



South Coast Youth Project

2004

Youth Activity Scan Report on Findings

Nov 2004



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The Southern Gold Coast Youth Project Crew

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Acknowledgements

The South Coast Youth Project was an initiative of Elanora State High Senior Students through the RACQ Future Leaders Project. The members of the South Coast Youth Project would like to thank all those who have been involved in completing the survey and those who assisted with the development of the project. Special thanks to Lisa Francisco from the Community and Resource Development Project through the Youth at Risk Alliance, Angela Driscoll from the Management of Public Intoxication and Expressive Ground and Grant Cleland, Youth Planning Officer for the Gold Coast City Council.

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INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Elanora High School's Southern Gold Coast Youth Project evolved from a desire to improve the quality of weekend entertainment, transport and appropriate social activities for young people on the Southern end of the Gold Coast.

The issue of improving weekend entertainment, transport and appropriate social activities for young people was chosen primarily due to its relevant nature and the severity of the impacts on the local community. By collaborative consultation with the Gold Coast City Council and youth agencies it was determined that this issue was also a concern for local government the community and the police. It was felt that a comprehensive survey of local young people would be helpful in determining practical outcomes and recommendations. It is hoped that a reduction in juvenile crime and public mischief might occur if appropriate entertainment venues and activities were offered to young people on the Southern End of the Coast.

Students involved in the Southern Gold Coast Youth Project determined that appropriate social activities were underprovided in this region and this has been compounded by an inefficient and irregular transport system. This issue has had numerous negative social impacts including alcohol abuse and public intoxication. These impacts continue to have far reaching effects on the Southern Gold Coast. Predominately a family oriented tourist destination, local businesses and residents fear that employment will begin to suffer if these instances continue to be a focus of the local media.

Students involved in the Southern Gold Coast Youth Project have worked collaboratively with the Gold Coast City Council, Youth at Risk Alliance, and Management of Public Intoxication Project to determine the activities, which already exist on the Southern End of the Coast and will highlight the deficiencies to local, state and commonwealth representatives and decision makers. Students conducted thorough research into the issue and have put forward a solution to reduce the number of young people becoming involved in anti-social behaviour.

Students involved in the Southern Coast Youth Project took charge of surveying approximately one thousand students from both primary and high schools across the southern coast. A number of young people who are not currently studying at schools were also surveyed. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix A.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The survey research, design and distribution, was assisted by representatives from the Gold Coast City Council, Elanora State High School, Youth At Risk Alliance and occurred during the early months of 2004. Sampling a number of people on the Southern Coast, aged between 12 and 18, this survey collected responses that were analysed in order to produce the following report.

The key findings from the Elanora State High School Southern Gold Coast Youth Project Survey were:

- Most popular form of entertainment requested by young people was live music and movie viewings.
- Popular venues requested by young people at which to hold activities were local beaches.
- Young people have requested that movie viewings be made available in the Elanora-Palm Beach area.
- Transport was a significant barrier that prevented young people from attending organised events.
- The majority of young people surveyed spent more than \$15 per week on entertainment and activities.
- 86% of respondents were interested in activities and events to be held during school holidays.
- Results steer towards suggestions relating to 'entertainment' type needs as opposed to 'activity' type needs.



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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

During 2004, a group of Gold Coast students identified the need to investigate the needs and attitudes of young people regarding availability of recreational activities for young people. In order to understand and appreciate the issues surrounding possible activities and venues for young people, a team of youth representatives was formed from the Senior Leaders of Elanora State High School to develop and co-ordinate the following project with assistance from the Gold Coast City Council and the Community and Resource Development Project through the Youth at Risk Alliance.

a. Survey Design.

The Youth Representative group agreed that the most effective means of gathering the necessary information was to create a survey for young people throughout the Gold Coast that posed questions aimed at retrieving information in relation to possible activities for teenagers. The carefully written survey categorized respondents into age groups and gender to give better insight into popular opinion based on identity.

Once the Youth Representatives had drafted the survey, and given careful consideration to the focus questions, discussion led to the distribution and method of data collection. Open-ended questions were utilized to give room for personal opinion.

b. Survey Distribution, Data Collection & Analysis.

The Gold Coast Youth Representatives concluded through discussion that peer-to-peer interviewing would be the most effective way of conducting the survey given the nature of the questions. The Youth Representatives agreed that peer-to-peer interaction would throw into sharp effect the reality of a vested interest in the outcome of the information gathered in the survey between the people that were conducting the survey, and the respondents.

Once the survey of young people throughout the study area was complete, the information was entered into a database so that common needs, and opinions of different age groups could be identified. The data captured allowed for comparison between age, gender and location of young people regarding close-ended questions in the survey.

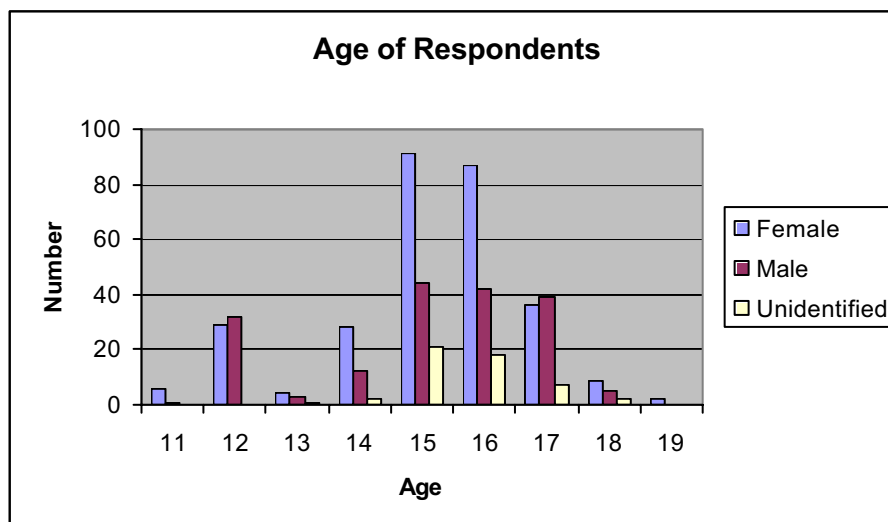
All information gathered by the survey was analyzed, and the trends identified have been published in this report. Thanks to the nature of data captured, should any queries arise surrounding information compiled by this survey, retrieval of the data can be done with relative ease.

c. Respondent sample

The amount of respondents compared to the overall population of the Gold Coast is of sufficient amount to be able to draw broad conclusion and identify popular trends in youth opinion. Through efforts of the Youth Representatives, conductors of the surveys were able to obtain responses from young people in varied social situations. Surveys were received from in-school teenagers, out of school young people, employed young people, unemployed young people as well as any other marginalized groups between the ages of 15-19. This diversity in respondents allowed for in-depth coverage of all young people residing on the Southern Gold Coast.

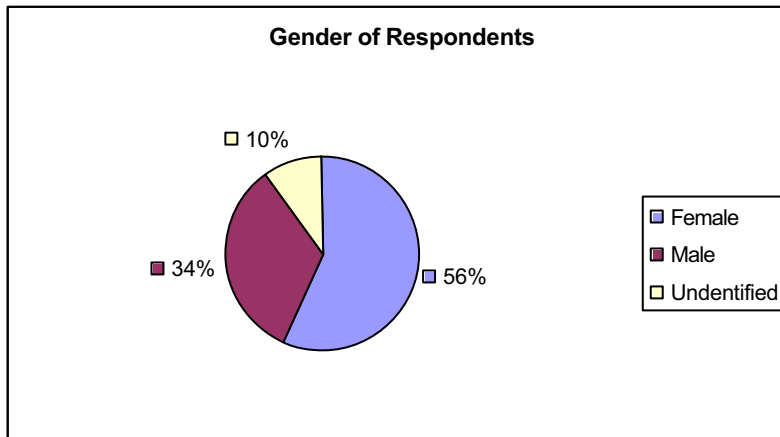
d. Age Distribution

The total sample composition in term of age for both male and female participants is presented in the chart below.



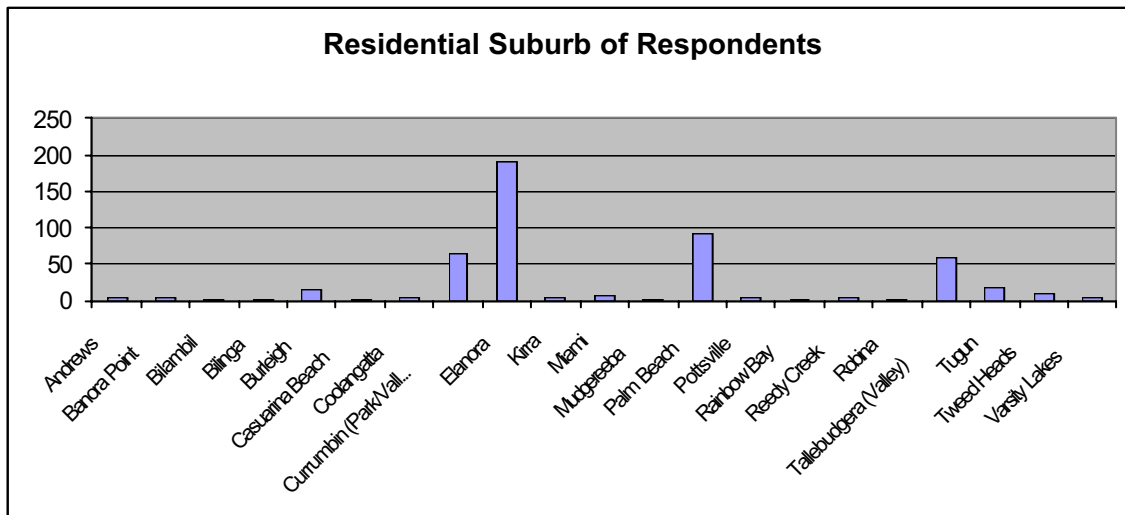
e. Gender Balance

To effectively determine traits in opinion and needs regarding teenage recreational activities, or lack there of, Youth Representatives recognized the need for respondents to specify their gender. The gender balance of the total survey is presented in the below graph.



f. Suburb Distribution

The residing suburb of the respondent is paramount in determining causes for participation rates and accessibility for recreational activities. This survey covered the area from South Tweed to Burleigh. The following graph documents the amount of respondents from each suburb.

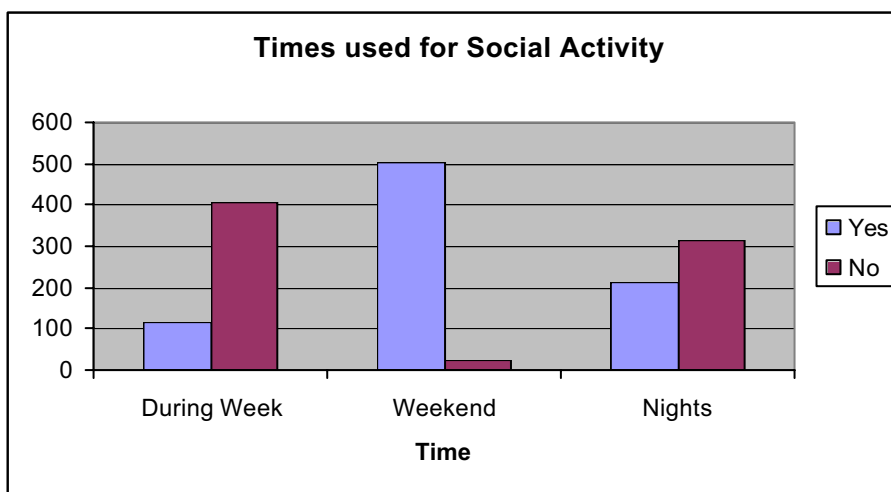


DETAILED FINDINGS (SURVEY DATA)

Most questions have been included to provide a clear indication of the survey results. Below is a snapshot of key findings from identified questions.

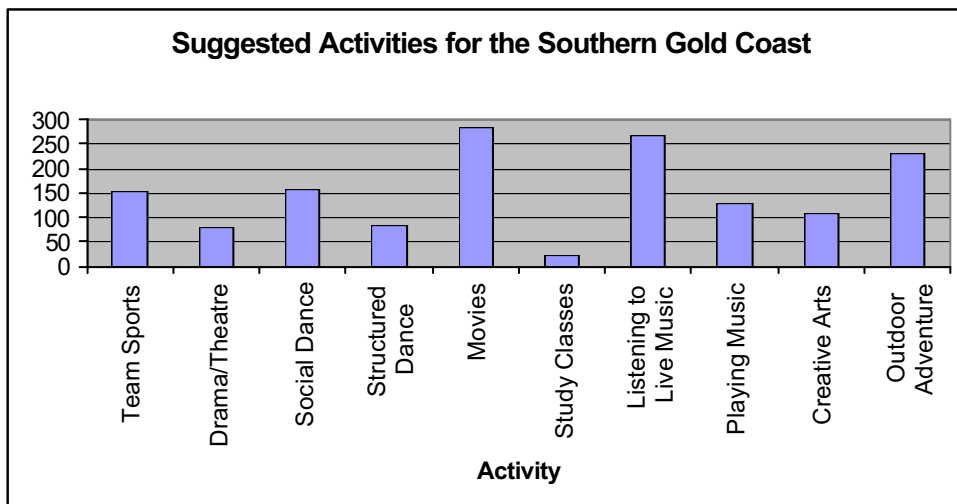
Question 2: When is your Leisure or Social Time?

This question asked respondents to indicate when during the week did they engage in social activities. The graph below clearly indicates that weekends are the most popular time of the week for young people's social time. Weekends included Friday and Saturday evenings while Nights indicated any particular night throughout the week.



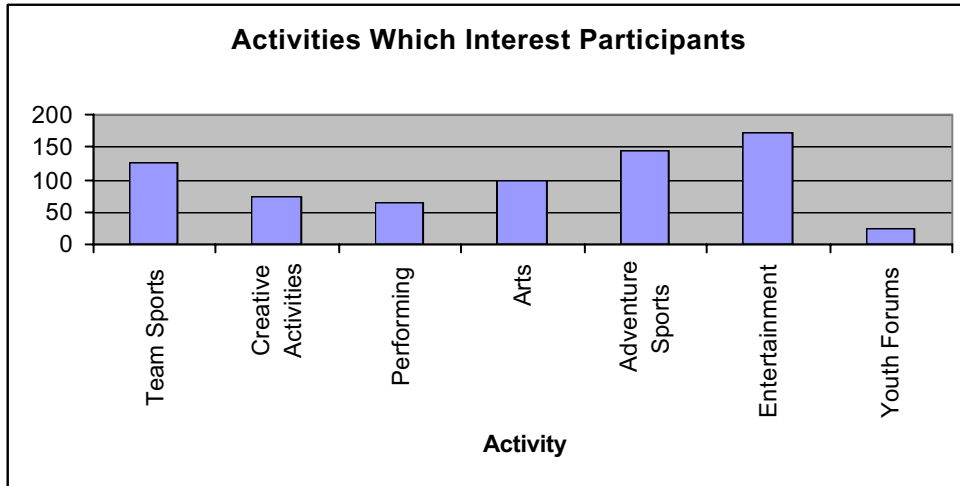
Question 3: What sorts of things would you like to see more of on the Southern Gold Coast?

The purpose of the project was to get an indication of what young people do and what they think there should be more of. The graph below gives an indication of activities young people feel there should be more of in the southern Gold Coast area. Access to movie entertainment and opportunities to listen to music as well as access to outdoor adventure activities rated highly amongst the results.



Question 4: Are there activities you are interested in but currently do not participate in?

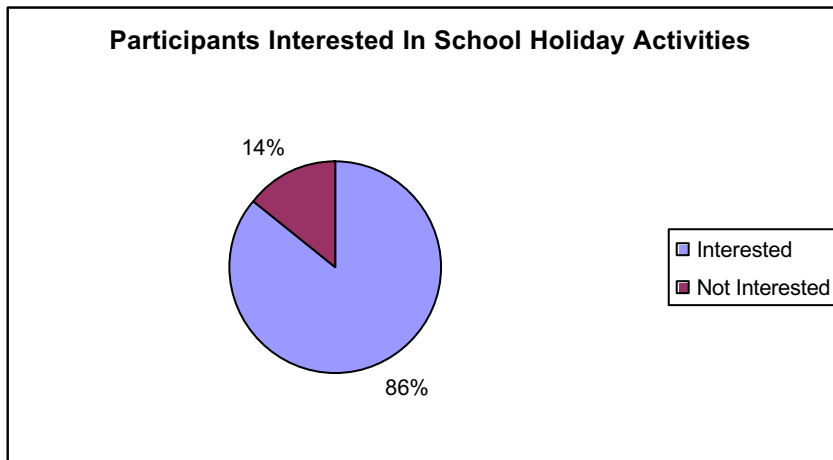
The purpose of this question was to identify interest areas for young people. From the results of the survey, young people have indicated that entertainment type activities are the most popular interest area for young people on the southern Gold Coast.



Question 5: Would a variety of activities / events made available during the school holidays be a good idea?

Respondents were asked this question to register the level of interest from young people in relation to offering potential activities and events during school holidays.

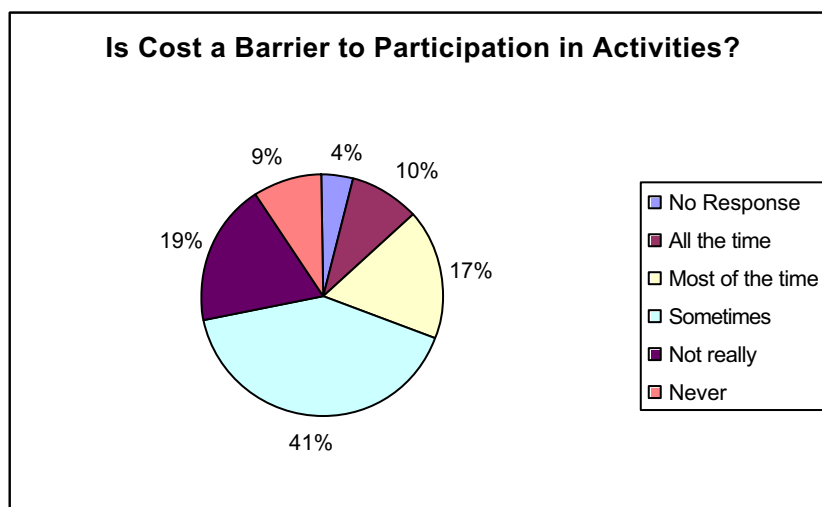
The graph below shows that young people would be very interested in activities and events being available and scheduled during school holidays.



Question 7: Is cost a barrier for you to participate in activities / events?

It was important to identify any barriers for young people to participate in activities or events. The question in relation to costs impacts on most activities for young people and it was hoped that results would give an indication of how costs might impact on young people's participation in activities.

The graph below indicates the variation of responses. It shows that for 41% of respondents, costs only impact on participation only some of the time for young people. 19% of respondents indicated that cost was not really a barrier to participation and yet 17% indicated that cost was a barrier most of the time.



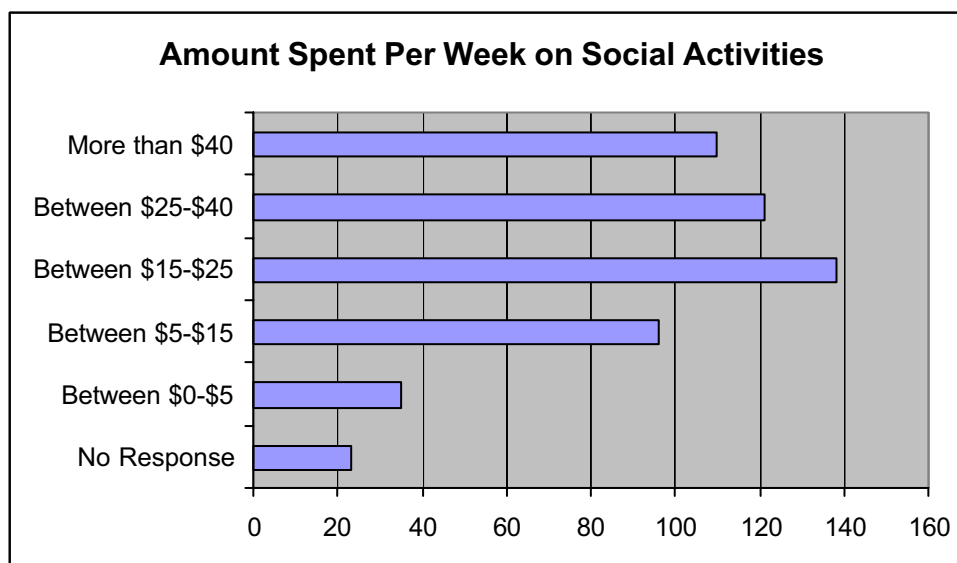
Question 8: Can you think of any other barriers to participation you can add?

25% of young people provided responses to this question. Of the 25%, 77% listed transport as a barrier to participation, with only 8% listing location and work as possible barriers with only 7% listing lack of time as a barrier.

Question 9: Per Week - How much do you think you spend on social activities / events / entertainment at the moment?

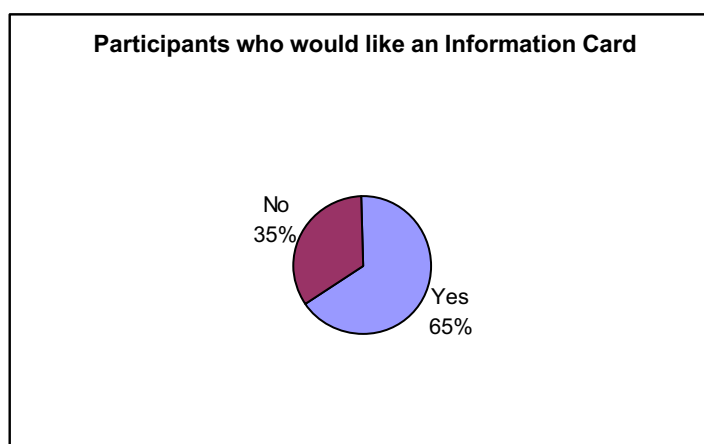
It was important to get an idea of what young people think they spend on their social time. The purpose of the question was to get an indication of affordability and its impact on young people in the southern Gold Coast area.

From the graph below, respondents indicated that the majority of young people would spend in excess of \$15 per week on their social activities.



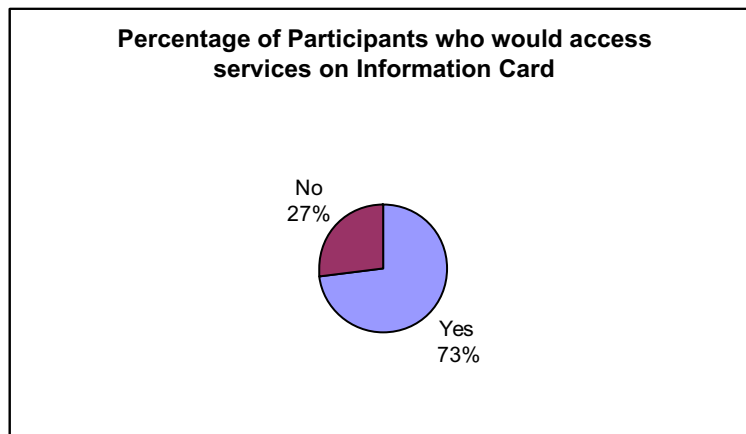
Question 10: If there was a booklet or information card available containing a variety of Structured and Unstructured activities/events that you could do, would you be interested in obtaining a booklet / information card?

Again this question was asked to measure interest levels regarding potential activity ideas / strategies. When asked this question, the majority of respondents indicated that they would be interested in this concept.



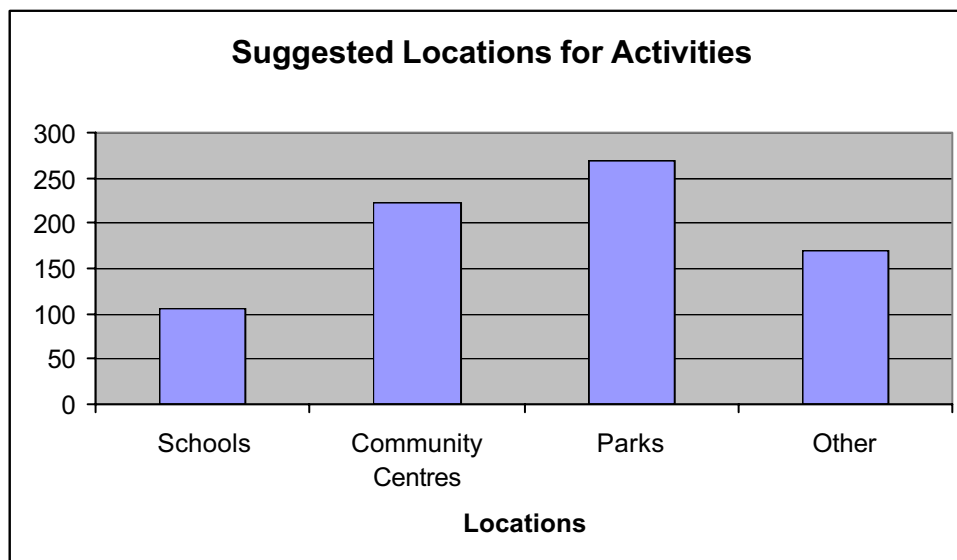
Question 11: Would you access this service during school holidays if it was available to young people?

The purpose of this question was to extend young people's interest levels to potential participation and access levels. The graph below shows that 73% of the respondents would access activities if they were available during school holidays.



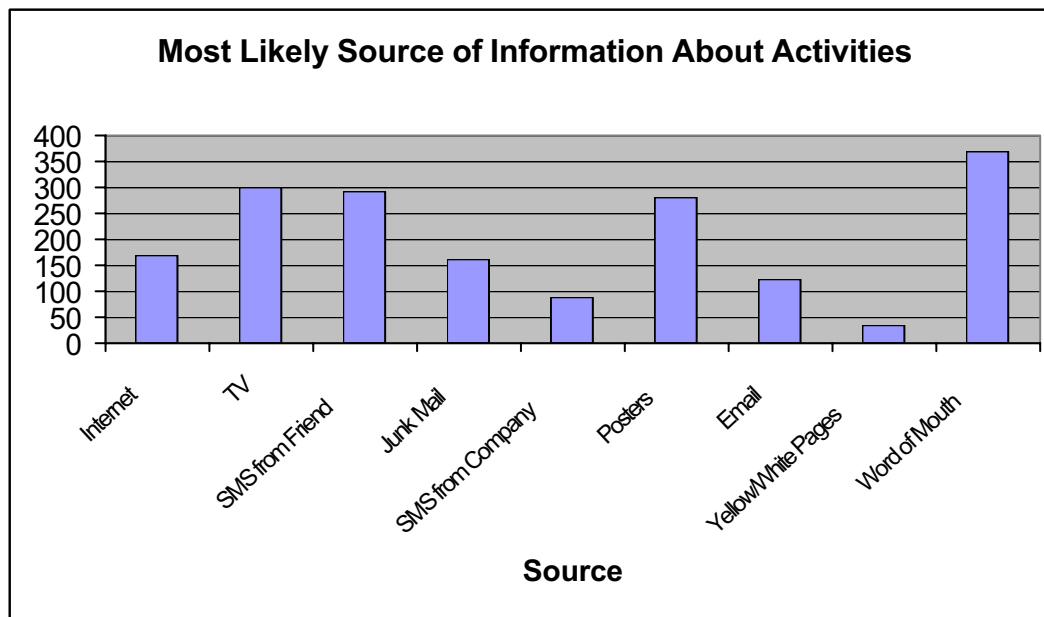
Question 12: What are good location / venues for these sorts of activities?

Young people were asked for their suggestions for potential activity / event locations. The graph below provides a breakdown of most popular responses. Of the 32% who indicated 'Other' locations, 36% specified the beach as a good location for activities.



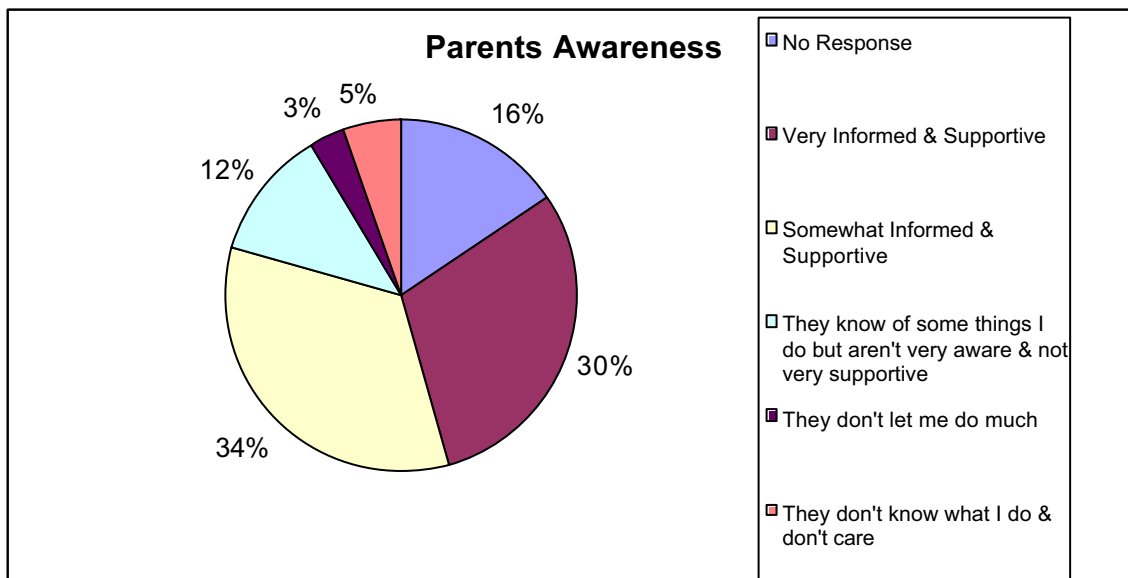
Question 13: How do you find out about what and when activities / events are happening?

The purpose of this question was to find out the most popular means of getting information out to young people. From the graph below, 'word of mouth' was the most common and successful means for getting information out to young people. Information via posters, television promotions and through SMS messaging were also common methods of finding out about activities and events. Surprisingly, the internet and email did not rate as high.



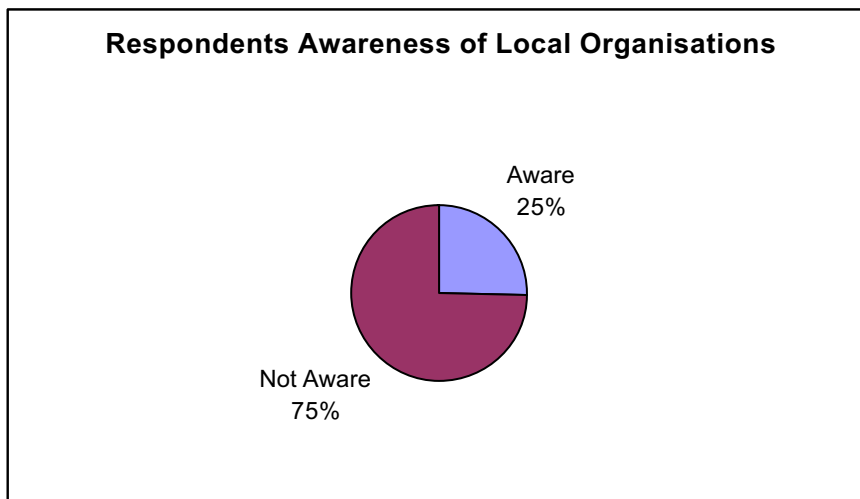
Question 14: Which best describes your parent’s awareness of what you do in your leisure social time.

It was important that the project also get an indication of parents knowledge and awareness of the social habits of young people. The graph below shows that 34% of the respondents felt that their parents were somewhat informed and supportive of their social activities, and that 30% of respondents indicated that their parents were very informed and supportive of their social activities.



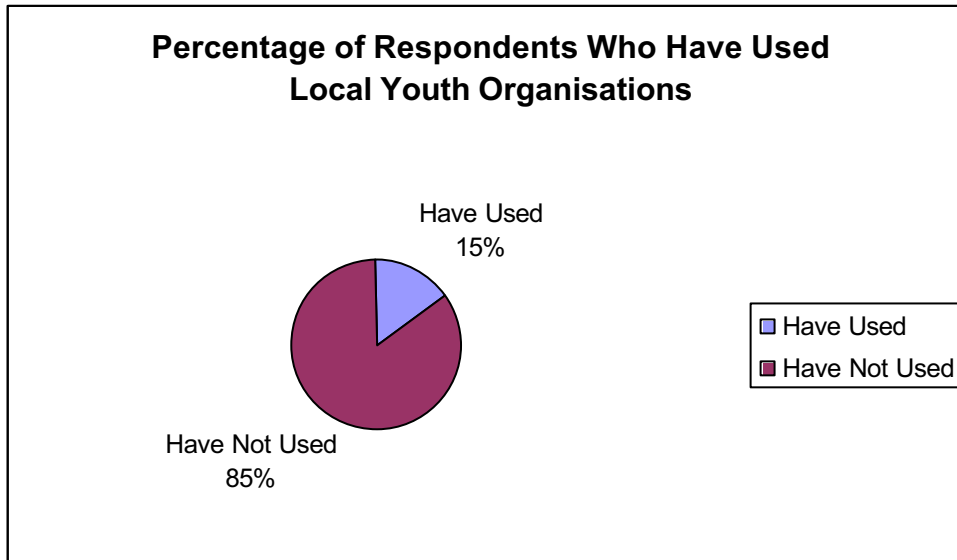
Question 15: Are you aware of any organisations who provide support or services for youth?

The project wanted to identify young people’s awareness of support and services in the community. From the graph below the responses clearly indicate that the majority of young people are not informed or aware of local youth organisations on the Gold Coast.



Question 16: Have you ever used a local youth organisation?

It is interesting to note that 15% percentage of young people have used a youth organisation in the past. This is a significant result considering only 25% of respondents were aware of youth organisations in the first instance.





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DISCUSSION

The survey data collected suggests a number of conclusions regarding the lack of services for young people on the Southern end of the Gold Coast.

The results indicate that the type of activity young people are most interested in relates to entertainment. There is a strong interest towards more activities in this region mainly because transport is unreliable and does not provide easy access to the central and Northern regions where the activities and events tend to occur. The results indicated that when young people were asked what were barriers for participation for them, that 77% mentioned transport. Therefore, as it has been found as extremely difficult to travel to and from venues on the northern end of the Gold Coast, it is almost crucial that activities and events begin to form within and around the Southern area. It is also recognised that the only structured activities available are various recreational or competitive sport clubs, therefore there is an extreme lack of entertainment venues, such as live music. With a variety of activities available on the Southern end of the Coast it will offer many more interesting and enjoyable events for young people. It is hoped that this in return will keep the youth of today occupied and involved in the community.

Suggestions from the data and young people in general include possible venues, and possible activities to consider for the future. Cinema and big screen movie options are missing from the southern end of the coast and are a major leisure / recreation activity for young people. It was suggested that locations such as The Pines Shopping Centre might be a good venue to expand to include a movie complex or an alternative might be outdoor movies located at Burleigh or Currumbin similar to what is on offer on at Surfers or Southbank and the Botanical Gardens in Brisbane. These might be good options particularly during the Christmas holidays as both locals and tourists would be able to take advantage of these. It is appreciated that these suggestions might be expensive exercises in their establishment - however it was felt that the feedback received needed to be shared as part of recommendations identified through this project.

From the data collected it was also evident that the most popular and 'convenient' activities that the young people on the Gold Coast most enjoy are live music events, which are closer to home and are affordable. This information must be seriously considered, as it is clear that the reason why events are demanded within the budget range of young people, is mainly due to the fact that the youth of today do not earn large incomes, mainly due to their age and dedication to their various school programs and other commitments. It is also established that transport facilities are relatively difficult to use and as a large majority of young people on the Gold Coast cannot rely on their own vehicles it is vital that if activities are to be introduced to the Southern end of the Coast, that they are in a central location where most people would be attracted and accessible to attend.

It is also recognised that the youth on the Gold Coast preferred to have their general leisure and social time over the Friday to Sunday time period. Therefore for activities and social events to be a success and to attract a vast majority of people, it is important that they run over a weekend basis to enable most of the youth on the Gold Coast to attend frequently.



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Another main conclusion regarding access and availability of activities on the Southern end is that it may begin to vanish severe social issues, such as street parties and public drug and alcohol use. By introducing new and exciting activities for the youth on the Southern end, it is anticipated that this might eventually change the negative image, which has been created by such issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- If activities are to be introduced on a regular basis, most of these should be based on music entertainment such as live bands
- Most activities should run over the weekend period
- All activities should be extremely affordable due to the youth of today earning low income rates
- Most activities should be established close to the centre of the Southern end to attract as many people as possible
- Transport services must be made more available to assist people to attend the various venues
- A space or location that could act as a youth club/centre
- Further consultation with young people before plans are put in place

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is clear that young people on the Southern Gold Coast hold many valuable and relevant views, attitudes and opinions regarding activities and entertainment on the Southern end of the Coast. It is evident that there is a lack of viable entertainment in this region, as at present entertainment and events for young people are primarily located in the central and Northern suburbs, leaving a void south of Burleigh. The survey suggests that the factors of cost, convenience, availability and transport are barriers for young people in attending fun and enjoyable events. If these influential barriers were addressed accordingly, and further events and activities were organised south of Burleigh it is conceivable that young people would become involved. This is recognised due to the issues, which have become a problem throughout the Coast; therefore the youth of today would appreciate such matters to further progress, and eventually see the creation of activities and venues around their end of the Gold Coast.



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APPENDIX A

Southern Gold Coast Research Area Based on Division 13



Southern Gold Coast Research Area based on Division 13



APPENDIX B

South Coast Youth Project Activity Survey



SOUTH COAST YOUTH PROJECT



SOUTH COAST YOUTH PROJECT ACTIVITY SURVEY - ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

This survey has been developed by the Southern Coast Youth Project. Like yourselves, we live on the southern end of the Gold Coast and we are concerned that there is not much to do in the south. We are involved in a project that will hopefully give us the opportunity to influence key stakeholders to address the need for weekend entertainment, more accessible public transport and a variety of appropriate social activities for young people on the South Coast. In order to do this we need to justify our proposal. Therefore we are hoping to survey up to 2000 young people from the southern coast to collect sufficient data to support our project. Please answer truthfully. This is all for our benefit.

Age: _____	Grade (please circle) 7 8 9 10 11 12 N/A
Gender: M F	Residential Suburb: _____
Are you in (please circle)	Private State Private Public F/T Primary Primary High High Work

For the purposes of this survey - ACTIVITY refers to what you do or might do at times outside of full time study or work. This survey asks what young people do with their 'LEISURE OR SOCIAL TIME'. It covers a range of possible meanings (for eg/hanging out at the beach or parks, or spending time with friends, movies, sports, classes of some kind, private parties etc) so please keep this in mind when answering some of the questions. Activity is not restricted to a sporting or structured activity.

*Please note that for any of the questions you are welcome to tick more than one box where a number of options are provided.

1. Out of the following, what sorts of social activities do you MOSTLY participate in your LEISURE OR SOCIAL TIME?

Activity	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Sport (out of school)							
Job (part time or casual)							
Night Clubs							
Movies							
Homework							
Stay at home (on your own or with friends)							
Hanging out with friends in the park							
Hanging out with friends at the beach							
Hanging out with friends at Shopping Centres							
Hanging out with friends at home							

Other(please specify) _____

2. When is your LEISURE OR SOCIAL TIME?

Weekends During the week If so which days (if applicable) Nights If so which nights



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3. What sort of things to do would you like to see more of on the Southern Gold Coast?

- Team Sports
- Drama/Theatre Groups
- Dance Events (social)
- Dance (structured/classes)
- Movies
- Study Classes
- Music (listening/live bands)
- Music (playing/performing)
- Creative Arts Workshops
(tye dying, drawing painting)
- Outdoor Adventure
- Other (please specify) _____

4. Are there activities you are INTERESTED in but currently do not participate in?

(If yes, tick & please comment) Yes No

- | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Playing team sports | <input type="checkbox"/> | Adventure sports | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Creative | <input type="checkbox"/> | Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Performing | <input type="checkbox"/> | Youth Management Forums | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Arts | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other _____ | |

5. Would a variety of activities/events made available during the school holidays be a good idea? Yes No

6. What would encourage you to attend an activity or event? (eg. Friends participating, close location) _____

7. Is cost a barrier for you to participate in activities / events?

- All the time Most of the time Sometimes Not really Never

8. Can you think of any other barriers to participation you can add? (If Yes, please comment) Yes No

9. Per Week - How much do you think you spend on social activities / events / entertainment at the moment?

*Note this does not include any upfront fees you might have to pay for things like sport activities
Please circle

Between \$0-\$5 Between \$5-\$15 Between \$15-\$25 Between \$25-\$40 More than \$40

10. If there was a booklet/information card containing a variety of Structured and Unstructured activities/events that you could do with some mates during holidays at discounted prices and that was exclusively for 12-17 yr olds, would you be interested in obtaining a booklet/information card?

- Yes No

Structured meaning organised and set times, some sort of commitment (eg. Sport, after school activity, creative arts, classes of some sort, training, band practice etc)
Unstructured meaning activities which you could be involved with without making a commitment like hanging with mates, playing in the park, attending a one-off activity like cooking, rock climbing, or a dance night/band night).



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If yes, what ACTIVITIES would you like to be in the booklet/information card (eg discounted rock climbing, rented out cinema for a certain age group only)

11. Would you access this service during school holidays if it was available to young people? (If No, why) Yes No

12. What are good locations/venues for these sorts of activities?

Schools Community Centres Parks Other

Can you suggest any other venues/locations which are not listed? _____

13. How do you find out about what and when activities / events are happening?

Internet (web page) SMS (company) Word of Mouth
 TV ad Posters/Signs Other (please specify)
 SMS (friend) Email _____
 Junk mail Yellow/White pages

14. Which statement best describes your parents AWARENESS of what you do in your LEISURE / SOCIAL time? (please circle)

1. Very informed & supportive
2. Somewhat informed & supportive
3. They know of some things I do but aren't that aware & not very supportive
4. They don't let me do much
5. They don't know what I do & don't care

15. Are you AWARE of any organisations who provide support or services for youth? (If Yes, which ones) Yes No

16. Have you ever used a local youth organisation? (If you are happy to mention which ones, please do) Yes No

17. Is there anything missing from the South Coast (in terms of activities, events or youth services) which has not been asked in this survey? (If yes, please comment)
Yes No

18. If you have any other comments which could assist us in providing activities and events for young people on the South Coast, please comment below.



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APPENDIX C

Newspaper Articles - South Coast Youth Project

Teens keen to flick that 'nothing-to-do'



FINDING ANSWERS ... Gorinne King (right) quizzes fellow student Donna Cotugno in the search for better social activities and strategies to keep young people occupied.
Picture: Brad Wagner

By DEIRDRE SMITH

LIKE teenagers everywhere, those on the southern Gold Coast are known to complain that there is nothing to do.

However, a group of Elanora High School students are attempting to come up with some strategies to keep their peers occupied.

Chosen from the school's senior leaders group, the 12 students will spend three months surveying 2000 teenagers to find out how they spend their free time and what activities they would like to see offered locally.

The ambitious project will take in state high schools including Palm Beach Currumbin and Elanora as well as private schools, and also cover alternative education centres and managers not still at school.

A report collating the findings and making recommendations will be launched in September.

The survey, which includes 18 questions covering interests, current activities, how much young people spend on entertainment and level of parental involvement was designed by the students with assistance

from Youth at Risk Alliance (YARA) and the Gold Coast City Council.

Elanora High School Year 12 co-ordinator, Alison Fahlbusch said the survey was part of the RACQ Future Leaders Project, an initiative that encouraged students to get involved in community activities.

"Rather than doing a one-off project which helped out a particular group, we wanted to do something that would have longer-term benefits," she said.

Year 12 student, Corinne King has already surveyed Year 9 and 10 students at the school and said that the complaint of 'nothing to do' was strong and that many students congregated in gangs because of lack of alternatives.

"Everybody thinks our age group are all troublemakers but we're really not," she said.

"It would be good to have something that made everybody happy.

"I would love to see movies on the beach at Currumbin or a hall where we

could hang out and drink coffee and see bands.

YARA youth development co-ordinator, Lisa Francisco said the survey was an important device to obtain tangible information straight from young people. She said the Gold Coast City Council had undertaken a report about young people and leisure a few years ago but it had been 'very broad'.

"It is rare for young people to take ownership of a project of this calibre," she said.

"By doing this, we can identify gaps for council and show it is a high-need area.

"Young people get a lot of bad press but there is not a lot of opportunity for them. There is a drought of services, activities and transport.

"The dance party and private party culture is very big on the southern Gold Coast but we want to provide alternatives that are safe and accessible."

Boost needed for entertainment, transport

YOUTH STUDY

... Year 12 students from Elanora State High - Donna Cotugno, Corinne King, Ashleigh Hines, Dimiti Davidson and Kathy O'Donnell.

Picture: JONO SEARLE



Teenagers ferret out the answer

By JASMINE GRIFFITHS

A TEENAGE group has done what the government has failed to do and come up with a possible solution to the southern Gold Coast's youth problems.

This week 12 students from Elanora State High School will address the council and the community on the findings of a three-month study to identify and find solutions to curb social problems along the Palm Beach-Currumbin corridor.

"We have come to the conclusion that the two biggest problems for youth between 12 and 17 on the southern end of the Coast is that there is a lack of public transport and entertainment options," said 17-year-old Dimiti Davidson.

"There's not much for us to do and we're often left to our own devices in terms of entertainment, which is where some problems start to occur."

The study was a student initiative inspired by the RACQ Future Leaders project, which aims at getting youth involved in their communities and establishing links with local government and organisations.

The group of student leaders spent three months surveying 1000 teenagers after becoming one of five finalists in the state-wide competition and collated the results to identify the problem and develop a solution.

Dubbing themselves the "South

Coast Youth Project', the students hit the streets with a mass of questions which they put to a diverse representation of teenagers.

"We were surprised how big the problem was when we started talking to people," said Ashleigh Hines, 17.

"I think one of the main reasons we were able to get answers was because it was teenagers talking to teenagers."

The two main recommendations to come out of the report were the need for recreational activities and better public transport in the southern suburbs.

"Teenagers indicated they would like to see a lot more in terms of entertainment, particularly live music and dance parties," said Ms Davidson.

"We recommended that bus routes extend to more suburban areas and more frequent services."

The students are hoping that the council and the community will take notice and back their proposals.

Year 12 co-ordinator Alison Fahlbruch said the community had already benefited from the students' project.

"Our prize for becoming a finalist was \$2000, which was largely donated to charities and youth-based community initiatives," she said.