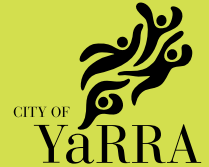




Proudly funded by the City of Yarra



# THE DRUM Youth Services

ANNUAL REPORT  
2021–2022





## Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the First Peoples of Australia. We acknowledge they have never ceded sovereignty and remain strong in their connection to land, culture and in resisting ongoing colonisation.

**The DRUM** respectfully acknowledges that we deliver services and programs on the stolen lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung people as the traditional Custodians and true sovereigns of the land now known as Yarra. We also acknowledge the significant contributions made by other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to life in Yarra. We pay our respects to Elders from all nations and to their Elders past, present and emerging.

As a team and organisation predominately comprised of settlers, we are committed to supporting First Nations people in their quest for decolonisation and sovereignty.

# CONTENTS

Acknowledgement of Country	Page 1
A word from our CEO, Karen Field	Page 3
<b>The DRUM</b> survey – young people	Page 4
<b>The DRUM</b> survey – staff	Page 6
<b>The DRUM</b> 's City of Yarra youth programs	Page 9
Collingwood Youth Drop-In	Page 10
Richmond Mix	Page 11
Richmond Girls Club	Page 12
RYMS Real Youth Music Studio	Page 12
RYMS evaluation overview	Page 14
<b>The DRUM</b> : Program stats and facts	Page 16
<b>The DRUM</b> : Our team	Page 19
<b>The DRUM</b> : Supporting partnerships, donors and supporters	Page 21
Connect with us	Page 24

# A word from our CEO, Karen Field

## » Thinking about young people who live work and play across the City of Melbourne

Public health has been such a focus, perhaps even an entirely new concept for some, over the past two years due to the pandemic. At the DRUM we had long embraced this framework to help shape our work and provide the best responses to all we support – including our young people – always in the context of their families and communities. For decades the research evidence has told us that positive home environments, pro-social connections to school and peers, and feeling a sense of belonging goes a long way in ameliorating life's inevitable ups and downs. For decades the research evidence has told us – and young people too – that positive home environments, pro-social connections to school and peers, and feeling a sense of belonging goes a long way in ameliorating life's inevitable ups and downs.

Furthermore, it has been our work amplifying the voices of young people over many years which continues to improve and evolve. This occurs via our commitment to co-design, our partnerships with local governments, such as the City of Melbourne, and in response to what young people and their families tell us themselves.

However, the last two years changed everything for everyone, and more so for many in our communities who already had to contend with far more than the usual developmental milestones.

The pandemic and its rolling lockdowns deeply disrupted our clients' lives and still has far-reaching impacts on young people's connections to their peers, school and employment pathways. Many of the young people we work with also experienced further harms – both in the community, with many marginalised by discriminatory/racially based policing responses, and in public housing estates, for those living in crowded and stressful conditions. The DRUM team have seen a far greater presentation of families in distress due to income and housing insecurity in the past year. This resulted in far greater numbers of young people and families requesting help due to family conflict, violence, housing, and poverty, which only exacerbated issues like substance misuse and poorer mental health.

Throughout, the DRUM service was there to maintain these essential and important connections to young people, and we continued to run our face-to-face programs whenever it was viable to do so, even when the rest of Drummond Street Services staff were working from home. We extend our genuine appreciation to our team of committed youth practitioners who





continued to provide much needed practical and emotional support – whether this was by providing important health information, community and systems navigation or by providing a safe space for young people to feel heard and connected. Many young people shared with us that going to program each week was a highlight and the only thing that kept them feeling connected and valued.

In this next phase, we know that many young people want to reconnect and recoup the opportunities they may feel they have missed or deferred. However, for some young people this will not be so easy – despite their resilience, creativity, energy and drive. We have some exciting plans for the coming year that will see young people enjoying nature and taking up a range of new opportunities within City of Melbourne and beyond.

It is in this context that Drummond Street, working alongside our community partners and young people themselves, must continue to move at pace and invest more time and resources to help young people recover and rediscover themselves in our continuously changing environment.

We also need to increase our advocacy on behalf of these young people, to ensure the great health inequalities we observed during COVID-19 times do not repeat themselves. Additionally, we need to continue our universal engagement and preventative efforts to ensure young people can reach out to local supports when needed. Along with amping up our collaborative efforts and applying an intersectional and place-based lens to our collective work, we need to guarantee that all young people – irrespective of their identities and different lived experiences – do not continue to defer their own dreams or their own potential. As this pandemic has taught us – nothing is certain, but it is our role to make a positive and active difference to the young people we directly support. As many of them have shown us – if they have the safe spaces, equity in opportunities, validation and encouragement, they can go far.

Thank you to our hard working, creative, caring team at the DRUM, led by Marie Iafeta. We appreciate your commitment.

Warm regards



**Karen Field**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Drummond Street Services



# The DRUM survey [young people]

## Satisfaction surveys

37

**A recent snapshot:** Young people who attend **the DRUM** programs completed an anonymous survey to provide feedback as part of our commitment to genuine co-design. This survey was disseminated via **the DRUM** staff, who encouraged young people who attended programs over this period to complete it in-program. A QR code was created to help young people to complete the form online directly; however, the young people also used printed out paper forms.

The surveys asked:

- » Their level of general satisfaction with **the DRUM**
- » What they most liked about **the DRUM**
- » Which activities they wanted to have
- » What supports they would be interested in

## What young people told us about the DRUM

The survey responses suggested that the programs ran by **the DRUM** have had an influence on building and strengthening the relationships between young people. A significant majority of young people reflected on how the programs run by **the DRUM** were a gateway to meeting new people and forming new friendships.

"I liked it when we joined up Yarra and Melbourne groups and it was good to meet new people at school holiday program as well as see old friends." [Young Person]

The programs offer significant opportunities to learn social and broader life skills and emphasise the importance of companionship, community and belonging.

"Skateboarding in a big group was the best thing ever." [Young Person]

This can also be illustrated through the common thread of "meeting new people" that young people reflected on as being a positive about the programs being run at **the DRUM**.

The comments made by young people about **the DRUM** programs included "fun", "amazing", "cool", "interesting and exciting". This highlights how the programs were beneficial for shifting the energies of young people throughout the week as they look forward to their programs.

"When she's writing her songs, I would just be living, doing my daily activities and then I would hear her singing random songs. And sometimes, she's got a friend over, some of the girls, they go through everything together, that's amazing." [Parent Feedback]

Throughout the reflections, young people were encouraged to give feedback on what they would like to see more of from **the DRUM** programs with a large majority commenting on new activities and excursions throughout Victoria.

**"It would be good to get out of the city and do some bushwalking, camp(ing) or hiking when we can."**  
[Young person]

This can be an indicator on how COVID-19 has shifted the perspectives for young people to make most of their physical surroundings while they can.

**80%**

**of respondents identified that connecting socially was the main thing they appreciated about being part of the DRUM.**

All survey respondents agreed that lockdowns and COVID-19 restrictions have had an added stressful impact on their families, which, in turn, has made for some increased tensions in the home.

**"You can learn how to write, rap, hip hop and dance / Calm yourself down and take three breaths / I am impressed / RYMS helps me even when I'm feeling stress"**  
[Real Youth Music Studio [RYMS] Participant]

## **What young people told us they're looking forward to**

The survey ended by asking young people what they were most looking forward to in the future. The majority emphasised "meeting new people and going new places". One young person expressed how they are enjoying a "bigger space at the DRUM so more people can come" which demonstrates both the resilience and strength instilled within the young people at the DRUM in being optimistic about the future, despite what has occurred in the past year.

The level of satisfaction was 91%, and 95% said they felt good about themselves when attending the program.

## **What young people told us they need**

Young people's needs included (listed in no particular order):

- » Social connection opportunities
- » Continuing to be able to connect via online means
- » Running face-to-face community events
- » Strong advocacy and support
- » Some mental health education (helping friends) and leading health promoting initiatives (bush walking and camping)
- » Coping strategies with reconnecting
- » Opportunities to meet in a space that feels like theirs and projects to make a change in their environments.

# The DRUM survey [staff]

Our staff survey asked:

- » The biggest struggles they saw for young people
- » How young people dealt with these challenges
- » What program participants missed out on
- » What young people wanted more of going forward
- » What government, schools, communities and families could do for young people or with young people
- » What they felt most positive about

## **What staff told us about young people they worked with**

We have seen a lot of financial difficulties within families stemming from things like the Coronavirus Supplement being removed, the completion of Job Keeper payments, and under/unemployment due to COVID-19 restrictions and lockdowns. With the continued number of illnesses, we have seen our young people continue to miss periods of schooling, which has resulted in isolation from community, friends, family, plus instability and changes to routines that has placed increased stress on young people and their families.

Since the restrictions have finished and we are coming to terms with a new COVID-19 normal we have seen a large increase in the numbers of participants for programs. As a result young people have continued to rebuild relationships within the team, leading to more disclosures of family distress and increased access to supports.

This past year has been challenging for young people from the public housing estate, it is clear from feedback that there appears to be a lack of trust from young people toward the mainstream media, some social media outlets, health authorities they are not familiar with, police and overall, other aspects of the community. This has been observed by young people and the team. Identifying the need for increased supports relating to:

- » Food supports
- » Parenting supports
- » Schooling supports
- » Increased behavioural supports for young people.



When staff were asked  
**"What achievements have you seen over the past year in youth services?":**

- » Increased number of participants
- » Increased number of participants in co-designed led programs
- » Increased confidence of young people
- » Co-design led programs
- » Inclusion across cultures, religion and gender within the programs

Staff identified their proudest moments to include:

"Seeing young people self-managing and showing respect to new staff members"

"During one of the painting workshops, I witness the young people express their feeling while painting. The young people make me very proud of what I am doing"

"The end of year showcase last year felt like a special celebration of all the young people had achieved post lockdowns"

"The proudest moment I had is when a young person came to me and apologised for the actions the young person took as that person felt like he disrespected me"

It is clear that more resources will be needed to support some of the most vulnerable people within our community going forward in the pandemic, whilst ensuring there are practical supports and resources available.

Young people continue to cope with the challenges they are facing by utilising the support of their peers, family, and **the DRUM** to support service navigation.

Common feelings young people expressed to **the DRUM** staff included:

- » A sense of excitement for programs and events
- » Reconnecting with friends

## Looking ahead to the future

Looking ahead, the young people have expressed that they would like more school holiday programs and similar excursion activities during regular programs. Activities such as skateboarding, and stencil art workshops received lots of praise during feedback sessions with the young people.

We know our program participants need to be regularly informed about the potential for a change in programs and circumstances. They need support to stay connected with their peers, their education and community support services.



## Government

Governments should provide adequate housing needs whilst recognising the community needs on the public housing estates. Further support by providing adequate funding to youth work organisations and youth-led programs, co-creating youth-led systemic changes that utilise the feedback and skills of young people, therefore increasing young people to gain experience and opportunities. These may be within government organisations, or through provision of accessible financial assistance. It would be good to ensure bureaucratic systems are simpler to navigate and access, with increased service options available for the middle young years who are often limited with service pathways due to availability. **The DRUM** staff are very aware of the major issues that families, many headed by sole females have in terms of the level of community safety on the estates. Drummond Street would like the state governments to take on their responsibility of providing safe and healthy public housing, and this will be a major advocacy focus in the coming year.

It is also recognised with the challenges operating youth programs within public housing estates and the level of supervision required to support safe programs as there is often situations that unfold on the public housing estate that are not seen in other locations, such as:

- » Police raids
- » Riots
- » Stabbing and shootings



## Community residents

Community residents can lead by example. They need to ensure young people are stimulated and encouraged, with healthy risk-taking activities and supports, providing spaces that are youth-led and co-created where young people can feel a sense of ownership over the space.

## Parents, teachers and carers

Parents, teachers and carers can provide consistent support, ensure preventative measures are being put into place, check in regularly on the mental health of young people, listen more, and be honest and real about uncertainties in the future (for example, ongoing home schooling).

## Young people

Young people can provide consistent support to their peers through regular check-ins, encouragement to attend youth spaces, and holding their peers accountable for mistakes without the necessary involvement of authority figures.

## How staff feel about the future

The young people that attend **the DRUM**'s programs have showed an amazing level of resilience and drive through an incredibly challenging few years. Their positive attitudes have been so inspiring, and this makes us feel positive about working alongside young people who are committed to their growth and connecting within their community regardless of the circumstances they're facing. Additionally, young people continue to show a deep commitment to social justice issues and are open to change for a more inclusive environment.

## Future visions

It is hoped with the increased needs of supports that **the DRUM** is able to increase program delivery through the week, continuing to offer a safe space for young people to connect and develop skills that continue to offer supports and increase overall help seeking behaviours.

# The DRUM's City of Yarra youth programs

The DRUM team continued to run co-designed early intervention programs during the school term and each school holiday period. In alignment with our co-design model, young people plan, guide and participate in the program development, delivery and evaluation cycle

## Program Logic:

Objectives:

- » To use place-based approach and assertive engagement activities to meaningfully support young people (YP) and families experiencing structural forms of disadvantage.
- » To enhance safety through providing safe places, relationships and opportunities for young people (YP) to grow, learn and lead.
- » To work alongside young people (YP) to elevate their voices in advocating against structural disadvantage.

Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Multicultural team - including youth peer leaders</li> <li>» Volunteers</li> <li>» Student placements</li> <li>» Young people</li> <li>» Infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Resources</li> <li>» Collaborative service and corporate partnerships</li> <li>» Funding</li> <li>» Drummond Street broader services</li> <li>» Co-design committee</li> </ul>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Case work and individual support</li> <li>» Young people are invited to identify their goals and begin to work toward them</li> <li>» Young people offered paid opportunities to facilitate various sessions which provide work experience and possible employment pathways</li> <li>» Young people involved in developing their support plan</li> <li>» Young people provided with skills to help and/or maintain wellbeing</li> <li>» YP are referred to other appropriate services as needed</li> <li>» Young involved in co-designed activities to contribute to the design of their programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Programs delivered by and for young people across inner-north and west Melbourne, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collingwood drop in</li> <li>• Richmond Girls</li> <li>• Richmond Mix</li> <li>• RYMS</li> <li>• Monday Drop in</li> <li>• Holiday programs</li> </ul> </li> <li>» Provide opportunities for families/ parents/carers with psychoeducation and tools to promote young person and family wellbeing</li> <li>» Advocacy</li> <li>» Evaluation of services</li> </ul>

<p><b>Short term outcomes</b> (immediate)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Young people feel a sense of ownership of program design and delivery</li> <li>» Young people have conversations that matter to them</li> <li>» Young people are exposed to different backgrounds and experiences of other young people, which challenges stigma and leads to new relationships</li> <li>» Young people feel comfortable in diverse social interactions</li> <li>» YP develop relationship skills through activities with their peers, peer leaders and staff</li> <li>» YP begin to develop skills (life skills, team skills, relationship skills, work skills, leadership skills, etc.).</li> <li>» Youth voices are elevated to promote change.</li> <li>» Consistent service delivery builds trust and provides YP with opportunities to be heard, seen, nourished and lead.</li> <li>» Young people are exposed to healthy coping strategies and positive help-seeking techniques, via staff modelling and program content</li> <li>» YP have meaningful employment opportunities.</li> <li>» Our workforce reflects the communities we serve.</li> <li>» Parents/carers are connecting with others with shared experiences of parenting young people and are aware of services available to their families</li> </ul>
<p><b>End of service term outcomes</b> (these are what we measure)</p> <p>What we see change in the young people by the end of their engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» YP have a sense of achievement through the role they have played in co-design and delivery</li> <li>» YP starting to feel confident to lead, feel listened to, respected, valued</li> <li>» Young people have improved knowledge of social systems and the ability to question and challenge discrimination and embedded social norms.</li> <li>» Enhanced emotional management</li> <li>» Improved communication skills</li> <li>» Improved interpersonal relationships</li> <li>» Expanded positive social networks</li> <li>» Enhanced problem-solving skills</li> <li>» Increased ability and willingness to seek and engage with support again when/if needed</li> <li>» Increased understanding of personal agency.</li> <li>» Increased confidence for positive risk taking (trying new things)</li> <li>» Mastery of things that matter to the young person</li> <li>» Ability to articulate and advocate for themselves</li> <li>» Trust built and the knowledge of where to find services that fit them</li> <li>» Consistent service delivery builds trust and engagement with families and enhances family level protective factors (and reduces risk factors)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Long term outcomes</b> (these are what we assume will happen if the end of service outcomes happen – we don't measure these)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» YP have confidence and skills to contributed to their communities (addressing structural inequalities)</li> <li>» YP become positive role models in their community</li> <li>» YP have long term career opportunities.</li> <li>» YP and their families have positive risk seeking behaviours.</li> <li>» Advocacy efforts reduce discrimination and structural inequalities.</li> <li>» Improved community cohesion</li> <li>» Increased leadership and pride in the young person's community</li> <li>» Reduction of stigma and prejudice in the wider community</li> </ul>





## Our popular City of Yarra funded programs include:

**Collingwood Youth Drop-In** – a weekly program that engages Collingwood young people aged 8–15 in youth-led activities and projects.

**Richmond Mix** – a weekly program that engages Richmond young people aged 8–18 in a range of youth-led activities and projects.

**Richmond Girls Club** – a fortnightly program that engages Richmond young women aged 8–18 in youth-led workshops that address female-specific issues and needs.

**Monday fortnightly drop in (New)** – a fortnightly program, developed at the request of young people in the Collingwood public housing estate. This program is based on a drop in model for young people aged 8-18

We also run **School Holiday Programs** – activities are guided by participant ideas; we offer delivery and/or support of a minimum of three activities each holiday period including a minimum of one activity on each estate and one excursion.

Within every year, we revisited our long standing aims and were able to strategize on how we could still achieve these, in different ways:

- » We are continuing to employ young people with connection to the estates in Peer Leader roles
- » We provide individual support, referrals and pathways for young people and their families
- » We create opportunities for young people and support them to access opportunities beyond the estates, and promote chances to become involved within their community
- » We promote young people's work and achievements to the wider community, including via our social media and other platforms
- » We lead and engage in advocacy to elevate the voices of young people from the estates.

The partnership formed with Yarra Youth Services provided an opportunity for youth workers to be recognised. These workers can share information with young people to support service navigation. **The DRUM** recognises and appreciated the Yarra Youth Services ongoing support and commitment in a shared working relationship meeting the needs of young people.

## Co-design

A big part of our programs is the co-design process our Leadership Committee run twice a year (each semester). It is a leadership program where young people are chosen from those who apply. They attend four meetings where the content discusses how to be leaders, why they want to be leaders, and how to lead on a program. At the end of the term, they practice their leadership skills by planning and leading their own activity during the program. We adopted many methodologies to obtain feedback and gain a better understanding of what young people want, which included:

- » regular feedback
- » leadership committees
- » satisfaction surveys

We ensured there were opportunities for young people to not only extend on knowledge they were interested in but also provided incentives for young people to play key roles at events, such as a gift card to those who provided regular feedback or for young people who played key roles at events. **The DRUM** values what young people have to say and will use all information to drive the outcome of programs.

## Collingwood Youth Drop-In

Collingwood Youth Drop-In is a regular drop-in program. This program offers an opportunity for young people to engage in social connections through playing basketball, pool, video games highlight the youth space as a safe space where they can feel ownership. The aim of this program is to provide a safe space for young people to connect and to minimize unsafe or unhealthy risk taking behaviours. It provides an opportunity for staff to role model positive help seeking behaviours, social skills, communication skills. The program provides a safe space to learn new skills with support, such as cooking and engaging in new opportunities not normally accessible to young people. A highlight of the drop-in service was having young people develop new friendships with people who attend the same school. Cooking new foods and exploring different activities in a safe youth space.

The attendance in the Collingwood Drop-In program continued to increase each week. We have seen a steady increase of engagement, predominately boys who also attend the collingwood drop in. At times we will support interpersonal relationships and support emotional management which is expected with the larger group numbers.

## Monday Collingwood Youth Drop-In

The Monday Collingwood Youth Drop-In is a new program that was identified by some of the older young people as a need and interest. This is a fortnightly program for young people aged between 8-18 and creates an opportunity for the older young people to form new relationships to service supports in areas they identify a need. Currently the program is operating as a fortnightly program with the hope to increase to Monday weekly.

## Richmond Mix

As the Richmond Mix program is located in a Department of Housing facility, restrictions were placed limiting program activity both indoors and outdoors. Working with the Yarra Youth Services we were able to combine Richmond Mix with their Tuesday Program to utilise the Richmond Youth Hub. As the young people became accustomed to being in a different program environment, we found the energy of the activities became more chaotic. This was due to the broad age range of young people and was managed by creating targeted and structured activities for the younger population, such as Jenga and Cat taco, games activities, sports, and t-shirt design, to name a few. The Richmond Mix program has seen an increase in regular attendance increasing to 20-25 YP each week, with consistent new registrations.

With the COVID reset we have experienced not only challenges with getting young people to re-engage but also now the increased numbers of young people attending continue to grow and with this comes a new set of challenges. This has been supported by ongoing relationships with the City of Yarra, volunteers, student placements and external services in the community.

## Shout Outs:

- » Yarra Youth Services
- » LUSH Australia
- » Helping Hoops
- » Chala (LetsGetIt Fitness)
- » Raffael (JUDAH Designs)
- » Challenge Laser Skirmish
- » Collingwood Neighbourhood House
- » Nourishing Neighbours
- » Second Try Program
- » Period Project

Where possible the Richmond Mix program continued to provide outdoor activities such as sports and outdoor games such as dodge ball and skateboarding at the Riverslide Skate Park. This continued to keep young people connected within the community and offer opportunities to engage in active play.

## Shout outs to:

Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House (BANH) for donating office space

FReeZA for funding programs that keep young people engaged

## Richmond Girls Club

Richmond Girls Club (RGC) is a safe space for young women in Richmond between the ages of 8 and 18 to come together for fun activities. Each session, we do a fun activity or project chosen by the group. RGC has experienced a slight drop-off in numbers on return of the program and it has been noted it is possible some participants have become an age where they would rather not attend if the other participants are younger. On average the RGC has seen an average of 10 participants per session. RGC has been a safe place for young girls to build supportive relationships with their peers, with older young women and with female staff. RGC is always guided by the needs and wants of young people and as such, we have been organising activities such as cooking, baking, games, crafts: plushy making, jewellery making, pottery etc.

A highlight of the RGC was when the young people worked towards creating artwork for the first RGC exhibition at local gallery "Seventh Gallery". In collaboration with YYS and mixed media Artist Sol Fernandez, staff facilitated the sessions and guided the young people in their art making journey. The process included promotion, poster making and installation. On installation day the young people created a mural at the gallery and painted some boards which spelled out RGC. The outcome was a 'mini opening' at the gallery whereby family, friends and community members were invited to view the art that the young people created which included air dry clay, digital art, the mural and a zine.

RGC is an extremely valuable program as it allows young girls to codesign a program that's just for them, develop self-confidence, explore their creativity and discuss topics they may not otherwise be able to when there are boys around. In the future, provided we get more funding for facilitators, the girls have requested some more sport-based activities, more excursions, and writing and recording songs.

### Shout outs to:

- » Yarra Youth Services Team
- » Seventh Gallery for supporting programs and donating time and resources
- » Sol Fernandez supporting the art project
- » Volunteers and student placements





# RYMS – Real Youth Music Studio

## RYMS is funded by the City of Yarra Engage/Creative Yarra

The young people who attend RYMS have had an amazing year and have gathered some incredible momentum since in-person programs and performance opportunities have been consistent and without lockdowns. Since the beginning of the year there has been an average of 15 attendees of the program and the young people have written over 30 verses completing an average of two songs per session. This year alone there have been 11 performances with an average of 10 young people performing at each. Among others, the young people performed at Melbourne Recital Centre.

Returning to consistent face-to-face programs, there were some behavioural issues, as to be expected, but the re-introduction of clear expectations of both participants and staff in to the space (which are reiterated weekly) as well as the All Star system (volunteers and staff pick a couple 'All Stars of the day' to reward good behaviour) have seen a marked decrease in major behavioural issues and an increase in good behaviour, creativity and a 'give it a go' attitude in young people. Furthermore, young people took it upon themselves to introduce staff All Star, where they highlight staff and volunteers who have supported them each week.

RYMS has completed at least 26 songs or verses recorded over 6 months, with new recordings and writing each week. During weekly sessions, RYMS facilitates regular communication with young people about programs and upcoming events via social media and liaising with parents, social media posts, liaising with bookers, finalising mixing and mastering young people's songs and young people for performances, and hiring dance facilitators every few weeks to teach dancing and stage presence.

This year, there has been a strong focus on building relationships between RYMS and YYS in order to foster clear pathways from RYMS in to Rising High (YYS studio). Recently, RYMS and YYS have collaborated on three events in order to bring RYMS in to YYS and help the young people associate YYS with music making and familiarise them with the staff and space at YYS before they age out of RYMS. These events included a visit from renowned Chicago DJ and inventor of the genre of 'Footwork', RP BOO, a school holiday program which included beat making, recording, graffiti artwork and DJing,





as well as a showcase included RYMS, Rising High, and DJ Skills participants. These events were all very successful and feedback from the young people was very positive.

As well as meeting RP BOO, young people have been working closely with local rap artist and producer Luigi Chisenga (known as Teether) weekly in the studio and had visits from both Mulalo and Bayang – two local and well-known rappers. Having the opportunity to connect with mentors and role models in the industry, also allows them to learn valuable music and life skills from older young people with similar interests. Additionally, dance teacher Damian Sedd who has been with the young people since RYMS started, has returned to support young people with their stage presence and choreograph dance routines. This last term we have seen a rise in natural leadership coming from RYMS' oldest and the longest running participants, helping younger/newer participants through the process of writing and recording, exemplifying good behaviour and really taking ownership of the program. They are vocalising and interest in production and we have begun conversations with Ableton and The Push about a 'takeover' session where they come in and teach the young people how to use the software.

After coming back to in person programming, many young people were reporting instances of racism at schools and in their community and along with Joshua Tavares from Collingwood neighbourhood house and the help of 3CR studios, we organised a podcasting session where young people were able to get together and share their experiences in order to feel less alone. With the young people's permission, we will

## Shout outs to:

3CR Studios

Joshua Tavares  
from Collingwood  
Neighbourhood House

The push

Ableton

Yarra Youth Services  
studios and team

Luigi Chisenga - performer

Mulalo - performer

Bayang - performer

Damian Sedd - dance  
teacher

Antony Rako - student  
placement

Iftine Omar - student  
Placement

Liquid Architecture on  
bringing Famous Chicago  
DJ RP Boo to Fitzroy

Sirak Keeghan (Sirak Abu) -  
producer, sound engineer

Katherine Hesline -  
volunteer song writer and  
supervisor

Dan Ford (Endless Prowl) -  
volunteer, beat making

Chicago DJ RP Boo

use this podcast to spread awareness to schools and the local community about the racism young people experience daily. Although this podcast was organised voluntarily outside of RYMS hours and funding, it was our engagement with the young people at RYMS and other programs, which led to these initial disclosures of racism.

RYMS has been collaborating with the CFRE - Centre for Family Research and Evaluation to create an evaluation plan to distribute to past and potential funders, giving them a well-rounded story of RYMS through data and interviews with staff, participants, past participants and parents. We are hopeful that this report will be a valuable tool in securing further funding for RYMS.

Recently, RYMS has partnered with media, photography and visual Arts students at RMIT to potentially create some music related media [perhaps music videos or band photos but outcome yet to be confirmed] for the young people. We have also built relationships with students at Collarts who will be volunteering at RYMS in the near future.

Our programs would not be possible with the support from community, **The DRUM** appreciates the support and looks forward to the continued partnership to offer increased supports to young people.



## REAL YOUTH MUSIC STUDIOS (RYMS) SOCIAL MEDIA OVER THE YEAR

### FACEBOOK



This page has **70** engaged users with an average of reaching **1,737** people

Of the fans of this page, **126** identify as male and **49** people identify as female

Fridays are the best day to engage people who follow this page

### INSTAGRAM



Over the year they had **2,665** likes and over **30,000** impressions

They had a high engagement rate of **95** people comments on the posts throughout the year

They did **107** stories which reached **9,361** people

Interesting to note there were **600** followers from Melbourne and **270** followers were from other states

RYMS Instagram @ryms.thedrum and on our YouTube channel [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaEXAwM8qpM2lcsufPe\\_rPg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaEXAwM8qpM2lcsufPe_rPg)

## RYMS RESEARCH EVALUATION

The DRUM Youth Services at Drummond Street Services run a music and youth-development program **Real Life Music Studios (RYMS)** for young people living in two inner-city Melbourne housing estates. As part of Drummond Street Services' [DS] commitment to research and evaluation and ongoing program development, their Centre for Family Research and Evaluation have undertaken an evaluation of the program in collaboration with the RYMS team.

The evaluation has drawn largely on qualitative data collected from program staff and management, RYMS volunteers, past and current participants, and parents. It also utilises participation data and observational data collected by the program team.



The purpose of this evaluation is to begin to tell the story about how RYMS is contributing to the intended outcomes for the young people who participate. It also documents some of the strengths and challenges of program delivery and identifies learning for ongoing program development.

## The aims of the evaluation

Through supported song writing and music production for young people who experience barriers to engagement, RYMS aims to:

- » build confidence, self-expression and other life skills for young people whilst promoting positive peer and mentor relationships
- » support young people to achieve their music and performance goals
- » create youth leaders
- » build pathways into the music industry for young people
- » provide young people with meaningful employment opportunities
- » break down structural barriers in the music industry for young people including racism and ageism
- » create visibility and diversity in music

The evaluation involved a mixed method approach to data collection, based on both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

The qualitative interviews were facilitated by CFRE researchers and the RYMS team. CFRE undertook the interviews with the program volunteers, RYMS program team and Drummond Street management. The RYMS program staff utilised their community-based relationships to engage and undertake the interviews with parents and a past participant of the program. Informed consent was discussed and gained from all participants prior to their participation in the evaluation.

To centralise the voice of the young people who participate in the program, the RYMS coordinator and CFRE team worked together to develop a data collection process that was engaging and integrated into the RYMS program. Utilising the research questions and the RYMS song-writing process, a workshop was developed to support the young people to write song and record verses about their experiences of RYMS.

The full analysis of the evaluation data is currently being completed. A full report will be provided upon completion.



## KEY QUOTES INCLUDE:

### RYMS past participant:

"Yeah, it's also taught me resilience and to not give up and to just keep pushing. Especially when life is frustrating sometimes and you didn't get what you want, but you just push through it."

### Volunteers:

"They're listening to the final product and being really happy and proud of themselves and then other young people are listening and cheering them and making them feel awesome."

### RYMS and Drummond Street staff:

"And then progressively over the weeks we see them go from saying that [I can't do it], to then building up the confidence to record something, with someone in the room. Then building up the confidence to share with their peers. To building up the confidence to perform it. And every step along the way, there's like an internal battle with themselves, if they should put themselves out there like that, or if they should try. But it's really cool to see that they push through that, and they end up being really proud of themselves at the end of it."





# The DRUM

## [program stats and facts]

### Real Music Youth Studios (RYMS)

#### 8–13 age group:

a firm group of **35**, with an average of **14** per week.

#### attendance:

a consistent average of **14** attending per week.

### Richmond Mix

#### 8–15 age group:

a firm group of **37**, with an average of **23** per week.

[increased from **17** per week at the beginning of the contract year]

#### cultural backgrounds:

Somali, Sudanese, Vietnamese, Thai, Australian

#### gender identification:

**50/50** identifying as male/female

### Collingwood Drop-in

#### attendance:

averaging **8–15** young people per session from with an average attendance of **28** per week, which is an increase from **25** attendances at the beginning of the contract year.

#### cultural backgrounds:

Sudanese, Australian, Aboriginal, Vietnamese, Kenyan, Egyptian, Chinese, Somali

Total number of young people who attended programs over the year

**1583**

Total number of young people registered for programs for the year

**168**

## Richmond Girls Club

8–18 age group:

**27** attendees with an average of **15** each fortnight.

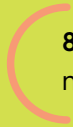
Since the beginning of the contract year the RGC attendances have increased from an average of 2 to an average of 16 weekly attendances.



## Monday Drop-In

8–18 age group:

new program operating fortnightly



Number of  
programs  
run

**62**

Not including  
holiday  
programs which  
the DRUM  
supports Yarra  
Youth Service to  
facilitate



## Total number of young people to referred to external services

- » **25** families to nourishing neighbours
- » **5** referrals to counselling services
- » **1** housing supports
- » **1** YSAS
- » **10** earphones
- » provided gym equipment [yoga matts, hand weights, basket balls and stretch bands]
- » **6** school mediations
- » **1** supports for child safety service
- » **7** family supports, referral pathways including counselling with DS, YSAS
- » Referrals for Laptops **6**
- » **10** IPAD supports with 21 supported to get on a wait list
- » Mother's Day supports **85** including self-care products [not included in individual supports]
- » **10** Housing support, advocacy letters
- » **1** cleaning supports
- » **1** Parenting supports including furniture, baby goods [**\$400** worth of baby items]

## Number of COVID supports offered to young people and families

- » Provided over **400** RATs
- » Provided **10** \$100 food vouchers [Woolworths and Aldi]
- » **1200** care packs [face masks, RATs, stress balls, information re
- » Regular information on where to get vaccinated and where to locate additional financial supports are
- » Regular check in calls to families **60**
- » **5** Deliveries to the home including baby formula and food, bottles

## Top five reasons for seeking supports

- » Mental Health
- » Financial
- » Family issues
- » School Issues
- » Behavioural challenges

### Special events we ran

- » Leadership groups get togethers
- » Regular school holiday programs
- » Play station competitions
- » Youth consultations and co-design sessions
- » Harmony Day
- » Block parties
- » Movie nights
- » PlayStation competitions
- » RYMS show cases and presentations
- » Access to music Studio Session
- » Sports events
- » Cooking programs
- » T-shirt design
- » Safety discussions with BANH and the Neighbourhood Justice Centre
- » Performances at Melbourne Recital Centre, Local Swerve
- » Moon lantern Festival
- » Art Exhibition at Seventh Gallery
- » **16** weekly RYMS sessions were delivered
- » **1** school holiday program was implemented
- » **7** performance opportunities were provided to young people, including **2** end-of-term showcases **250** audience participants in total
- » **26** young people participated in performances
- » **26** songs were written by young people
- » **5** dances were choreographed by young people
- » Harmony day [**80**]
- » Moon festival [**100**]

### Referral pathways

- » Front Yard
- » Launch
- » YSAS
- » Drummond Street, Family services
- » The DRUM individual supports
- » Berry street counselling
- » Child Safety services, social workers
- » Alfred CAHMS
- » Royal Women's hospital maternity social workers
- » Nourishing neighbours
- » The associations Child with disabilities
- » NDIS
- » Centrelink
- » Foundation house

### Program locations

- Collingwood • Richmond • Collingwood Yards

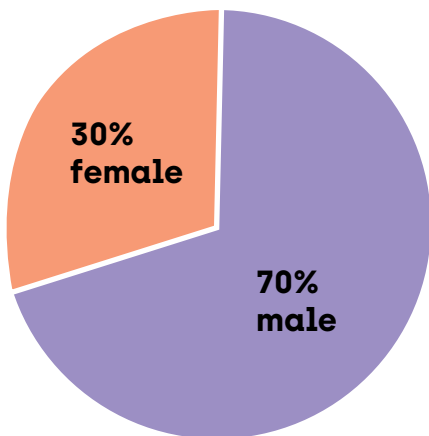
As regulations increased, we began to re-establish connections with young people and community, increasing our program numbers at every program. We initially had some unregistered clients over the 12 months who were young people who typically came along with their friends who were regulars of **The DRUM** programs. This mostly led to increased registrations however occasionally, a young person may only attend a group with their friend on the one instance then not return.

Total number of young people receiving individual supports

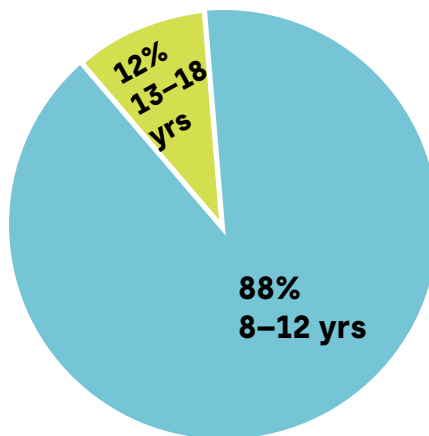
**1859**

including the COVID supports provided to families

## Gender of young people

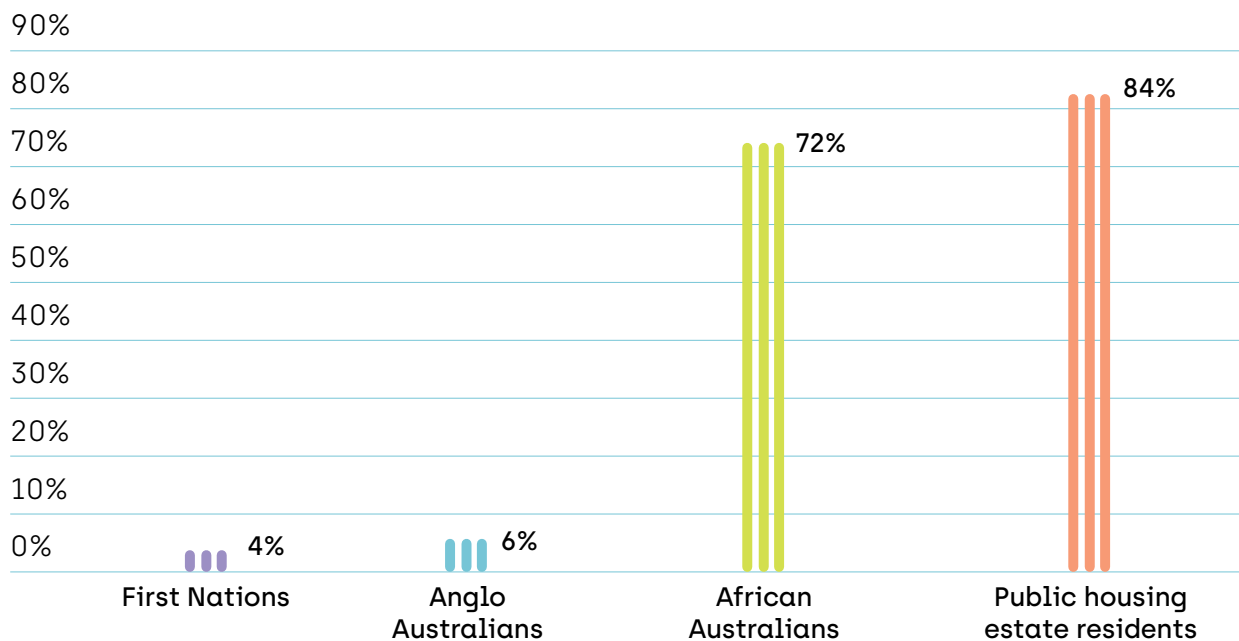


## Age of young people



## Targeted cohort

(many fit into more than one group, intersectionally)



# The DRUM [our team]

**The DRUM** delivers programs for young people and communities connected to Collingwood, and Richmond public housing estates. We also deliver individual-based and family supports.

## MEET OUR TEAM

### Marie Iafeta

**Youth Service Manager** [she/her pronouns]

Marie utilises her experience co-developing, delivering, and coordinating innovative social change activities and campaigns to support and enable the work of the youth, community and the DRUM team. Drawing from her passion for working alongside young people deftly navigating structural barriers, and from theoretical knowledge from as a registered Social Worker, she remains committed to identifying and responding to these systemic challenges. Young people continue to inspire and teach her.

### Akolda Bil

**Peer Leader** [he/him pronouns]

Akolda is an artist, youth worker and community leader of South Sudanese background. Akolda spent his early childhood living in Egypt before settling in Newcastle, NSW in 2003, later relocating to Fitzroy in Naarm/Melbourne in 2011. Akolda recently finished his Diploma in Community Services and is driven by a want to work side-by-side and empower young people. He wants to be a positive male role model for his community, something he lacked when he was growing up. For Akolda, music, art and connecting with community has been important for his personal development and this motivated him to pursue a career in youth work.



## Faly

**Peer Leader** (he/him pronouns)

Faly is our Peer Leader who works on our Collingwood Drop-In and Richmond Mix programs. He is passionate about uplifting young people and building community. He recently graduated with a bachelor's degree in International Development as he has plans to go home to Madagascar to run locally based projects, however his focus is currently dedicated towards empowering young people in Naarm. In his spare time, he enjoys listening to music, playing sport and socialising with friends and family.

## Mukhtar Mohamed-Saeed

**Senior Youth Development Practitioner** (he/him pronouns)

Mukhtar is very enthusiastic about giving back to his community (City of Yarra), through aiming to promote the wellbeing of all people within our society.

Mukhtar aims to assist families within our society to value and accept their culture as he believes this is a special part of everyone. Mukhtar has worked for Drummond Street services for a number of years, assisting young families to build and strengthen their relationships through highlighting the importance of building family security and communication with themselves and their children at an early age. Mukhtar has volunteered and participated in work at CoHealth working with youth in North Melbourne, organising leisure events providing them with opportunities at areas of interest for them. In Mukhtar's spare time, he enjoys playing table tennis, cooking, and reading books with his kids.

## Ria

**Youth Development Practitioner** (she/they pronouns)

Ria has been working alongside young people since she was young. She started working as a youth facilitator when she was 17 and learned a lot about what it means to listen to and work with young people of all identities. She has prioritised supporting young POC and has worked with development agencies based in India to promote sexual health and autonomy. They now co-run a Naarm- based non-profit that focusses on engaging young people in social change through local arts and music, and also loves to DJ at events in Naarm. She brings her passion for community engagement, creativity and youth empowerment to her role as Youth Development Practitioner on **the DRUM's** Drop-In programs in Collingwood and Richmond.

## Christobel

**Youth Development Practitioner** [she/her pronouns]

Christobel is the Youth Development Practitioner for the DRUM Yarra Team – she supports our Richmond Girls Club program and is the founder and lead worker on RYMS [Real Youth Music Studios]. She also works with our friends FLN Youth [Fitzroy Learning Network Youth] on their Youth Sewing Program. She is a DIY producer and vocalist and has been supporting young people to make music since 2017. Christobel also has a bachelor's degree in psychology and is super interested in how music and creative practices benefits wellbeing.

## Leyla Pacheco

**Youth Development Practitioner** [she/her pronouns]

Leyla grew up in public housing herself which drives her to provide great and memorable experiences for young people. Completing a Bachelor of youthwork, Leyla is largely driven by trauma-informed frameworks and is passionate about mental health, Advocacy and creating culturally safe programs. Leyla has previously been involved in a variety of other youth services, where she has learnt an array of transferable skills, she brings to her role today. Leyla is currently working as an Interim youth development practitioner in the COY. Leyla loves to create street art and play guitar, and is a passionate and charismatic individual who has had a wealth of experiences in her personal and professional life.

## We would also like to thank our former team members for their hard work and commitment.

We thank them for their hard work in building connections in community, strengthening networks with other organisations and helping build a strong future for the DRUM and its participants in challenging times.

We did have some turnover of staff, like many non-profit organisations. Many people chose to change their work lives while adapting to COVID-19.

**Ayub Abdi-Barre**

**Shukura Chapman**

## Thanks to our wonderful students:

**Antony Rako**

**Amy**

**Iftine Omar**

**Christine Allawu**

**Nyea Pritchard**

**Etsub Tadesse**

## SUPPORTING PARTNERSHIPS, DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

As a service of Drummond Street services, **The DRUM Youth Services** has partnered with multiple services to ensure that young people within the community have an opportunity to access a seamless pathway into accessing supports. This has not only supported referral pathways into **The DRUM Youth Services** but also into external services through the support of navigated services with not only young people but families also.

The support of such programs means we are able to provide a youth service as part of a greater service meeting young people at all ages and staged creating a more flowing pathway into the next stage of life with familiar people.

Some of the services we have partnered with include:

### LiveWires

The after-school program for primary school aged children on Collingwood Housing Estate. This program has been supporting and engaging the children of this community for 15 years. Many of the first participants have grown up and gone onto peer and leadership positions in community organisations and now want to give back. LIVE WIRES is credited with supporting children and encouraging school engagement, giving them a break from family and promoting social skills. In the past, LIVE WIRES ran four nights per week, and it continues to be popular with a waitlist of families wanting their children to attend. At present, it runs 3–6pm Wednesdays and Thursdays. There are also activities during the school holidays.

LiveWires is a place-based, unique community development program. It seeks to build the resilience of children, teach life skills and respectful relationships, promote creativity and enhance the healthy development of the Collingwood Estate's children. The program also provides children with opportunities to learn.

### Ready Steady Family

Our Drummond Street Family Services program has 24 experienced and qualified professionals from a range of cultural backgrounds providing individual and family counselling. These teams have family therapists, psychologists and mental health professionals who are able to come to the Yarra sites, work with parents and others involved with the family and help make long term changes where mental health, family violence, financial issues and other problems are impacting. Drummond Street provides counselling services at no cost to all young people and families who attend our youth services programs in Yarra.

Other partnerships included:

### **Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House:**

BANH Inc. is a community organisation which operates Neighbourhood Houses on the Collingwood and North Richmond Public Housing Estates. The houses are a friendly meeting place for the local community and offer regular activities like community choirs and lunches. BANH Inc. runs special events throughout the year and works with local residents to support them to produce their own events – everything from roller discos to political theatre. BANH Inc. also partners with locally based community organisations such as Carringbush Adult Education and Concern Australia to offer programs including English classes and after-school programs held at the houses. This team are an ever present and valued support to our youth services, and we continue to partner with them on new funding opportunities to further support the estate communities.

### **Yarra Youth Services:**

- » We work closely with Yarra Youth Services during school holidays as they lead the programming and we support with staff, engagement and some resources
- » We also work in tandem with the Richmond Youth Hub on Tuesdays, as we run the younger years drop in while the 14+ drop in is run at the same time.

### **Grill'd Restaurant donations jar**

- » We were able to take part in some community fundraising by getting our young people involved in the Grill'd community fundraising initiatives.

### **The Period Project:**

- » They donated over 100 handbags with gift items from the Body Shop and other places as Mother's Day gifts
- » They have also donated toiletries for us to stock our bathrooms at the youth centre

### **Every Little Bit Helps**

- » Donated 10 boxes worth of makeup, dental care, hair products, socks, shampoo/conditioner, soap and other toiletries for us to use as material support and to stock our bathrooms.



### Dodgeball with John:

- » John is a member of the Richmond community and has run really fun and well-received dodgeball sessions in both Richmond and Collingwood.
- » Raffael from Judah Tribe

### Collingwood Drop In:

- » More staff to support the increased attendance
- » Continuing the new program 'Chillin Club'

### RYMS: Yarra Youth Services:

- » Collaborating with School Holiday Program and Showcase, staff from YYS visited one week to introduce themselves to young people. YYS and Liquid architecture brought in famous Chicago DJ RP Boo and we collaborated with them so the YP could meet him.
- » **The Push** where we are located visit RYMS so the YP can familiarise themselves with them
- » Performance opportunities given to YP through BAHN Inc, YYS and Collingwood Neighbourhood house.
- » Local Grill'd jar competition winner

### Richmond Mix:

- » N/A

### Seventh Gallery [Richmond]:

- » hosted participant art exhibition

## OUR PARTNERS

Riverslide, Signal Arts, Hotham Mission, the Venny, Skate Victoria, YMCA

## OUR CHAMPIONS

Deka [interviewing politicians], Sabrina [live from lockdown], Khadija [hosting panel discussions]

## OUR BELIEVERS AND FEARLESS CHAMPIONS

Karen Field and Helen Rimington, Drummond Street

Rupert North and Sandra Tay, City of Yarra

Paula Butcher, YMCA



## OUR DONORS

Two Birds

Bunnings

Reclink

Helping Hoops

Ikea

Kensington

Neighbourhood House

Lush Northland, Lush  
Melbourne Central and  
Lush Southland

Nike

The Little Bookroom

Aesop

Nova Cinemas

Culture kings

Grill'd

Sony

Typo

## OUR FUNDERS

City of Yarra

Engage funding from Department of  
Premier and Cabinet

FReeZA funding from Department of  
Premier and Cabinet



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Australian Muslim Social Services Agency

Baker Boy

Queerspace Youth

Collingwood Neighbourhood house [BANH]

Capital City Local Learning and Employment Network

Yarra Libraries

Recreation and Leisure Services Youth Network

Richmond Youth Hub

CoHealth

Collarts

Department of Human Services Flemington

Kensington Legal Centre

Front Yard

Good Cycles

Helping Hoops

High Rising Hip Hop

Inner Melbourne Community Legal

Inner West Children and Youth Network [formerly Kensington Children and Youth Committee]

Islamic Youth

Jesuit Social Services

Koorie Heritage Trust

Minus18

RiS'N

School Focused Youth Services SIGNAL

Spectrum Intersections

St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre St Joseph's Primary School

Strong brother, strong sister youth org Study Melbourne

The Push

The Wellington

Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Association

The Village

Visionary Images

Youthlaw

YMCA Kensington YSAS

Zoe Belle Gender Collective

Joshua Tavares

Koula Fotinos

Universal Studios

## CONNECT WITH US

We are evolving and working with how organisations and clients can contact us. The great thing about working with young people is they are extremely skilled and knowledgeable about connecting.

Please see our websites and social media for ways you can find us and some of the programs we run as well!

### Social media

#### The DRUM

<https://thedrum.ds.org.au/>

<https://www.facebook.com/thedrumyouthservices/>

<https://www.instagram.com/thedrummelb/>

#### in}visible for young QTPoC

<https://www.facebook.com/invisiblethedrum/>

<https://www.instagram.com/invisible.thedrum/>

#### Queerspace youth

<https://www.facebook.com/queerspaceyouth/>

<https://www.instagram.com/queerspaceyouth/>



## Only in the Fam Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/onlythefam.thedrum/>

## City of Yarra

<https://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au/services/young-people>

## VoiceFest

<https://www.facebook.com/VOICEFESTdifferenceisstrength/>

<https://www.instagram.com/voicefest.thedrum/>





Proudly funded by the City of Yarra

