**Latrobe Youth Space – Design principles developed by young people**

1. **CONNECTION**

The purpose of Latrobe Youth Space is to enable young people to better connect with each other, strengthen the community and break down stereotypes.

To do this, all aspects of architectural design and program delivery should be designed to enhance young people’s connection to their community. Suggestions include:

* assisting young people to access existing facilities in the community
* links to employment or educational opportunities
* including health and wellbeing initiatives
* providing flexible and available transport
* using technology to connect with the broader community
* promoting connection with the natural environment.

The Space should be a single, central site with designated shuttle buses, enhanced public transport options and an online platform. The Youth Space could also build connection with young people through a ‘mobile operations centre’ that takes Youth Space activities out to all communities throughout Latrobe, particularly the small towns not linked by public transport.

1. **TRANSPORT**

Young people feel that good transport and easy access to Latrobe Youth Space is critical to its success. Young people want to access Latrobe Youth Space through flexible transport options, including:

* improved public transport
* designated Youth Space shuttle buses
* night-time transport to assist getting home safely after-hours
* a smartphone application for individualised transport.

1. **YOUTH LED**

Young people expressed strong interest in having an ongoing role in the operation of Latrobe Youth Space. It should directly employ young people in management, service delivery and capital works. Latrobe Youth Space should also empower youth leadership by enabling young people to lead community projects or to respond to issues arising in the Latrobe Valley.

This could include, but is not limited to:

* establishment of a youth board
* youth-run activities and events
* peer to peer mentoring
* youth in employed leadership positions
* youth-run café enterprise or other social enterprises
* an ‘ideas incubator’ space that helps provide workshops and spaces for youth-run projects.

1. **INCLUSIVE, SAFE AND INVITING**

Latrobe Youth Space needs to be an open, accessible and safe space for all young people, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and ability.

It is imperative that the space does not feel like an imposing government building or service interface. Architecture and program delivery therefore needs be an inviting, warm place that attracts young people. Suggested ways to do this include:

* a garden or café entry
* house style facades
* youth workers with broad unimposing roles to support young people’s engagement, support the facilitation of programs and to link young people into additional support where needed
* being inclusive of young parents and their children
* connecting with multiculturalism
* providing opportunities for Aboriginal young people to celebrate and share culture.

1. **MULTI-PURPOSE**

Latrobe Youth Space needs to be adaptable and flexible to better capture the multitude of ways young people will interact with the space.

The space will offer a wide variety of activities, services and opportunities including:

* social enterprises and cafés
* informal and formal approaches
* fun and engaging activities
* educational and creative workshops
* employment pathways
* health and wellbeing services, including referral pathways to local welfare services for young people needing additional support.

Young people see that the architecture will reflect this adaptive and multi-purpose element by including:

* adaptable spaces with movable walls
* quiet areas, study spaces or ‘chill zones’, with cosy atmospheres, sound-absorbing walls
* outdoor and garden spaces
* sport, recreation and multi-sport court area
* arts spaces
* inclusion of spaces for young people to inhabit even when the centre is closed.

1. **ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

Young people feel Latrobe Youth Space should promote a connection with the natural environment.

The architecture would incorporate:

* natural elements
* a seamless transition between the indoor and outdoor spaces
* environmentally sustainable features.

Young people also expressed strong interest in providing hands-on experiences at all levels of the food chain, including:

* the establishment and maintenance of community gardens
* a commercial kitchen and cafes
* promotion of healthy eating and freely available food options.

1. **TECHNOLOGY**

Latrobe Youth Space will be at the forefront of technology that connects young people to each other, information and opportunities on offer throughout Latrobe. The facility will have free high-speed WIFI and offer young people in Latrobe the opportunity to access and experience a range of innovative technology to connect to the world online.

An online Latrobe Youth Space platform will further enhance a sense of connection and community by reflecting the design principles by being inclusive, youth led, linking in with social media and offering a multitude of ways for young people to interact.

1. **PROGRAMS AND FACILITY**

Young people see Latrobe Youth Space offering opportunities for them to explore pathways to education, employment and creativity, including

* a focus on music, visual and performing arts, and sound studio/DJ booth
* sport and recreation
* technology
* animal welfare
* a focus on food through formal and informal approaches
* youth and social groups
* a café enterprise and social enterprises
* a focus on learning life skills.

1. **RECIPROCITY AND COMMUNITY**

Latrobe Youth Space will focus on the mutual reciprocity between young people and their community. It will be a space of giving back, providing leadership and teamwork opportunities and acknowledging the contribution of young people.

Young people have recommended establishing a credit system for people involved in Latrobe Youth Space. Young people would earn points through their contributions, volunteered time or achievements that can be redeemed at the Latrobe Youth Space or as a method to support access to other community facilities.