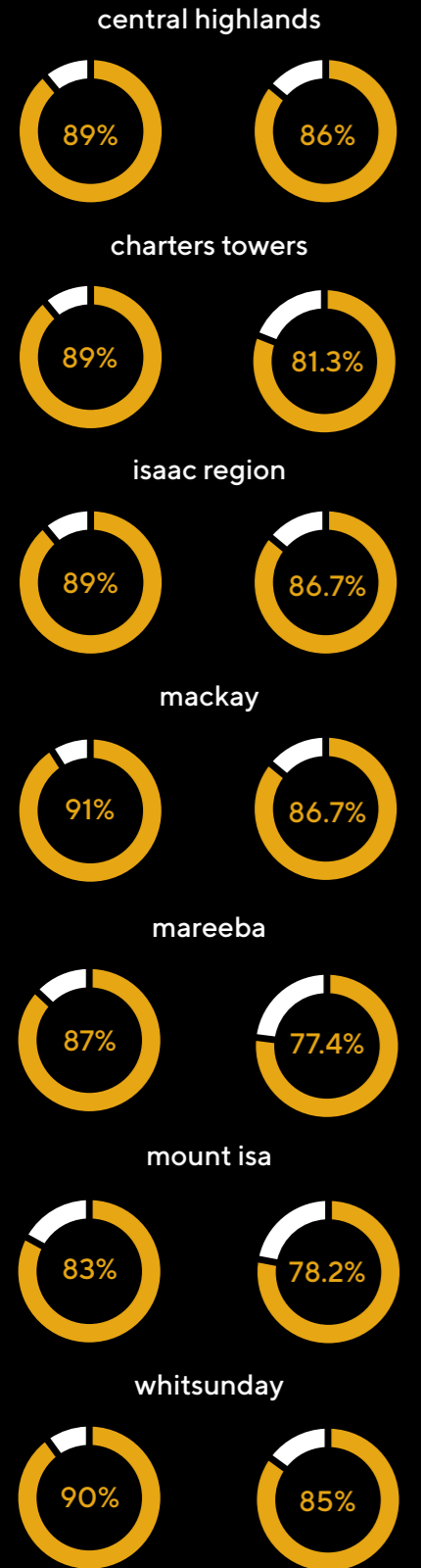
The isolation and small population of Isaac communities affect educational and employment opportunities for young people in the region.

Some communities have only one school, while others have none.

All groups noted that schools struggle to attract and retain qualified staff due to isolation and school size.

Limited subject availability from online learning narrows future vocational training, higher education, and employment opportunities for young people.

3,478

young people attended school (46.8% of all young people aged 0–24 in the Isaac region)

[what are the challenges?]

high turnover of teaching staff

limited subject selection in secondary school which affects higher education prospects

bullying   *Difficult relations with peers and teaching staff*

limited number of local industries to provide employment experience and vocational training

[parents concerns about school...]

not enough opportunity

behaviour management
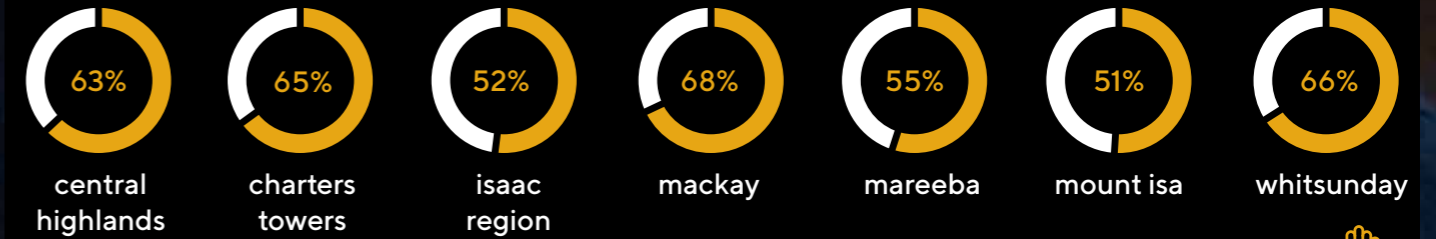
bullying   *disruptive peer behaviour*

"Our children are either expected to travel over 2 hours a day to attend high school or go to boarding school. There is nothing in (our community) to help further their study during their high school years or after. "

Parent of an 11-year-old, Nebo area.

"(Our community) has a good support network for parents and kids, should it be sought out. I feel very lucky to have such a fabulous village around me."

Parent of a 12-year-old, Belyando area.

[average proportion of students attending school 90% of the time or more by LGA in 2021

central highlands	charters towers	isaac region	mackay	mareeba	mount isa	whitsunday
63%	65%	52%	68%	55%	51%	66%

[average percentage of Isaac region students attending school 90% of the time or more]

70%

Isaac region students attended school 90% of the time or more in 2018

52%

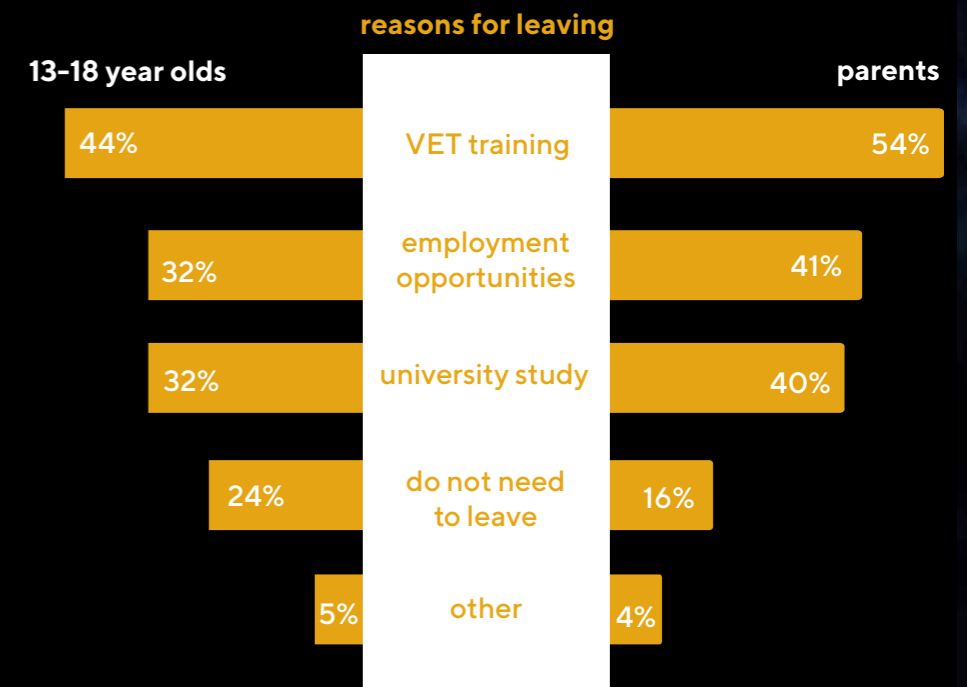Isaac region students attended school 90% of the time or more in 2021

[what are the challenges?]

Most survey participants expressed a desire to finish secondary school and pursue further education or training. Some had specific goals, such as entering the mining industry or the defence force, while others had no particular career aspirations.

A minority planned to work in agriculture or family businesses.

Regardless of a young person's anticipated education, training, or employment path, both young people and parents strongly believed that leaving the Isaac region would be necessary in order for young people to pursue their choices.

[perceptions about further education, training or employment opportunities in the Isaac region]

reasons for leaving

13–18 year olds		parents
44%	VET training	54%
32%	employment opportunities	41%
32%	university study	40%
24%	do not need to leave	16%
5%	other	4%

[health and wellbeing]

[mental health]

Mental health is a concern among those surveyed but self-esteem was generally good among the young people in the region.

There was a similar consensus between parents and young people regarding self-esteem reporting, with almost three-quarters of each group reporting very good, mostly good, or average self-esteem (74.3% of young people versus 72.7% of parents). Mental health concerns often lead to safety concerns and risk-taking behaviours.

Ready access to drugs and alcohol and their widespread use, even at very young ages, has been flagged by all parties as a significant issue within communities.

[factors that negatively impact young people]

[age group 13–18 say ...]

school and homework challenges

self-esteem

family dynamics

[age group 10–12 say ...]

peer difficulties

bullying

family dynamics

[how young people cope with upsetting behaviour]

[age group 13-18 ...]

music

spend time with friends

digital distraction **being active**

[age group 10–12...]

spend time with friends

play with pets

being active
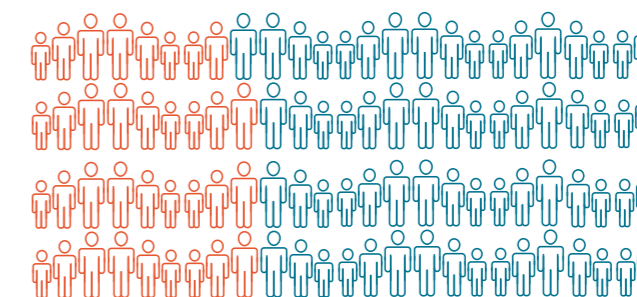
digital distraction

[safety]

While over three-quarters (78.6%) of young people would feel safe walking during the day, only 47.6% would feel safe walking alone at night.

Although the younger age group displayed a greater fear of strangers compared to the older group and parents, safety concerns were still raised for young people walking alone, due to the high number of strangers in the community caused by the transient workforce.

65% of juvenile offences in the Isaac region are committed by males

35% of juvenile offences in the Isaac region are committed by females

Queensland Police Service, LGA offenders, March 2018 to July 2022

I am afraid of dangerous people and strangers.

I am afraid of drugs, alcohol and crime.
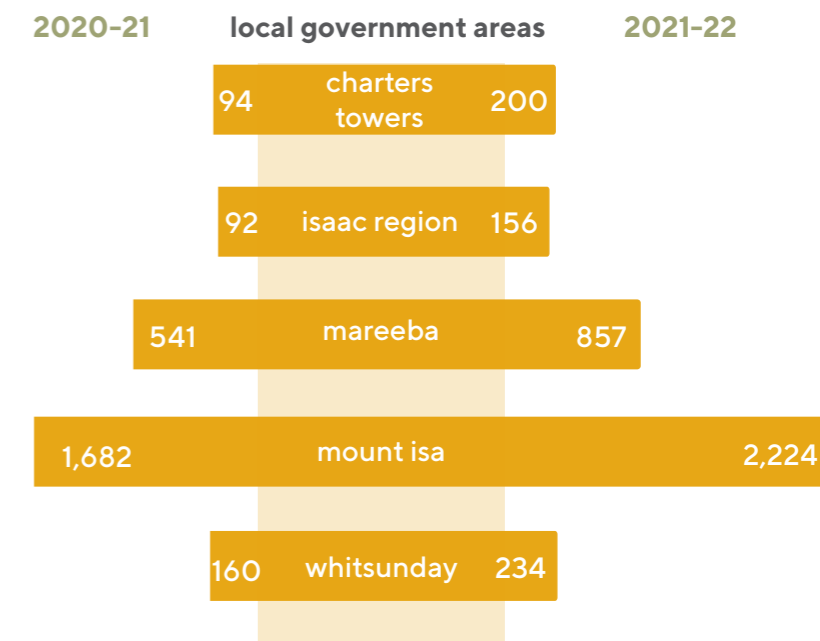
parents and young people share the same safety concerns

[comparative analysis of juvenile offenders across ...]

2020–21	local government areas	2021–22
94	charters towers	200
92	isaac region	156
541	mareeba	857
1,682	mount isa	2,224
160	whitsunday	234

juvenile offenders charged with an offence has increased in the Isaac region by 69%

comparison made from 2020–21 to 2021–22

[relationships]

Relationships can be challenging at the best of times, for adults and young people alike.

Negative relationships have the ability to influence every element of youth wellbeing, depending on the nature and severity of the problem, and the level of support a young person receives.

Peer difficulties are common and can develop into peer pressure to engage in risk-taking behaviours, bullying and a lack of acceptance.

Due to the small size of communities and peer groups, it can be difficult to avoid bullies. The majority of young people spend their time with friends, mostly from school or from sports or other activities young people are engaged in.

1/3 young people say they primarily spent time alone

Of concern is that one-third of young people reported that they primarily spent time alone, indicating that isolation and difficulty with friendships is problematic for a significant proportion of young people in the region.

[bullying]

While most young peoples' experiences of bullying are:

51.7% verbal

34.2% deliberate exclusion

27.1% physical violence

20.8% cyberbullying

[family support]

Almost all young people in the Isaac region feel accepted within their families and/or communities,

with only 1.5% of young people reporting that they do not feel accepted by anyone where they live.

Young people and their parents are also often isolated from their extended families, limiting the support networks parents have available to them.

When parents work long shifts, this can lead to young people having to take on the lion's share of parental responsibilities with chores and caring for siblings at the same time.

[the big issues]

Poor relationship skills modelled by parents, broken families, and generational issues can lead to parental mental health problems, domestic and family violence, and drug and alcohol misuse.

Family conflicts and stress can be compounded by a lack of resilience or financial strain.

Limited availability of family, individual, and youth support services in small regional, rural, and remote communities can contribute to the perpetuation of dysfunctional relationships.

1.
Bullying is experienced at a high rate

2.
Peer pressure to engage in risk taking activities

3.
Young people are reluctant to build deep meaningful relationships due to the transient community and the expectations that friends, teachers and support staff will move on

4.
Lack of parental engagement and support resulting from the pressure of work hours and conditions as well as work-life balance.

[place and space]

[our young people spend most of their time at ...]

- home
- friend's place
- pool
- park
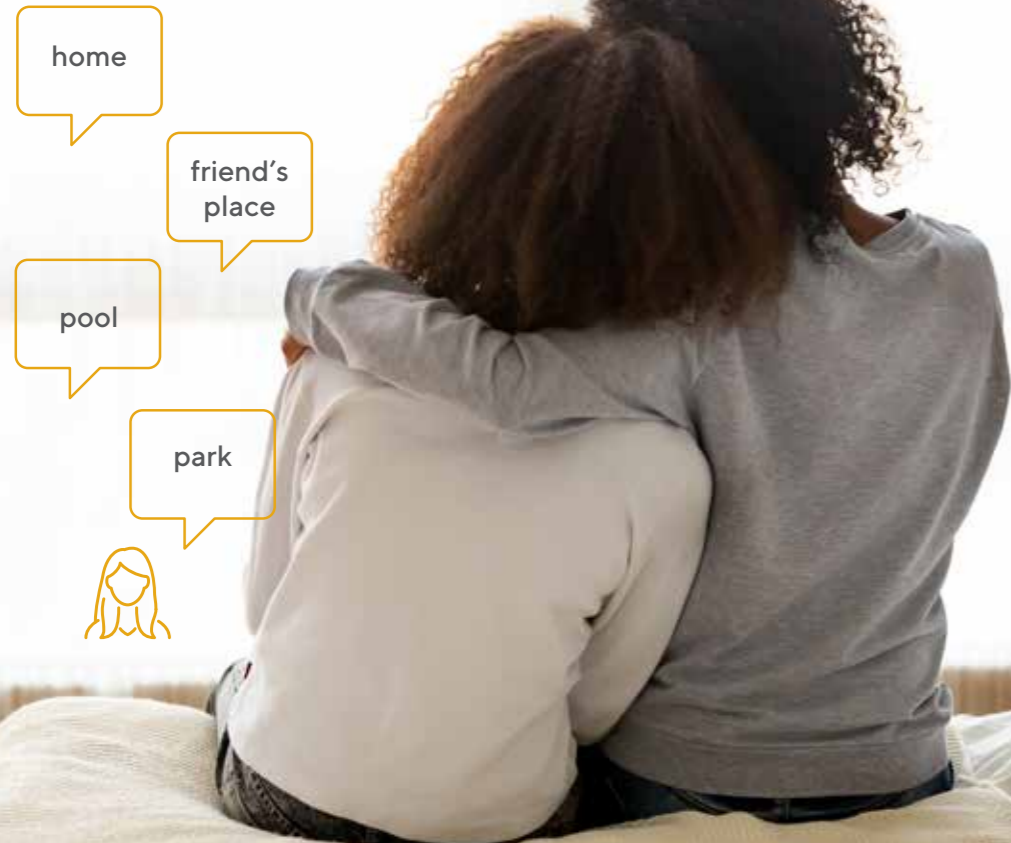
Young people spend most of their free time at home, at a friend's place, the local pool, parks, sports grounds or sports courts, the gym and in and around natural spaces such as beaches, dams, creeks, and national parks, either alone or with friends.

Spending time at cafes or fast-food outlets or shopping was also common, more so in the older age group.

The 10-12 year olds were more likely to spend time at skate parks, the beach or the cinemas compared with their older counterparts.

Only a small proportion of respondents noted that young people spent time at libraries, church or youth or community centres.

However, some of these differences can likely be attributed to the availability of these amenities and facilities in the areas of the survey respondents.

[main transport method]

Young people also use physically active methods of transport, with

62.8% walking,

43.3% cycling

29.6% riding their skateboard or scooter around
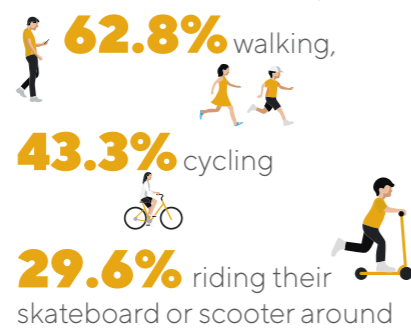
[what are the common concerns for young people?]

[age group 13-18 are worried about ...]

- mental health
- friends and peers
- self esteem

[age group 10-12 are worried about ...]

- bullying
- friends
- peer pressure

[the big issues]

1. Limited transport options

2. Limited youth-friendly safe spaces

3. Limited supervised safe spaces

[support services]

Across regional, rural and remote communities such as Isaac, specialist youth support services are sparse.

Numerous service gaps exist due to limited funding and the size and isolation of the communities, along with factors associated with difficulty in attracting and retaining qualified staff. Young people often find it difficult to understand and acknowledge that they need help, and harder still to ask for it.

Stigma about needing help or that the support will not be confidential due to the small size of their communities often prevents young people from seeking help.

[what are the challenges in our communities?]

Due to the geographical isolation of the Isaac region, specialist support services for young people are limited, and transportation to access such services can be a challenge, particularly for those who lack family support.

Additionally, many young people in the region are not aware of the available support services, which further compounds the challenge.

Despite some young people having already faced significant challenges, most have been able to receive the necessary support to address their needs.

However, the results of this research show that mental health is a significant concern for a significant proportion of young people in the region, with 36.8% indicating concern in this regard.

This is considerably higher than the 2020 study by the Queensland Family and Child Commission, which found that mental health was a concern for 29% of 13 to 18-year-olds living in inner and outer regional areas and 21% of those in remote and very remote areas in Central Queensland.

Comparatively, 29.2% of Queensland 15 to 19-year-olds and 30.6% of Australian youth in that age group have concerns about mental health.

> *"All of these services do exist in town. However they are not well publicised and as a result, not well supported."*
> Parent of a 15-year-old, Belyando area.

Approximately one-third of young people (31.3%) and 28.3% of parents indicated that they (or their child) has previously needed to seek help for a serious problem.

Of the youth respondents, 24.3% had been successful in accessing support, whereas 7% had not.

Similarly, 20.8% of parents indicated that they had been successful in accessing support for their child, while only 7.5% had not.

Lack of knowledge of service availability and stigma were the most common reasons given for not accessing support.

Several parents indicated that they had been able to access support for their young person, but it had required referral to another town to access the service.

> *"(We need) health services that bulk bill for people under 18 years. Sometimes they need help but don't have the money to get it and don't want to involve parents or carers."*
> Parent of a 17-year-old, Belyando area.

> *"A safe place to go hang out with others – a supervised youth centre with different activities."*
> Parent of a 15-year-old, Belyando area.

[barriers to service delivery]

Funding limitations and competition for grants have a significant impact on service availability in the Isaac region. Moreover, the eligibility requirements that providers must meet, determined by the scope of their organisation's funding, can also limit their ability to deliver regional services.

The competition and overlap of services have resulted in some youth service needs being unmet, or confusion about which service is best suited to a young person's needs.

Additionally, difficulties with the referral process and long waiting times to access support can make the process of seeking help overwhelming, leading young people to give up on accessing support.

[youth support services that participants think are needed in their community ...]

mental health services and programs

headspace

youth centre programs and groups

> *"I believe that we have great services that need to be supported by local industry to keep them going and continue to offer visiting services."*
> Parent of a 15-year-old, Belyando area.

[where do they go for help?]

Most young people would be comfortable seeking help from parents and other family members, friends, school staff such as teachers, principals, guidance officers or school chaplain, or police and emergency services.

[what do young people and parents worry about?]

[what 13-18 year olds worry about ...]

self esteem *cyberbullying* **bullying**
mental health
friendships *peer pressure* peer difficulties
family **relationships**
affordability *home life*
health
sex *identity*

[what 10-12 year olds worry about ...]

crime violence
feeling safe
public spaces *peer difficulties*
home stigma
school bullying
lack of transport *threats of physical violence*

[what parents worry about for their young people...]

substance misuse
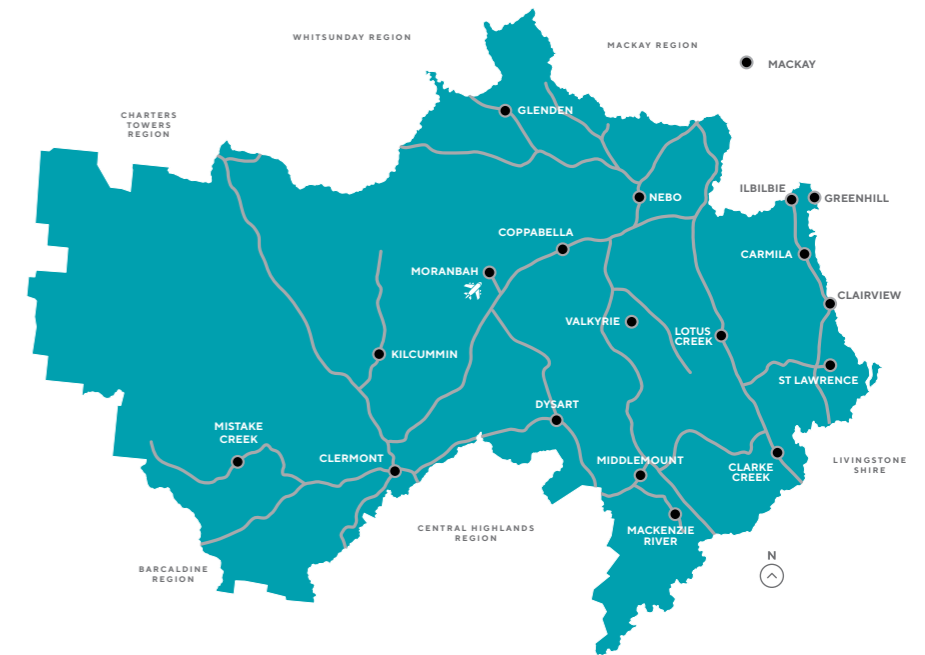**isolation**
access to transport lack of connection

[what do we have for our young people in the Isaac region?]

Moranbah, Dysart and Clermont have the highest permanent-based populations in the region.

With 14,605 residents between them, they make up just over 65% of the Isaac population.

These communities enjoy access to the widest variety of community facilities and infrastructure.

Most communities within the region have a primary school, and the five high schools are in Moranbah, Clermont, Middlemount, Glenden and Dysart. There is an abundance of sporting, skating and park facilities with at least one in each of the communities across the region.

[Map of Isaac region showing locations: WHITSUNDAY REGION, MACKAY REGION, MACKAY, CHARTERS TOWERS REGION, GLENDEN, NEBO, ILBILBIE, GREENHILL, COPPABELLA, CARMILA, MORANBAH, CLAIRVIEW, VALKYRIE, LOTUS CREEK, KILCUMMIN, ST LAWRENCE, DYSART, MISTAKE CREEK, CLERMONT, MIDDLEMOUNT, CLARKE CREEK, LIVINGSTONE SHIRE, CENTRAL HIGHLANDS REGION, MACKENZIE RIVER, BARCALDINE REGION]

[education]

13 primary schools

3 high schools

1 catholic school

2 schools K-12

[transport]

1 bus per week between Dysart and Moranbah

[health]

3 hospitals

3 youth centres

services and support including:

in-school support

employment services

domestic and family support

alcohol and other drugs

sexual health and sexual assault

[recreation]

8 swimming pools

2 BMX tracks

6 skate parks

28 sporting facilities

56 parks, ovals and playgrounds

[who else is involved?]

[state government]

The Queensland Government offers a variety of programs and initiatives to provide support to youth in the Isaac region.

These include education and training, health and wellbeing services, youth justice services, and youth support services.

In addition, the government provides project funding to support local sports and community groups that cater to the needs and interests of young people in the area.

During 2021-2022, the Queensland Government contributed to the upgrade of Moranbah East State School, Dysart State High School, and Clermont State High school and ELAM's Youth Program.

[federal government]

The Australian Government provides funding to organisations that work with young people, including non-profit organisations, schools, and community groups.

The funding supports a range of initiatives, such as mentoring programs, life skills training, and community engagement activities.

The Australian Government also provides funding for a range of other programs and services that benefit young people in the region. These include education and training programs, mental health services, and initiatives to improve access to employment and housing.

[corporate funding]

This helps to promote youth engagement in community initiatives, sports, and cultural events.

By sponsoring these activities, businesses provide a platform for young people to develop their leadership skills, build networks, and become active and engaged citizens.

Corporate funding provides opportunities for youth to access education and training, mentoring and guidance, as well as employment support.

It is acknowledged that many large corporate organisations contribute to the upgrade of facilities and programs that support young people.

Examples include Anglo-American Steelmaking Coal partnering with The Resilience Project to deliver emotionally engaging school-based programs to provide practical mental health strategies to assist in building resilience and happiness. Another example is Bravus supporting Clermont State High School – Career Exploration Experience.

[youth community organisations]

These are a valuable resource for young people in the Isaac region.

In addition to providing opportunities for personal growth and social engagement, they also provide opportunities for community involvement.

Additionally, the organisations or groups can have a positive impact on the wider community by building social capital and fostering a sense of community

cohesion. There are numerous community organisations, including church youth groups, centers, sports clubs, and community groups that offer a variety of programs and activities for young people.

ELAM for example provides safe and engaging events, school holiday programs and specialised support for the youth in the community.

[service providers]

The Isaac region is home to numerous service providers

catering to the needs of young people.

These service providers offer a range of services aimed at improving the well-being, education, and socialisation of youth in the area.

Specialised services such as mental health services, drug and alcohol counselling, and employment assistance are available.

The region boasts a variety of options to support the growth and development of young people in the area, with the aim of creating

a thriving and healthy community for all.

[schools]

Schools play a key role in child and youth development in shaping the way young people interact within their peer groups and the wider community.

They are often the first (and sometimes only) platform for children and young people to access support and referral to specialist services. With collaboration and support from external services and

organisations, schools can provide protective factors that promote safety, motivation, relationships, and support for positive student outcomes. Chaplaincy programs are identified by Isaac young people as positive supports and that for some, school is a safe place.

[families]

Meaningful family engagement positively impacts youth outcomes across various domains including education, health and community interaction. Families can play a role in supporting young people in the Isaac through being involved in local community groups and sporting clubs, working with other parents to provide transport for young people, advocating for programs and activities in their local community.

[youth]

Creating opportunities for youth to express themselves, voice their ideas, and provide input for projects or programs is crucial to understanding what their needs are and securing their engagement and ownership over new initiatives.

Providing young people opportunities and support to develop and implement a project or initiative that brings together their peers is the best way to ensure their participation.

An example of this is the Smart Transformation's Youth Advisory Council which provides key input and feedback – a youth voice – for incorporation into the Smart Transformation Project.

[what our communities want]
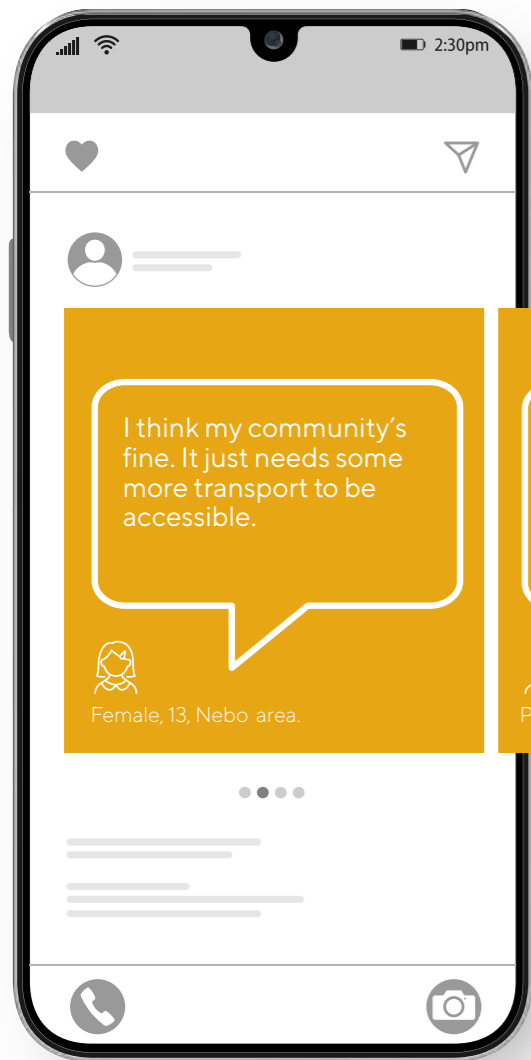
I think my community's fine. It just needs some more transport to be accessible.

Female, 13, Nebo area.

The only problem is distance from anywhere. It would be nice to have a community bus...

Parent of a 14-year-old, Broadsound area.

My community is lacking greatly in organised activities for people with disabilities.

Female, 18, Belyando area.

[this is what our communities want to see more of ...]

transport between communities and ability to attend activities

upgraded facilities with better opening hours

support services that cater to unique regional needs

bigger range of activities and events

parents want youth groups and activities on weekends and holidays

improved education, training and employment opportunities within region

[recommendations]

[satellite sessions]

1

A series of satellite feedback sessions to be conducted in six locations across the Isaac Regional Council area.

These sessions should aim to gather feedback from local participants, discuss findings, and develop localised strategies to address community needs.

Facilitators to guide the discussions to ensure that all participants can contribute their thoughts and ideas.

The feedback collected from these sessions to be analysed to identify common themes and areas.

The primary objective of conducting these sessions is to ensure that the voices of all individual communities are heard and that local perspectives are considered when developing strategies to address community needs.

[youth summit]

2

Local organisations, service providers, local industry, and young people from the Isaac region to be invited to participate in a youth summit.

The summit to utilise participatory methods to co-design a strategy around the issues identified in the region.

The aim is to ensure that young people and other stakeholders who are central to these issues have an equal say in identifying challenges and designing solutions.

The summit will provide a platform for young people to share their opinions and perspectives and collaborate with local organisations and service providers to develop strategies that meet their needs.

The goal of the youth summit is to create a sense of ownership and investment in the outcomes, and to ensure that young people have a meaningful role in addressing the youth challenges facing the region.

[develop action plans]

3

Participants of the youth summit can develop specific action plans to address the issues discussed.

These plans could include short-term and long-term goals, strategies, and timelines.

[engage with relevant stakeholders]

4

Engage with relevant stakeholders, such as government officials, community leaders, and non-governmental organisations, to raise awareness about the issues discussed and to garner support for their proposed solutions.

[build a youth network to foster cross-sectoral collaboration]

5

The research found no youth-specific network active in the Isaac region. From the momentum created by the research process the newly established Isaac Coalition for Youth Action (IC-YA) was formerly endorsed July 2022.

The recommendation is for key stakeholders to support and contribute to the IC-YA network to foster meaningful, effective partnerships, to be inclusive of the youth voice and to develop solutions that address the issues identified.

[youth strategy]

6

Developing a youth strategy for the region to ensure the needs and aspirations of young people are addressed.

A youth strategy can empower and support the next generation, ensuring that they have the tools and resources they need to thrive in their communities.