

Burnet Institute

Coping with COVID-19

Design briefs

Social Connection with Young People

Design Briefs

We worked with a group of diverse young Victorians to understand stages of social connection, challenges and opportunities for change.

Together, we created a set of evidence informed design briefs that can be used to start a co-design process with young people and professionals in your community.

Understanding stages of social connection for young people

Stages of connection



Stages of connection



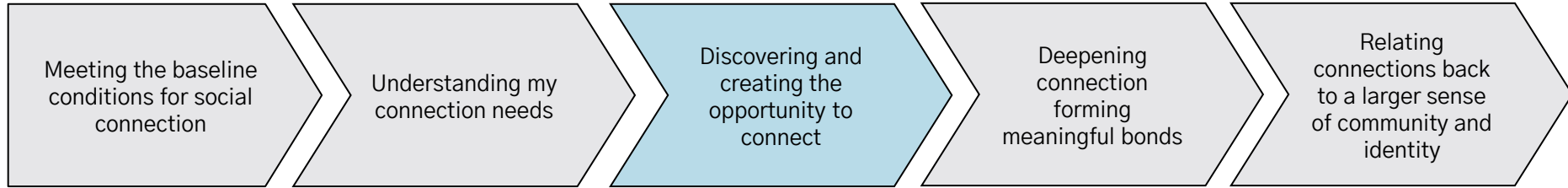
Before young people are able to attempt social connection they need to meet baseline needs including a level of mental and financial wellbeing. Addressing structural and social issues as well as providing mental health support is important to help young people meet these needs.

Stages of connection



In order to engage in activities that young people find fulfilling and meaningful, they need to have an understanding of their needs, and interests. COVID has been a time of reflection, and some have learnt about their needs, but there is an opportunity to help young people further at this stage.

Stages of connection



Once young people have an understanding of their interests and needs they can seek out ways to fulfil them, either with existing connections or new people. There are opportunities help people discover these opportunities, as well as to capture when these opportunities don't exist and create a system to create new opportunities

Stages of connection



Making new connections is only the first step in forming meaningful connections. Systems, structures and regular contact help people develop these shallow connections into more meaningful connections

Stages of connection



Those who were most satisfied with their social connections had connected them back to a sense of identity of community. For those people, they no longer relied on spending time together to find relationships meaningful. That is, they felt connected even when they weren't spending time together

Design Brief

A design brief:

- Summarises what we know from the evidence and puts it into context with a key challenge to solve
- Injects the voice and views of young people into the problem definition
- Poses a How Might We (HMW) question that could be solved in different ways by different people
- Can be used to bring people together to generate ideas
- Can be adapted or re-written entirely based on your context, lived experiences and learning

Opportunities

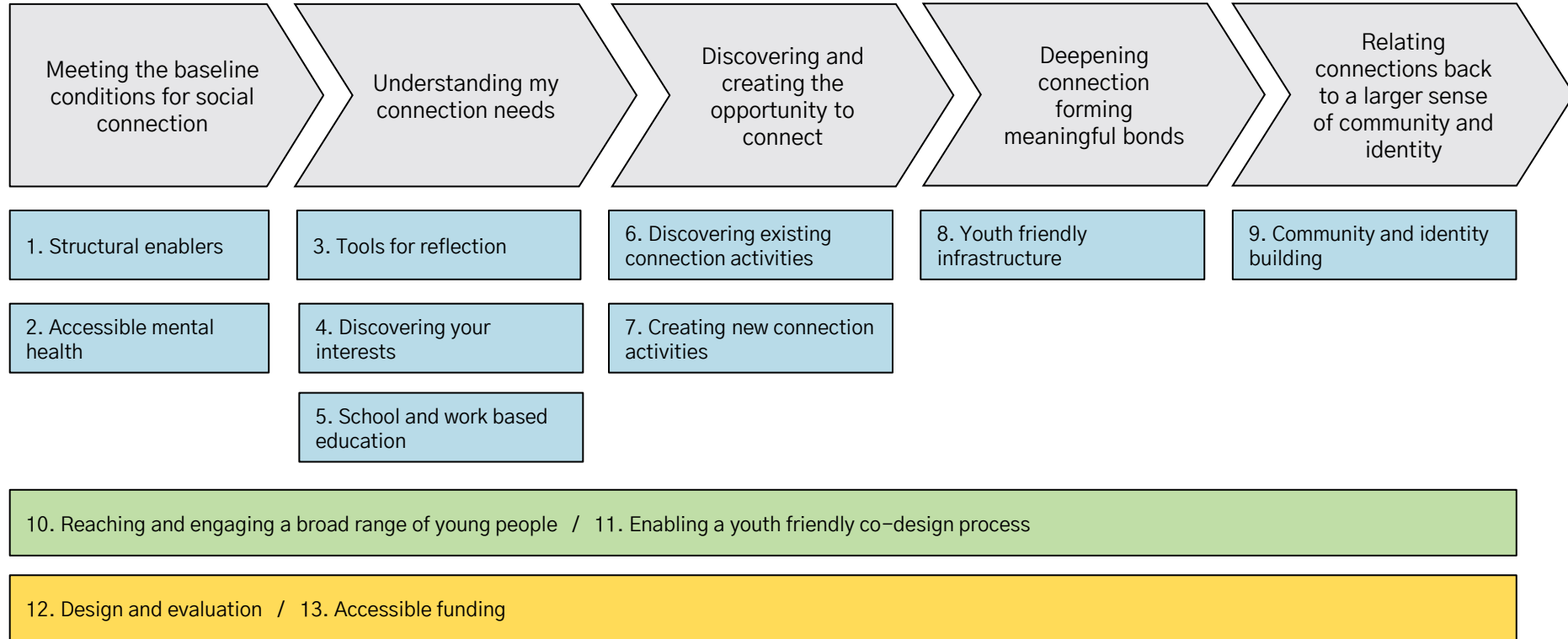
We've identified 13 Design Briefs across
3 key opportunity areas

1.
Create partnerships to
co-design local social
connection projects

2.
Strategies for reaching
broader young people
most in need

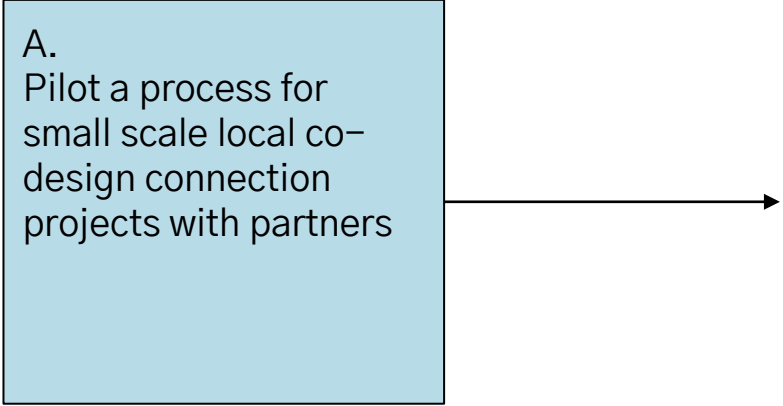
3.
Building an evidence
base and evaluating
existing programs
effectiveness and reach

Opportunities across the stages of connection



Design brief

A.
Pilot a process for
small scale local co-
design connection
projects with partners



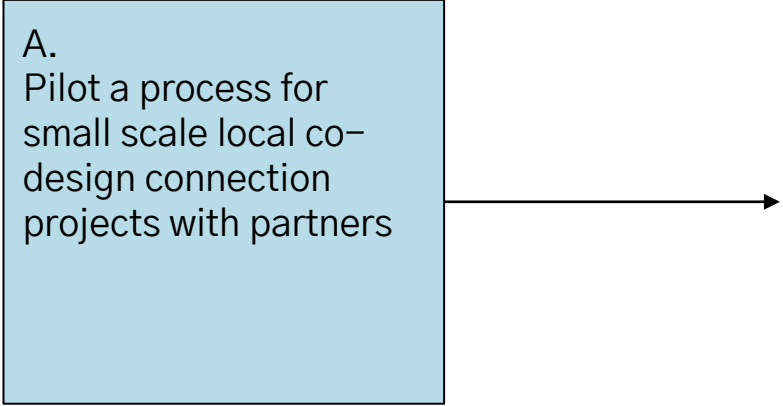
1. Structural enablers

We know that systemic and structural issues like access to housing, education, employment and infrastructure can impact on young people's ability to create and maintain quality social connection.

- HMW use systems thinking to better define how we can create healthy connected communities?
- HMW we address structural barriers to sources of social connection such as education and employment?
- HMW ensure that young people with mental health problems can remain engaged in education and employment settings?
- HMW ensure that young people can remain engaged in education and employment settings during times of crisis?

Design brief

A.
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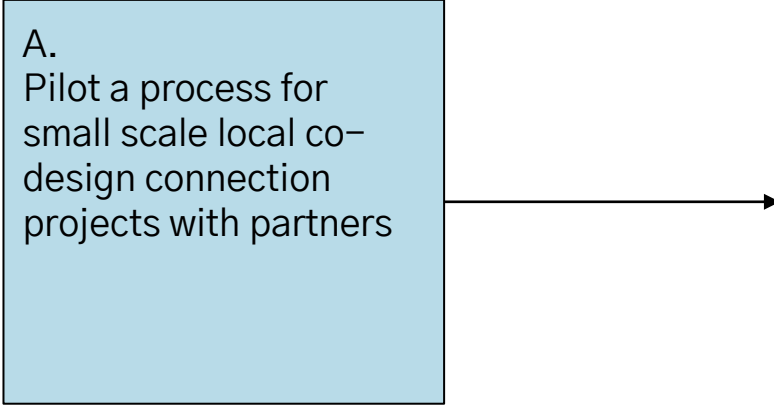
2. Accessible mental health support

We know that young people are aware of the cycle between their mental health and social connection but they don't always access the support they need.

- HMW provide mental health support to those who don't identify as having mental health issues?
- HMW we make seeking mental and social health support a normal part of maintaining good health?
- HMW address burnout and high stress among young people to prevent them from withdrawing from social connection?

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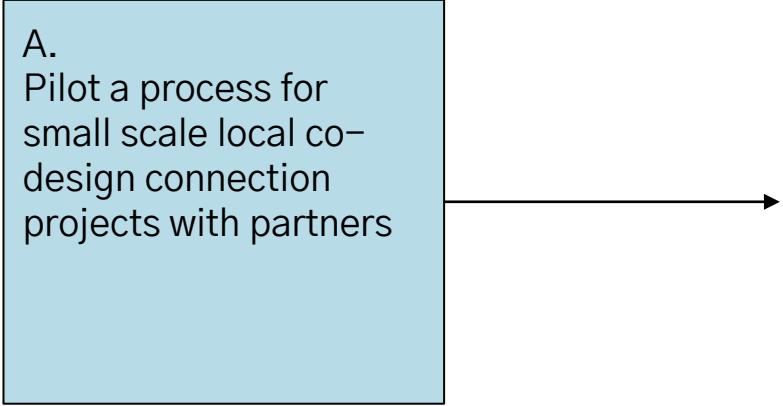
3. Tools for reflection

We know that understanding and identifying connection and wellbeing needs can help enable quality social connection, but this is not always prioritised or made accessible to young people.

- HMW help young people to understand and explore the relationship between social connection and their own wellbeing?
- HMW enable young people to plan for and integrate small acts of social connection in their lives by identifying and prioritizing their values and interests?
- HMW create activities and services that assist young people before transitions so that they can successfully enter a new phase or stage?

Design brief

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4. Discovering your interests

We know that having a common interest or hobby can be a great way to start conversations and connect with new people, however it can be hard to seek out interests when you are feeling stressed or down. Ways to connect over shared interests aren't always accessible to the young people who need them most.

- HMW help young people to identify the types of activities they might enjoy connecting through?
- HMW give young people a means to suggest new programs or connection opportunities?
- HMW help young people self-organise over issues and interests they are passionate about?

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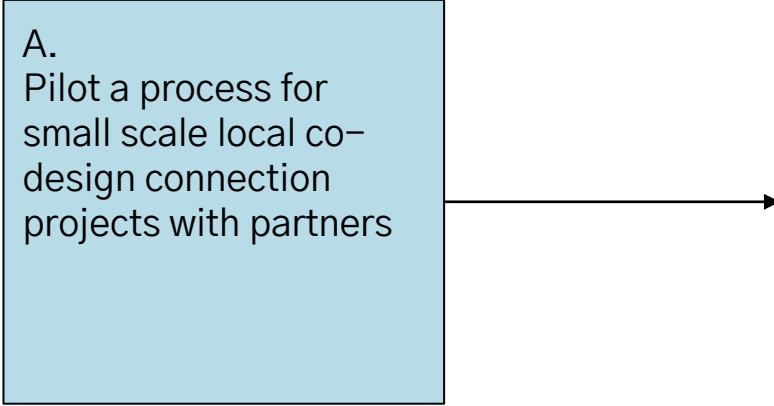
5. School and work based education and skills building

We know that social health education is missing from young people's school and workplaces and that this impacts on their ability to create and maintain quality social connection throughout their lives.

- HMW enable young people to develop social health knowledge and skills?

Design brief

A.
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6. Discoverability of existing connection activities

We know that young people will connect through activities they are interested in and excited by, but there are barriers to them getting involved in things that are already happening around them.

- HMW increase the discoverability of existing programs or connection opportunities?
- HMW amplify the social connection benefits of organisations run by young people that aren't explicitly focused on social connection outcomes
- HMW enable young people seeking greater social connection to engage in existing activities that excite and inspire them?

Design brief

A.
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7. Creating new connection activities

Even though young people may be seeking social connection, existing activities don't always interest them or provide the right structure to help them show up, create new contacts or grow contacts into deeper connections.

- HMW create activities that cater to the diverse and changing interests or values of young people in your community?
- HMW create opportunities for young people to make new connections?
- HMW create the opportunity and a safe environment for young people to grow contacts into meaningful connections?

Design brief

A.
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8. Youth friendly connection infrastructure (online and IRL)

Community and public spaces don't always appeal to young people or meet their changing needs (both during the pandemic and otherwise.

- HMW create environments that enable young people to meaningfully connect regardless of their physical proximity to others?
- HMW make public spaces more accessible and appealing to those with low social connection?

Design brief

A.
Pilot a process for
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projects with partners




9. Community and identity building

We know that having a sense of shared identity or community can contribute to quality social connection however this isn't accessible to all young people. Without these to leverage, starting new relationships or growing existing ones can be harder.

- HMW create connection to a shared community?
- HMW help all young people connect over something bigger so that they can access a sense of belonging and purpose?

Design brief

B.
Strategies for reaching
young people most in
need




10. Reaching and engaging young people most in need

We know that engaging in structured projects can be a great way to build self-esteem and connect, but these projects are not always inclusive of young people who are least connected. The shared experiences of the COVID19 pandemic among young Victorians may have increased the spectrum of people seeking engagement opportunities.

- How make the benefits of youth engagement accessible and inclusive to less connected young people?
- How partner with young people to co-deliver programs in the community?
- How capitalise on post lockdown energy of young Victorians to create sustained change?

Design brief

B.
Strategies for reaching
young people most in
need



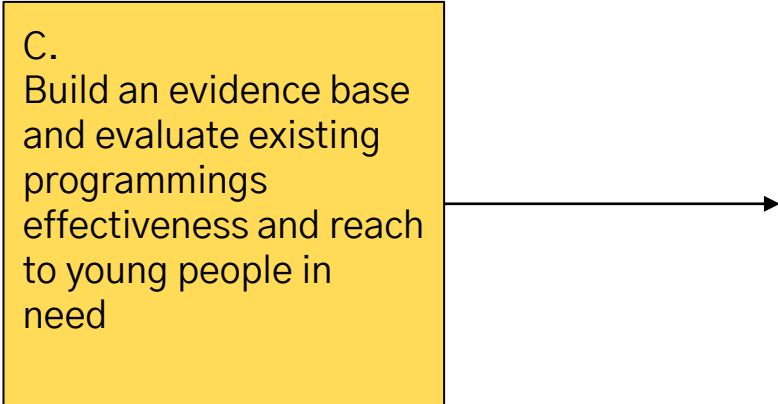
11. Enabling a youth friendly co-design process

We know that co-design processes can enable social connection among participants and result in better design outcomes, however co-design isn't always inclusive of young people.

- HMW design, and iterate a process for engaging young people in the design and delivery of connection projects

Design brief

C.
Build an evidence base
and evaluate existing
programmings
effectiveness and reach
to young people in
need



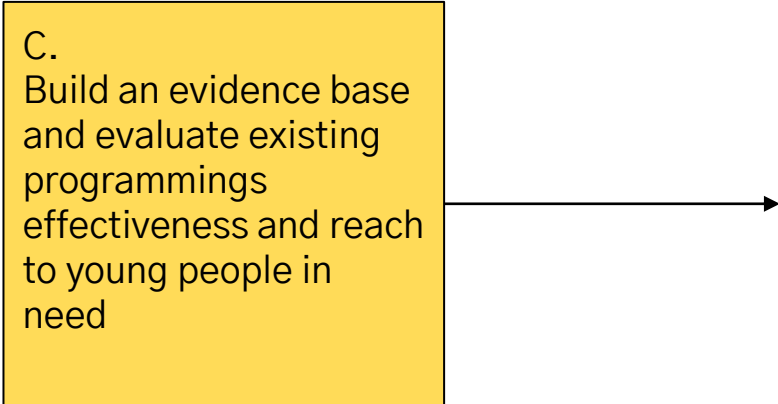
12. Design and evaluation

We know that developing a sense of quality social connection happens across a lifetime and the experiences that build towards connection can vary. This makes identifying funding opportunities and evaluating programmatic success difficult.

- HMW change the way we define high impact so that we can create diverse and appealing activities with young people?
- HMW use the co-design process to create social connection between participants
- HMW identify and measure the pathways toward quality social connection in the short, medium and long term?
- HMW build social connection KPIs into all programming

Design brief

C.
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13. Accessible funding

We know that organisations and groups with huge reach and appeal to young people may not be set up to access funding mechanisms for social connection programs.

- HMW provide opportunities to organisations and groups who don't fit existing funding criteria

Acknowledgments

Thank-you to a wonderful team of young co-designers



Today