

CONTENTS Click on the topic or State/Territory to jump to the particular area in the report. CEO's message NT **National** QLD **Overview** summary WA SA **Aboriginal** NSW and Torres About **Strait Islander** the survey ACT() summary VIC **Discussion** We acknowledge the traditional custodians of lands throughout Australia, and we pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future for ISBN: 978-1-875357-29-1 © Mission Australia 2021

they hold the memories, the culture and dreams of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continual relationship with the land and we recognise the importance of the young people who are the future leaders.

This report may be cited as: Tiller, E., Greenland, N., Christie, R., Kos, A., Brennan, N., & Di Nicola, K. (2021). Youth Survey Report 2021. Sydney, NSW: Mission Australia.

CEO's message

As we celebrate two decades of Mission Australia's iconic *Youth Survey* this year, we'd like to express our immense gratitude to the hundreds of thousands of young people across Australia who have participated in our survey over the past 20 years.

Every year, Mission Australia takes seriously the challenge of elevating young people's thoughts, experiences, interests and needs expressed within this landmark annual report. Listening to and acting on these crucial insights has always been vital and is now more pressing than ever as we round out our second year of COVID-19 pandemic challenges.

We've analysed the responses of more than 20,000 Youth Survey participants aged between 15 and 19 in this Youth Survey 2021 report to reveal rich and compelling evidence about young people's thoughts and concerns. These voices must not gather dust on the shelf: they must be illuminated and acted upon.

Encouragingly, this year's survey showed most young people are happy about their lives and feel positive about their futures, although these figures have somewhat dwindled since last year. Most young people in Australia are engaged with education and many feel confident they can achieve their work and study goals.

However, the results also show that young people are facing a range of challenges, concerns and barriers.

Time and time again, young people tell us they're acutely aware of and care about social issues affecting themselves and their country, with COVID-19, the environment, and equity and discrimination topping the key issues they feel Australia must address in 2021. These responses are given in the context of a crescendo of public dialogue accompanying national and international events such as COVID-19 lockdowns and outbreak responses, climate change campaigns, extreme weather events such as bushfires, drought and floods, and the Black Lives Matter movement.

This report shows that close to four in 10 young people identified the environment as a key national issue, and one quarter indicated their personal concern about climate change. Echoing existing research, these figures alongside survey respondent comments show climate change is taking a psychological toll on young people across Australia. No doubt concerns about the lack of action on climate change in Australia during the past several years has affected the mental health of young people. We should all be concerned about the impacts of this on young people, who are tomorrow's workers, parents and carers.

Not surprisingly, our report highlights that the COVID-19 pandemic and associated public health responses continue to affect young people in a multitude of ways, with negative impacts seen on their health, wellbeing and education. In 2021, COVID-19 was the most important issue in Australia according to young people across the country.

More than one quarter of young people were also personally concerned about COVID-19, saying it adversely impacted on their ability to participate in activities, their mental and physical health, as well as their families and friendships.

This year has seen more extensive disruptions to young people's education and job prospects. A smaller proportion of young people were studying full-time in 2021 than in 2020, and too many young people felt their mental health, academic ability and COVID-19 were barriers standing between them and their work and study goals. Without the right supports and policy changes in place, there is a real concern the pandemic will have long-term impacts on our young people.

With equity and discrimination identified as an important national issue according to more than one third of young people, it is gravely concerning that more than one third of those surveyed had been unfairly treated in the past year.

This treatment was most commonly due to their *gender* – with far more gender diverse young people, and more young females than males citing this – or because of *mental health*, or due to *race or cultural background* – which was endured by more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people than their non-Indigenous peers. So, to be clear, gender and racial discrimination exist in our country, and our *Youth Survey* tells us that young people in Australia want it brought out of the shadows and into the light.

Health and wellbeing issues were also highlighted in this year's Youth Survey. Young people remain very aware of their own mental health, while also seeing it as an important issue across Australia. Once again, young people's top three areas of personal concern relate to their mental health: coping with stress, mental health and school or study problems. This year was also incredibly stressful for more than four in 10 young people who said they felt stressed either all of the time or most of the time.

Concerningly, far too many young people's exercise, screen and sleep habits do not meet the Australian physical activity and exercise guidelines, with almost two thirds reporting less than seven hours of exercise weekly, around three quarters engaging in screen use more than five hours daily, and around one in five getting six hours or less of sleep a night.

Regardless of a young person's background, location or experience, access to appropriate support at the right time can be life changing. Contained within our *Youth Survey 2021* are many positive examples of determination, empowerment and resilience shown by young people while taking on 2021's challenges. But we know that more must be done to ensure young people have ample opportunities to access education, employment and services when they need them.

Now is a critical time to make sure young people are heard. Young people can and should create and advise on solutions that will address issues that affect them, other young people, and Australia. The nuances of different emerging issues in respect of gender and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status indicate that policy and service responses for young people must be properly customised and adapted. A 'one size fits all' approach is not fit for purpose.

This is a call to action for everyone in Australia. Young people have the answers. It's a matter of ensuring they are genuinely listened to, included in decision-making processes, and their concerns acted upon. It's the brightest way forward for us all.

James Toomey CEO, Mission Australia



"This is a call to action for everyone in Australia. Young people have the answers. It's a matter of ensuring they are genuinely listened to, included in decision-making processes, and their concerns acted upon. It's the brightest way forward for us all."

WA

MISSION AUSTRALIA YOUTH SURVEY 2021 CONTENTS | THE SURVEY | NAT | ATSI | ACT | NSW | NT | QLD | SA | TAS | VIC |

MISSION

2021 YOUTH SURVEY AUSTRALIA OVERVIEW

The Mission Australia Youth Survey is the largest annual survey of young people in Australia. Now in its 20th year, the Youth Survey aims to identify the values, aspirations and issues of concern to young people. In 2021, 20,207 young people in Australia aged 15 to 19 years participated in the Youth Survey.



The Youth Survey hears from young people during a key transitional period in their lives. For some young people this is an exciting period filled with positive experiences and healthy stresses they can manage, but for a considerable number the findings of this survey point to a difficult and challenging time if not appropriately supported.

The Youth Survey 2021 showed that most young people were engaged in study or work, felt confident about the future and were happy with their lives. It also highlighted some important areas of concern and challenge. The issues identified by young people in the Youth Survey 2021 reflect the findings of other research that demonstrate similar trends.

In response to questions in the Youth Survey 2021, young people continued to demonstrate a strong civic awareness and concern about a range of issues. They nominated COVID-19, the environment, and equity and discrimination as key issues that Australia needs to address. These issues were also reflected in the top concerns for young people personally, the most important of which were coping with stress, mental health and school and study problems.

Most important issues:



COVID-19



The environment



Equity and discrimination

As in previous years, responses to the Youth Survey 2021 reveal that, in general, young females have more heightened concerns than young males about some issues and were more likely to experience certain negative outcomes. This includes in areas such as confidence in achieving study or work goals and barriers to achieving their goals, concerns about coping with stress, mental health and body image, and unfair treatment due to gender. The experiences and concerns of gender diverse young people were even more heightened in relation to all of these and additional areas.

While the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were connected to education, valued their family and friends and felt positive about the future, they also reported more and deeper challenges than their non-Indigenous peers, including being less likely to feel happy or very happy with their lives. Particularly concerning is the higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who reported having been treated unfairly in the past year compared with non-Indigenous respondents (47.1% compared with 33.6% of non-Indigenous respondents). Half (52.5%) of those who had been treated unfairly said the reason was race/cultural background.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young females had more heightened concerns and were more likely to experience negative outcomes in a number of areas than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young males, including concerns about mental health and related issues. Of particular concern, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female respondents experienced comparatively low levels of happiness and comparatively high levels of stress.

The marked differences based on gender and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status indicate that policy and service responses to the issues and concerns raised in the Youth Survey need a nuanced approach. The inclusion of data for gender diverse young people this year has highlighted some particular challenges for this group.

These findings remind us that diversity has to be specifically recognised and included in the development of strategies, programs and policies for young people. It is incumbent on us all - governments, health professionals, community services, businesses, schools, members of the community – to create welcoming environments that are responsive to the needs of all young people, whatever their background and circumstances.

Young people need to be at the centre of policy and service design and development, to bring their unique perspective to bear on issues that affect them and on the development of solutions.



MISSION AUSTRALIA

YOUTH SURVEY 2021

CONTENTS

THE SURVEY

ACT

OLD

KEY FINDINGS



53.2% female

41.8% male

3.7% gender diverse

1.3% preferred not to say their gender

4.8% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

9.0% identified as living with disability

In 2021, a notable proportion of young people identified as gender diverse. As a result, for the first time, the responses from gender diverse young people are included in gender breakdowns in the Youth Survey 2021 Report.



of young people



45.4% of young people



barriers that impact on study or work goals



of young people studying identified barriers to achieving their study or work goals

Top 3 barriers identified by all respondents studying:



Mental health

51.5%

Academic ability



of gender diverse young people studying identified barriers to achieving their study or work goals

Compared to all those studying, much higher proportions of gender diverse young people identified as barriers:



Mental health

83.2% compared with 51.5%



Discrimination

29.4% compared with 6.9%



Lack of family support

21.9% compared with 9.8%



41.9%

of young people were extremely or very concerned about mental health

Gender diverse young people

Gender diverse young people experienced poorer mental health across numerous indicators throughout the survey. This data shows that particular care and consideration is needed when developing mental health responses, services and recommendations.



were highly concerned* about mental health as a personal issue



rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor



feelings of safety

were highly concerned about bullying/emotional abuse

compared with 13.3% of all respondents

were highly concerned about personal safety

compared with 19.3% of all respondents

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females also experienced higher levels of personal concern about mental health and related issues than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males:



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females

were highly concerned about mental health

were highly concerned about coping with stress

were highly concerned about body image

Many young people's screen, exercise and sleep habits are outside of the Australian physical activity and exercise guidelines for 5- to 17-year-olds¹.



spent more than 5 hours on screens per day

engaged in less than 7 hours of exercise per week

were getting 6 hours or less of sleep per night

YOUTH SURVEY 2021 MISSION AUSTRALIA **CONTENTS** THE SURVEY WA NAT **ATSI ACT** NSW **QLD** SA TAS VIC

^{*&#}x27;Highly concerned' consists of those who responded as feeling extremely or very concerned.

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA





45.7%

identified it as one of the most important issues in Australia

compared with 38.8% in 2020

2



38.0% identified it as one of the most

An increase from 34.2% in 2019

important issues in Australia

Young people identified areas of their life negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Top 3 areas impacted negatively by COVID-19



Participation in activities



Education

62.3%



Mental health

50.3%

"[COVID-19 has affected me] through the cancellation of events and uncertainty about the future as well as an inability to do things I want to do. I think about the future, both immediate and long term. and I really want to travel however COVID quashes those dreams every time)."

Female, ACT, 16, non-Indigenous



of young people were personally extremely or very concerned about climate change

"Every problem we face, not just as Australians but as citizens of Earth, can be linked back to discrimination and climate change. We must take action to not only acknowledge Australia's casual racism and complete lack of action against climate change but to take action and implement initiatives and legislation that will require us to do something about these problems. We cannot continue to treat our fellow human beings so poorly, we must call ourselves on our dreadful behaviour and work to improve. We have no future without a habitable planet."

Non-binary, 16, NSW, non-Indigenous

"Climate change, I am very concerned as to the effects of massive industry gas emissions on the environment and global climate change and the birds not coming home in spring."

Male, 15, TAS, non-Indigenous

"I've felt very depressed about the future of the Earth. I have lost a lot of faith in humanity, and feel like nothing is being done (or very little, very slowly) to reduce the effect of climate change."

Female, 15, QLD, non-Indigenous





35.4%

identified it as one of the most important issues in Australia

An increase from 24.8% in 2019

In 2021, 34.2% of respondents reported experiencing unfair treatment themselves, in the past year, which is an increase from the 27.0% of respondents reporting unfair treatment in 2020².

Top 3 reasons given for unfair treatment



Gender



Mental health 27.6%



Race/cultural background 27.6%

Higher proportions of gender diverse young people reported being unfairly treated (69.9% compared with 38.3% of females and 25.3% of males).

of gender diverse young people reported being unfairly treated

Close to half (47.1%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people experienced unfair treatment. Double the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people experienced unfair treatment due to their race/cultural background.

Aboriginal and Torres 52.5% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who experienced unfair treatment said it was due to race/cultural background

1. Department of Health, n.d. Physical activity and exercise guidelines for all Australians, https://www.health. gov.au/health-topics/physical-activity-and-exercise/physical-activity-and-exercise-guidelines-for-allaustralians#:~:text=Physical%20activity%20and%20exercise%20guidelines%20for%20all%20Australians,02%20 6269%201080.%204%20Summary%20by%20age.%20

2. Tiller, E., Fildes, J., Hall, S., Hicking, V., Greenland, N., Liyanarachichi, D. and Di Nicola, K. 2020. Youth Survey Report 2020, Sydney, NSW: Mission Australia

"My biggest concern is discrimination of any kind. Kids need to have consequences instead of being told to not do it again then being let off." Non-binary, 15, NSW, non-Indigenous

"As someone with Asian heritage I have been worried about myself, my family and other Asian friends when going out in public due to the rapid increase in Asian hate crimes. I think that a much wider education of the impacts and causes of racism need to be applied into Australian society." Not listed, NSW, 16, non-Indigenous

If you are a young person and need someone to talk with, you can contact Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 (24/7) kidshelpline.com.au

MISSION AUSTRALIA

YOUTH SURVEY 2021

CONTENTS

THE SURVEY

About the survey

Background

The Mission Australia Youth Survey is the largest annual survey of young people in Australia. Now in its 20th year, the Youth Survey aims to identify the values, aspirations and issues of concern to young people. The Youth Survey was developed by Mission Australia to strengthen Mission Australia's capacity to support and advocate for young people in need.

Participation

In 2021, 20,207 young people in Australia aged 15 to 19 years participated in the Youth Survey.

Focus of the survey

As well as collecting valuable socio-demographic data, the Youth Survey 2021 sought to capture the views and perspectives of young people on a broad range of issues. Topics covered by the survey include education and employment, barriers to achieving study or work goals, participation in community activities, general wellbeing, preferred sources of support, as well as feelings about the future. Additional questions were added this year to explore young people's experiences of COVID-19, disability supports and their housing situation.

Methodology

The Youth Survey was open between April and August 2021. During this period, a number of States and Territories experienced some form of COVID-19 related lockdowns. Young people were engaged via schools, community organisations, local governments and through Mission Australia services. Following approval from State and Territory Education Departments, as well as Catholic Education Offices, secondary school principals were approached via email with information about the survey and how to get involved. Information about the Youth Survey was also distributed to Mission Australia services, local government organisations and networks, Federal, State and Territory Departments, youth organisations and peak bodies.

In 2021, due to restrictions in accepting research applications, the Victorian Department of Education and Training were delayed in providing approval to proceed with the Youth Survey. Approval to contact Victorian public schools was provided one business day before data collection was due to end. To provide an opportunity for schools to participate, data collection was extended for two weeks. However, the short-notice and quick turnaround time impacted many Victorian public schools' capacity to participate in the survey in 2021.

As in previous years, participating schools, organisations and local councils were able to receive a tailored Youth Survey report if 100 or more young people responded to the survey. In order

to do this, a pre-arranged code was allocated to the school or organisation, which young people were to enter into the survey prior to completion.

Mission Australia is committed to child and youth safety and extends this responsibility to the young people who participate in the Youth Survey. In line with the research approvals obtained from State and Territory Education Departments and Catholic Education Offices, Mission Australia reported re-identifiable information to participating schools if a young person's responses to the Kessler 6 question indicated psychological distress, or if any free-text response indicated the young person was at potential risk of harm, abuse or neglect. To implement this reporting mechanism, date of birth is a mandatory item in

For any survey respondents whose responses indicated potential risk of harm or psychological distress, the date of birth, gender and postcode (where provided) were reported back to school principals on a weekly basis. Where possible, principals were encouraged to re-identify the young person and provide appropriate support or services. In 2021, more than 110 cases of potential risk of harm were reported back to participating schools, and more than 210 psychological distress reports were forwarded to schools across the five-month data collection period. These two forms of reporting were not required by the Western Australian Department of Education and the Western Australian Catholic Education Office; as such, the collection of date of birth and the reporting methods were not implemented for responses from this state.

Survey design and changes in 2021

Mission Australia seeks external advice on the survey design each year. As a result a number of amendments were made to the survey this year:

- To improve inclusivity, the question about gender was restructured to provide all gender options at once. The list of response options include, female, male, a-gender/nongendered, gender diverse gender, transgender, not listed and prefer not to say.
- The list of items for the question regarding personal concerns was amended to reflect the current concerns of young people. The additional items included were climate change and COVID-19.
- The open text question about the biggest issue young people have been dealing with was rewritten to make the question clearer. The new wording for the question was, in the past year, what has been the biggest personal challenge you have faced or experienced? What do you think needs to be done

- The list of items for the question about where young people go for help with important issues was amended. The item partner or significant other was added to the list.
- · To capture further information about type of screen use young people are engaging in, additional questions were added. The guestion, on average, how much time do you spend ...?, included three additional sub-questions, spend on screens connecting with others (e.g. family, friends), spend on screens for entertainment (e.g. playing games, watching videos) and spend on screens learning.
- A new question was added asking whether there was a particular cultural or ethnic group that young people identify with.

New questions were also added this year:

- A set of guestions on barriers to achieving study or work goals were included in 2021. The question asked whether they felt there were any barriers that impact on the achievement of the study or work goals. If the response was yes, respondents were asked to identify which barriers they felt existed. The barriers included: academic ability, admission/job requirements, COVID-19, cultural responsibilities, discrimination, family responsibilities, financial difficulty, lack of family support, lack of information, lack of jobs, lack of school support, mental health, physical health, transport and where you live.
- Two new questions were added to identify the impact of COVID-19 on young people. The first question was an open text question asking, in what ways has COVID-19 affected you most? The second question asked specifically about whether COVID-19 had a negative impact on young people across a number of areas in their life. These areas included: education, employment, family, financial security, friendships, housing, mental health, participation in activities and physical health.
- A new question was added to capture stress management behaviours. Young people were asked to identify what they do to reduce stress, options included: consume alcohol and/ or other drugs, do a hobby, do something relaxing, physical activity, play games or watch TV/movies, reach out to a professional, sleep, spend time online, spend time with friends or family, take medication prescribed by a health professional, nothing and other.
- A group of questions focused on disability were included in 2021. Questions were asked to all respondents to capture perceptions of community support for people with disability and perceptions of unfair treatment. A question which has previously been asked to only young people with disability, was expanded to all respondents. This question sought to understand young people's experience about access, independence and inclusion.

 A cluster of questions were asked about young people's housing circumstances. These included time spent away from home because they felt they could not go back, their current residential setting and the adequacy of their housing in relation to access to services, distance to family/friends, comfort and number of bedrooms and physical accessibility.

Please note that not all questions included in the survey are presented in this report. These questions will inform other research publications to be released throughout 2022.

This report

This report contains an overview, a national summary, a summary of findings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and a summary of findings for each State and Territory.

Each State and Territory summary compares the state-level findings against the national data; contains a breakdown of key data by gender and, where appropriate, compares 2021 findings with results from previous years. This year, the Northern Territory chapter does not include gender breakdowns because the number of respondents were too low. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander summary compares the responses of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people with those from non-Indigenous respondents.

Care needs to be taken when interpreting and generalising the results for certain States and/or Territories due to the small sample size and the imbalance between the number of females and males who participated in the survey. For the first time, responses from young people who identified as genders other than female and male are included in the national summary. In the survey, gender options included are female, male, a-gender/ non-gendered, non-binary gender, transgender, not listed and prefer not to say. Due to the small sample sizes, a-gender/nongendered, non-binary gender, transgender and not listed, are combined under the gender diverse reporting category. We use the term gender diverse to allow us to practicably report the data. We understand this is an imperfect approach, but it allows us to share in a meaningful way the voices and experiences of all young people. To ensure confidentiality is maintained we are only able to include *gender diverse* responses in the national summary, the response numbers for each State and Territory are too small to report.

Please note that the percentages in all tables, figures and text throughout the report are rounded to one decimal place and may not necessarily total 100%. Not all respondents answered all survey questions; the data presented for each question are for those who responded.

Young people - each with their own background, experiences, culture and values – are behind the numbers, words and figures in this report. We recognise that the measures in this report reflect only part and not the whole story of these young people's lives.





SA

Discussion

The Youth Survey hears from young people during a key transitional period in their lives. For some young people this is an exciting period filled with positive experiences and healthy stresses they can manage, but for a considerable number the findings of this survey point to a difficult and challenging time if not appropriately supported.

Results from the Youth Survey 2021 show that a majority of young people were happy with their lives (53.4%) and just over half of young people (51.6%) reported feeling positive or very positive about the future. While high, these figures have decreased since 2020 by 5.2% and 3.9% respectively (Tiller et al., 2020).

Young people continue to demonstrate a strong civic awareness and concern about a range of issues. They nominated COVID-19, the environment, and equity and discrimination as key issues that Australia needs to address. These issues were also reflected in the top concerns for young people personally, alongside coping with stress, mental health and school and study problems.

As in previous years, responses to the Youth Survey 2021 reveal that, in general, young females have more heightened concerns than young males about some issues and were more likely to experience certain negative outcomes. This includes in areas such as confidence in achieving study or work goals and barriers to achieving their goals, concerns about coping with stress, mental health and body image, and unfair treatment due to gender. The experiences and concerns of gender diverse young people were even more heightened in relation to all of these and additional areas.

Some key differences in Youth Survey results were also evident for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. While the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were connected to education, valued their family and friends and felt positive about the future, they also reported more and deeper challenges than their non-Indigenous peers, including being less likely to feel happy or very happy with their lives. Particularly concerning is the higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who reported having been treated unfairly in the past year compared with non-Indigenous respondents (47.1% compared with 33.6%). Half (52.5%) of those who had been treated unfairly said the reason was race/cultural background.

Similar gender trends were seen among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents as for all respondents, where young females had more heightened concerns and were more likely to experience negative outcomes in a number of areas, including concerns about *mental health* and related issues, and experiences of unfair treatment. Particularly concerning

results for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female respondents included high levels of unfair treatment (47.4%), comparatively low levels of feeling happy/very happy (35.8%) and comparatively high levels of feeling stressed all or most of the time (53.1%).

Five central themes emerging from the findings of this year's *Youth Survey* are discussed below:

- 1. Educational engagement and successful transitions
- 2. Health and wellbeing
- 3. COVID-19
- 4. The environment and climate change
- 5. Equity, discrimination and unfair treatment

Educational engagement and successful transitions

Giving young people the best opportunity to engage with school will equip them with the skills and confidence to navigate the transition to further education, training or employment (Bowman et al., 2015).

Encouragingly, almost half (46.0%) of young people responding to the *Youth Survey 2021* who were currently studying were very or extremely confident in achieving their study or work goals. Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, four in 10 (40.2%) indicated high levels of confidence in meeting their goals. Almost all students intended to complete Year 12 (96.9%), including the vast majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (91.2%). Nevertheless, 54.1% of respondents currently studying were *somewhat*, *slightly* or *not confident* in achieving their study or work goals.

Almost half (46.6%) of young people currently studying felt there were barriers to achieving their study or work goals, with mental health, academic ability and COVID-19 topping the list, the same top barriers identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

This year, young people were asked to nominate one choice for their plans after leaving school. More than three quarters (77.3%) intended to pursue further education and training (including going to university, getting an apprenticeship or going to TAFE or college), while 7.5% planned to get a job. While a much smaller proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents than non-Indigenous respondents reported plans to go to university after school (37.4% compared with 63.5%), a larger proportion planned to get a job (17.7%), to get an apprenticeship (15.9%) or to go to TAFE or college (8.4%) than non-Indigenous respondents.

These findings from the Youth Survey 2021 about young people's aspirations are set against findings from other research about the challenging labour market that they will face after completing education and training. Since the 1990s there has been a gradual shift from full-time to part-time work for 15 to 24-year-olds, which is not attributable to shifts in education participation (Productivity Commission, 2020). This is coupled with the employment rate declining by 4.3% for young people since the Global Financial Crisis, although it rose for those aged over 24 years (Borland & Coelli, 2021). Pre-COVID data reveal that on average it can take five years to find full-time work and two years to find part-time work after completing formal education (Foundation for Young Australians, 2018).

While further education can provide greater employment prospects, it can be difficult to find jobs aligned to qualifications in Australia at this time. A longitudinal study found that, four months after graduating, 38.8% of undergraduates were employed full-time in a role that did not require bachelor level or higher qualifications, and this figure remained high, at 27.3%, after three years (Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching, 2021).

More broadly, young people fare worse across several other economic indicators – such as wage and wealth growth and home ownership – which contributes to a lower level of non-essential spending than young people enjoyed three decades ago (Wood et al., 2019). Without urgent and comprehensive policy responses to the economic barriers for young people, Millennials and Gen Z will be the first generations to endure a lesser standard of living than the generation that preceded them (Wood et al., 2019).

Gender differences in educational engagement

While the majority of *Youth Survey 2021* respondents who were still at school intended to complete Year 12, there were significant differences by gender. Three times more gender diverse young people and twice as many young males indicated they did not plan to complete Year 12 than did young females (5.9% and 4.3% compared with 1.9%). Similarly, close to three times more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males stated they were not planning on completing Year 12 than did Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females (12.8% compared with 4.6%).

A majority of young people (62.1%) were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their studies, with no notable difference between females and males, but gender diverse respondents were much less likely to be so (46.0%). Just under one in 10 respondents nationally reported being *very dissatisfied* or *dissatisfied* with their studies, but this increased to one in five (19.3%) gender diverse young people.

Gender differences also emerge in the data about confidence in achieving study or work goals and barriers to achieving their goals. Young females and gender diverse young people were less likely to report being extremely or very confident in achieving study or work goals than males (41.4% and 34.7% compared with 53.9%). Higher proportions of gender diverse young people reported the presence of barriers to achieving their study or work goals (70.0% compared with 52.5% of females and 36.5% of males)

A similar trend was seen among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents, where a lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female respondents reported being extremely or very confident in achieving study or work goals than male respondents (32.4% compared with 47.5%).

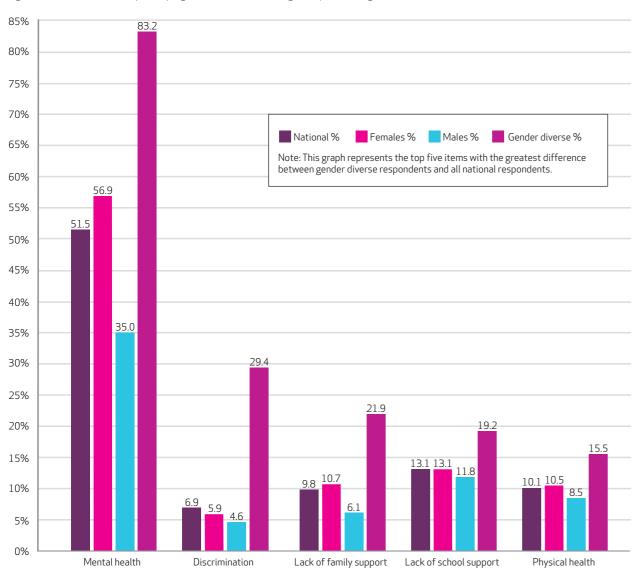
These results indicate particular issues for young females around confidence and barriers to achieving their goals. An Australian survey of 1,700 girls aged 10 to 17 years found 91% agreed it would be easier to get ahead if they were treated the same way as boys are (Plan International Australia, 2017). That survey found as girls age, there are noted decreases in confidence and feelings of power, alongside rigid views of gender stereotypes associated with careers (Plan International Australia, 2017).

Traditional gender stereotypes appear to affect the choices and disparities between education and employment pathways (OECD, 2017). These stereotypes can influence perceptions of abilities and subject choices in high school, despite comparable aptitude between females and males (OECD, 2015).

The findings from the Youth Survey 2021 additionally indicate that gender diverse young people experience challenges to remaining safely engaged in school and reaching their study or work goals. One in 10 (11.0%) gender diverse young people are not studying and, as noted, 70.0% felt there were barriers to their study or work goals, considerably higher than the overall results (46.6%). Of the barriers identified, many more gender diverse young people reported barriers relating to mental health (83.2% compared to 51.5%) and lack of school support (19.2% compared to 13.1%) and reported more than four times higher on discrimination than the average results (29.4% compared to 6.9%). See Figure overleaf.

Traditional gender stereotypes appear to affect the choices and disparities between education and employment pathways (OECD, 2017).

Figure: For those currently studying, barriers to achieving study or work goals



The school environment can play a key role in supporting the mental health and overall wellbeing of gender diverse young people. When gender diverse young people are not supported in school, they are more likely to experience abuse and worse educational outcomes (Jones et al., 2016). They are also more likely to leave school early if they experience discrimination (Smith et al., 2014). School-based approaches to sexuality and gender diversity appear to be largely being driven by individual school leaders and teachers, rather than by a systematic approach (Ferfolja & Ullman, 2020).

A common theme in research is that gender diverse young people are often denied the safe and supportive spaces they need to explore their identity and find themselves (Strauss et al., 2017). Creating an inclusive school environment with zero tolerance to bullying will benefit all students, but particularly gender diverse students. Research indicates that practical and specific measures that can assist include addressing students with their preferred pronouns, flexibility with uniform and bathroom arrangements, and improvements to sexuality and puberty education (Smith et al., 2014).

Health and wellbeing

A young person's physical and mental health are critical to their wellbeing, affecting their ability to reach their full potential and achieve study, work and life goals (ESRC, 2014).

Physical health

The Youth Survey 2021 found that physical health is highly valued by 64.4% of young people and that 49.0% of young people engage in physical activity to reduce stress. However, many young people's exercise, screen and sleep habits as revealed by the Youth Survey are outside of the Australian physical activity and exercise guidelines for five to 17-year-olds (Department of Health, n.d.). Following those guidelines provides optimal health benefits and can lead to improved motor and cognitive development, and psychosocial health (Department of Health, 2019).

Exercise: Guidelines for children and young people aged 5 to 17 recommend seven hours of moderate to vigorous exercise per week (Department of Health, n.d). Although the intensity of exercise was not measured for *Youth Survey* respondents, over two-thirds (67.4%) indicated they exercised for fewer than seven hours per week.

The Australian Sports Commission (2020) has been surveying the Australian population since 2015 and reports similarly low levels of activity. It finds only 21% of 15- to 17-year-olds and 37.7% of 18- to 24-year-olds are sufficiently active according to the Australian physical activity guidelines (Australian Sports Commission, 2020). Top reported reasons for not participating in physical activity were not enough time/too many other commitments, doesn't like physical activity, too lazy, not a priority, and poor health and injury (Australian Sports Commission, 2020).

Screen time: Over half (55.9%) of *Youth Survey* respondents spent two or more hours on *screens for entertainment* per day, which is above the recommended two hours of sedentary recreational screen time (Department of Health, n.d).

Other research shows that excessive screen-time among 5- to 17-year-olds can have negative effects on diet and weight, behavioural concerns and psychosocial health (Joshi & Hinkley, 2021). Parents can support young people to adopt healthy screen-time use through strategies such as role modelling limited screen-time, setting boundaries on use, and balancing it with physical activities (Joshi & Hinkley, 2021).

Sleep: Guidelines for 14- to 17-year-old Australians recommend eight to 10 hours of sleep per night (Department of Health, n.d). Among *Youth Survey* respondents, just over one in five (21.6%) were getting six or fewer hours of sleep.

It should be noted a young person's biology naturally influences a later bedtime and wake up time, however individual lifestyle also contributes to irregular sleep patterns, which can impact schooling (Sleep Health Foundation, 2011). Chronic sleep deprivation can have many negative effects for teenagers, including concentration and memory difficulties, shortened attention span, poor decision-making and impacts on mood (VicHealth, 2018).

Mental health

Mental health entered the top three issues facing Australia for the first time in the Youth Survey 2016 (Bailey et al., 2016) and has remained an ever-present concern for young people since. Young people's awareness of the importance of mental health is strongly demonstrated by the two thirds of respondents (66.9%) who endorsed it as something they value. Mental health was a personal concern for four in 10 young people (41.9%), including for a similar proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (39.2%).

Of the young people who reported there were barriers to achieving their study or work goals, over half (51.5%) nominated mental health as a barrier, which is a substantial increase from 16.6% in 2019 when this question was last included in the survey

(Carlisle et al., 2019). A similar proportion (48.9%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people identified *mental health* as a barrier.

In partnership with Black Dog Institute, Mission Australia released a report in August 2021 focusing on psychological distress in young people (Brennan et al., 2021). The report found that in 2020 more than one quarter of young people met the criteria for experiencing psychological distress – an increase of 8% since 2012 - and made urgent recommendations to help better support young people, their friends and family, through boosting the capacity of schools as important places of intervention and other measures (Brennan et al., 2021).

There have been three significant reviews into mental health in recent years, by the Productivity Commission, Victorian Government and National Suicide Prevention Advisor. While some action has been taken in response, including increased funding for some programs and some jurisdictions, the findings of the Youth Survey underscores the importance of governments working in partnership with young people and other stakeholders to ensure all young people's mental health needs are met.

Gender differences in mental health

Responses to questions about mental health in the Youth Survey 2021 varied considerably by gender. Female respondents were much more likely than male respondents to say they were either extremely or very concerned about coping with stress (59.5% compared with 27.0%), mental health (52.8% compared with 25.2%) and body image (47.2% compared with 15.0%). An even higher proportion of gender diverse young people indicated high levels of concern about these issues (64.2%, 72.2% and 49.1% respectively). Higher proportions of females identified mental health as an important issue facing Australia today (39.0% compared with 30.1% of gender diverse respondents and 29.6% of males).

Young people were asked about how often they felt stressed, with just over one quarter (26.2%) of gender diverse young people saying they felt stressed *all of the time*, compared with 15.7% of females and 5.1% of males. Young people were also asked how happy they were with their lives, with nearly two thirds (63.2%) of males saying they were *happy/very happy*, compared with just under a half (48.5%) of females and less than one quarter (22.2%) of gender diverse young people.

A similar trend was seen among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents, where a higher proportion of female respondents than male respondents said they were either extremely or very concerned about mental health (50.3% compared with 26.6%), coping with stress (48.5% compared with 26.1%) and body image (44.3% compared with 19.1%). A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female respondents than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male respondents also identified mental health as an important issue facing Australia today (37.6% compared with 23.0%).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female respondents were particularly likely to indicate that they felt stressed *all of the*

time (20.0% compared with 9.1% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male respondents and 15.7% of all female respondents) and less likely to indicate they were happy/very happy (35.8% compared with 52.1% of Aboriginal male respondents and 48.5% of all female respondents).

Similar gendered trends have been observed in data from previous *Youth Surveys*, indicating that gender-sensitive mental health services are important in policy and program responses (Tiller et al., 2020). Mission Australia's recent report in partnership with the Black Dog Institute also identified young females as an emerging high-risk group. It showed a greater proportion of young females reporting psychological distress compared to young males in 2020 (34.1% compared to 15.3%), which aligns with other research showing a greater increase over time in the proportion of females with psychological distress relative to males (Brennan et al., 2021).

The very high levels of concern about *mental health* among gender diverse young people (72.2%) highlights an urgent need for support. A recent study found that three quarters of transgender or gender diverse young people in Australia have been diagnosed with depression and/or anxiety, and almost one in two have attempted suicide (Strauss et al., 2019). Alongside having appropriate support services, enhanced workforce training is also required. While some mental health professionals provide care that is inclusive of gender diversity, most mental health service providers in Australia are not properly trained to treat clients in an affirmative manner (Strauss, et al., 2021).

Closely linked to mental health is the feeling of safety. In the Youth Survey 2021, almost one third of gender diverse young people reported feeling extremely or very concerned about bullying/emotional abuse (31.2%) and their personal safety (30.9%), which is considerably higher than the broader average results. This is reflected in other research that found they feel less safe in school than their peers, and experienced additional barriers to getting help when unsafe (Russell et al., 2020).

COVID-19

COVID-19 has significantly disrupted the lives of young people since the first confirmed case in Australia in January 2020.

In July 2021, Mission Australia's report Young Voices of the Pandemic: Youth Survey COVID-19 (Greenland, 2021) was a platform for the views and experiences of young people living through the pandemic. The views of young people highlighted there have been reinforced by the findings of the Youth Survey 2021, which found that COVID-19 was the most important issue in Australia for young people (45.7% compared with 38.8% in 2020) and was an issue of personal concern for 28.6% of young people. Survey respondents reported that COVID-19 has negatively impacted their participation in activities (68.3%), mental health (50.3%), physical health (46.1%), family (37.9%) and friendships (33.8%).

Impact on activities and interactions with family and friends

Through the Youth Survey and other research, young people in Australia and internationally have described how restrictions on movement and activities to stop the spread of COVID-19 have limited their opportunities for social interaction, increased their feelings of isolation and negatively affected their health and wellbeing (Greenland, 2021; Marlay et al., 2020; McKinlay et al., 2021; Scott et al., 2021).

Survey respondents described reduced opportunities for interactions with friends and family, with much of this interaction being restricted or occurring via digital platforms. For example:

"My anxiety has been heightened by a constant state of the unknown and that everything can change so quickly. Not knowing when I will see family and friends next, being isolated, feeling insecure in my job."

COVID-related restrictions have led to feelings of isolation for young people (Greenland, 2021) and an increase in loneliness at a higher rate amongst those aged 18-24 compared to all older age groups (Biddle et al., 2020a). Survey respondents commented on their experience of loneliness and isolation due to COVID:

"COVID-19 has isolated me from my peers during, what I believe, are the most important parts of my teen years. I feel as if it has weakened my friendships and ability to socialise because we have to constantly isolate from each other."

Impact on mental health

Isolation and loneliness have been linked to poor mental health in young people. Systematic reviews have shown that there is an association between loneliness and mental health problems and that young people in isolation or quarantine situations are more likely to require mental health support (Brooks et al., 2020; Loades et al., 2020).

Other research has shown that the pandemic has negatively impacted on the wellbeing of young people in Australia and internationally, causing a decline in mental health and increases in depression and anxiety symptoms and diagnoses, with those with pre-existing vulnerabilities at risk of poorer outcomes (Jones et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021; Magson et al., 2021). Responses to the *Youth Survey* have confirmed that young people feel uncertain, stressed and are without access to their usual support mechanisms (Greenland, 2021).

Respondents to the *Youth Survey 2021* spoke about this impact, for example:

"Due to lockdowns, I was unable to physically be in contact with my friends which left me feeling isolated as well as a sense of being trapped. This had effects on my mental health as my friends are my support people."

Impact on education

A majority of young people (62.3%) responding to the *Youth Survey 2021* reported COVID-19 had negatively impacted their *education*. Both in Australia and internationally, students have reported struggling with transitions to online learning, managing their workload and motivation (Aristovnik et al., 2020; Dodd et al., 2021). They reported worry about educational disruptions and consequences for their educational outcomes (Greenland, 2021; Marlay et al., 2020).

Survey respondents spoke about adapting to online learning:

"It's been difficult to stay motivated, in comparison to how it would have been with me being at school; I would have had my friends and teachers for support, but I feel deflated and tired."

This is even more challenging for students with higher needs:

"[COVID-19 has] affected how I'm going at school and my grades. I have dyslexia and working online has been very difficult."

Economic impact

Young people responding to the Youth Survey 2021 identified that COVID-19 had negatively impacted their employment (30.1%), financial security (24.3%) and housing (6.9%).

Following the pandemic and introduction of restrictions on movement and activities, research confirms negative impacts on young people's economic situation in Australia. The general shift to part-time over full-time youth employment (Productivity Commission, 2020) was reflected in the *Youth Survey's* finding that the proportion of respondents in part-time employment in 2021 was higher than in 2020 (45.4% compared with 40.5%) (Tiller et al., 2020). The proportion of unemployed 15- to 24-year-olds increased from 12% to 16% between March and May 2020 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2021); interestingly, this was not reflected in the *Youth Survey 2021*, which found slightly smaller proportions of young people (aged 15-19) were either unemployed and looking for work (31.8% compared with 34.7%) or unemployed and not looking for work (22.2% compared with 24.2%) than in 2020.

As part of the Federal Government's temporary COVID-19 support measures, the proportion of young people aged 16-24 who received an income support payment doubled between March and May of 2020 from 5.6% to 11.5% (Atkins et al., 2020; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2021).

While only a small proportion of young respondents to the *Youth Survey 2021* reported that COVID-19 had impacted on their housing (6.9%), other evidence suggests that the negative impacts of COVID on housing are fairly widespread. For example, 28% of young people aged 18 to 24 in Australia were in housing stress due to COVID-19 (Biddle et al., 2020b). Families have also reported experiencing housing stress when they have lost incomes during COVID-19 (Hand et al., 2020).

The environment and climate change

In every year from 2019, no fewer than one quarter of respondents to the Youth Survey have nominated the environment as a major issue for Australia. This year it ranked second, with close to four in 10 (38.0%) young people indicating that it was a major issue facing Australia. A smaller proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated the environment was a top national issue (23.4% compared with 38.9% of non-Indigenous young people). One quarter of all respondents (25.5%) identified climate change as a personal concern which they were extremely or very concerned about, including one in five (20.3%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

Other research has found significant levels of concern about environmental and climate change issues. The largest Australian survey on young people's awareness about climate change and desire for action found that more than 80% of young people aged 16 to 24 were concerned about climate change (AIDR and World Vision 2020).

Impact on mental health

There is evidence that increased awareness of climate change issues is causing distress and adversely affecting wellbeing. As noted above, a quarter of *Youth Survey 2021* respondents expressed high levels of concern about it, which was reflected by *Youth Survey* respondents such as:

"One of my biggest problems is that it is hard for me to see the light at the end of the tunnel when there is so much climate change and it feels like the world is going to end."

Such distress is confirmed by other research, such as in the largest global study on the effects of negative climate-related emotions. This found a modest impact on self-assessments of wellbeing, and noted these emotions are significantly correlated to insomnia and perceptions of poor mental health (Ogunbode et al, 2021).

Other researchers and professional psychological associations have also drawn links between the unfolding climate crisis and the occurrence of 'eco-anxiety' (Clayton et al., 2017; Australian

Psychological Society, 2020). In response, the Australian Psychological Society (2020) has urged collaborative action to address climate change across government, industry and health sectors to promote successful adaptation and resilience, and in particular to focus on the psychological dimensions.

Acting on young people's calls for action

The findings in the Youth Survey 2021 add to calls for action by young people who have participated in climate change actions across the country (AYCC, 2019).

A recent survey of young people identified governments as having the most important role in increasing the availability of sustainable products, and over 80% agreed corporations should be held to account for their environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) impact (Foundations for Tomorrow, 2021). The vast majority (93%) of young people who responded to that survey believed that government is not doing enough to address climate change (Foundations for Tomorrow, 2021). These ideas are reflected by respondents in the *Youth Survey 2021*, for example:

"Climate change is such a major issue and I think there is nowhere near enough... being done."

Equity, discrimination and unfair treatment

Over one third (35.4%) of respondents to the *Youth Survey 2021* reported that *equity and discrimination* was an important issue in Australia today. This is slightly lower than in 2020, when it was the first-ranked issue and 40.2% of respondents indicated that it was an important issue (Tiller et al., 2020). In 2021, it was the third-ranked issue of importance for survey respondents.

At the same time, reports of unfair treatment as a personal concern have increased. Over one third (34.2%) of young people reported experiencing unfair treatment themselves, which is an increase from the 27.0% of those who experienced it in 2020 (Tiller et al., 2020). Similar proportions of young people with personal experiences of discrimination in Australia have been reported elsewhere (Evans-Whipp, 2021).

Close to half (47.1%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year, substantially more than the proportion of all respondents nationally (34.2%). A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (47.4% compared with 41.8% of males).

The top three reasons given for unfair treatment by young people were *gender* (37.3%), *mental health* (27.6%) and *race/cultural background* (27.6%). There were marked gender differences in the top reported reasons for unfair treatment. The most common reason for unfair treatment reported by females was *gender* (42.7%); for males it was *race/cultural background* (31.8%); and for gender diverse young people it was *sexuality* (74.6%) followed closely by *gender* (74.2%).

Discrimination, which refers to unfair treatment on the basis of individual characteristics such as appearance, cultural background, gender, sexuality and disability, is a social determinant of health and wellbeing (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2020). Experiencing discrimination can have devastating consequences on the health and wellbeing of young people. It has been shown that discrimination (direct, indirect and systemic) is associated with anxiety, depression, self-harming, suicide risk, poor physical health, behavioural problems and poorer access to services and resources (Evans-Whipp, 2021; VicHealth, 2014).

Gendered discrimination

In the Youth Survey 2021, the largest proportion of those reporting unfair treatment due to their *gender* identified as gender diverse (74.2%), followed by females (42.7%) and males (16.7%).

As shown in this report and elsewhere, females report gender-based discrimination at a higher rate than males and appear to experience this type of discrimination in later adolescence i.e. aged 16-17 years (Evans-Whipp, 2021). Reports of discrimination based on gender and sexual identity are also much higher for same-sex attracted adolescents than for their peers (Evans-Whipp, 2021).

Gender inequality continues to be a significant issue in Australia. Women face structural inequalities that see them disadvantaged in their careers, salaries and financial and material security (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2018; Equality Rights Alliance, 2021). The Global Gender Gap Index shows that Australia was ranked 50th globally, dropping six points since the 2020 Index (World Economic Forum, 2021). Gender inequality is also a factor in violence against women and girls (Our Watch et al., 2015; Wall, 2014).

The Youth Survey responses, in line with other research, highlight that the issues and concerns which trouble many young people are experienced at much greater proportions by gender diverse young people. However, it is important to state that the adversity faced by gender diverse young people is not inherent to their identity; rather it is external factors, such as discrimination, transphobia and abuse, which create barriers and negatively impact their overall wellbeing (Strauss et al., 2017).

Globally, gender diverse people have experienced entrenched and systematic discrimination and pathologisation. It was only in 2019 that trans-related categories were removed from the International Classification of Diseases (United Nations, 2021). In Australia, a large proportion of gender diverse people experience abuse due to their gender identities and sexuality, with large proportions hiding their identities at work, events and when accessing services (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2021).

Technology-facilitated gender-based violence is a contemporary concern, especially for young women and young gender diverse people, as the digital realm has created alternative opportunities for discrimination, harassment and violence (Dunn, 2020). Recent Australian research has found that workers have described this type of gender-based violence as a growing issue, but note concerns related to their abilities to help clients with it (Flynn et al., 2021).

Racial and cultural discrimination

Discrimination against young people based on their race or cultural background has consequences for development, health and wellbeing and educational and social inclusion (VicHealth, 2014). Experiences of racism have been linked to the development of poor mental wellbeing, including higher levels of psychological distress (Ferdinand et al., 2015). Racial discrimination is a major issue facing young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as well as young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds (FECCA et al., 2018).

Of all respondents to the Youth Survey 2021 who reported unfair treatment, 27.6% identified race/cultural background as a reason for the unfair treatment. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, this was notably higher at 52.5%, and took the form of insulting or hurtful comments said to them (88.2% of those who had been treated unfairly due to their race/cultural background), being harassed or intimidated (69.4%), and feeling targeted or unfairly represented by the media (60.1%).

Among respondents who indicated they had experienced unfair treatment due to race/cultural background, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female respondents were more likely than other respondents to have been harassed or intimidated (71.8%), felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media (67.1%) or felt unwelcome in school, employment or services (62.2%). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male respondents were more likely than others to have experienced physical violence (33.7%).

One quarter (25.2%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated that they were extremely or very concerned about discrimination (compared with 18.1% of all respondents nationally). Around one third (32.5%) also identified equity and discrimination as an important issue for Australia, as did 35.6% of non-Indigenous respondents.

Discrimination was reported as a barrier to achieving study or work goals by 6.9% of respondents, but one in 10 (10.5%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported it.

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and culturally and linguistically diverse young people, experiences of racism have been shown to be associated with suicide risk, poor housing and childhood illnesses (VicHealth, 2014). Newly arrived migrants and refugees have reported experiencing racism during the early years of resettlement in Australia. A report produced by Vic Health showed that 97% of Aboriginal people who participated in their study had experienced racism (VicHealth, n.d.). Another study has shown that racism is likely to be experienced during early adolescence (Evans-Whipp, 2021).

Conclusion

Experiences in the late teenage years can change the course of an individual's life. Young people in Australia, including those who responded to the Youth Survey 2021, are at a crucial transition phase. Their participation and outcomes during this period can have significant, ongoing impacts on their social and economic participation, wellbeing and outlook on life.

The Youth Survey 2021 showed that most young people were engaged in study or work, felt confident about the future and

were happy with their lives. It also highlighted some important areas of concern and challenge, including the impacts of *climate* change, discrimination, mental wellbeing and COVID-19.

As in previous years, the marked differences based on gender and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status indicate that policy and service responses to the issues and concerns raised here need a nuanced approach. The inclusion of data for gender diverse young people this year has highlighted some particular challenges for this group.

These findings remind us that diversity has to be specifically recognised and included in the development of strategies, programs and policies for young people. It is incumbent on us all – governments, health professionals, community services, businesses, schools, members of the community – to create welcoming environments that are responsive to the needs of all young people, whatever their background and circumstances.

Young people need to be at the centre of policy and service design and development, to bring their unique perspective to bear on issues that affect them and on the development of solutions.

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MISSION AUSTRALIA YOUTH SURVEY 2021 CONTENTS | THE SURVEY | NAT | ATSI | ACT | NSW | NT | QLD | SA | TAS | VIC | WA

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MISSION AUSTRALIA YOUTH SURVEY 2021 CONTENTS | THE SURVEY | NAT | ATSI | ACT | NSW | NT | QLD | SA | TAS | VIC | WA

National

- Profile of respondents
- Education and employment
- Values and concerns
- COVID-19
- Unfair treatment

- Sources of support and family's ability to get along
- ► Engagement in activities
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Most important issues in Australia and the future



National summary

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

State and territory distribution

A total of 20,207 young people aged between 15 and 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2021*. Respondents came from across Australia, Figure 1.1 indicates the number and proportion of responses from each Australian state and territory.

Gender breakdown

More than half (53.2%) of respondents were female, 41.8% were male, 3.7% were gender diverse and 1.3% preferred not to say.

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

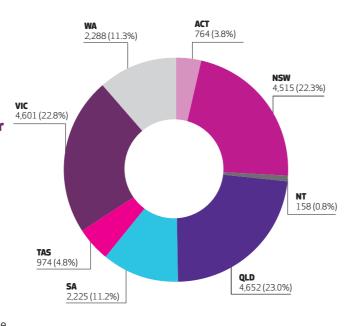
A total of 952 (4.8%) respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 747 (3.7%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 112 (0.6%) identified as Torres Strait Islander, and the remaining 0.5% identified as both.

Cultural background

A total of 3,008 (15.1%) respondents stated they were born overseas and 3,984 (20.1%) young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the 98 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Chinese, Mandarin, Arabic, Filipino/Tagalog and Vietnamese.



Figure 1.1: Percentage of respondents by state/territory



One in five (20.6%) respondents reported a particular cultural or ethnic group with which they identified strongly. Of the 170 cultural or ethnic groups identified, the most common were (in order of frequency): Chinese, Indian, Italian, Filipino and Greek.

Four in 10 (41.2%) respondents stated one or both of their parents were born overseas.

Disability

A total of 1,811 (9.0%) respondents identified as living with disability. A greater proportion of gender diverse young people reported living with disability (34.8% compared with 9.3% of males and 6.7% of females). The most frequently cited disabilities among respondents were (in order of frequency): autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning disability, physical disability and anxiety disorders.



Over 20,000 young people from all Australian states and territories shared their values, aspirations and issues of concern.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Are young people studying?

As indicated in Table 1.1, 84.5% of young people were studying full-time, which is lower than the 86.6% studying full-time in 2020 (Tiller et al., 2020). A higher proportion of females reported studying full-time (88.1% compared with 81.2% of gender diverse young people and 80.5% of males). Conversely, a higher proportion of males reported studying part-time (10.4% compared with 7.8% of gender diverse young people and 6.1% of females). A larger proportion of gender diverse young people reported not studying (11.0% compared with 9.2% of males and 5.7% of females).

Table 1.1: Participation in education

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Studying full-time	84.5	88.1	80.5	81.2
Studying part-time	8.1	6.1	10.4	7.8
Not studying	7.4	5.7	9.2	11.0

How satisfied are young people with their studies?

As in previous years, the majority (62.1%) of respondents who were currently studying reported they were either very satisfied or satisfied with their studies. Slightly less than one in 10 (9.1%) indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. As shown in Table 1.2, a lower proportion of gender diverse young people reported feeling very satisfied or satisfied (46.0%) compared with 63.3% of females and 63.0% of males).

Table 1.2: Satisfaction with studies

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Very satisfied or satisfied	62.1	63.3	63.0	46.0
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	28.8	28.1	28.7	34.7
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	9.1	8.7	8.3	19.3

Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying. Responses for very satisfied and satisfied have been aggregated, as have the responses for dissatisfied and very dissatisfied.

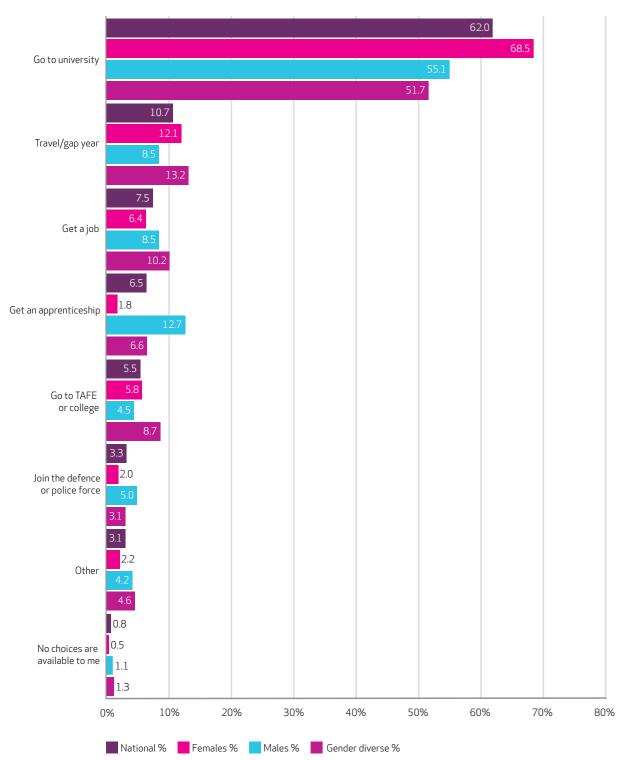
Of those still at school, the majority (96.9%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. Compared to females, more than three times the proportion of gender diverse young people indicated they did not plan to complete Year 12 (5.9% compared with 1.9% of females), and more than double the proportion of males indicated they did not plan to complete Year 12 (4.3% compared with 1.9% of females).

What are young people's plans after school?

More than six in 10 (62.0%) young people planned to go to university after school, as shown in Figure 1.2. One in 10 (10.7%) respondents reported travel/gap year plans after school and one in 13 (7.5%) indicated plans to get a job.

While the most frequently reported plan among all genders was to *go to university* after finishing school, a higher proportion of females indicated they planned to do so (68.5% compared with 55.1% of males and 51.7% of gender diverse young people). A slightly higher proportion of gender diverse respondents reported *travel/gap year* plans after leaving school (13.2% compared with 12.1% of females and 8.5% of males). A much larger proportion of males indicated they were planning to *get an apprenticeship* after school (12.7% compared with 6.6% of gender diverse and 1.8% of females).

Figure 1.2: Plans after leaving school



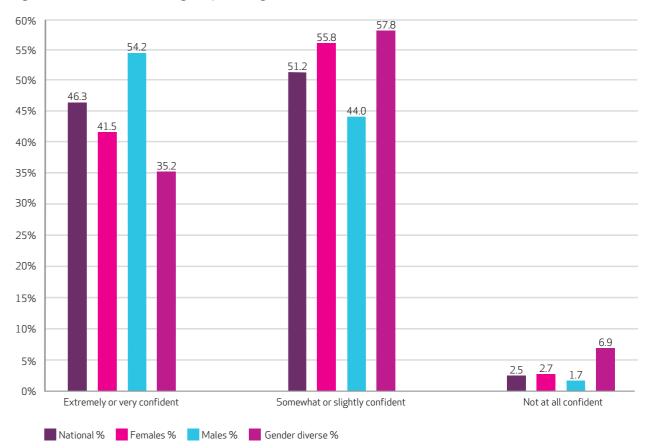
Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Respondents were only able to choose one option from the above list of predetermined items. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

How confident are young people in achieving their study or work goals?

Close to half (46.3%) of young people indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study or work goals (see Figure 1.3).

- A notably higher proportion of males reported they were *extremely* or *very confident* in their ability to achieve their study or work goals after school (54.2% compared with 41.5% of females and 35.2% of gender diverse respondents).
- Larger proportions of gender diverse respondents reported they were *not* at all confident to achieve their study or work goals (6.9% compared with 2.7% of females and 1.7% of males).

Figure 1.3: Confidence in achieving study or work goals



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Responses for extremely confident and very confident have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat confident and slightly confident.



Gender diverse young people were less confident to achieve their study or work goals.

WA

What are the barriers to achieving study or work goals?

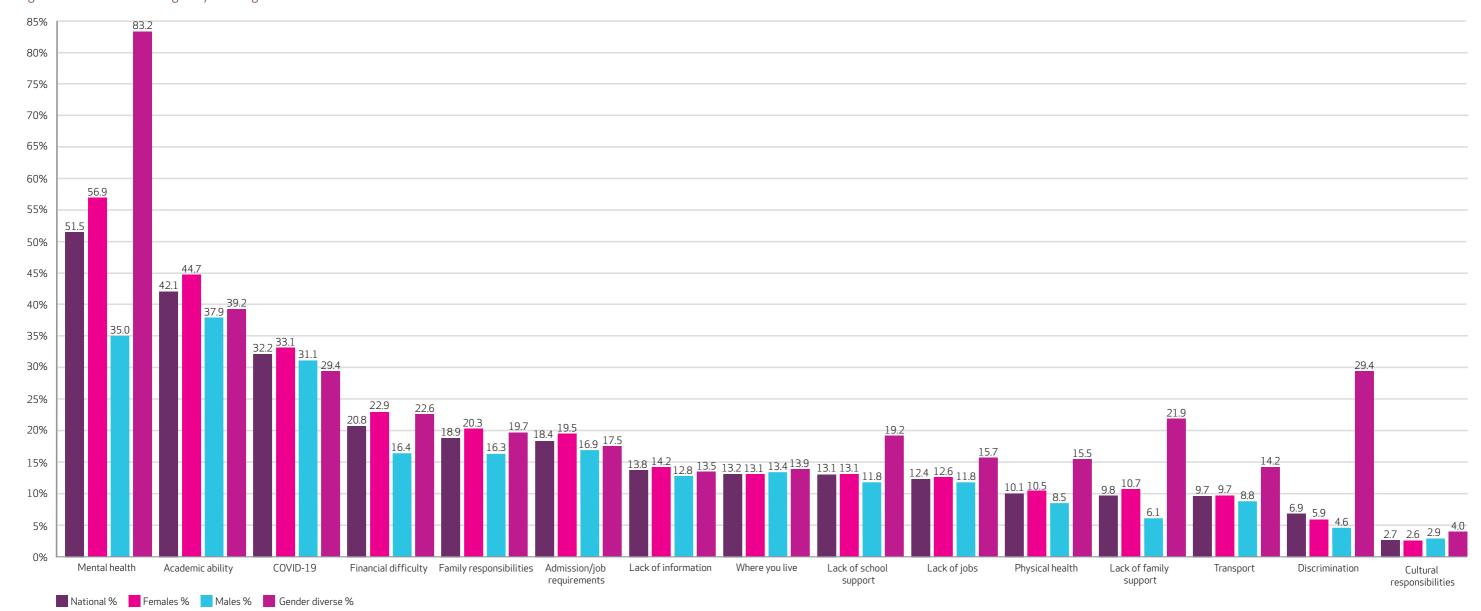
Close to half (46.6%) of young people felt there were barriers that impacted on their achievement of their study or work goals. Higher proportions of gender diverse young people reported the presence of barriers (70.0% compared with 52.5% of females and 36.5% of males) (see Figure 1.4).

- Mental health (51.5%), academic ability (42.1%) and COVID-19 (32.2%) were the top three barriers impacting on young people's achievement of study or work goals.
- One in five (20.8%) respondents felt financial difficulty was a barrier to achieving study or work goals.
- A notably higher proportion of gender diverse young people felt *mental health* was a barrier impacting on the achievement of study or work goals (83.2% compared with 56.9% of females and 35.0% of males).
- A notably higher proportion of gender diverse young people felt *discrimination* (29.4% compared with 5.9% of females and 4.6% of males) and *lack of family support* (21.9% compared with 10.7% of females and 6.1% of males) were barriers impacting on the achievement of study or work goals.



Eight in 10 gender diverse young people identified mental health as a barrier to achieving their work or study goals, notably higher than females and males.

Figure 1.4: Barriers to achieving study or work goals



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying and felt there were barriers that impacted the achievement of study or work goals. Respondents were able to choose more than one option from the predetermined list of items. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

MISSION AUSTRALIA YOUTH SURVEY 2021 CONTENTS | THE SURVEY | NAT | ATSI | ACT | NSW | NT | QLD | SA | TAS | VIC | V

Are young people employed?

Close to half (45.4%) of young people reported they were employed part-time (see Table 1.3). Over half (54.0%) indicated they were not in paid employment: 31.8% stated they were looking for work, while 22.2% were neither working nor looking for work. The proportion of respondents in part-time employment in 2021 was higher than in 2020 (45.4% compared with 40.5% respectively) (Tiller et al., 2020). However, compared to 2020 smaller proportions of young people were either not looking for work (22.2% compared with 24.2%), or looking for work (31.8% compared with 34.7%) (Tiller et al., 2020). A very small proportion of young people who reported being in paid employment were employed full-time (0.6%).

Table 1.3: Participation in paid employment

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Employed full-time	0.6	0.3	0.9	2.1
Employed part-time	45.4	48.7	42.6	36.6
Not in paid employment, looking for work	31.8	29.1	34.0	37.6
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	22.2	21.9	22.4	23.6

Note: Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average, how many hours they worked per week. Part-time employment is considered to be less than 35 hours per week, while full-time employment is considered to be 35 hours or more.



Higher proportions of young people were in part-time employment than in 2020.

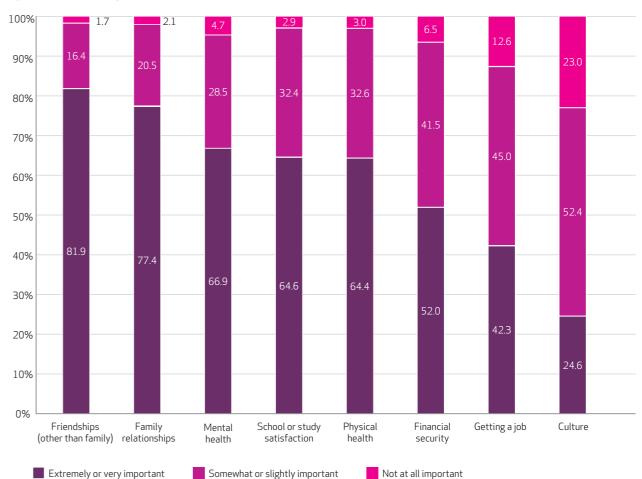
VALUES AND CONCERNS

What do young people value?

The three most highly valued items nationally were friendships (other than family), family relationships and mental health (see Figure 1.5). The next most highly valued items were school or study satisfaction and physical health.

- More than eight in 10 (81.9%) of respondents considered friendships (other than family) as extremely or very important.
- More than three quarters (77.4%) of respondents saw family relationships as extremely or very important.
- Two thirds (66.9%) of respondents placed a high value upon mental health.

Figure 1.5: What young people value



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely and very important for each item.

Friendships (other than family) was rated as the most important item by all genders, as shown in Table 1.4.

- Friendships (other than family) were rated extremely or very important by more than eight in 10 females (83.2%) and males (81.5%), and more than seven in 10 (74.3%) gender diverse respondents.
- Notably higher proportions of females placed a high value upon *school or study satisfaction* (70.7% compared with 59.0% of males and 49.1% of gender diverse respondents).
- Higher proportions of males rated *physical health* as *extremely* or *very important* (67.8% compared with 63.8% of females and 41.8% of gender diverse young people).

Table 1.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	83.2	15.6	1.2
Family relationships	79.7	18.8	1.5
Mental health	71.6	25.4	3.0
School or study satisfaction	70.7	27.6	1.8
Physical health	63.8	33.7	2.6
Financial security	55.0	39.8	5.2
Getting a job	42.9	44.7	12.3
Culture	26.0	52.0	22.0
Males	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	81.5	16.8	1.8
Family relationships	77.5	20.4	2.1
Mental health	60.9	32.8	6.3
School or study satisfaction	59.0	37.3	3.7
Physical health	67.8	29.5	2.7
Financial security	49.0	43.6	7.4
Getting a job	42.2	45.3	12.6
Culture	23.5	53.4	23.1
Gender diverse	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	74.3	19.7	6.0
Family relationships	50.5	40.5	9.1
Mental health	68.8	22.0	9.2
School or study satisfaction	49.1	42.1	8.8
Physical health	41.8	48.3	9.9
Financial security	47.6	40.5	11.8
Getting a job	39.1	45.1	15.8
Culture	18.3	50.5	31.2

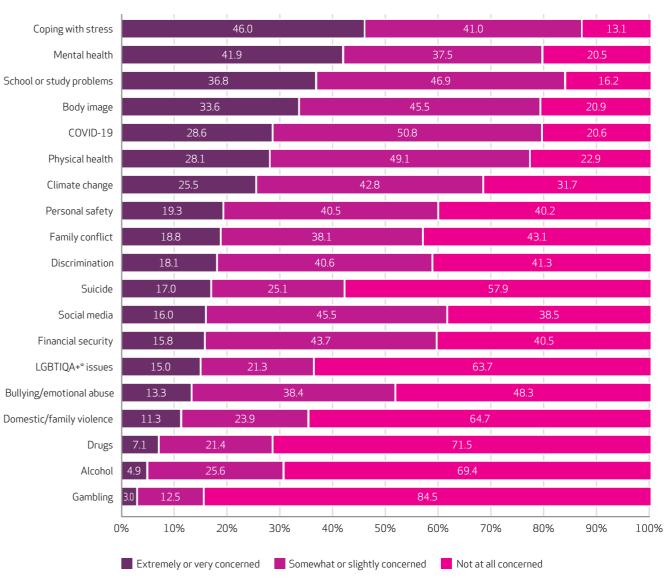
Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

The top three issues of personal concern for young people were coping with stress, mental health and school or study problems. The next most concerning issues were body image and COVID-19, as shown in Figure 1.6.

- Close to half (46.0%) of respondents indicated they were extremely or very concerned about coping with stress.
- More than four in 10 (41.9%) respondents were extremely or very concerned about mental health.
- Over one third of young people were extremely or very concerned about school or study problems (36.8%) and body image (33.6%).

Figure 1.6: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely concerned and very concerned for each item.

Coping with stress was the top issue of personal concern for both females and males, as shown in Table 1.5. For gender diverse young people, LGBTIQA+ issues was the top personal concern. For all genders the second most concerning personal issue was mental health. The third top personal concern for females was body image, for males it was school or study problems and for gender diverse young people it was coping with stress.

- Notably higher proportions of gender diverse young people were extremely or very concerned about LGBTIQA+ issues (72.5% compared with 16.9% of females and 6.5% of males).
- Coping with stress was a major personal concern for close to two thirds (64.2%) of gender diverse respondents (compared with 59.5% of females and 27.0% of males).

^{*}Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Table 1.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

Females	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	59.5	35.4	5.1
Mental health	52.8	36.4	10.8
School or study problems	47.0	44.1	9.0
Body image	47.2	43.2	9.6
COVID-19	36.5	52.6	11.0
Physical health	33.0	50.7	16.3
Climate change	29.8	46.1	24.1
Personal safety	24.0	41.9	34.2
Family conflict	24.0	42.2	33.8
Discrimination	21.6	44.9	33.5
Suicide	20.2	27.9	51.9
Social media	21.6	50.0	28.4
Financial security	18.7	46.5	34.8
LGBTIQA+* issues	16.9	26.5	56.6
Bullying/emotional abuse	16.3	42.7	41.1
Domestic/family violence	13.4	25.9	60.7
Drugs	7.3	23.1	69.6
Alcohol	5.0	28.1	67.0
Gambling	2.3	11.9	85.8



Males	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	27.0	49.4	23.5
Mental health	25.2	41.3	33.5
School or study problems	23.3	50.9	25.8
Body image	15.0	49.2	35.8
COVID-19	18.0	49.3	32.6
Physical health	22.3	46.2	31.5
Climate change	17.8	39.4	42.8
Personal safety	12.3	38.0	49.7
Family conflict	10.7	32.4	57.0
Discrimination	11.1	35.5	53.5
Suicide	10.4	21.0	68.5
Social media	8.4	39.6	52.0
Financial security	11.5	39.6	48.8
LGBTIQA+* issues	6.5	15.2	78.2
Bullying/emotional abuse	7.7	33.0	59.3
Domestic/family violence	7.6	20.6	71.8
Drugs	6.4	18.6	75.0
Alcohol	4.3	22.2	73.5
Gambling	3.4	13.0	83.7

QLD

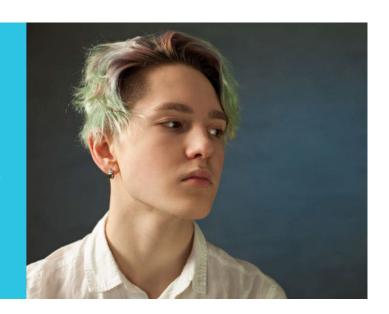


"My biggest personal challenge has been stress related things with school. The expectations of my teachers at school, I know people want me to do well, but I never expected this much weight to be on my shoulders."

(Female, 15, QLD, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)

"In the past year, the biggest personal challenge I faced is managing my stress around school work. I often become overwhelmed by the amount of school work I am given, and begin to stress if I feel my work is not at a high enough standard."

(Male, 15, ACT, non-Indigenous)



TAS

SA

MISSION AUSTRALIA YOUTH SURVEY 2021 CONTENTS | THE SURVEY | NAT | ATSI | ACT | NSW |

Table 1.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

Gender diverse	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	64.2	26.1	9.8
Mental health	72.2	15.8	12.0
School or study problems	45.8	40.7	13.5
Body image	49.1	36.4	14.4
COVID-19	36.5	46.9	16.5
Physical health	26.7	56.1	17.2
Climate change	48.8	35.2	16.0
Personal safety	30.9	44.8	24.3
Family conflict	35.0	40.4	24.6
Discrimination	45.0	35.3	19.7
Suicide	40.4	29.1	30.4
Social media	22.1	45.9	32.0
Financial security	25.3	46.1	28.5
LGBTIQA+* issues	72.5	12.9	14.6
Bullying/emotional abuse	31.2	38.1	30.7
Domestic/family violence	22.6	31.5	45.9
Drugs	12.5	26.7	60.8
Alcohol	8.6	28.6	62.8
Gambling	8.1	13.4	78.5

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.



"[My biggest personal issue has been] figuring out who I am, coming out and being accepted and not discriminated against. I think that LGBTIQA+ history should be taught in schools and it should be more accepted in schools for kids to question their identity and change it."

(Transgender, 15, QLD, non-Indigenous)

COVID-19

How has COVID-19 impacted on young people?

The top three areas young people identified as being negatively impacted by COVID-19 were participation in activities (68.3%), education (62.3%) and mental health (50.3%) (see Table 1.6).

- Males reported feeling less impacted by COVID-19 across almost all areas when compared with females and gender diverse young people.
- A higher proportion of females identified their *participation in activities* was negatively impacted by COVID-19 (71.1% compared with 68.2% of males and 62.4% of gender diverse respondents).
- A notably higher proportion of gender diverse young people identified their *mental health* was negatively impacted by COVID-19 (70.2% compared with 61.9% of females and 34.3% of males).

Table 1.6: Impact of COVID-19 on young people

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Participation in activities	68.3	71.1	68.2	62.4
Education	62.3	66.8	58.2	67.7
Mental health	50.3	61.9	34.3	70.2
Physical health	46.1	50.5	40.7	48.2
Family	37.9	41.4	32.1	46.6
Friendships	33.8	37.2	27.7	41.3
Employment	30.1	31.0	27.7	31.6
Financial security	24.3	27.2	19.6	30.9
Housing	6.9	6.3	5.9	10.9

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, the ways COVID-19 has negatively impacted them. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.



"I mostly procrastinate at home, it is difficult to focus and get work down at home. I cannot obtain individual help from my teacher while stuck at home and I cannot understand the content to a satisfactory extent. It has also impacted my mental health. I cannot interact with friends and form study groups or rely on them as my coping mechanism and relax from the immense stress that is caused by studies."

(Male, 17, VIC, non-Indigenous)

UNFAIR TREATMENT

Have young people been treated unfairly?

More than one third (34.2%) of young people reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A much higher proportion of gender diverse young people reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (69.9% compared with 38.3% of females and 25.3% of males).

Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify whether they had been treated unfairly due to their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason.

Of the 34.2% of young people who had been treated unfairly in the past year (see Table 1.7):

- Notably higher proportions of gender diverse respondents reported being treated unfairly due to their sexuality (74.6% compared with 17.6% of females and 14.5% of males).
- A high proportion of gender diverse respondents and females had been treated unfairly due to their *gender* (74.2% and 42.7% compared with 16.7% of males).
- More than four in 10 (44.3%) gender diverse respondents reported being treated unfairly due to their *mental health* (compared with 28.6% of females and 21.3% of males).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of males reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background* (31.8% compared with 27.1% of females and 14.0% of gender diverse young people).

Table 1.7: Reasons for being treated unfairly

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Gender	37.3	42.7	16.7	74.2
Mental health	27.6	28.6	21.3	44.3
Race/cultural background	27.6	27.1	31.8	14.0
Sexuality	21.7	17.6	14.5	74.6
Other	21.5	19.4	28.1	13.6
Age	18.3	19.5	15.4	18.5
Religion	11.4	11.2	12.5	8.1
Disability	7.0	4.8	8.3	16.9
Financial background	7.0	6.5	7.9	6.5

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

Young people who responded they had been treated unfairly due to their race/cultural background were offered an additional question about the nature and experience of the unfair treatment (see Table 1.8). Of these young people, nine in 10 (89.0%) had been insulted or had hurtful comments said to them. More than six in 10 (62.5%) young people had been harassed or intimidated and more than half (54.2%) had felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media. Of this group:

- A higher proportion of females felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media (59.3% compared with 41.7% of males).
- Half (50.0%) of females felt unwelcome in school, employment or services (compared with 38.5% of males).
- One in five (20.8%) males experienced physical violence (compared with 8.5% of females).

Table 1.8: Experiences of unfair treatment due to race/cultural background

	National %	Females %	Males %
Been insulted or had hurtful comments said to you	89.0	90.1	87.1
Been harassed or intimidated	62.5	59.4	65.1
Felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media	54.2	59.3	41.7
Felt unwelcome in school, employment or services	46.6	50.0	38.5
Received insulting or hurtful comments online	43.1	40.3	44.9
Been excluded from social events or activities	27.2	25.6	26.9
Felt unwelcome or excluded from sporting clubs or groups	24.2	24.2	20.5
Experienced physical violence	14.5	8.5	20.8

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency. Data for gender diverse respondents has not been reported due to the small number of responses.

Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Close to six in 10 (55.6%) young people reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year because of their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason. A much higher proportion of gender diverse young people reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (74.4% compared with 59.9% of females and 48.3% of males).

What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

Of the respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 57.6% reported witnessing unfair treatment due to a person's race/cultural background (see Table 1.9). Almost half (48.0%) indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality. More than four in 10 (43.7%) respondents who witnessed unfair treatment reported it was due to a person's gender.

- Seven in 10 (69.3%) gender diverse respondents witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's *gender* (compared with 46.4% of females and 35.6% of males).
- A notably higher proportion of gender diverse respondents reported witnessing unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality (73.1% compared with 51.8% of females and 38.2% of males).

Table 1.9: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Race/cultural background	57.6	58.6	56.5	56.1
Sexuality	48.0	51.8	38.2	73.1
Gender	43.7	46.4	35.6	69.3
Disability	32.4	32.3	29.3	51.1
Mental health	26.1	27.6	20.7	45.6
Religion	25.3	25.7	24.2	28.7
Age	16.7	16.8	15.9	20.0
Financial background	15.0	14.2	15.0	22.8
Other	9.6	7.9	12.3	7.8

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND FAMILY'S ABILITY TO GET ALONG

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

As shown in Figure 1.7, friend/s (80.5%), parent/s or guardian/s (69.7%) and the internet (47.5%) were the three most frequently named sources of help for young people.

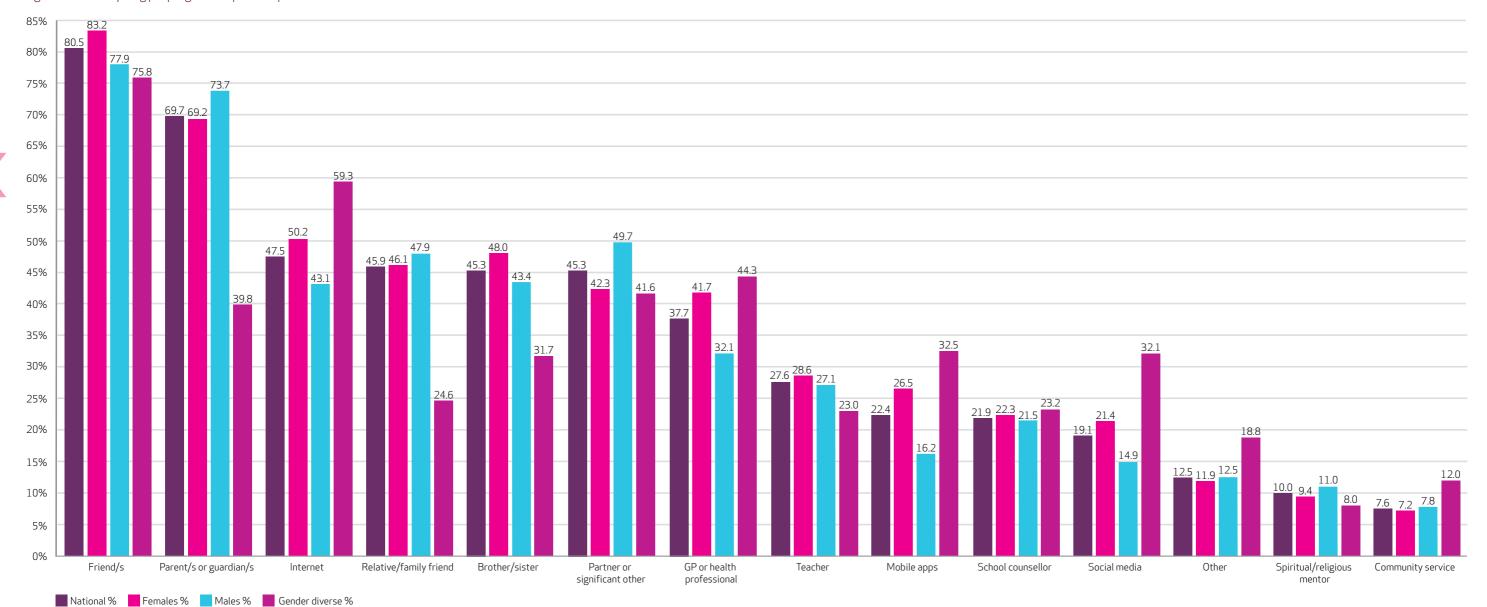
- Around half of young people indicated they would go to their relative/family friend (45.9%), brother/sister (45.3%) or partner or significant other (45.3%) for support with important issues in their lives.
- Close to four in 10 (37.7%) young people would turn to a GP or health professional as a source of help with important issues.
- A higher proportion of gender diverse young people said they would turn to *social media* (32.1% compared with 21.4% of females and 14.9% of males) or the *internet* (59.3% compared with 50.2% of females and 43.1% of males) for support with important issues in their lives
- A higher proportion of males stated they would go to their partner or significant other (49.7% compared with 42.3% of females and 41.6% of gender diverse young people).



"I've been struggling with depression and anxiety since graduating high school and starting university. It's made it difficult to work, study, keep healthy relationships and just feel good about myself. For me, I just need to use the help available to me online and with friends to overcome this."

(Non-binary, 17, NSW, non-Indigenous)

Figure 1.7: Where young people go for help with important issues

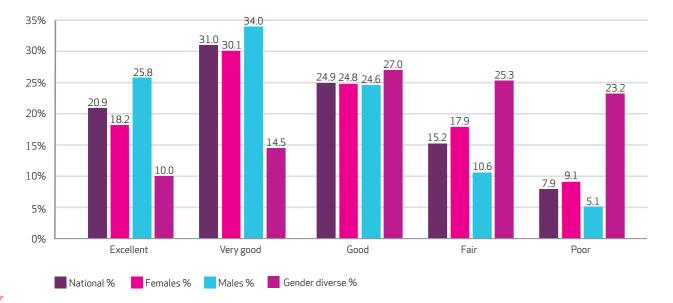


Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, where they go for help with important issues. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

How do young people rate their family's ability to get along?

The majority (51.9%) of respondents rated their family's ability to get along as excellent (20.9%) or very good (31.0%) (see Figure 1.8). However, close to one quarter (23.1%) of young people indicated their family's ability to get along was either fair (15.2%) or poor (7.9%). A higher proportion of male respondents rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good (59.8% compared with 48.3% of females and 24.5% of gender diverse respondents), while a much higher proportion of gender diverse young people rated their family's ability to get along as poor (23.2% compared with 9.1% of females and 5.1% of males).

Figure 1.8: Family's ability to get along with one another





Close to one quarter of young people said their family's ability to get along was either fair or poor.

ENGAGEMENT IN ACTIVITIES

What activities are young people involved in?

Over the past year, the top three activities young people were engaged in were sports (as a participant) (71.0%), sports (as a spectator) (64.6%) and arts/cultural/music activities (43.2%), as shown in Table 1.10.

- More than four in 10 (41.1%) respondents reported they had participated in volunteer work in the past year.
- One third (33.9%) of young people indicated they had taken part in student leadership activities.

Sports (as a participant) and sports (as a spectator) were the top two activities for both females and males. While arts/cultural/music activities was the third most reported activity for females, volunteer work was the third highest for males. For gender diverse respondents the top three activities where arts/cultural/music activities, sports (as a participant) and sports (as a spectator).

• Higher proportions of females reported taking part in *student leadership activities* in the past year (37.9% compared with 30.3% of gender diverse young people and 29.4% of males).

Table 1.10: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Sports (as a participant)	71.0	68.9	76.1	49.7
Sports (as a spectator)	64.6	60.6	72.4	43.5
Arts/cultural/music activities	43.2	49.0	33.8	63.9
Volunteer work	41.1	42.7	39.6	38.8
Student leadership activities	33.9	37.9	29.4	30.3
Youth groups/activities	24.5	25.3	22.9	34.6
Religious groups/activities	23.4	25.5	21.6	18.5
Environmental groups/activities	19.1	20.0	16.9	30.0
Political groups/activities	9.3	9.7	7.6	23.2

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what activities they were involved in during the past year. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.



The majority of young people are involved in sports either as a participant or a spectator.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

How stressed are young people?

More than four in 10 (44.5%) young people felt stressed either all of the time or most of the time in the past four weeks (see Table 1.11).

- A higher proportion of gender diverse respondents felt stressed *all of the time* or *most of the time* (65.7% compared with 56.6% of females and 26.9% of males).
- Conversely, around three times the proportion of males felt stressed *none of the time* (8.1% compared with 1.6% of females and 3.3% of gender diverse young people).

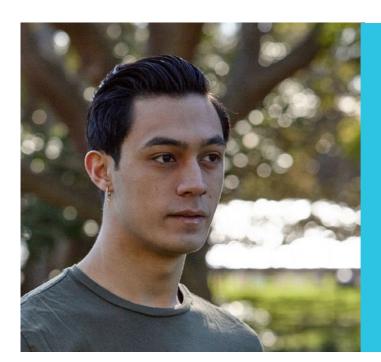
Table 1.11: Young people's level of stress

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
All of the time	11.6	15.7	5.1	26.2
Most of the time	32.9	40.9	21.8	39.5
Some of the time	32.0	30.1	35.5	23.5
A little of the time	19.0	11.8	29.6	7.5
None of the time	4.4	1.6	8.1	3.3

What do young people do to reduce stress?

The top three ways young people reported reducing stress was to do something relaxing (63.2%), spend time online (62.3%) and play games or watch TV/movies (61.4%) (see Table 1.12).

- A higher proportion of females reported they would sleep (66.5% compared with 60.6% of gender diverse young people and 50.6% of males) and spend time with friends or family (50.3% compared with 44.7% of males and 29.8% of gender diverse respondents) to reduce stress
- A higher proportion of males reported they use *physical activity* (56.0% compared with 45.8% of females and 24.6% of gender diverse respondents) and *doing a hobby* (54.1% compared with 48.0% of gender diverse young people and 39.2% of females) to reduce stress.
- A higher proportion of gender diverse young people reported they *spend time online* (71.7% compared with 64.6% of females and 59.0% of males) and *take medication prescribed by a health professional* (15.1% compared with 7.6% of females and 3.3% of males) to reduce stress.



"Coping with my stress and anxiety has been a challenge so far this year throughout year 12. I am currently talking to a counsellor and continuing to do this will ensure that I learn about different strategies to relax and think positively."

(Male, 17, QLD, non-Indigenous)



	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Do something relaxing	63.2	67.2	58.8	64.4
Spend time online	62.3	64.6	59.0	71.7
Play games or watch TV/movies	61.4	57.1	67.3	62.5
Sleep	59.5	66.5	50.6	60.6
Physical activity	49.0	45.8	56.0	24.6
Spend time with friends or family	46.9	50.3	44.7	29.8
Do a hobby	45.7	39.2	54.1	48.0
Nothing	16.5	16.0	15.9	23.4
Consume alcohol and/or other drugs	12.1	12.0	11.3	20.1
Reach out to a professional	6.8	8.7	3.9	12.9
Other	6.7	6.2	6.3	15.1
Take medication prescribed by a health professional	6.1	7.6	3.3	15.1

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what they do to reduce stress. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

How much control do young people feel they have over their life?

A majority (53.3%) of young people felt they were *completely* or *mostly in control* of their lives, as shown in Table 1.13: 7.8% reported having *complete control* and 45.5% felt *mostly in control*. More than one in 10 (12.3%) respondents reported they had *almost no control* (9.9%) or *no control* (2.4%) over their life.

A much higher proportion of gender diverse young people reported feeling *almost no control* over their lives (38.4% compared with 13.4% of females and 8.0% of males). Conversely, a much higher proportion of males felt they had *complete control* or were *mostly in control* of their lives (64.2% compared with 47.4% of females and 22.6% of gender diverse respondents).

Table 1.13: Young people's level of control over their life

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Complete control	7.8	4.6	12.3	3.6
Mostly in control	45.5	42.8	51.9	19.0
Some control	34.5	39.2	27.9	39.0
Almost no control	9.9	11.2	6.4	25.7
No control	2.4	2.2	1.6	12.7



ACT

How lonely are young people?

One quarter (24.9%) of young people felt lonely all or most of the time in the past four weeks (see Table 1.14).

- A notably higher proportion of gender diverse respondents felt lonely all or most of the time (47.1% compared with 28.8% of females and 17.5% of males).
- A higher proportion of males felt lonely none of the time (26.1% compared with 12.8% of females and 7.4% of gender diverse young people).

Table 1.14: Young people's level of loneliness

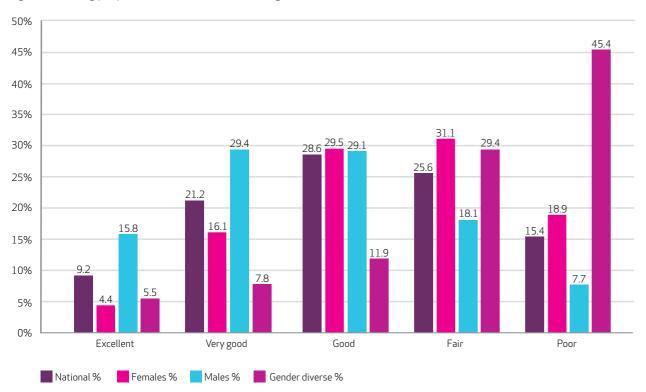
	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
All of the time	5.9	6.3	4.2	17.3
Most of the time	19.0	22.5	13.3	29.8
Some of the time	29.7	32.8	25.9	29.7
A little of the time	27.1	25.6	30.5	15.7
None of the time	18.2	12.8	26.1	7.4

How do young people rate their mental health and wellbeing?

Three in 10(30.4%) young people rated their mental health and wellbeing as better than good (see Figure 1.9): 9.2% rated it as excellent and 21.2% rated it as very good. More than one in seven (15.4%) respondents rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor.

- A notably higher proportion of males rated their mental health and wellbeing positively (45.2% compared with 20.5% of females and 13.3% of gender diverse young people).
- Much higher proportions of gender diverse respondents rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor (45.4% compared with 18.9% of females and 7.7% males).

Figure 1.9: Young people's mental health and wellbeing



How happy are young people?

The majority (53.4%) of young people indicated overall happiness with their lives, as shown in Table 1.15. A notably higher proportion of males reported feeling happy/very happy with their lives as a whole (63.2% compared with 48.5% of females and 22.2% of gender diverse young people), whereas a much greater proportion of gender diverse respondents indicated they felt very sad/sad (41.6% compared with 15.7% of females and 8.7% of males).

Table 1.15: Young people's level of happiness

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Happy/very happy (70-100)	53.4	48.5	63.2	22.2
Not happy or sad (40-60)	32.6	35.8	28.0	36.2
Very sad/sad (0-30)	13.9	15.7	8.7	41.6

Note: Respondents were asked to rate how happy they are with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes happy/very happy; 40-60 signifies not happy or sad; and 0-30 indicates very

How much time do young people spend on screens?

More than one third (35.7%) of young people spent 9 hours or more on screens per day (see Table 1.16). Notably higher proportions of gender diverse respondents spent 9 hours or more on screens (51.2% compared with 35.9% of females and 33.8% of males).

Table 1.16: Young people's screen-time per day

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
No screen time	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.7
1-2 hours	5.5	4.8	6.4	5.2
3-4 hours	17.3	16.2	19.6	9.5
5-6 hours	22.7	23.2	22.8	16.8
7-8 hours	18.6	19.9	17.2	16.6
9 hours or more	35.7	35.9	33.8	51.2

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

Close to half (46.2%) of young people spent 1-2 hours on screens connecting with others. Over four in 10 (41.8%) respondents spent 1-2 hours on screens for entertainment and 30.6% spent 5-6 hours on screens for learning (see Table 1.17).

Table 1.17: Young people's screen-time per day by purpose

National respondents	Connecting with others %	For entertainment %	For learning %
No screen time	6.2	2.2	8.3
1-2 hours	46.2	41.8	21.8
3-4 hours	22.3	29.3	19.4
5-6 hours	11.1	14.3	30.6
7-8 hours	5.4	5.3	14.2
9 hours or more	8.9	7.0	5.8

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day connecting with others, for entertainment and for learning. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

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YOUTH SURVEY 2021

THE SURVEY

OLD

How much time do young people spend sleeping?

A majority (52.8%) of young people reported sleeping on average between 7-8 hours per night (see Table 1.18). A much higher proportion of gender diverse respondents reported sleeping 6 hours or less per night (35.9% compared with 22.9% of females and 18.5% of males).

Table 1.18: Young people's sleep per night

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
6 hours or less	21.6	22.9	18.5	35.9
7-8 hours	52.8	53.9	53.1	37.8
9-10 hours	16.8	16.0	18.3	11.7
11 hours or more	8.8	7.2	10.1	14.7

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend sleeping per night. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings

How much time do young people spend exercising?

One quarter (25.0%) of young people reported exercising on average 1-2 hours per week (see Table 1.19). A higher proportion of gender diverse respondents reported not engaging in any exercise (17.0% compared with 8.0% of females and 5.1% of males). Whereas a much higher proportion of males reported engaging in 9 hours or more of exercise per week (31.7% compared with 19.2% of gender diverse young people and 15.9% of females).

Table 1.19: Young people's exercise per week

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
No exercise	7.2	8.0	5.1	17.0
1-2 hours	25.0	27.9	20.6	30.4
3-4 hours	20.1	23.4	16.2	18.6
5-6 hours	15.1	15.8	15.0	8.4
7-8 hours	9.8	9.1	11.4	6.4
9 hours or more	22.8	15.9	31.7	19.2

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend exercising per week. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.



"|One of the most important issues in Australia today is a slowly decaying environment caused by our failure to elect leaders that support environmental issues."

(Female, 15, NSW, non-Indigenous)

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA AND THE FUTURE

What issues do young people think are the most important in Australia today?

In 2021, young people reported that the top three issues in Australia were COVID-19 (45.7%), the environment (38.0%) and equity and discrimination (35.4%), as shown in Table 1.20.

- More than one third (34.6%) of young people identified mental health as an important national issue.
- Higher proportions of females identified mental health as an important issue facing Australia today (39.0% compared with 30.1% of gender diverse respondents and 29.6% of males).
- Higher proportions of males saw the economy and financial matters as a key issue in Australia (13.1% compared with 9.4% of females and 8.3% of gender diverse young people).
- · A notably higher proportion of gender diverse young people identified LGBTIQA+ issues as an important issue in Australia today (26.0% compared with 7.5% of females and 4.4% of males).
- Equity and discrimination has been in the top three issues of national concern for the past three years, while COVID-19 has continued to grow in importance for young people since 2020.

Table 1.20: Most important issues in Australia today

	National 2021 %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %	National 2020 %	National 2019 %
COVID-19	45.7	46.1	46.8	29.5	38.8	-
The environment	38.0	40.5	34.4	45.1	29.8	34.2
Equity and discrimination	35.4	39.2	30.4	34.1	40.2	24.8
Mental health	34.6	39.0	29.6	30.1	30.6	36.2
Crime, safety and violence	10.9	12.3	9.1	10.1	9.3	12.2
The economy and financial matters	10.9	9.4	13.1	8.3	15.3	14.5
Alcohol and drugs	10.6	9.1	12.8	8.7	10.5	20.8
Homelessness/housing	7.0	7.2	6.9	5.4	8.3	7.9
LGBTIQA+ issues	7.0	7.5	4.4	26.0	4.8	6.8
Education	6.7	6.5	6.7	8.9	7.0	9.1

Note: Respondents were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The responses provided were categorised into the items listed above. Items are listed in order of 2021 national frequency.

"Issues like the inequalities and deaths in custody that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face, as well as governmental inaction on climate change have concerned me."

(Male, 16, SA, non-Indigenous)

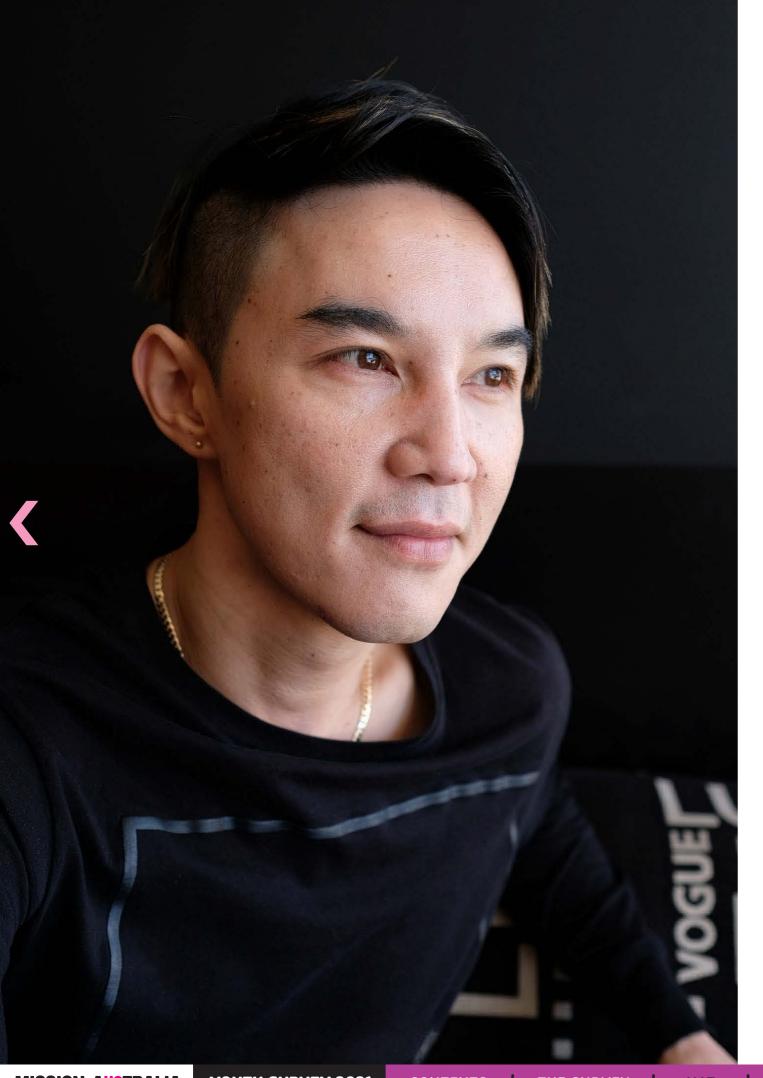


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CONTENTS

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How do young people feel about the future?

The majority (51.6%) of young people felt either very positive or positive about the future (see Table 1.21). However, one in six (16.0%) young people indicated they felt negative or very negative about the future.

- A higher proportion of males reported feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future (58.0% compared with 48.8% of females and 26.6% of gender diverse young people).
- A notably larger proportion of gender diverse young people reported feeling *negative* or *very negative* (40.9% compared with 16.8% of females and 12.1% of males).
- The proportion of respondents reporting feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future has reduced over time from 58.3% in 2019, to 55.5% in 2020 and 51.6% in 2021.

Table 1.21: Feelings about the future

	National 2021 %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %	National 2020 %	National 2019 %
Very positive or positive	51.6	48.8	58.0	26.6	55.5	58.3
Neither positive nor negative	32.5	34.4	29.8	32.5	30.5	29.5
Negative or very negative	16.0	16.8	12.1	40.9	13.9	12.2

Note: Responses for very positive and positive have been aggregated, as have the responses for negative and very negative.



Around one in six young people feel negatively about the future - an increase of 3.8% since 2019.

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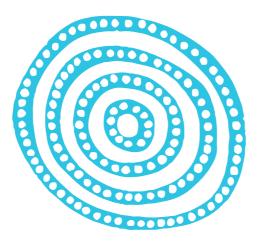
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

- Profile of respondents
- Education and employment
- Values and concerns
- COVID-19
- Unfair treatment

- Sources of support and family's ability to get along
- ► Engagement in activities
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Most important issues in Australia and the future



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander summary



PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 952 (4.8%) young people identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 747 (3.7%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 112 (0.6%) identified as Torres Strait Islander, the remaining 0.5% identified as both.

Gender

Close to half (47.4%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were female, 44.0% were male, 7.0% were gender diverse and 1.6% preferred not to say.

Cultural background

A total of 72 (7.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents stated they were born overseas and 188 (20.1%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the 28 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Indigenous languages, Kriol and Chinese.

A total of 270 (29.2%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported a particular cultural or ethnic group with which they identified strongly. Of the 40 cultural or ethnic groups identified, the most common were (in order of frequency): Australian Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Chinese, Italian and Australian.

A total of 187 (20.3%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents stated one or both of their parents were born overseas.

Disability

A total of 174 (18.5%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents identified as living with disability. A greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported living with disability (18.7% compared with 10.3% of females). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, learning disability, physical disability and deafness or hearing impairment.

952 Aboriginal and/or Torres
Strait Islander young people
took the time to share their
values, aspirations and
issues of concern in Mission
Australia's Youth Survey 2021.



EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Are young people studying?

As indicated in Table 2.1, 70.3% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were studying full-time, which is similar to the 71.1% studying full-time in 2020 (Tiller et al., 2020). A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported studying full-time (77.1% compared with 66.7% of males). Conversely, a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported studying part-time (16.5% compared with 9.6% of females).

Table 2.1: Participation in education

	Non-Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
Studying full-time	85.3	70.3	77.1	66.7
Studying part-time	7.8	13.9	9.6	16.5
Not studying	6.9	15.8	13.3	16.7

How satisfied are young people with their studies?

As in previous years, the majority (54.1%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who were currently studying reported they were either very satisfied or satisfied with their studies. A lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were either very satisfied or satisfied compared with non-Indigenous respondents (54.1% compared with 62.5%). One in nine (11.3%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. As shown in Table 2.2, a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported feeling dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (10.5% compared with 8.8% of males).

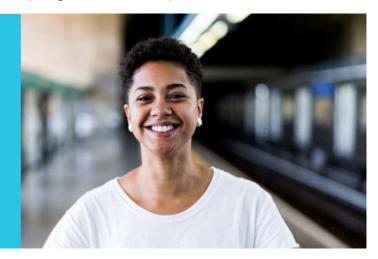
Table 2.2: Satisfaction with studies

	Non-Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
Very satisfied or satisfied	62.5	54.1	54.1	56.8
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	28.5	34.7	35.4	34.4
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	9.0	11.3	10.5	8.8

Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying. Responses for very satisfied and satisfied have been aggregated, as have the responses for dissatisfied and very dissatisfied.

Of those still at school, the majority (91.2%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. Close to three times the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males stated they were not planning on completing Year 12 (12.8% compared with 4.6% of females).

A majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were studying full-time and most intended to complete Year 12.



MISSION AUSTRALIA

YOUTH SURVEY 2021

CONTENTS

THE SURVEY

AT

ATSI

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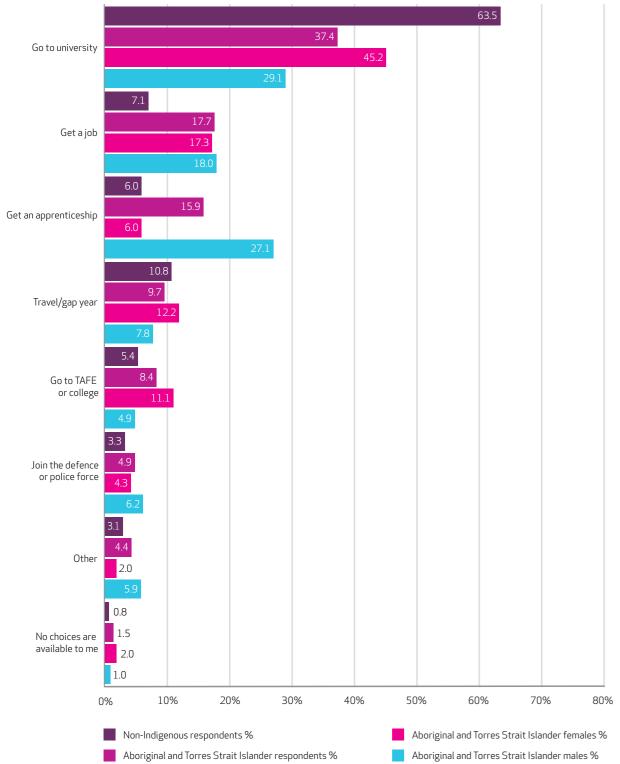
AS

What are young people's plans after school?

Close to four in 10 (37.4%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people planned to *go to university* after school as shown in Figure 2.1. Around one in six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported plans to *get a job* (17.7%) or *get an apprenticeship* (15.9%) after school.

While the most frequently reported plan among all genders was to *go to university* after finishing school, a higher proportion of females indicated they planned to do so (45.2% compared with 29.1% of males). More than four times the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported plans to *get an apprenticeship* (27.1% compared with 6.0% of females).

Figure 2.1: Plans after leaving school



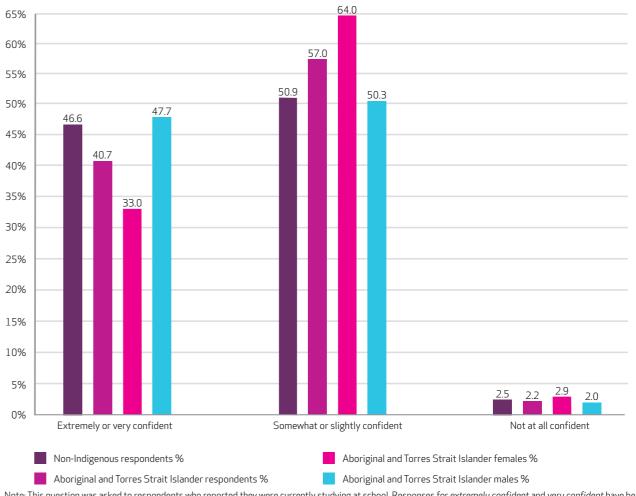
Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Respondents were only able to choose one option from the above list of predetermined items. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

How confident are young people in achieving their study or work goals?

Four in 10 (40.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study or work goals (see Figure 2.2).

• A notably higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported they were extremely or very confident in their ability to achieve their study or work goals after school (47.7% compared with 33.0% of females).

Figure 2.2: Confidence in achieving study or work goals



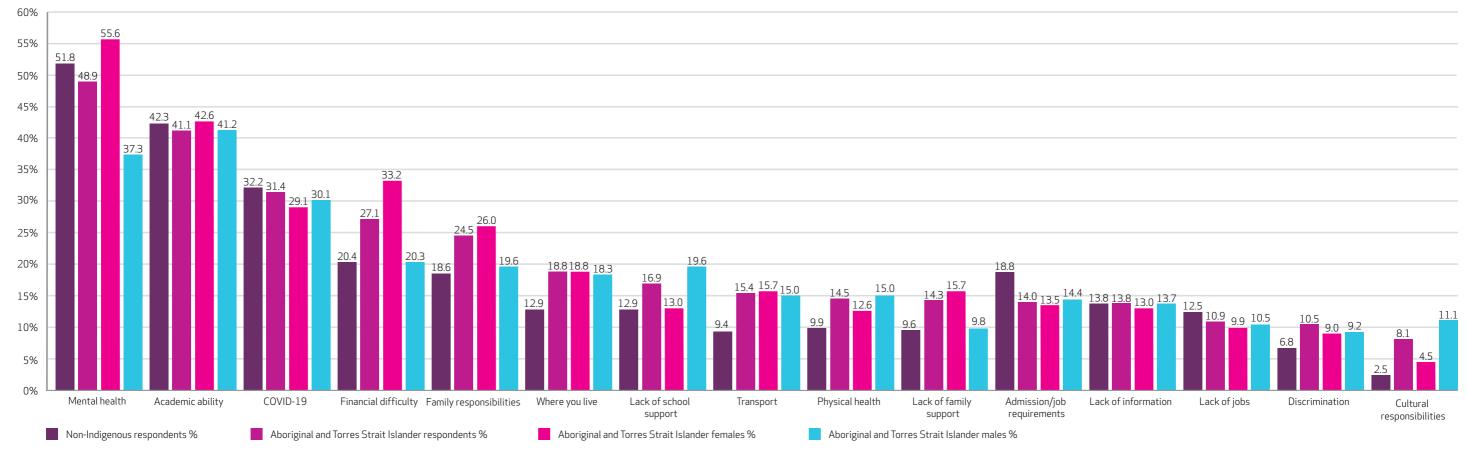
Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Responses for extremely confident and very confident have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat confident and slightly confident.

What are the barriers to achieving study or work goals?

More than half (53.2%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt there were barriers that impacted on their achievement of their study or work goals. As shown in Figure 2.3, mental health (48.9%), academic ability (41.1%) and COVID-19 (31.4%) were the top three barriers impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people's achievement of study or work goals.

- More than one quarter (27.1%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents felt *financial difficulty* was a barrier to achieving study or work goals.
- A notably higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females felt mental health (55.6% compared with 37.3% of males) and financial difficulty (33.2% compared with 20.3% of males) were barriers impacting on the achievement of study or work goals.
- Higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males felt cultural responsibilities (11.1% compared with 4.5% of females) and lack of school support (19.6% compared with 13.0% of females) were barriers impacting on the achievement of study or work goals.

Figure 2.3: Barriers to achieving study or work goals



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying and felt there were barriers that impacted the achievement of study or work goals. Respondents were able to choose more than one option from the predetermined list of items. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

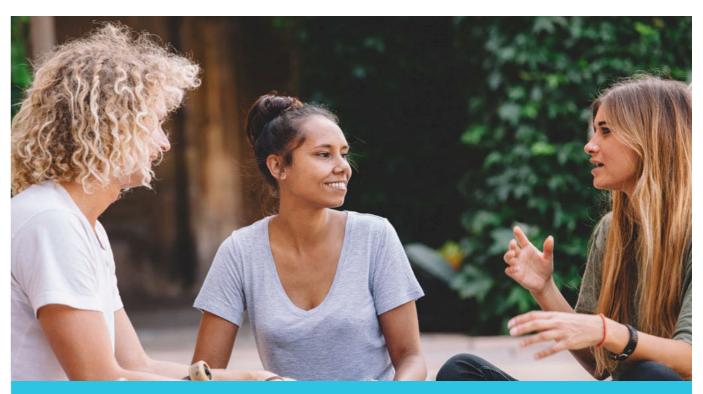
Are young people employed?

Close to four in 10 (38.4%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported they were employed part-time, (see Table 2.3). Close to six in 10 (58.9%) indicated they were not in paid employment: 41.3% stated they were looking for work, while 17.6% were neither working nor looking for work. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents in part-time employment in 2021 was slightly higher than in 2020 (38.4% compared with 35.3% respectively) (Tiller et al., 2020). A small proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who reported being in paid employment were employed full-time, this was slightly higher than in 2020 (2.7% compared with 1.3% respectively) (Tiller et al., 2020).

Table 2.3: Participation in paid employment

	Non-Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
Employed full-time	0.5	2.7	1.9	2.9
Employed part-time	45.7	38.4	42.7	36.3
Not in paid employment, looking for work	31.3	41.3	42.4	38.9
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	22.5	17.6	12.9	21.9

Note: Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average, how many hours they worked per week. Part-time employment is considered to be less than 35 hours per week, while full-time employment is considered to be 35 hours or more.



"This past year I have experienced home and mental health struggles. This has affected my ability to stay on top of all my school work."

(Female, 15, NSW, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)

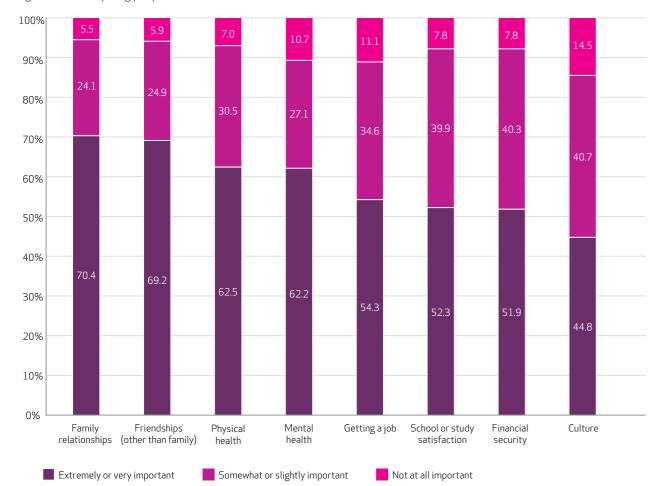
VALUES AND CONCERNS

What do young people value?

The three most highly valued items for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were family relationships, friendships (other than family) and physical health (see Figure 2.4). The next most highly valued items were mental health and getting a job.

- Seven in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents saw family relationships (70.4%) and friendships (other than family) (69.2%) as extremely or very important.
- More than six in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt physical health (62.5%) and mental health (62.2%) were extremely or very important.

Figure 2.4: What young people value



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely and very important for each item.

Family relationships and friendships (other than family) was rated as the most important item by both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males, as shown in Table 2.4.

- Notably higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females placed a high value upon school or study satisfaction (59.9% compared with 48.4% of males).
- Higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males rated physical health as extremely or very important (66.5% compared with 62.9%).

Table 2.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Family relationships	73.8	23.7	2.6
Friendships (other than family)	70.6	25.0	4.4
Physical health	62.9	32.0	5.0
Mental health	68.3	24.9	6.8
Getting a job	58.9	33.8	7.4
School or study satisfaction	59.9	36.4	3.7
Financial security	55.3	39.9	4.8
Culture	46.6	43.6	9.9
Males	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Family relationships	71.0	23.8	5.3
Friendships (other than family)	70.9	25.1	4.0
			1.0
Physical health	66.5	28.0	5.6
Physical health Mental health	66.5 60.7	28.0 28.6	
Mental health			5.6
Mental health Getting a job	60.7	28.6	5.6
•	60.7 53.1	28.6	5.6 10.7 12.5

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.



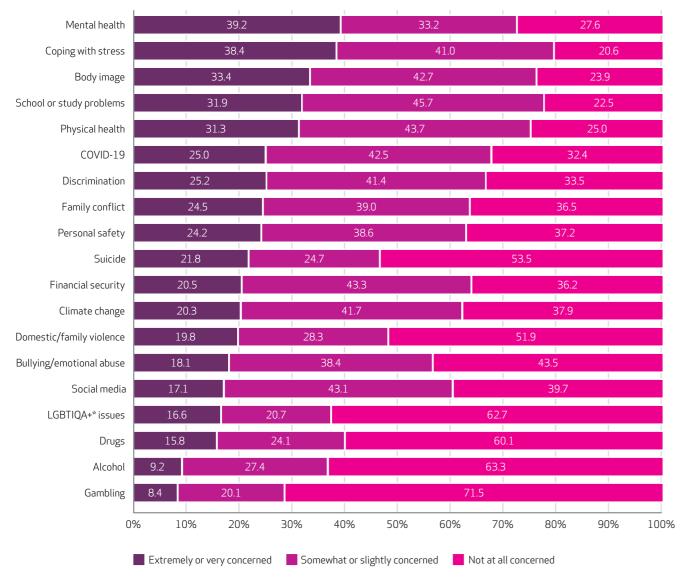
Family relationships and friendships were extremely or very important to more than 70% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

The top three issues of personal concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were mental health, coping with stress and body image, as shown in Figure 2.5. The next most concerning issues were school or study problems and physical health.

- Close to four in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were extremely or very concerned about mental health (39.2%) and coping with stress (38.4%).
- One third (33.4%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were extremely or very concerned about body image.

Figure 2.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely concerned and very concerned for each item. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

The top issue of personal concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were mental health, coping with stress and body image. Whereas the top three issues for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males were physical health, mental health and coping with stress, as shown in Table 2.5. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported higher levels of personal concern about almost all issues.

• Compared with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males, notably higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were extremely or very concerned about body image (44.3% compared with 19.1%), mental health (50.3% compared with 26.6%) and coping with stress (48.5% compared with 26.1%).

Table 2.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

Females	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Mental health	50.3	33.6	16.1
Coping with stress	48.5	41.5	10.0
Body image	44.3	44.8	10.9
School or study problems	39.6	47.7	12.7
Physical health	34.9	47.7	17.4
COVID-19	27.4	51.0	21.6
Discrimination	26.1	48.7	25.2
Family conflict	32.1	39.3	28.6
Personal safety	28.7	40.5	30.8
Suicide	25.0	27.1	47.9
Financial security	23.3	47.3	29.4
Climate change	19.4	49.8	30.9
Domestic/family violence	21.9	31.9	46.3
Bullying/emotional abuse	20.6	45.1	34.3
Social media	19.2	49.9	30.9
LGBTIQA+* issues	13.6	26.6	59.8
Drugs	16.1	25.6	58.3
Alcohol	8.3	30.0	61.8
Gambling	5.1	22.3	72.6



"I have dealt with the stress of school and juggling work and assessments and also dealing with my mental health. I have never dealt with these feelings and thoughts, so that was a challenge to work around and discover, but recently I have been feeling much better."

(Female, 15, QLD, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)

Table 2.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

Males	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Mental health	26.6	36.0	37.5
Coping with stress	26.1	43.5	30.3
Body image	19.1	43.7	37.2
School or study problems	23.5	44.8	31.8
Physical health	27.6	40.9	31.6
COVID-19	19.8	36.9	43.3
Discrimination	20.4	37.2	42.5
Family conflict	14.9	39.3	45.8
Personal safety	18.5	36.7	44.9
Suicide	14.7	23.4	61.8
Financial security	15.4	41.4	43.2
Climate change	16.5	36.7	46.9
Domestic/family violence	13.9	26.7	59.4
Bullying/emotional abuse	12.4	34.5	53.1
Social media	12.0	38.2	49.9
LGBTIQA+* issues	9.8	16.5	73.7
Drugs	12.1	24.5	63.4
Alcohol	7.9	25.5	66.6
Gambling	8.7	18.4	72.9

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait respondents. *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.



"[My biggest personal issue is] the workload at school... To achieve good grades in my subjects the workload is disgusting. I have to study until 1am most nights and this results in major sleep deprivation, depression and physical illnesses from stress."

(Male, 16, QLD, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)

COVID-19

How has COVID-19 impacted on young people?

The top three areas Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people identified as being negatively impacted by COVID-19 were participation in activities (63.6%), education (61.6%) and physical health (49.3%) (see Table 2.6). A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people identified their housing was negatively impacted by COVID-19 compared to non-Indigenous respondents (16.0% compared with 6.3%).

- Compared with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males, females experienced greater negative impacts of COVID-19 across all areas.
- A notably higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females identified their *mental health* was negatively impacted by COVID-19 (54.0% compared with 35.6% of males).

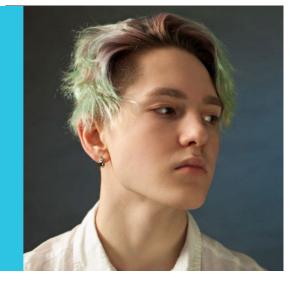
Table 2.6: Impact of COVID-19 on young people

	Non-Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
Participation in activities	68.7	63.6	66.1	61.6
Education	62.5	61.6	65.2	57.5
Physical health	46.0	49.3	52.8	45.8
Mental health	50.7	45.7	54.0	35.6
Family	37.7	43.6	45.3	41.1
Friendships	33.7	37.0	38.2	33.7
Employment	29.9	33.6	35.6	28.5
Financial security	24.1	30.1	31.0	26.3
Housing	6.3	16.0	14.1	13.9

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, the ways COVID-19 has negatively impacted them. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

"[COVID-19] has impacted the stability of many aspects of my life. Socially, I struggle to meet new people and form new connections. Being in and out of lockdown is both exhausting and takes a toll on my social life. That affects my mental health, which affects all aspects of my life, particularly my motivation."

(Male, 15, VIC, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)



UNFAIR TREATMENT

Have young people been treated unfairly?

Close to half (47.1%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (47.4% compared with 41.8% of males).

Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify whether they had been treated unfairly due to their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason.

Of the 47.1% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who had been treated unfairly in the past year (see Table 2.7):

- Notably higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females had been treated unfairly due to their gender (32.7% compared with 14.9% of males).
- Higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females had also been treated unfairly due to their *mental health* (29.8% compared with 20.2% of males) and *sexuality* (22.1% compared with 12.5% of males).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported they had been treated unfairly due to their race/cultural background (57.7% compared with 49.5% of females).

Table 2.7: Reasons for being treated unfairly

	Non-Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
Race/cultural background	25.9	52.5	49.5	57.7
Gender	37.9	29.1	32.7	14.9
Mental health	27.6	28.3	29.8	20.2
Age	17.9	24.2	22.1	20.8
Sexuality	21.5	24.2	22.1	12.5
Other	21.7	17.7	17.3	15.5
Financial background	6.5	14.1	10.6	14.9
Disability	6.6	12.8	7.2	13.1
Religion	11.4	12.1	6.3	13.7

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

Young people who responded that they had been treated unfairly due to their race/cultural background were offered an additional question about the nature and experience of the unfair treatment, (see Table 2.8). Of these Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, close to nine in 10 (88.2%) had been insulted or had hurtful comments said to them. Seven in 10 (69.4%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people had been harassed or intimidated and six in 10 (60.1%) had felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media. Of this group:

- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females *felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media* (67.1% compared with 45.1% of males).
- More than seven in 10 (71.8%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females had been harassed or intimidated (compared with 60.9% of males).
- One third (33.7%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males experienced physical violence (compared with 16.3% of females).

Table 2.8: Experiences of unfair treatment due to race/cultural background

	Non-Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
Been insulted or had hurtful comments said to you	89.0	88.2	90.4	86.2
Been harassed or intimidated	61.4	69.4	71.8	60.9
Felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media	53.4	60.1	67.1	45.1
Received insulting or hurtful comments online	41.2	57.9	53.4	53.9
Felt unwelcome in school, employment or services	45.2	57.7	62.2	50.5
Been excluded from social events or activities	25.7	37.9	33.7	30.7
Felt unwelcome or excluded from sporting clubs or groups	23.1	32.7	25.9	27.3
Experienced physical violence	12.2	31.8	16.3	33.7

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Close to six in 10 (58.3%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year because of their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason. A much higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (64.4% compared with 51.9% of males).

What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

Of the respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 59.8% reported witnessing unfair treatment due to a person's race/cultural background (see Table 2.9). More than four in 10 (42.8%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality and more than one third (36.2%) reported it was due to a person's gender.

- Close to half (47.0%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality (compared with 35.3% of males).
- A notably higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported witnessing unfair treatment due to a person's financial background (23.2% compared with 12.1% of females).

Table 2.9: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

	Non-Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
Race/cultural background	57.6	59.8	61.2	63.3
Sexuality	48.3	42.8	47.0	35.3
Gender	44.2	36.2	34.5	34.8
Disability	32.3	35.8	34.2	33.3
Mental health	26.2	25.6	26.7	20.8
Religion	25.6	21.0	18.1	24.2
Age	16.7	18.5	16.0	18.8
Financial background	14.9	17.9	12.1	23.2
Other	9.5	10.2	8.5	8.7

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

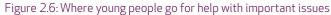
MISSION AUSTRALIA YOUTH SURVEY 2021 CONTENTS | THE SURVEY | NAT | ATSI | ACT | NSW | NT | QLD | SA | TAS | VIC | WA

SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND FAMILY'S ABILITY TO GET ALONG

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

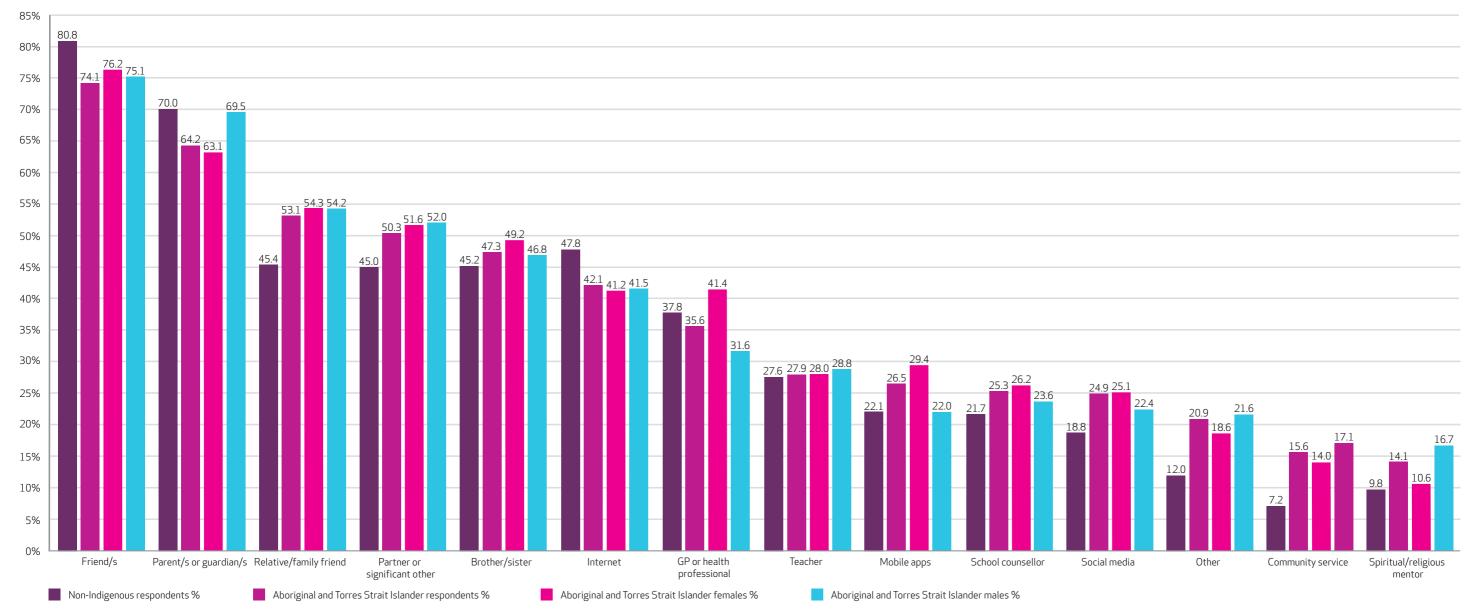
As shown in Figure 2.6, friend/s (74.1%), parent/s or guardian/s (64.2%) and relative/family friend (53.1%) were the three most frequently named sources of help for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

- Half (50.3%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people would turn to a *partner or significant other* as a source of help with important issues.
- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females said they would turn to a *GP* or health professional (41.4% compared with 31.6% of males) for support with important issues in their lives.
- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males stated they would go to their parent/s or guardian/s (69.5% compared with 63.1% of females) and a spiritual/religious mentor (16.7% compared with 10.6% of females).





Close personal relationships are important sources of support, with a majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people seeking help from friend/s, parent/s or guardian/s and a relative/family friend.



Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, where they go for help with important issues. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents

MISSION AUSTRALIA YOUTH SURVEY 2021 CONTENTS | THE SURVEY | NAT | ATSI | ACT | NSW | NT | QLD | SA | TAS | VIC | WA

How do young people rate their family's ability to get along?

Four in 10 (42.1%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good (see Figure 2.7). However, three in 10 (30.5%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated their family's ability to get along was either fair or poor. A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good (47.4% compared with 38.3% of females), while a much higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females rated their family's ability to get along as fair or poor (34.8% compared with 23.6% of males).

Figure 2.7: Family's ability to get along with one another





"My family has become less of a family, and at the moment I am struggling and really need them or someone."

(Female, 15, NSW, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)

ENGAGEMENT IN ACTIVITIES

What activities are young people involved in?

Over the past year, the top three activities Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were engaged in were sports (as a participant) (67.3%), sports (as a spectator) (64.7%) and arts/cultural/music activities (47.8%), as shown in Table 2.10.

- More than four in 10 (42.1%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported they had participated in *volunteer work* in the past year.
- One third (33.4%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they had taken part in student leadership activities.
- Notably higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported taking part in *sports* (as a spectator) (71.9% compared with 59.9% of females) in the past year.
- Higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported taking part in arts/cultural/music activities (51.6% compared with 42.5% of males) in the past year.

Table 2.10: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	Non-Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
Sports (as a participant)	71.2	67.3	65.1	72.3
Sports (as a spectator)	64.6	64.7	59.9	71.9
Arts/cultural/music activities	43.1	47.8	51.6	42.5
Volunteer work	41.1	42.1	43.5	40.1
Student leadership activities	34.0	33.4	33.6	31.9
Youth groups/activities	24.2	32.0	33.0	29.3
Environmental groups/activities	18.7	25.7	23.3	25.9
Religious groups/activities	23.4	24.9	21.4	25.6
Political groups/activities	9.1	13.8	11.5	12.1

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what activities they were involved in during the past year. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.



Around two thirds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have engaged in *sports as a participant* and/or *as a spectator*.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

How stressed are young people?

More than four in 10 (43.4%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt stressed either all of the time or most of the time in the past four weeks (see Table 2.11).

- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females felt stressed *all of the time* or *most of the time* (53.1% compared with 30.7% of males).
- Conversely, more than seven times the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males felt stressed *none of the time* (12.0% compared with 1.6% of females).

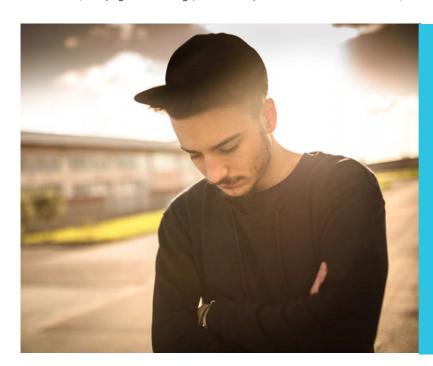
Table 2.11: Young people's level of stress

	Non-Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
All of the time	11.4	16.6	20.0	9.1
Most of the time	33.2	26.8	33.1	21.6
Some of the time	32.1	29.9	27.6	33.7
A little of the time	18.9	19.6	17.7	23.6
None of the time	4.3	7.1	1.6	12.0

What do young people do to reduce stress?

The top three ways Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported reducing stress was to sleep (58.9%), do something relaxing (55.3%) and play games or watch TV/movies (52.4%) (see Table 2.12). Double the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported they would consume alcohol and/or other drugs (22.9% compared with 11.5% of non-Indigenous respondents) to reduce stress.

- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported they would *sleep* (69.9% compared with 49.1% of males) and *do something relaxing* (62.0% compared with 49.6% of males) to reduce stress.
- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported they would do a hobby (51.4% compared with 26.9% of females) and physical activity (55.3% compared with 37.4% of females) to reduce stress.



"Stress has been a big issue over the past year, but I relieve that stress by talking to my family and playing sports."

(Male, 16, QLD, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)

Table 2.12: Ways young people reduce stress

	Non-Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
Sleep	59.6	58.9	69.9	49.1
Do something relaxing	64.0	55.3	62.0	49.6
Play games or watch TV/movies	62.1	52.4	48.5	58.0
Spend time online	63.2	50.2	51.7	50.9
Physical activity	49.4	44.7	37.4	55.3
Spend time with friends or family	47.2	42.4	42.4	44.0
Do a hobby	46.1	38.4	26.9	51.4
Consume alcohol and/or other drugs	11.5	22.9	20.5	21.9
Nothing	16.4	17.6	13.0	18.9
Other	6.5	10.6	8.4	9.6
Take medication prescribed by a health professional	6.0	9.6	11.4	5.9
Reach out to a professional	6.8	8.6	9.6	5.9

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what they do to reduce stress. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

How much control do young people feel they have over their life?

Close to half (45.6%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt they had control over their life, as shown in Table 2.13: 10.6% reported having *complete control* and 35.0% felt *mostly in control*. Close to one in five (19.0%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported they had *almost no control* (11.5%) or *no control* (7.5%) over their life.

- A much higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males felt they had *complete control* or were mostly in control of their lives (59.1% compared with 37.6% of females).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported feeling *almost no control* over their lives (18.7% compared with 11.7% of males).

Table 2.13: Young people's level of control over their life

	Non-Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
Complete control	7.7	10.6	6.2	16.9
Mostly in control	46.1	35.0	31.4	42.2
Some control	34.4	35.4	43.6	29.3
Almost no control	9.8	11.5	14.1	7.2
No control	2.1	7.5	4.6	4.5

How lonely are young people?

Close to one third (32.9%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt lonely all or most of the time (see Table 2.14).

- A notably higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females felt lonely *all* or *most of the time* (35.5% compared with 24.3% of males).
- A notably higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males felt lonely *none of the time* (26.8% compared with 15.0% of females).

Table 2.14: Young people's level of loneliness

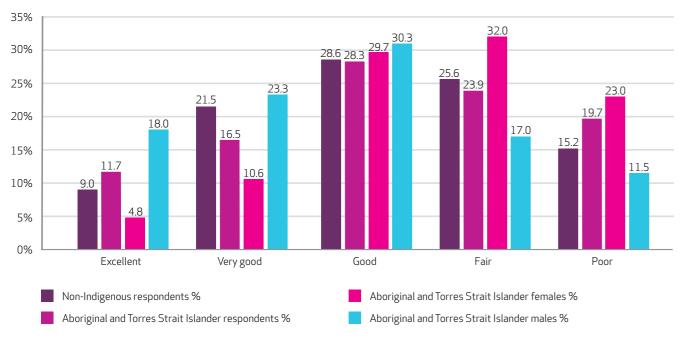
	Non-Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
All of the time	5.6	11.3	9.2	8.3
Most of the time	18.9	21.6	26.3	16.0
Some of the time	29.8	26.9	28.8	26.1
A little of the time	27.5	20.5	20.7	22.8
None of the time	18.1	19.7	15.0	26.8

How do young people rate their mental health and wellbeing?

Close to three in 10 (28.2%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people rated their mental health and wellbeing as better than good (see Figure 2.8): 11.7% rated it as excellent and 16.5% rated it as very good. One in five (19.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor.

- A notably higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males rated their mental health and wellbeing as excellent or very good (41.3% compared with 15.4% of females).
- Much higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females rated their mental health and wellbeing as *poor* (23.0% compared with 11.5% males).

Figure 2.8: Young people's mental health and wellbeing



How happy are young people?

More than four in 10 (42.4%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated overall happiness with their lives, as shown in Table 2.15. A notably higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported feeling happy/very happy with their lives as a whole (52.1% compared with 35.8% of females), whereas a much greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females indicated they felt very sad/sad (23.3% compared with 16.7% of males).

Table 2.15: Young people's level of happiness

	Non-Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Strait Islander respondents %		Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
Happy/very happy (70-100)	54.0	42.4	35.8	52.1
Not happy or sad (40-60)	32.5	34.6	40.9	31.2
Very sad/sad (0-30)	13.5	22.9	23.3	16.7

Note: Respondents were asked to rate how happy they are with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes happy/very happy; 40-60 signifies not happy or sad; and 0-30 indicates very sad/sad.

How much time do young people spend on screens?

Close to four in 10 (38.8%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people spent 9 hours or more on screens per day (see Table 2.16). Higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males spent 9 hours or more on screens (39.1% compared with 34.9% of females).

Table 2.16: Young people's screen-time per day

	Non-Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
No screen time	0.2	0.8	0.7	1.0
1-2 hours	5.4	7.0	5.5	7.9
3-4 hours	17.3	17.1	15.7	20.6
5-6 hours	22.8	22.7	26.9	20.4
7-8 hours	18.9	13.6	16.4	11.1
9 hours or more	35.5	38.8	34.9	39.1

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.



Compared with non-Indigenous young people, a smaller proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt happy/very happy.

Around one third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people spent 1-2 hours on *screens connecting with others* (34.5%) and *for entertainment* (32.6%). Close to three in 10 (28.5%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents spent 5-6 hours on *screens for learning* (see Table 2.17).

Table 2.17: Young people's screen-time per day by purpose

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents	Connecting with others %	For entertainment %	For learning %
No screen time	9.6	4.0	14.9
1-2 hours	34.5	32.6	22.4
3-4 hours	20.2	24.9	14.9
5-6 hours	16.0	16.9	28.5
7-8 hours	5.2	6.9	11.7
9 hours or more	14.5	14.8	7.6

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day connecting with others, for entertainment and for learning. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

How much time do young people spend sleeping?

Close to four in 10 (38.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported sleeping on average between 7-8 hours per night (see Table 2.18).

Table 2.18: Young people's sleep per night

	Non-Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
6 hours or less	21.2	30.4	29.6	28.0
7-8 hours	53.7	38.7	42.1	39.6
9-10 hours	16.7	17.6	17.8	17.9
11 hours or more	8.4	13.3	10.5	14.5

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend sleeping per night. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.



"My biggest personal challenge is self-care, so eating, exercising, getting out of bed and hygiene. I think it's just like a mental block in your head that's stopping you from doing those things."

(Female, 15, QLD, Aboriginal and/or Torres
Strait Islander)



"[My biggest personal issue is] getting enough physical exercise. 60 minutes a day seems difficult to aim for."

(Female, 15, VIC, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)

How much time do young people spend exercising?

One quarter (24.9%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported exercising on average 9 hours or more per week (see Table 2.19). However, a larger proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported engaging in no exercise per week (11.3% compared with 7.0% of non-Indigenous respondents). A notably higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported engaging in 9 hours or more of exercise per week (31.7% compared with 18.0% of females). Conversely, a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported engaging in no exercise per week (13.0% compared with 7.9% males).

Table 2.19: Young people's exercise per week

	Non-Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %
No exercise	7.0	11.3	13.0	7.9
1-2 hours	25.2	23.9	26.0	20.4
3-4 hours	20.4	16.9	20.7	14.0
5-6 hours	15.0	15.3	15.7	16.7
7-8 hours	10.0	7.6	6.6	9.3
9 hours or more	22.5	24.9	18.0	31.7

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend exercising per week. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA AND THE FUTURE

What issues do young people think are the most important in Australia today?

In 2021, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported that the top three issues in Australia were *COVID-19* (42.5%), equity and discrimination (32.5%) and mental health (29.0%), as shown in Table 2.20.

- Close to one quarter (23.4%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported the environment as an important national issue
- Higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females identified mental health (37.6% compared with 23.0% of males) and equity and discrimination (38.1% compared with 28.3% of males) as important issues facing Australia today
- Equity and discrimination and mental health have been in the top three issues of national concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander repondents for the past three years, while COVID-19 has continued to grow in importance since 2020.

Table 2.20: Most important issues in Australia today

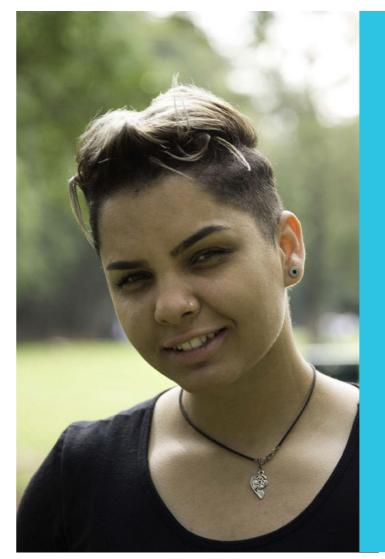
	Non- Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2021 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2020 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2019 %
COVID-19	45.7	42.5	47.2	40.8	37.6	-
Equity and discrimination	35.6	32.5	38.1	28.3	37.9	24.3
Mental health	34.9	29.0	37.6	23.0	23.6	28.9
The environment	38.9	23.4	24.1	23.0	18.5	23.7
Alcohol and drugs	10.5	13.0	12.9	12.5	12.9	28.1
Crime, safety and violence	11.0	10.4	12.9	6.7	11.1	14.4
Homelessness/housing	7.0	8.5	11.2	6.7	6.5	8.0
The economy and financial matters	11.0	8.1	7.6	8.2	12.3	10.5
Education	6.6	7.7	7.1	8.5	6.6	8.5
LGBTIQA+ issues	7.0	6.5	5.1	4.4	4.0	6.0

Note: Respondents were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The responses provided were categorised into the items listed above. Items are listed in order of 2021 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.



"Mental health is a large issue and brings many people to harm themselves. People need to be more aware of people's situation and be supportive."

(Male, 15, QLD, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)



"In the past year, the biggest challenge I have faced is discrimination against my sexuality, my culture and my gender. People outside of heteronormative society need to be normalised and more represented in media, parliament and everyday life, so the generations that are growing up now do not discriminate/assault people outside of their 'norm'."

(Female, 15, SA, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)

How do young people feel about the future?

Close to half (47.6%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future, as shown in Table 2.21. However, more than one in six (17.4%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they felt *negative* or *very negative* about the future.

- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future (52.7% compared with 44.2% of females).
- The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reporting feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future has reduced over time from 52.1% in 2019, to 48.8% in 2020 and 47.6% in 2021.

Table 2.21: Feelings about the future

	Non- Indigenous respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2021 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2020 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2019 %
Very positive or positive	51.8	47.6	44.2	52.7	48.8	52.1
Neither positive nor negative	32.4	35.1	40.5	31.8	31.3	31.6
Negative or very negative	15.9	17.4	15.3	15.4	19.8	16.3

Note: Responses for very positive and positive have been aggregated, as have the responses for negative and very negative.

Australian Capital Territory

- Profile of respondents
- Education and employment
- Values and concerns
- COVID-19
- Unfair treatment

- Sources of support and family's ability to get along
- ► Engagement in activities
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Most important issues in Australia and the future



Australian Capital Territory



PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 764 young people from the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) aged between 15 and 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2021*.

Gender

Close to six in 10 (58.2%) ACT respondents were male, 36.4% were female, 3.6% were gender diverse and 1.9% preferred not to say.

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 25 (3.3%) young people from the ACT identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. A similar proportion of ACT females and males identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (3.6% and 3.2% respectively).

Cultural background

A total of 82 (11.0%) ACT respondents stated they were born overseas and 125 (16.6%) ACT young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the more than 40 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Filipino/Tagalog, Italian and Spanish.

A total of 148 (19.7%) ACT young people reported a particular cultural or ethnic group with which they identified strongly. Of the 55 cultural or ethnic groups identified, the most common were (in order of frequency): Filipino, Italian and Indian.

A total of 259 (34.6%) ACT respondents stated one or both of their parents were born overseas.

Disability

A total of 76 (10.1%) ACT respondents identified as living with disability. A greater proportion of males from the ACT reported living with disability (10.3% compared with 6.6% of females). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism and learning disability.

764 young people from the ACT took the time to share their values, aspirations and issues of concern in Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2021.



EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Are young people studying?

A majority (87.8%) of young people from the ACT were studying full-time, which is slightly lower than the 88.8% studying full-time in 2020 (Tiller et al., 2020) (see Table 3.1). A higher proportion of ACT females reported studying full-time (92.7% compared with 84.7% of males). Conversely, double the proportion of ACT males reported studying part-time (10.3% compared with 5.1% of females).

Table 3.1: Participation in education

	National %	ACT %	Females %	Males %
Studying full-time	84.5	87.8	92.7	84.7
Studying part-time	8.1	8.2	5.1	10.3
Not studying	7.4	4.1	2.2	5.0

How satisfied are young people with their studies?

As in previous years, the majority (56.7%) of ACT respondents who were currently studying reported they were either very satisfied or satisfied with their studies. One in 10 (9.5%) ACT young people indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Satisfaction with studies

	National %	ACT %	Females %	Males %
Very satisfied or satisfied	62.5	56.7	54.6	58.6
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	28.5	33.9	36.1	32.0
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	9.0	9.5	9.3	9.4

Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying. Responses for very satisfied and satisfied have been aggregated, as have the responses for dissatisfied and very dissatisfied.

Of those still at school, the majority (98.9%) stated they intended to complete Year 12.

"Online learning really impacted both my mental wellbeing and my physical wellbeing. During online learning I fell behind at school and was seriously stressed, I don't want to do it again."

(Female, 15, ACT, non-Indigenous)



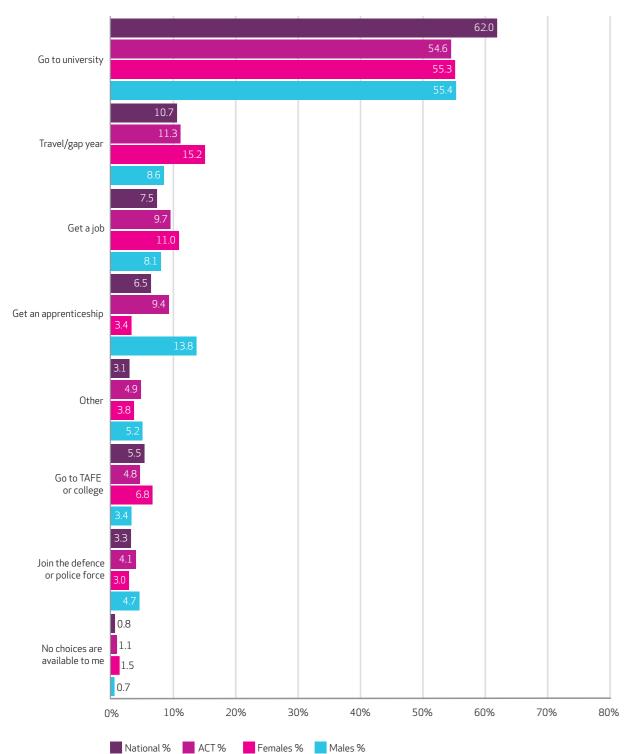
WA

What are young people's plans after school?

More than half (54.6%) of ACT young people planned to *go to university* after school, as shown in Figure 3.1. More than one in 10 (11.3%) ACT respondents reported *travel/gap year* plans after school, and close to one in 10 (9.7%) indicated plans to *get a job*.

A higher proportion of females from the ACT reported *travel/gap year* plans (15.2% compared with 8.6% of males). Four times the proportion of ACT males reported plans to *get an apprenticeship* (13.8% compared with 3.4% of females).

Figure 3.1: Plans after leaving school



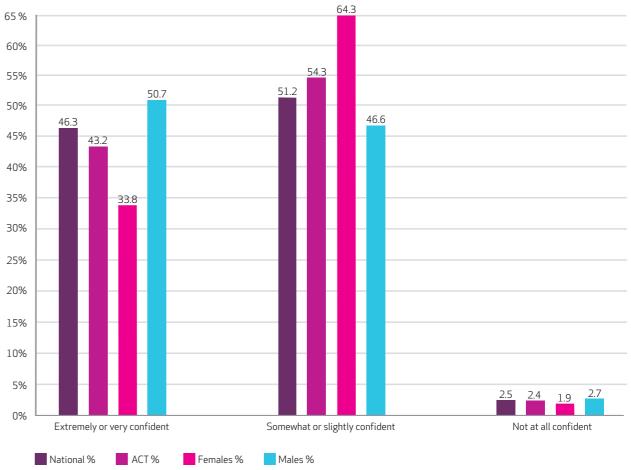
Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Respondents were only able to choose one option from the above list of predetermined items. Items are listed in order of ACT frequency.

How confident are young people in achieving their study or work goals?

More than four in 10 (43.2%) ACT young people indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study or work goals (see Figure 3.2).

• A notably higher proportion of ACT males reported they were extremely or very confident in their ability to achieve their study or work goals after school (50.7% compared with 33.8% of females).

Figure 3.2: Confidence in achieving study or work goals



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Responses for extremely confident and very confident have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat confident and slightly confident.



"I'm extremely worried that the amount of stress I continue to feel due to the presence of a global pandemic will affect my studies. What's really quite awful is that these things continue to be normalized and students are expected to 'carry on'. I don't know if I'm going to meet the admission requirements for university."

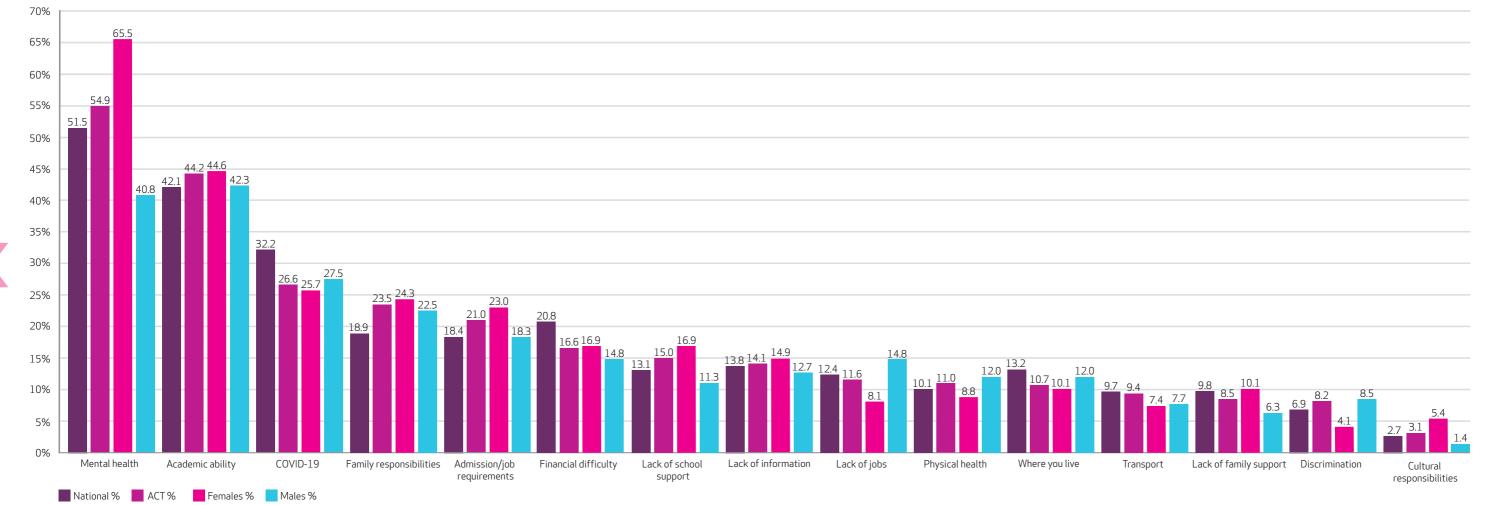
(Female, 15, ACT, non-Indigenous)

What are the barriers to achieving study or work goals?

More than four in 10 (44.1%) ACT young people felt there were barriers that impacted on their achievement of their study or work goals. As shown in Figure 3.3, *mental health* (54.9%), *academic ability* (44.2%) and *COVID-19* (26.6%) were the top three barriers impacting on young people's achievement of study or work goals.

- A notably higher proportion of ACT females felt *mental health* was a barrier impacting on the achievement of study or work goals (65.5% compared with 40.8% of males).
- A higher proportion of ACT males felt *lack of jobs* was a barrier impacting on the achievement of study or work goals (14.8% compared with 8.1% of females).

Figure 3.3: Barriers to achieving study or work goals



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying and felt there were barriers that impacted the achievement of study or work goals. Respondents were able to choose more than one option from the predetermined list of items. Items are listed in order of ACT frequency.



Of the 44.1% of ACT young people who felt there were barriers to achieving their study or work goals, more than half identified mental health as a barrier.

"[My biggest personal issue is] having a lack of motivation to complete my school work or strive to better myself physically and mentally. This also led me to fall behind on application stuff for 2022 and my studies."

[Male, 16, ACT, non-Indigenous]



Are young people employed?

More than half (53.7%) of ACT young people reported they were employed part-time, as shown in Table 3.3. Close to half (46.2%) indicated they were not in paid employment of any kind: 31.0% stated they were looking for work, while 15.2% were neither working nor looking for work. A small proportion of ACT young people who reported being in paid employment were employed full-time (0.1%). A higher proportion of males from the ACT reported not looking for work (18.1% compared with 10.0% of females).

Table 3.3: Participation in paid employment

	National %	ACT %	Females %	Males %
Employed full-time	0.6	0.1	0.0	0.2
Employed part-time	45.4	53.7	58.4	52.0
Not in paid employment, looking for work	31.8	31.0	31.6	29.6
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	22.2	15.2	10.0	18.1

Note: Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average, how many hours they worked per week. Part-time employment is considered to be less than 35 hours per week, while full-time employment is considered to be 35 hours or more.



Close to half of ACT young people were not in paid employment, with more the 30% looking for work.

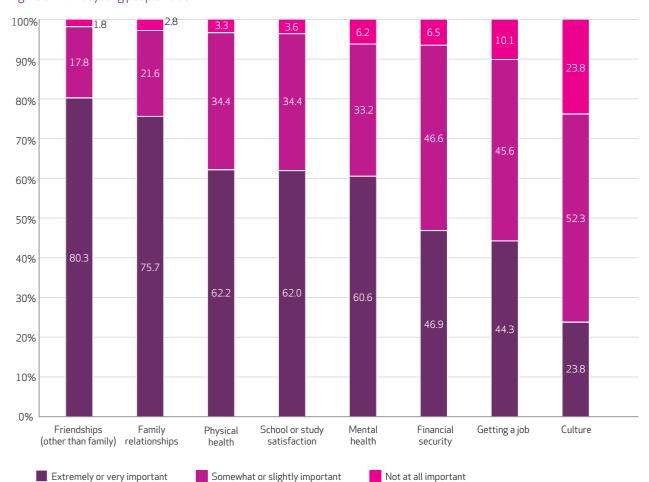
VALUES AND CONCERNS

What do young people value?

The three most highly valued items for ACT young people were friendships (other than family), family relationships and physical health (see Figure 3.4). The next most highly valued items were school or study satisfaction and mental health.

- Eight in 10 (80.3%) ACT respondents saw friendships (other than family) as extremely or very important.
- Three quarters (75.7%) of young people from the ACT saw family relationships as extremely or very important.
- More than six in 10 ACT respondents saw physical health (62.2%), school or study satisfaction (62.0%) and mental health (60.6%) as extremely or very important.

Figure 3.4: What young people value



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely and very important for each item.



Around 80% of ACT young people felt friendships and family relationships were extremely or very important.

Friendships (other than family) and family relationships were rated as the most important items by both ACT females and males, as shown in Table 3.4.

- Notably higher proportions of ACT females placed a high value upon mental health (68.8% compared with 55.9% of males).
- Higher proportions of ACT males rated physical health as extremely or very important (66.6% compared with 57.1% of females).

Table 3.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	86.1	13.2	0.7
Family relationships	78.7	19.5	1.8
Physical health	57.1	41.0	1.9
School or study satisfaction	66.5	31.6	1.8
Mental health	68.8	28.7	2.6
Financial security	51.3	42.9	5.9
Getting a job	49.1	44.3	6.6
Culture	23.0	52.2	24.8
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Males	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Males Friendships (other than family)			
	important %	important %	important %
Friendships (other than family)	important %	important %	important %
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships	important % 77.4 77.4	20.8 20.1	1.8 2.5
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Physical health	important % 77.4 77.4 66.6	20.8 20.1 29.7	1.8 2.5 3.7
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Physical health School or study satisfaction	important % 77.4 77.4 66.6 60.1	20.8 20.1 29.7 35.8	1.8 2.5 3.7 4.1
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Physical health School or study satisfaction Mental health	important % 77.4 77.4 66.6 60.1 55.9	20.8 20.1 29.7 35.8 36.1	1.8 2.5 3.7 4.1 8.0

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are listed in order of ACT frequency.



"Keeping relationships with friends and family has been challenging as the amount of activities we can do is limited from COVID-19."

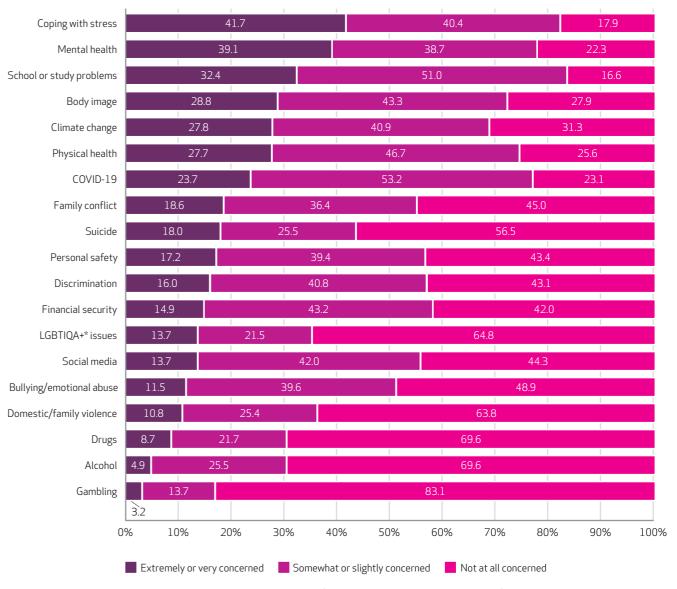
(Male, 15, ACT. non-Indigenous)

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

The top three issues of personal concern for ACT young people were coping with stress (41.7%), mental health (39.1%) and school or study problems (32.4%), as shown in Figure 3.5.

• Close to three in 10 ACT young people were extremely or very concerned about body image (28.8%), climate change (27.8%) and physical health (27.7%).

Figure 3.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely concerned and very concerned for each item.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

The top issues of personal concern for ACT females were coping with stress, mental health and body image. Whereas the top three issues for ACT males were coping with stress, mental health and physical health, as shown in Table 3.5. ACT females reported higher levels of personal concern about almost all issues.

• Compared with ACT males, notably higher proportions of ACT females were extremely or very concerned about body image (51.6% compared with 14.5%), mental health (59.3% compared with 25.1%) and coping with stress (59.5% compared with 29.3%).

Table 3.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

Females	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	59.5	36.9	3.6
Mental health	59.3	33.3	7.4
School or study problems	48.5	46.7	4.7
Body image	51.6	38.1	10.3
Climate change	35.8	44.2	20.1
Physical health	32.7	52.8	14.5
COVID-19	37.0	56.4	6.6
Family conflict	32.2	41.4	26.4
Suicide	25.0	33.5	41.5
Personal safety	24.3	49.3	26.5
Discrimination	22.9	49.1	28.0
Financial security	20.2	51.1	28.7
LGBTIQA+* issues	17.9	32.2	49.8
Social media	23.2	48.9	27.9
Bullying/emotional abuse	18.0	48.9	33.1
Domestic/family violence	18.0	28.3	53.7
Drugs	11.0	26.8	62.1
Alcohol	5.8	30.3	63.9
Gambling	2.9	14.3	82.7

Table 3.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

Males	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	29.3	43.7	27.0
Mental health	25.1	43.1	31.9
School or study problems	21.5	54.8	23.7
Body image	14.5	46.4	39.1
Climate change	21.0	40.5	38.5
Physical health	25.0	42.2	32.8
COVID-19	14.8	52.1	33.1
Family conflict	9.8	33.0	57.2
Suicide	11.9	21.0	67.1
Personal safety	12.4	32.8	54.8
Discrimination	10.5	36.5	53.0
Financial security	10.6	39.1	50.3
LGBTIQA+* issues	7.3	15.9	76.8
Social media	8.6	35.9	55.5
Bullying/emotional abuse	6.4	33.9	59.7
Domestic/family violence	5.7	23.2	71.1
Drugs	7.0	18.4	74.5
Alcohol	4.6	21.4	74.0
Gambling	3.0	13.4	83.6

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are listed in order of ACT frequency.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

QLD



"[My biggest personal challenge is] accepting my body and who I am. I have struggled for so long with the issues I have been dealing with. I have a therapist now to help get through the challenges."

(Female, 17, ACT, non-Indigenous)

"My school work has been getting a little too much to bear, but I've been having support from my teachers and I'm getting on top of it now."

(Male, 16, ACT, non-Indigenous)



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COVID-19

How has COVID-19 impacted on young people?

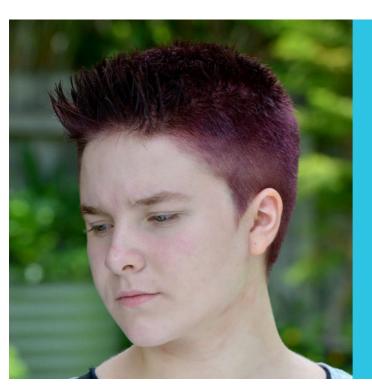
The top three areas ACT young people identified as being negatively impacted by COVID-19 were participation in activities (65.5%), education (59.8%) and mental health (46.4%) (see Table 3.6). Compared with ACT males, females experienced greater negative impacts of COVID-19 across all areas.

A notably higher proportion of ACT females identified their mental health was negatively impacted by COVID-19 (67.3% compared with 30.7% of males).

Table 3.6: Impact of COVID-19 on young people

	National %	ACT %	Females %	Males %
Participation in activities	68.3	65.5	70.8	62.8
Education	62.3	59.8	70.5	52.6
Mental health	50.3	46.4	67.3	30.7
Physical health	46.1	39.9	50.5	32.3
Family	37.9	36.6	45.8	29.0
Employment	30.1	27.4	28.4	24.4
Friendships	33.8	22.9	27.1	18.8
Financial security	24.3	17.1	19.0	14.4
Housing	6.9	5.4	5.9	4.6

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, the ways COVID-19 has negatively impacted them. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of ACT frequency.



"[My biggest personal issue is]
my mental health. Having almost
everything I have been looking
forward to being cancelled this year,
including concerts, school carnivals
and festivals has had a negative
impact. I am also extremely busy with
work, extra-curricular commitments
meaning I have little time for self-care."

(Female, 16, ACT, non-Indigenous)

UNFAIR TREATMENT

Have young people been treated unfairly?

Three in 10 (29.9%) ACT young people reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of ACT females reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (40.8% compared with 21.1% of males).

Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify whether they had been treated unfairly due to their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason.

Of the 29.9% of ACT young people who had been treated unfairly in the past year (see Table 3.7):

- Notably higher proportions of ACT females had been treated unfairly due to their gender (50.5% compared with 13.0% of males).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of ACT males reported they had been treated unfairly due to their race/cultural background (38.0% compared with 24.3% of females).

Table 3.7: Reasons for being treated unfairly

	National %	ACT %	Females %	Males %
Gender	37.3	36.3	50.5	13.0
Mental health	27.6	31.9	30.6	32.6
Race/cultural background	27.6	29.2	24.3	38.0
Sexuality	21.7	21.7	18.0	18.5
Age	18.3	19.9	25.2	8.7
Other	21.5	16.4	11.7	23.9
Disability	7.0	8.4	3.6	9.8
Financial background	7.0	7.5	8.1	5.4
Religion	11.4	7.1	4.5	12.0

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of ACT frequency.

Young people who responded that they had been treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background* were offered an additional question about the nature and experience of the unfair treatment (see Table 3.8). Of these ACT young people, nine in 10 (89.2%) had been insulted or had hurtful comments said to them. More than six in 10 (62.1%) ACT young people had been harassed or intimidated and close to half (49.2%) received insulting or hurtful comments online.

Table 3.8: Experiences of unfair treatment due to race/cultural background

	National %	ACT %
Been insulted or had hurtful comments said to you	89.0	89.2
Been harassed or intimidated	62.5	62.1
Received insulting or hurtful comments online	43.1	49.2
Felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media	54.2	45.9
Felt unwelcome in school, employment or services	46.6	41.0
Been excluded from social events or activities	27.2	35.0
Felt unwelcome or excluded from sporting clubs or groups	24.2	23.3
Experienced physical violence	14.5	15.0

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of ACT frequency. A gender breakdown has not been reported due to the small number of responses.

Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

More than half (53.3%) of ACT young people reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year because of their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason. A much higher proportion of ACT females reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (66.2% compared with 45.2% of males).

What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

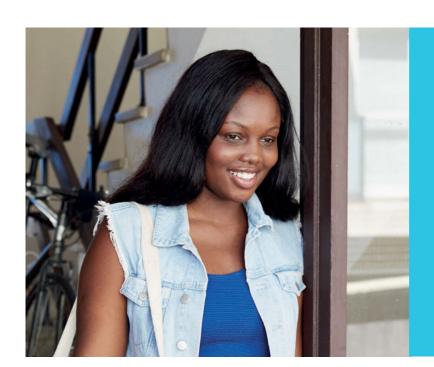
Of the respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 60.5% reported witnessing unfair treatment due to a person's race/cultural background (see Table 3.9). More than half (55.3%) of ACT young people indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality. Close to half (47.6%) of ACT respondents who witnessed unfair treatment reported it was due to a person's gender.

• A notably higher proportion of ACT females reported witnessing unfair treatment due to a person's gender (57.2% compared with 36.9% of males) and sexuality (65.0% compared with 44.9% of males).

Table 3.9: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

	National %	ACT %	Females %	Males %
Race/cultural background	57.6	60.5	59.4	61.6
Sexuality	48.0	55.3	65.0	44.9
Gender	43.7	47.6	57.2	36.9
Disability	32.4	37.0	40.6	31.8
Mental health	26.1	29.8	36.7	22.2
Religion	25.3	21.6	22.8	21.2
Age	16.7	17.4	21.7	12.1
Financial background	15.0	13.6	12.2	14.1
Other	9.6	7.9	5.0	11.6

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of ACT frequency.



Notably higher proportions of females both experienced and witnessed unfair treatment due to gender.



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CONTENTS

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SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND FAMILY'S ABILITY TO GET ALONG

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

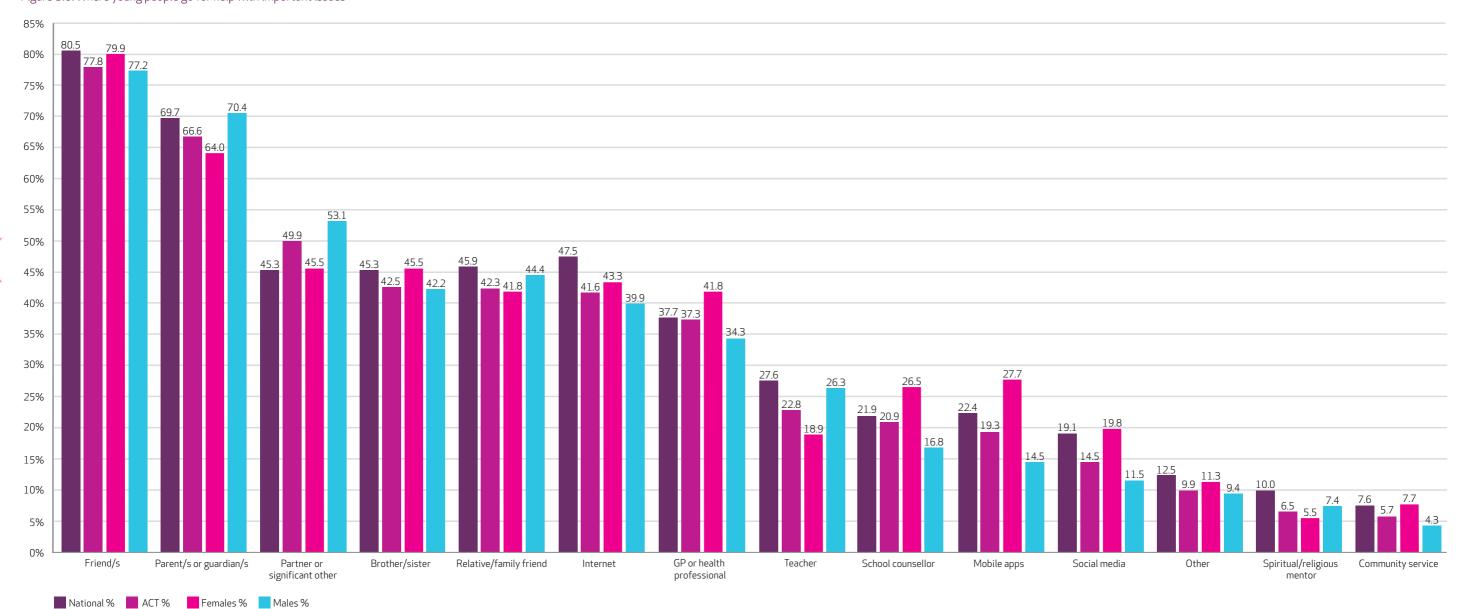
As shown in Figure 3.6, friend/s (77.8%), parent/s or guardian/s (66.6%) and partner or significant other (49.9%) were the three most frequently named sources of help for ACT young people.

- A higher proportion of ACT females said they would turn to *mobile apps* for support with important issues in their lives (27.7% compared with 14.5% of males).
- Compared with females, a higher proportion of ACT males stated they would go to their partner or significant other (53.1% compared with 45.5%), teacher (26.3% compared with 18.9%) and parent/s or guardian/s (70.4% compared with 64.0%).

Figure 3.6: Where young people go for help with important issues



Personal relationships, including friends, parents or guardians, and partner or significant other were the most common sources of support for ACT young people.

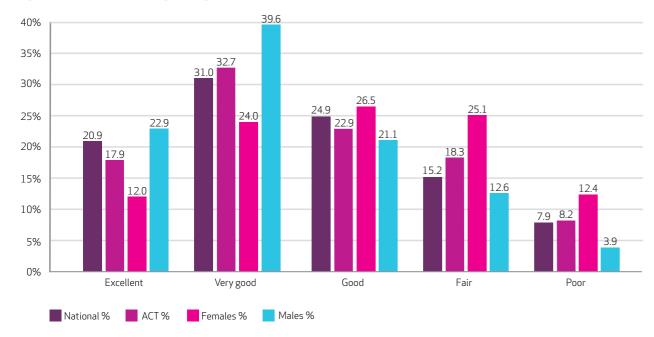


Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, where they go for help with important issues. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of ACT frequency.

How do young people rate their family's ability to get along?

Half (50.6%) of ACT respondents rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good (see Figure 3.7). However, more than one quarter (26.5%) of ACT young people indicated their family's ability to get along was either fair or poor. A higher proportion of ACT males rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good (62.5% compared with 36.0% of females), while a much higher proportion of ACT females rated their family's ability to get along as fair or poor (37.5% compared with 16.5% of males).

Figure 3.7: Family's ability to get along with one another



"Conflict with my family made it difficult for me to remain in contact with friends, and COVID-19 distanced me further from them.

I felt isolated from important communities in my life."

(Non-binary, 15, ACT, non-Indigenous)



ENGAGEMENT IN ACTIVITIES

What activities are young people involved in?

In the past year, the top three activities young people from the ACT were involved in were sports (as a participant) (72.5%), sports (as a spectator) (67.4%) and volunteer work (40.1%) (see Table 3.10).

- Close to one third (32.1%) of ACT respondents reported they had participated in arts/cultural/music activities in the past year.
- Notably higher proportions of ACT females reported taking part in *volunteer work* (47.4% compared with 35.8% of males) and in *arts/cultural/music activities* (37.0% compared with 27.5% of males) in the past year.
- Higher proportions of ACT males reported taking part in *sports* (as a spectator) in the past year (73.5% compared with 60.7% of females).

Table 3.10: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	National %	ACT %	Females %	Males %
Sports (as a participant)	71.0	72.5	68.4	76.4
Sports (as a spectator)	64.6	67.4	60.7	73.5
Volunteer work	41.1	40.1	47.4	35.8
Arts/cultural/music activities	43.2	32.1	37.0	27.5
Student leadership activities	33.9	23.4	21.3	24.4
Religious groups/activities	23.4	21.8	19.9	24.4
Youth groups/activities	24.5	20.0	18.8	20.3
Environmental groups/activities	19.1	16.1	19.0	12.9
Political groups/activities	9.3	9.4	12.0	7.4

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what activities they were involved in during the past year. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of ACT frequency.



A majority of young people in the ACT reported engaging in *sports* as either a participant or *spectator*.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

How stressed are young people?

Four in 10 (39.9%) ACT young people felt stressed either all of the time or most of the time in the past four weeks (see Table 3.11).

- A higher proportion of ACT females felt stressed all of the time or most of the time (56.6% compared with 27.3% of males).
- Conversely, more than three times the proportion of ACT males felt stressed *none of the time* (8.5% compared with 2.2% of females).

Table 3.11: Young people's level of stress

	National %	ACT %	Females %	Males %
All of the time	11.6	11.1	17.9	5.5
Most of the time	32.9	28.8	38.7	21.8
Some of the time	32.0	32.9	30.3	35.3
A little of the time	19.0	21.4	10.9	28.9
None of the time	4.4	5.8	2.2	8.5

What do young people do to reduce stress?

The top three ways ACT young people reported reducing stress was to play games or watch TV/movies (65.2%), do something relaxing (61.9%) and spend time online (61.0%) (see Table 3.12).

- A higher proportion of ACT females reported they would sleep to reduce stress (68.7% compared with 55.9% of males) and do something relaxing (68.0% compared with 58.4% of males).
- Compared with ACT females, a higher proportion of ACT males reported they would do a hobby (57.7% compared with 36.7%),
 physical activity (59.1% compared with 46.5%) and play games or watch TV/movies (70.9% compared with 58.5%) to reduce stress.

Table 3.12: Ways young people reduce stress

	National %	ACT %	Females %	Males %
Play games or watch TV/movies	61.4	65.2	58.5	70.9
Do something relaxing	63.2	61.9	68.0	58.4
Spend time online	62.3	61.0	63.3	59.1
Sleep	59.5	60.7	68.7	55.9
Physical activity	49.0	53.0	46.5	59.1
Do a hobby	45.7	49.2	36.7	57.7
Spend time with friends or family	46.9	41.1	44.4	41.8
Nothing	16.5	18.2	11.6	21.6
Consume alcohol and/or other drugs	12.1	14.3	16.0	11.8
Other	6.7	6.7	6.9	6.4
Take medication prescribed by a health professional	6.1	6.7	8.4	4.3
Reach out to a professional	6.8	5.5	8.4	4.1

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what they do to reduce stress. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of ACT frequency.

How much control do young people feel they have over their life?

More than half (51.3%) of ACT young people felt they had control over their life, as shown in Table 3.13: 7.9% reported having *complete* control and 43.4% felt *mostly in control*. One in eight (12.4%) ACT respondents reported they had *almost no control* (9.8%) or *no control* (2.6%) over their life.

- A much higher proportion of ACT males felt they had *complete control* or were *mostly in control* of their lives (59.5% compared with 41.1% of females).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of ACT females reported feeling *almost no control* or *no control* over their lives (14.3% compared with 8.5% of males).

Table 3.13: Young people's level of control over their life

	National %	ACT %	Females %	Males %
Complete control	7.8	7.9	4.8	10.0
Mostly in control	45.5	43.4	36.3	49.5
Some control	34.5	36.3	44.7	32.0
Almost no control	9.9	9.8	12.5	6.4
No control	2.4	2.6	1.8	2.1

How lonely are young people?

One quarter (24.7%) of ACT young people felt lonely all or most of the time (see Table 3.14).

- A notably higher proportion of ACT females felt lonely all or most of the time (33.7% compared with 16.3% of males).
- A notably higher proportion of ACT males felt lonely none of the time (24.3% compared with 11.0% of females).

Table 3.14: Young people's level of loneliness

	National %	ACT %	Females %	Males %
All of the time	5.9	6.3	7.0	4.8
Most of the time	19.0	18.4	26.7	11.5
Some of the time	29.7	29.9	33.3	28.2
A little of the time	27.1	26.6	22.0	31.2
None of the time	18.2	18.8	11.0	24.3



"My mental health had been pretty bad, I've started seeking support, but I really think I need to get some more support to further develop my 'mental health managing' skills. I have also been neglecting my physical health and I would like to start exercising more to improve that."

(A-gender/non-gendered, 16, ACT, non-Indigenous)

How do young people rate their mental health and wellbeing?

Three in 10 (30.8%) ACT young people rated their mental health and wellbeing as better than good (see Figure 3.8): 9.5% rated it as excellent and 21.3% rated it as very good. More than one in six (17.4%) ACT respondents rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor.

- A notably higher proportion of ACT males rated their mental health and wellbeing as excellent or very good (42.7% compared with 13.5% of females).
- A much higher proportion of ACT females rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor (28.1% compared with 8.4% males).

Figure 3.8: Young people's mental health and wellbeing



How happy are young people?

More than half (51.5%) of ACT young people indicated overall happiness with their lives (see Table 3.15). A notably higher proportion of ACT males reported feeling happy/very happy with their lives as a whole (61.5% compared with 38.9% of females), whereas a much greater proportion of ACT females indicated they felt very sad/sad (21.1% compared with 10.5% of males).

Table 3.15: Young people's level of happiness

	National %	ACT %	Females %	Males %
Happy/very happy (70-100)	53.4	51.5	38.9	61.5
Not happy or sad (40-60)	32.6	32.5	40.0	28.0
Very sad/sad (0-30)	13.9	16.0	21.1	10.5

Note: Respondents were asked to rate how happy they are with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes happy/very happy; 40-60 signifies not happy or sad; and 0-30 indicates very sad/sad.



While more than half of young people indicated overall happiness with their lives, a notably larger proportion of ACT males were happy/very happy with their lives.

How much time do young people spend on screens?

Three in 10 (30.6%) ACT young people spent 9 hours or more on screens per day (see Table 3.16). Higher proportions of ACT males spent 9 hours or more on screens (31.8% compared with 26.9% of females).

Table 3.16: Young people's screen-time per day

	National %	ACT %	Females %	Males %
No screen time	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.5
1-2 hours	5.5	6.2	6.5	5.9
3-4 hours	17.3	17.5	13.8	20.2
5-6 hours	22.7	27.2	33.1	23.6
7-8 hours	18.6	18.2	19.6	18.0
9 hours or more	35.7	30.6	26.9	31.8

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

Close to half (45.4%) of ACT young people spent 1-2 hours on screens connecting with others. Four in 10 (40.0%) young people from the ACT spent 1-2 hours on screens for entertainment. Close to three in 10 (28.9%) ACT respondents spent 5-6 hours on screens for learning (see Table 3.17).

Table 3.17: Young people's screen-time per day by purpose

Australian Capital Territory respondents	Connecting with others %	For entertainment %	For learning %
No screen time	6.0	2.4	8.9
1-2 hours	45.4	40.0	27.4
3-4 hours	22.0	30.4	21.7
5-6 hours	9.4	15.2	28.9
7-8 hours	7.2	6.2	9.3
9 hours or more	10.0	5.8	3.8

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day connecting with others, for entertainment and for learning. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

How much time do young people spend sleeping?

Close to six in 10 (55.8%) ACT young people reported sleeping on average between 7-8 hours per night (see Table 3.18).

Table 3.18: Young people's sleep per night

	National %	ACT %	Females %	Males %
6 hours or less	21.6	20.7	23.6	17.7
7-8 hours	52.8	55.8	54.9	58.0
9-10 hours	16.8	13.7	13.5	13.9
11 hours or more	8.8	9.8	8.0	10.5

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend sleeping per night. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

How much time do young people spend exercising?

Three in 10 (30.5%) ACT young people reported exercising on average 9 hours or more per week (see Table 3.19). A notably higher proportion of ACT males reported engaging in 9 hours or more of exercise per week (37.5% compared with 20.0% of females).

Table 3.19: Young people's exercise per week

	National %	ACT %	Females %	Males %
No exercise	7.2	5.4	7.6	3.6
1-2 hours	25.0	18.5	22.5	13.4
3-4 hours	20.1	19.0	21.8	17.0
5-6 hours	15.1	15.6	16.7	16.6
7-8 hours	9.8	11.1	11.3	11.8
9 hours or more	22.8	30.5	20.0	37.5

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend exercising per week. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.



"[The biggest issue is] climate change, people need to take action to prevent it.

The government needs to stop supporting large coal companies and switch to renewable energy, otherwise the world will burn and the public will feel politicians are watching it burn, and laughing."

(Male, 15, ACT, non-Indigenous)

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA AND THE FUTURE

What issues do young people think are the most important in Australia today?

In 2021, ACT young people reported that the top three issues in Australia were COVID-19 (48.3%), the environment (42.7%) and equity and discrimination (38.5%), as shown in Table 3.20.

- More than one third (36.1%) of ACT young people reported mental health as an important national issue.
- Higher proportions of ACT females identified *equity and discrimination* (48.2% compared with 33.5% of males) and *mental health* (44.7% compared with 31.5% of males) as important issues facing Australia today.
- Young people from the ACT have ranked the environment and equity and discrimination in the top three issues of national concern for the past three years, while COVID-19 has continued to grow in importance since 2020.

Table 3.20: Most important issues in Australia today

	National 2021 %	ACT 2021 %	Females %	Males %	ACT 2020 %	ACT 2019 %
COVID-19	45.7	48.3	49.4	50.4	37.7	-
The environment	38.0	42.7	45.8	40.6	34.3	53.1
Equity and discrimination	35.4	38.5	48.2	33.5	42.4	20.6
Mental health	34.6	36.1	44.7	31.5	28.3	35.0
The economy and financial matters	10.9	13.6	11.1	15.6	17.7	15.7
Alcohol and drugs	10.6	13.1	11.9	13.9	9.2	11.9
Crime, safety and violence	10.9	8.7	9.9	8.1	7.4	8.4
Homelessness/housing	7.0	7.8	8.7	7.3	10.4	10.8
LGBTIQA+ issues	7.0	7.2	10.7	4.3	5.9	7.0
Politics	6.5	7.2	4.7	7.1	8.5	10.3

Note: Respondents were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The responses provided were categorised into the items listed above. Items are listed in order of 2021 ACT frequency.

How do young people feel about the future?

Close to half (45.1%) of ACT young people felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future (see Table 3.21). However, one in five (19.5%) young people indicated they felt *negative* or *very negative* about the future.

- A higher proportion of ACT males reported feeling very positive or positive about the future (51.6% compared with 36.7% of females).
- The proportion of ACT respondents reporting feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future has reduced notably from 2020 to 2021 (57.2% and 45.1% respectively).

Table 3.21: Feelings about the future

	National 2021 %	ACT 2021 %	Females %	Males %	ACT 2020 %	ACT 2019 %
Very positive or positive	51.6	45.1	36.7	51.6	57.2	45.2
Neither positive nor negative	32.5	35.4	38.5	34.9	30.2	31.7
Negative or very negative	16.0	19.5	24.7	13.5	12.6	23.1

Note: Responses for very positive and positive have been aggregated, as have the responses for negative and very negative.

New South Wales

- Profile of respondents
- Education and employment
- Values and concerns
- COVID-19
- Unfair treatment

- Sources of support and family's ability to get along
- ► Engagement in activities
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Most important issues in Australia and the future



New South Wales

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 4,515 young people from New South Wales (NSW) aged between 15 and 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2021*.

Gender

More than six in 10 (62.4%) NSW respondents were female, 32.5% were male, 4.0% were gender diverse and 1.1% preferred not to say.

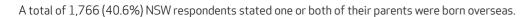
Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 268 (6.1%) young people from NSW identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. A higher proportion of NSW males identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (7.9% compared with 4.9% of females).

Cultural background

A total of 439 (10.0%) NSW respondents stated they were born overseas and 929 (21.3%) NSW young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the 78 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Arabic, Chinese, Mandarin, Cantonese and Hindi.

A total of 1,130 (26.0%) NSW young people reported a particular cultural or ethnic group with which they identified strongly. Of the more than 100 cultural or ethnic groups identified, the most common were (in order of frequency): Chinese, Lebanese, Indian, Filipino and Italian.



Disability

A total of 415 (9.3%) NSW respondents identified as living with disability. A greater proportion of males from NSW reported living with disability (10.7% compared with 6.4% of females). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, learning disability, physical disability and anxiety disorder.



4,515 young people from NSW took the time to share their values, aspirations and issues of concern in Mission Australia's *Youth Survey* 2021.



Are young people studying?

As indicated in Table 4.1, 83.0% of young people from NSW were studying full-time, which is slightly lower than the 85.3% studying full-time in 2020 (Tiller et al., 2020). A notably higher proportion of NSW females reported studying full-time (87.6% compared with 75.0% of males). Conversely, more than double the proportion of NSW males reported not studying (12.7% compared with 5.4% of females).

Table 4.1: Participation in education

	National %	NSW %	Females %	Males %
Studying full-time	84.5	83.0	87.6	75.0
Studying part-time	8.1	8.7	6.9	12.2
Not studying	7.4	8.3	5.4	12.7

How satisfied are young people with their studies?

As in previous years, the majority (59.7%) of NSW respondents who were currently studying reported they were either very satisfied or satisfied with their studies. One in 10 (10.6%) NSW young people indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Satisfaction with studies

	National %	NSW %	Females %	Males %
Very satisfied or satisfied	62.5	59.7	60.6	60.8
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	28.5	29.7	29.5	29.7
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	9.0	10.6	9.9	9.5

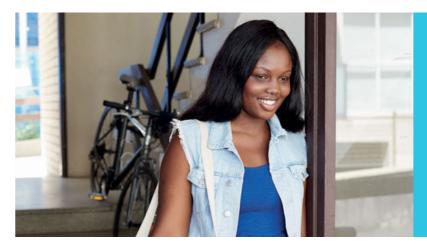
Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying. Responses for very satisfied and satisfied have been aggregated, as have the responses for dissatisfied and very dissatisfied.

Of those still at school, the majority (94.7%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. More than four times the proportion of NSW males stated they were not planning on completing Year 12 (10.5% compared with 2.4% of females).

What are young people's plans after school?

Six in 10 (60.9%) NSW young people planned to *go* to *university* after school, as shown in Figure 4.1. Close to one in eight (12.0%) NSW respondents reported *travel/gap year* plans after school, and one in 13 (7.8%) indicated plans to *get* an *apprenticeship*.

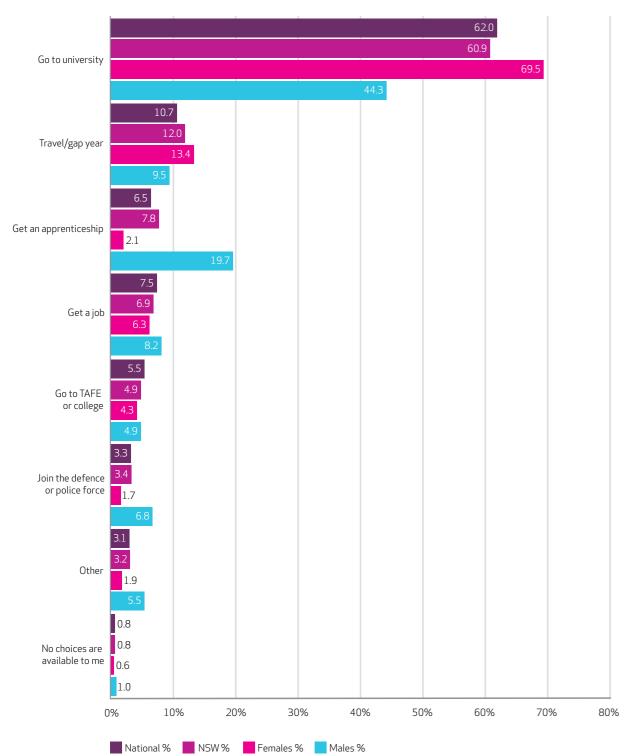
While the most frequently reported plan among both genders was to *go to university* after finishing school, a higher proportion of NSW females indicated they planned to do so (69.5% compared with 44.3% of males). More than nine times the proportion of NSW males reported plans to *get an apprenticeship* (19.7% compared with 2.1% of females).



"I've been dissatisfied with my studies and I've felt anxiety about not knowing what to do with my life after school."

(Female, 15, NSW, non-Indigenous).

Figure 4.1: Plans after leaving school



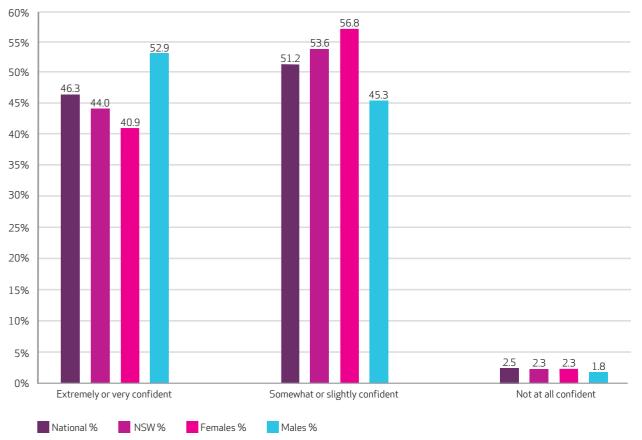
Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Respondents were only able to choose one option from the above list of predetermined items. Items are listed in order of NSW frequency.

How confident are young people in achieving their study or work goals?

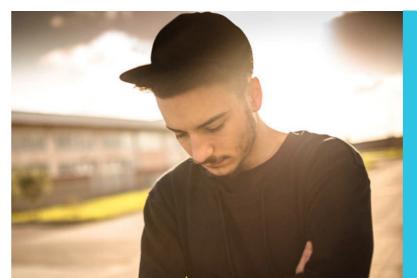
Four in 10 (44.0%) NSW young people indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study or work goals (see Figure 4.2).

• A notably higher proportion of NSW males reported they were extremely or very confident in their ability to achieve their study or work goals after school (52.9% compared with 40.9% of females).

Figure 4.2: Confidence in achieving study or work goals



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Responses for extremely confident and very confident have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat confident and slightly confident.



"My biggest personal problem is my insecurity about my schooling, specifically the scary idea of not getting the grades I need to get into university."

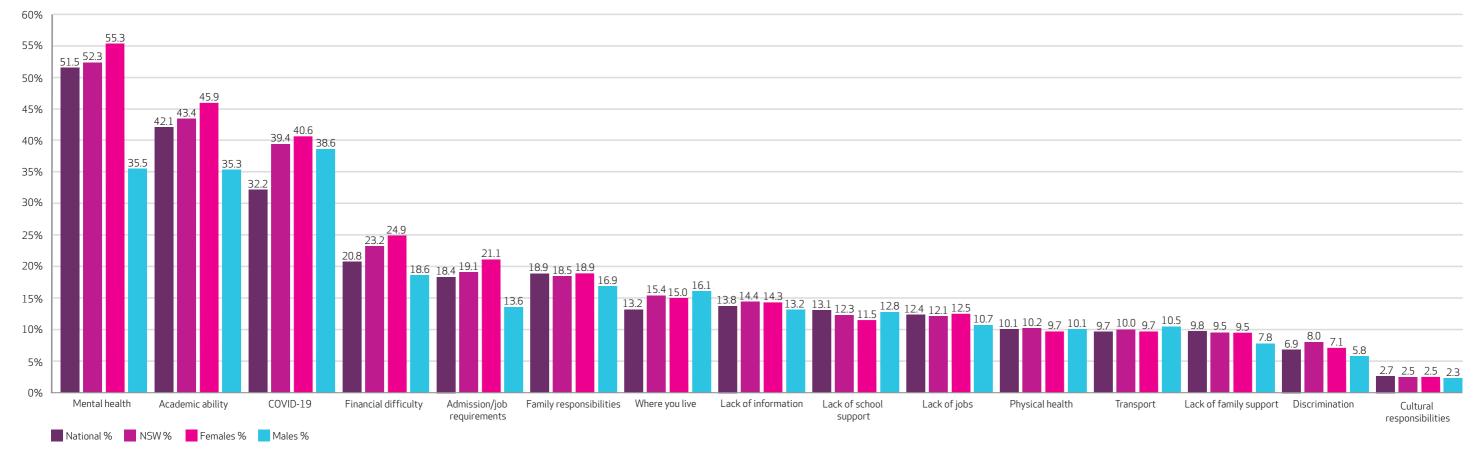
(Male, 15, NSW, non-Indigenous)

What are the barriers to achieving study or work goals?

Half (50.9%) of NSW young people felt there were barriers that impacted on their achievement of their study or work goals. As shown in Figure 4.3, mental health (52.3%), academic ability (43.4%) and COVID-19 (39.4%) were the top three barriers impacting on young people's achievement of study or work goals.

- Close to one quarter (23.2%) of NSW respondents felt financial difficulty was a barrier to achieving study or work goals.
- A notably higher proportion of NSW females felt *mental health* (55.3% compared with 35.5% of males) and *academic ability* (45.9% compared with 35.3% of males) were barriers impacting on the achievement of study or work goals.

Figure 4.3: Barriers to achieving study or work goals



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying and felt there were barriers that impacted the achievement of study or work goals. Respondents were able to choose more than one option from the predetermined list of items. Items are listed in order of NSW frequency.



Half of NSW young people felt there were barriers impacting the achievement of their study or work goals. Of these, more than half identified mental health as a barrier. "[My biggest personal issue is] getting my school work done. I feel as if there is something blocking me from reaching my potential. I think there should be more mainstream discussion about barriers in learning, and working to do with mental health."

(Non-binary, 15, NSW, non-Indigenous)





Close to half of NSW young people were employed part-time.

Are young people employed?

Close to half (45.6%) of NSW young people reported they were employed part-time. More than half (53.5%) indicated they were not in paid employment: 27.1% stated they were looking for work, while 26.4% were neither working nor looking for work. The proportion of NSW respondents in part-time employment in 2021 was slightly higher than in 2020 (45.6% compared with 40.5% respectively) (Tiller et al., 2020). A small proportion of NSW young people who reported being in paid employment were employed full-time (0.8%). A higher proportion of males from NSW were looking for work (30.6% compared with 24.9% of females).

Table 4.3: Participation in paid employment

	National %	NSW %	Females %	Males %
Employed full-time	0.6	0.8	0.3	1.6
Employed part-time	45.4	45.6	46.8	44.8
Not in paid employment, looking for work	31.8	27.1	24.9	30.6
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	22.2	26.4	28.0	23.0

Note: Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average, how many hours they worked per week. Part-time employment is considered to be less than 35 hours per week, while full-time employment is considered to be 35 hours or more.

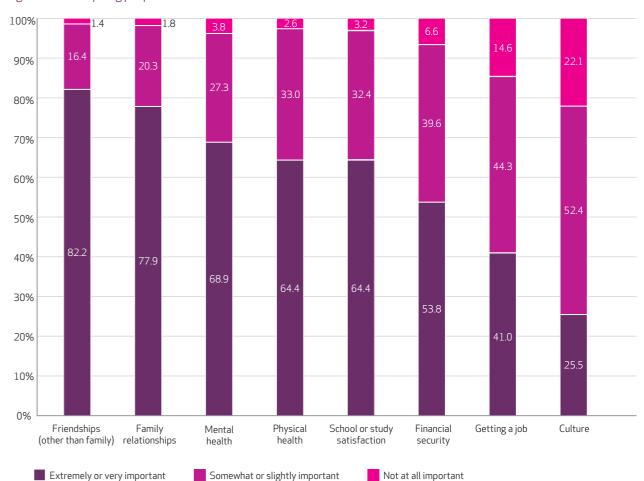
VALUES AND CONCERNS

What do young people value?

The three most highly valued items for NSW young people were friendships (other than family), family relationships and mental health (see Figure 4.4). The next most highly valued items were physical health and school or study satisfaction.

- More than eight in 10 (82.2%) NSW respondents saw friendships (other than family) as extremely or very important.
- Close to eight in 10 (77.9%) young people from NSW saw family relationships as extremely or very important.
- Close to seven in 10 (68.9%) NSW respondents saw mental health as extremely or very important.

Figure 4.4: What young people value



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely and very important for each item.

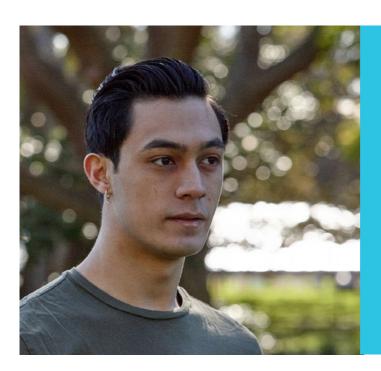
Friendships (other than family) and family relationships were rated as the most important items by both NSW females and males, as shown in Table 4.4.

- Notably higher proportions of NSW females placed a high value upon school or study satisfaction (70.4% compared with 55.3% of males) and mental health (72.2% compared with 62.5% of males).
- Higher proportions of NSW males rated getting a job as extremely or very important (46.9% compared with 38.5% of females).

Table 4.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	83.7	15.2	1.2
Family relationships	80.4	18.1	1.5
Mental health	72.2	25.1	2.7
Physical health	65.0	32.8	2.2
School or study satisfaction	70.4	27.7	1.9
Financial security	56.0	38.3	5.7
Getting a job	38.5	45.4	16.1
Culture	27.6	52.7	19.7
Males	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Males Friendships (other than family)			
	important %	important %	important %
Friendships (other than family)	important %	important %	important %
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships	important % 81.1 77.1	17.6 21.3	1.3 1.6
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Mental health	important % 81.1 77.1 62.5	17.6 21.3 32.1	1.3 1.6 5.3
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Mental health Physical health	important % 81.1 77.1 62.5 66.5	17.6 21.3 32.1 30.7	1.3 1.6 5.3 2.7
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Mental health Physical health School or study satisfaction	important % 81.1 77.1 62.5 66.5 55.3	important % 17.6 21.3 32.1 30.7 40.2	1.3 1.6 5.3 2.7 4.5

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are listed in order of NSW frequency.



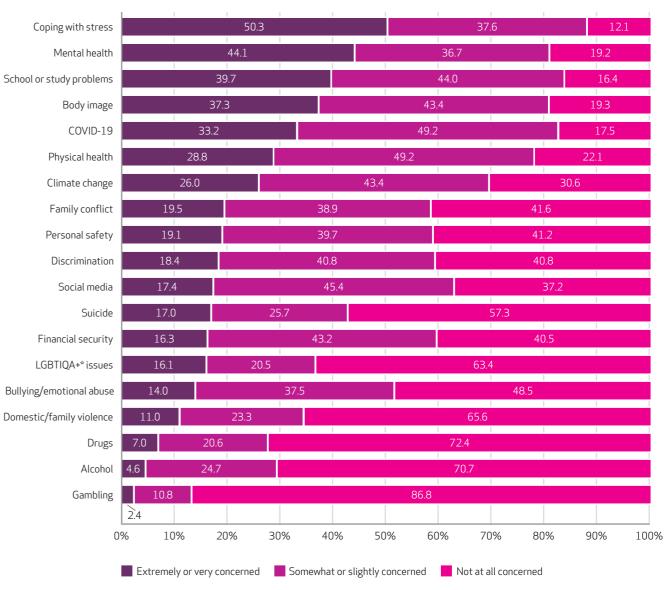
Relationships are extremely or very important to a majority of NSW young people. Around eight in 10 NSW young people highly valued friendships and family relationships.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

The top three issues of personal concern for NSW young people were coping with stress (50.3%), mental health (44.1%) and school or study problems (39.7%).

- Close to four in 10 (37.3%) NSW young people were extremely or very concerned about body image.
- One third (33.2%) of NSW respondents were extremely or very concerned about COVID-19.

Figure 4.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely concerned and very concerned for each item.

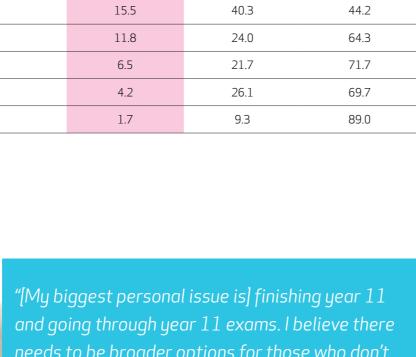
*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

The top issues of personal concern for NSW females were coping with stress, mental health and school or study problems. Whereas the top three issues for NSW males were coping with stress, mental health and physical health, as shown in Table 4.5. NSW females reported higher levels of personal concern about almost all issues.

• Notably higher proportions NSW females were extremely or very concerned about coping with stress (61.0% compared with 28.0% of males) and body image (47.7% compared with 15.5% of males).

Table 4.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

Females	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	61.0	34.2	4.8
Mental health	51.9	37.0	11.1
School or study problems	47.8	42.8	9.4
Body image	47.7	41.5	10.8
COVID-19	40.5	50.6	8.8
Physical health	32.1	50.9	17.0
Climate change	29.6	45.9	24.5
Family conflict	22.7	42.0	35.3
Personal safety	21.4	40.5	38.2
Discrimination	20.1	44.0	35.9
Social media	22.0	49.1	28.9
Suicide	18.3	27.3	54.4
Financial security	17.8	45.7	36.5
LGBTIQA+* issues	16.3	24.9	58.8
Bullying/emotional abuse	15.5	40.3	44.2
Domestic/family violence	11.8	24.0	64.3
Drugs	6.5	21.7	71.7
Alcohol	4.2	26.1	69.7
Gambling	1.7	9.3	89.0





needs to be broader options for those who don't want an ATAR and don't cope with the stress well but still want to gain a HSC."

(Female, 17, NSW, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)

Table 4.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

Males	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	28.0	46.0	26.0
Mental health	25.2	39.6	35.2
School or study problems	22.7	47.6	29.7
Body image	15.5	48.0	36.5
COVID-19	19.3	46.9	33.8
Physical health	23.2	45.0	31.8
Climate change	16.0	39.6	44.4
Family conflict	11.6	32.3	56.1
Personal safety	12.9	38.1	49.0
Discrimination	11.1	35.8	53.1
Social media	8.0	38.4	53.6
Suicide	11.2	21.9	66.8
Financial security	12.7	38.2	49.1
LGBTIQA+* issues	6.9	13.9	79.2
Bullying/emotional abuse	8.4	31.7	59.9
Domestic/family violence	8.5	20.2	71.3
Drugs	7.1	17.9	74.9
Alcohol	4.7	21.7	73.6
Gambling	3.4	12.9	83.7

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are listed in order of NSW frequency. *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

"I struggle when it comes to study, especially with organisation and trying to focus. I get extremely stressed when an assignment or exam comes near, I struggle with coping with that."

(Male, 15, NSW, non-Indigenous)



YOUTH SURVEY 2021 MISSION AUSTRALIA **CONTENTS** THE SURVEY QLD

COVID-19

How has COVID-19 impacted on young people?

The top three areas NSW young people identified as being negatively impacted by COVID-19 were participation in activities (69.7%), education (67.2%) and mental health (54.2%) (see Table 4.6). Compared with NSW males, females experienced greater negative impacts of COVID-19 across almost all areas.

• A notably higher proportion of NSW females identified their *mental health* was negatively impacted by COVID-19 (63.5% compared with 34.1% of males).

Table 4.6: Impact of COVID-19 on young people

	National %	NSW %	Females %	Males %
Participation in activities	68.3	69.7	72.7	64.3
Education	62.3	67.2	70.3	60.4
Mental health	50.3	54.2	63.5	34.1
Physical health	46.1	49.0	52.2	42.1
Family	37.9	39.3	41.7	33.9
Friendships	33.8	38.1	40.7	31.1
Employment	30.1	32.1	32.8	30.8
Financial security	24.3	25.7	28.4	19.8
Housing	6.9	6.8	5.9	7.2

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, the ways COVID-19 has negatively impacted them. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of NSW frequency.

"[COVID-19] has affected my ability to go to school and see my peers. It's not just that I miss my friends, but I miss the feeling of being at school, being able to participate in class, and experiencing the hustle and bustle of the corridors. This has affected my mental health."

(Female, 15, NSW, non-Indigenous)



UNFAIR TREATMENT

Have young people been treated unfairly?

More than one third (35.1%) of NSW young people reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of NSW females reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (37.3% compared with 25.9% of males).

Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify whether they had been treated unfairly due to their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason.

Of the 35.1% of NSW young people who had been treated unfairly in the past year (see Table 4.7):

- Notably higher proportions of NSW females had been treated unfairly due to their gender (44.1% compared with 17.3% of males).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of NSW males reported they had been treated unfairly due to their disability (9.7% compared with 4.8% of females) and religion (19.2% compared with 15.6% of females).

Table 4.7: Reasons for being treated unfairly

	National %	NSW %	Females %	Males %
Gender	37.3	40.7	44.1	17.3
Race/cultural background	27.6	29.9	31.3	32.2
Mental health	27.6	29.2	28.0	25.1
Sexuality	21.7	22.6	17.1	16.5
Other	21.5	20.6	18.6	26.8
Age	18.3	17.5	18.7	13.8
Religion	11.4	15.8	15.6	19.2
Disability	7.0	7.3	4.8	9.7
Financial background	7.0	7.3	6.2	8.9

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of NSW frequency.

Young people who responded that they had been treated unfairly due to their race/cultural background were offered an additional question about the nature and experience of the unfair treatment (see Table 4.8). Of these NSW young people, nine in 10 (90.6%) had been insulted or had hurtful comments said to them. Close to two thirds (64.1%) of NSW young people had been harassed or intimidated and 62.3% had felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media.

- Compared with all respondents nationally, a larger proportion of NSW respondents *felt unwelcome* in school, employment or services (51.4% compared with 46.6%).
- A notably higher proportion of NSW females *felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media* (66.2% compared with 46.4% of males).
- Four times the proportion of males from NSW had experienced physical violence (28.3% compared with 7.1% of females).
- A higher proportion of NSW males had received insulting or hurtful comments online (50.9% compared with 40.7% of females).

Table 4.8: Experiences of unfair treatment due to race/cultural background

	National %	NSW %	Females %	Males %
Been insulted or had hurtful comments said to you	89.0	90.6	91.4	87.7
Been harassed or intimidated	62.5	64.1	61.9	65.5
Felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media	54.2	62.3	66.2	46.4
Felt unwelcome in school, employment or services	46.6	51.4	52.5	44.1
Received insulting or hurtful comments online	43.1	45.3	40.7	50.9
Been excluded from social events or activities	27.2	28.8	26.5	32.7
Felt unwelcome or excluded from sporting clubs or groups	24.2	26.4	25.2	24.1
Experienced physical violence	14.5	14.3	7.1	28.3

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of NSW frequency.

Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Close to six in 10 (55.6%) NSW young people reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year because of their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason. A much higher proportion of NSW females reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (58.9% compared with 46.2% of males).

What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

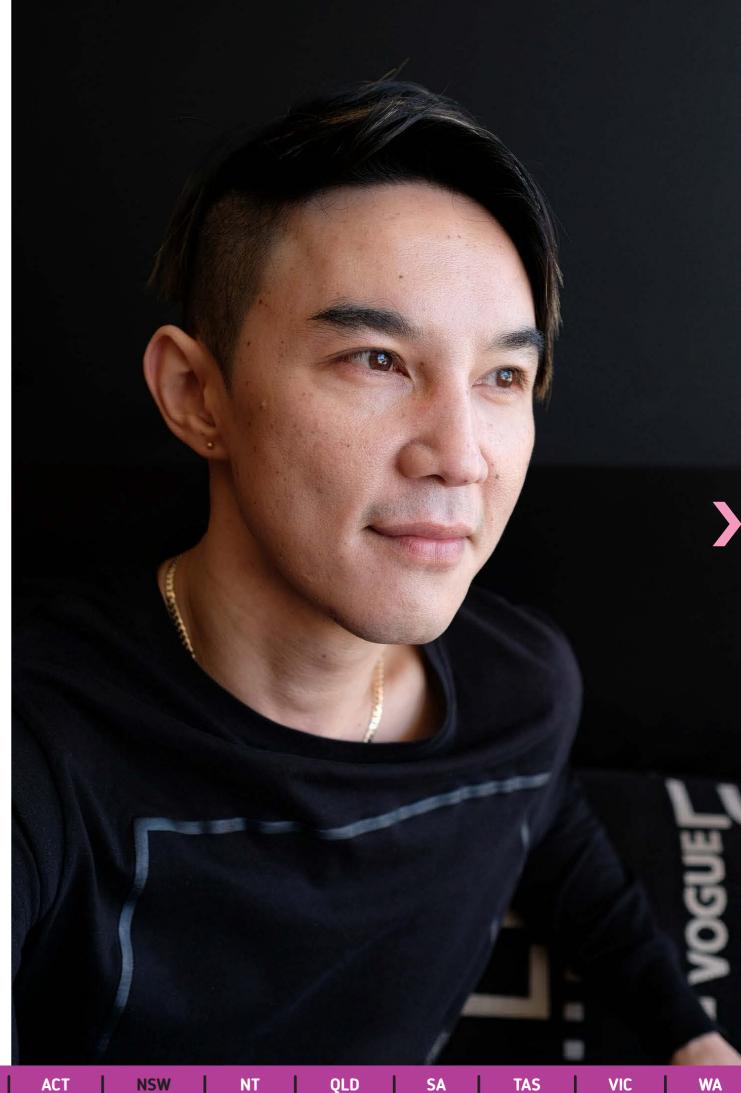
Of the respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 59.3% reported this was due to a person's race/cultural background (see Table 4.9). Close to half (48.0%) of NSW young people indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality, and more than four in 10 (44.2%) reported it was due to a person's gender.

• A notably higher proportion of NSW females reported witnessing unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality (51.1% compared with 35.9% of males) and gender (46.0% compared with 35.7% of males).

Table 4.9: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

	National %	NSW %	Females %	Males %
Race/cultural background	57.6	59.3	61.2	56.5
Sexuality	48.0	48.0	51.1	35.9
Gender	43.7	44.2	46.0	35.7
Disability	32.4	32.7	33.1	27.9
Religion	25.3	28.0	28.4	27.3
Mental health	26.1	27.9	27.8	23.8
Age	16.7	16.6	17.5	14.2
Financial background	15.0	14.4	14.1	13.4
Other	9.6	8.4	6.9	11.1

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of NSW frequency.



SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND FAMILY'S ABILITY TO GET ALONG

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

As shown in Figure 4.6, friend/s (80.7%), parent/s or guardian/s (69.7%) and the internet (48.3%) were the three most frequently named sources of help for NSW young people.

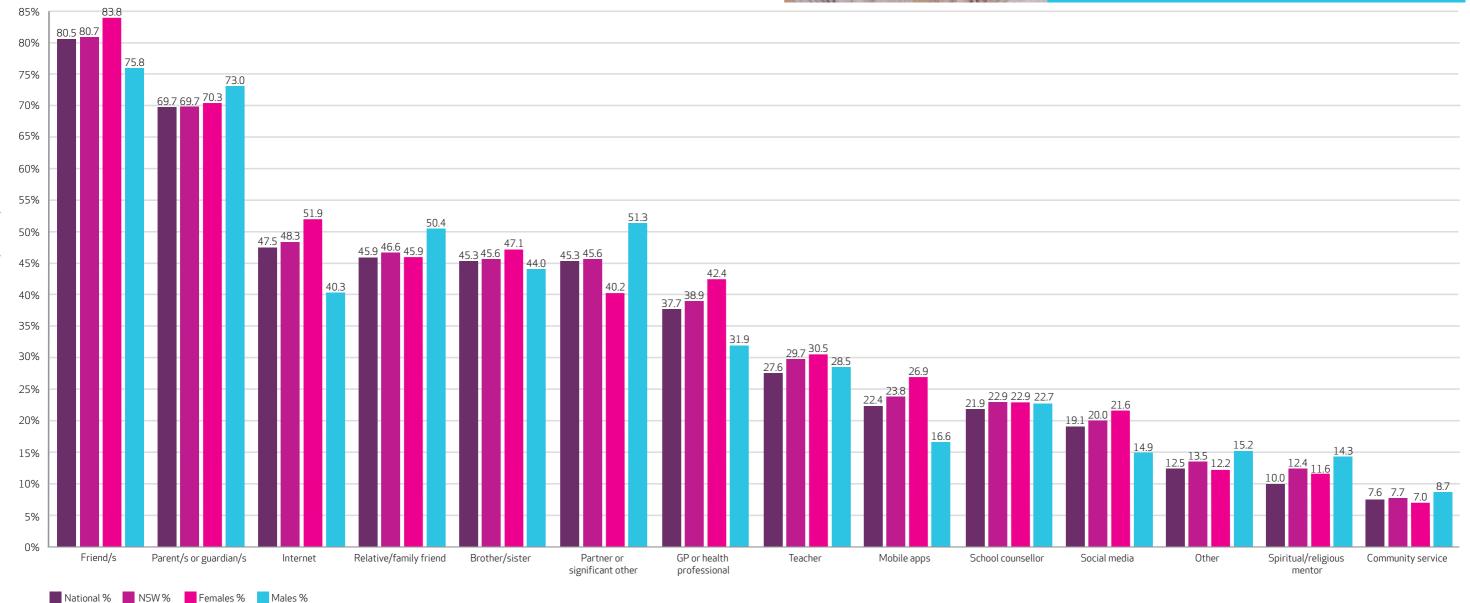
- Compared with NSW males, a higher proportion of NSW females said they would turn to the *internet* (51.9% compared with 40.3%), *GP or health professional* (42.4% compared with 31.9%) or *mobile apps* (26.9% compared with 16.6%) for support with important issues in their lives.
- A higher proportion of NSW males stated they would go to their partner or significant other (51.3% compared with 40.2% of females).

Figure 4.6: Where young people go for help with important issues



"[My biggest personal issue is] not being able to see friends, help them cope with school stress and for them to help me cope. Although my family is extremely supportive, my friends give me a sense of empathy because they can relate."

(Female, 16, NSW, non-Indigenous)



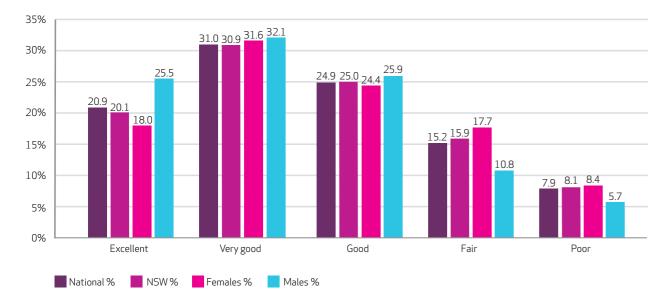
Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, where they go for help with important issues. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of NSW frequency.

MISSION AUSTRALIA YOUTH SURVEY 2021 CONTENTS | THE SURVEY | NAT | ATSI | ACT | NSW | NT | QLD | SA | TAS | VIC | WA

How do young people rate their family's ability to get along?

More than half (51.0%) of NSW respondents rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good (see Figure 4.7). However, close to one quarter (24.0%) of NSW young people indicated their family's ability to get along was either fair or poor. A higher proportion of NSW males rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good (57.6% compared with 49.6% of females), while a much higher proportion of NSW females rated their family's ability to get along as fair or poor (26.1% compared with 16.5% of males).

Figure 4.7: Family's ability to get along with one another





"Not seeing friends and family has affected me the most because family and friends are everything to me and it was taken away because of a virus."

(Female, 15, NSW, non-Indigenous)

ENGAGEMENT IN ACTIVITIES

What activities are young people involved in?

Over the past year, the top three activities NSW young people engaged in were sports (as a participant) (70.6%), sports (as a spectator) (61.4%) and arts/cultural/music activities (44.5%), as shown in Table 4.10.

- More than four in 10 (43.1%) NSW respondents reported they had participated in volunteer work in the past year.
- Close to four in 10 (38.9%) NSW young people indicated they had taken part in student leadership activities.
- Notably higher proportions of NSW females reported taking part in *arts/cultural/music activities* (49.2% compared with 33.1% of males) and *student leadership activities* (43.8% compared with 30.3% of males) in the past year.
- A higher proportion of NSW males reported taking part in *sports* (as a spectator) in the past year (67.6% compared with 59.9% of females).

Table 4.10: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	National %	NSW %	Females %	Males %
Sports (as a participant)	71.0	70.6	70.7	72.8
Sports (as a spectator)	64.6	61.4	59.9	67.6
Arts/cultural/music activities	43.2	44.5	49.2	33.1
Volunteer work	41.1	43.1	45.1	40.4
Student leadership activities	33.9	38.9	43.8	30.3
Religious groups/activities	23.4	29.4	32.5	25.0
Youth groups/activities	24.5	26.3	26.9	24.6
Environmental groups/activities	19.1	17.1	17.8	14.8
Political groups/activities	9.3	10.3	10.6	7.8

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what activities they were involved in during the past year. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of NSW frequency.



A majority of NSW young people engaged in *sports* either as a *participant* or as a *spectator*.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

How stressed are young people?

Close to half (47.3%) of NSW young people felt stressed either all of the time or most of the time in the past four weeks (see Table 4.11).

- A higher proportion of NSW females felt stressed all of the time or most of the time (56.2% compared with 27.3% of males).
- Conversely, more than seven times the proportion of NSW males felt stressed *none of the time* (10.1% compared with 1.3% of females).

Table 4.11: Young people's level of stress

	National %	NSW %	Females %	Males %
All of the time	11.6	13.8	17.1	6.0
Most of the time	32.9	33.5	39.1	21.3
Some of the time	32.0	31.8	31.4	34.1
A little of the time	19.0	16.6	11.0	28.5
None of the time	4.4	4.3	1.3	10.1

What do young people do to reduce stress?

The top three ways NSW young people reported reducing stress was to do something relaxing (65.0%), spend time online (64.2%) and play games or watch TV/movies (61.4%) (see Table 4.12).

- Compared with NSW males, a higher proportion of NSW females reported they would sleep (66.4% compared with 47.5%), do something relaxing (68.9% compared with 58.1%) and spend time online (67.4% compared with 57.1%) to reduce stress.
- A higher proportion of NSW males reported they would do a hobby to reduce stress (53.1% compared with 39.1% of females).

Table 4.12: Ways young people reduce stress

	National %	NSW %	Females %	Males %
Do something relaxing	63.2	65.0	68.9	58.1
Spend time online	62.3	64.2	67.4	57.1
Play games or watch TV/movies	61.4	61.4	59.4	65.7
Sleep	59.5	60.0	66.4	47.5
Physical activity	49.0	48.6	48.2	52.4
Spend time with friends or family	46.9	47.1	51.0	41.3
Do a hobby	45.7	44.1	39.1	53.1
Nothing	16.5	16.7	17.0	15.4
Consume alcohol and/or other drugs	12.1	12.3	11.4	13.0
Reach out to a professional	6.8	7.3	9.0	3.7
Take medication prescribed by a health professional	6.1	7.1	8.1	3.8
Other	6.7	7.0	5.9	7.5

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what they do to reduce stress. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of NSW frequency.

How much control do young people feel they have over their life?

Half (50.8%) of NSW young people felt they had control over their life, as shown in Table 4.13: 6.7% reported having *complete control* and 44.1% felt *mostly in control*. More than one in eight (13.2%) NSW respondents reported they had *almost no control* (10.4%) or *no control* (2.8%) over their life.

- A much higher proportion of NSW males felt they had *complete control* or were *mostly in control* of their lives (63.0% compared with 46.7% of females).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of NSW females reported feeling *almost no control* or *no control* over their lives (13.9% compared with 9.2% of males).

Table 4.13: Young people's level of control over their life

	National %	NSW %	Females %	Males %
Complete control	7.8	6.7	3.9	12.3
Mostly in control	45.5	44.1	42.8	50.7
Some control	34.5	36.0	39.4	27.8
Almost no control	9.9	10.4	11.6	6.8
No control	2.4	2.8	2.3	2.4

How lonely are young people?

Close to three in 10 (28.2%) NSW young people felt lonely all or most of the time (see Table 4.14).

- A notably higher proportion of NSW females felt lonely all or most of the time (31.0% compared with 19.3% of males).
- A notably higher proportion of NSW males felt lonely none of the time (25.2% compared with 13.1% of females).

Table 4.14: Young people's level of loneliness

	National %	NSW %	Females %	Males %
All of the time	5.9	7.0	7.0	4.4
Most of the time	19.0	21.2	24.0	14.9
Some of the time	29.7	29.0	30.7	26.4
A little of the time	27.1	26.0	25.3	29.1
None of the time	18.2	16.8	13.1	25.2



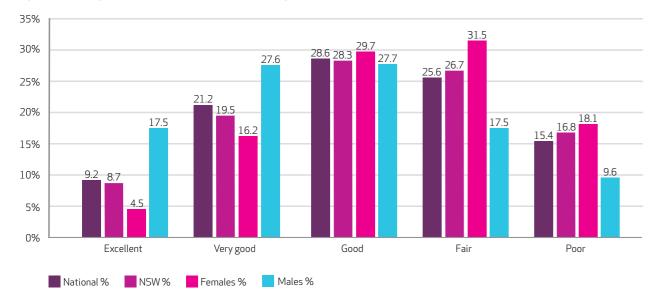
Three in 10 NSW females felt lonely all or most of the time, notably higher than NSW males.

How do young people rate their mental health and wellbeing?

Close to three in 10 (28.2%) NSW young people rated their mental health and wellbeing as better than good (see Figure 4.8): 8.7% rated it as excellent and 19.5% rated it as very good. One in six (16.8%) NSW respondents rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor.

- A notably higher proportion of NSW males rated their mental health and wellbeing as excellent or very good (45.1% compared with 20.7% of females).
- A much higher proportion of NSW females rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor (18.1% compared with 9.6% males).

Figure 4.8: Young people's mental health and wellbeing



How happy are young people?

More than half (52.8%) of NSW young people indicated overall happiness with their lives. A notably higher proportion of NSW males reported feeling *happy/very happy* with their lives as a whole (63.2% compared with 49.6% of females), whereas a larger proportion of NSW females indicated they felt *very sad/sad* (15.6% compared with 10.4% of males).

Table 4.15: Young people's level of happiness

	National %	NSW %	Females %	Males %
Happy/very happy (70-100)	53.4	52.8	49.6	63.2
Not happy or sad (40-60)	32.6	32.1	34.7	26.4
Very sad/sad (0-30)	13.9	15.1	15.6	10.4

Note: Respondents were asked to rate how happy they are with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes happy/very happy; 40-60 signifies not happy or sad; and 0-30 indicates very sad/sad.



Notably higher proportions of NSW males rated their mental health and wellbeing as excellent or very good, compared with NSW females.

How much time do young people spend on screens?

Four in 10 (39.6%) NSW young people spent 9 hours or more on screens per day (see Table 4.16). Higher proportions of NSW females spent 9 hours or more on screens (41.3% compared with 34.6% of males).

Table 4.16: Young people's screen-time per day

	National %	NSW %	Females %	Males %
No screen time	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
1-2 hours	5.5	5.5	4.4	7.6
3-4 hours	17.3	15.8	13.4	20.6
5-6 hours	22.7	20.4	20.9	20.7
7-8 hours	18.6	18.6	20.0	16.3
9 hours or more	35.7	39.6	41.3	34.6

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

Around half (47.0%) of NSW young people spent 1-2 hours on screens connecting with others. More than four in 10 (41.9%) young people from NSW spent 1-2 hours on screens for entertainment. One third (33.6%) of NSW respondents spent 5-6 hours on screens for learning (see Table 4.17).

Table 4.17: Young people's screen-time per day by purpose

New South Wales respondents	Connecting with others %	For entertainment %	For learning %
No screen time	6.0	2.1	8.6
1-2 hours	47.0	41.9	19.4
3-4 hours	22.6	29.4	17.1
5-6 hours	10.6	14.0	33.6
7-8 hours	5.1	5.4	14.2
9 hours or more	8.7	7.2	7.0

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day connecting with others, for entertainment and for learning. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

How much time do young people spend sleeping?

More than half (51.9%) of NSW young people reported sleeping on average between 7-8 hours per night (see Table 4.18).

Table 4.18: Young people's sleep per night

	National %	NSW %	Females %	Males %
6 hours or less	21.6	21.1	21.4	19.5
7-8 hours	52.8	51.9	54.5	48.7
9-10 hours	16.8	17.9	16.6	21.3
11 hours or more	8.8	9.1	7.5	10.6

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend sleeping per night. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

How much time do young people spend exercising?

More than one quarter (26.9%) of NSW young people reported exercising on average 1-2 hours per week (see Table 4.19). A notably higher proportion of NSW males reported engaging in 9 hours or more of exercise per week (27.9% compared with 14.5% of females).

Table 4.19: Young people's exercise per week

	National %	NSW %	Females %	Males %
No exercise	7.2	7.3	7.2	6.6
1-2 hours	25.0	26.9	29.4	21.5
3-4 hours	20.1	21.6	23.8	17.9
5-6 hours	15.1	14.8	15.4	14.8
7-8 hours	9.8	10.1	9.8	11.4
9 hours or more	22.8	19.3	14.5	27.9

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend exercising per week. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.



"[The most important issue in Australia is] pollution. I'm really scared that we're not going to do anything about climate change and thus our future will be negatively impacted."

(Prefer not to say, 15, NSW, non-Indigenous)

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA AND THE FUTURE

What issues do young people think are the most important in Australia today?

In 2021, NSW young people reported that the top three issues in Australia were *COVID-19* (47.8%), the environment (36.9%) and mental health (35.4%).

- One third (33.1%) of NSW young people reported equity and discrimination as an important national issue.
- Higher proportions of NSW females identified *equity and discrimination* (36.9% compared with 25.9% of males) and *mental health* (39.5% compared with 28.7% of males) as important issues facing Australia today.
- Young people from NSW have ranked the environment in the top three issues of national concern for the past three years, while COVID-19 has continued to grow in importance since 2020.

Table 4.20: Most important issues in Australia today

	National 2021 %	NSW 2021 %	Females %	Males %	NSW 2020 %	NSW 2019 %
COVID-19	45.7	47.8	47.9	49.6	36.2	-
The environment	38.0	36.9	39.9	31.0	32.7	36.0
Mental health	34.6	35.4	39.5	28.7	32.6	38.8
Equity and discrimination	35.4	33.1	36.9	25.9	42.5	23.8
The economy and financial matters	10.9	12.2	11.4	14.4	14.6	14.6
Crime, safety and violence	10.9	10.5	11.4	8.7	9.0	12.0
Alcohol and drugs	10.6	9.2	7.7	12.8	9.6	19.6
Education	6.7	7.8	8.0	7.1	7.3	9.2
Homelessness/housing	7.0	7.2	7.9	5.9	7.2	7.6
LGBTIQA+ issues	7.0	7.0	6.8	4.3	5.0	6.8

Note: Respondents were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The responses provided were categorised into the items listed above. Items are listed in order of 2021 NSW frequency.

How do young people feel about the future?

Half (50.7%) of NSW young people felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future. However, one in six (16.5%) young people indicated they felt *negative* or *very negative* about the future.

- A higher proportion of NSW males reported feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future (55.9% compared with 49.9% of females).
- Similar to the trend for all respondents nationally, the proportion of NSW respondents reporting feeling very positive or positive about the future has slightly reduced over time from 57.9% in 2019, to 54.9% in 2020 and 50.7% in 2021.

Table 4.21: Feelings about the future

	National 2021 %	NSW 2021 %	Females %	Males %	NSW 2020 %	NSW 2019 %
Very positive or positive	51.6	50.7	49.9	55.9	54.9	57.9
Neither positive nor negative	32.5	32.8	33.8	31.2	29.8	29.9
Negative or very negative	16.0	16.5	16.2	12.8	15.4	12.3

 $Note: Responses \ for \ \textit{very positive} \ \text{and} \ \textit{positive} \ \text{have} \ \text{been aggregated}, \ \text{as have the responses} \ \text{for} \ \textit{negative} \ \text{and} \ \textit{very negative}.$

Northern Territory

- Profile of respondents
- Education and employment
- Values and concerns
- COVID-19
- Unfair treatment

- Sources of support and family's ability to get along
- ► Engagement in activities
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Most important issues in Australia and the future



Northern Territory

NOTE: Owing to the low number of respondents from the Northern Territory in 2021 we are unable to provide gender breakdowns and are also unable to provide further detail on the experience of unfair treatment. Caution should be used when interpreting the data in this chapter because of the low number of respondents.

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 158 young people from the Northern Territory (NT) aged between 15 and 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey* 2021.

Gender

Close to half (48.3%) of NT respondents were female and 47.7% were male.

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Amongst Youth Survey respondents from the NT, close to one quarter (24.5%) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Cultural background

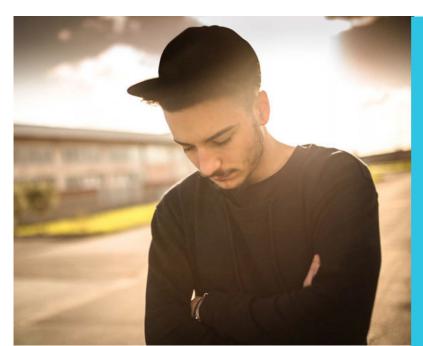
Amongst respondents from the NT, 23.1% stated they were born overseas and 29.7% reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the 24 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Greek, Filipino/Tagalog and Indigenous languages.

Amongst NT respondents, 29.9% reported a particular cultural or ethnic group with which they identified strongly. Of the 20 cultural or ethnic groups identified, the most common were (in order of frequency): Australian Aboriginal, Timorese and Greek.

Close to half (48.0%) of all NT respondents stated one or both of their parents were born overseas.

Disability

A small proportion (9.6%) of NT respondents identified as living with disability.



158 young people from NT took the time to share their values, aspirations and issues of concern in Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2021.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Are young people studying?

Most respondents (73.9%) from the NT reported studying full-time, as indicated in Table 5.1. One in 10 (10.8%) NT respondents indicated they were not studying.

Table 5.1: Participation in education

	National %	NT %
Studying full-time	84.5	73.9
Studying part-time	8.1	15.3
Not studying	7.4	10.8

How satisfied are young people with their studies?

Half (55.0%) of respondents from the NT who were currently studying reported they were either very satisfied or satisfied with their studies. Of respondents from the NT who were studying, 8.6% indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, as shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Satisfaction with studies

	National %	NT %
Very satisfied or satisfied	62.5	55.0
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	28.5	36.4
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	9.0	8.6

Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying. Responses for very satisfied and satisfied have been aggregated, as have the responses for dissatisfied and very dissatisfied.

Of those still at school, the majority (95.7%) stated they intended to complete Year 12.

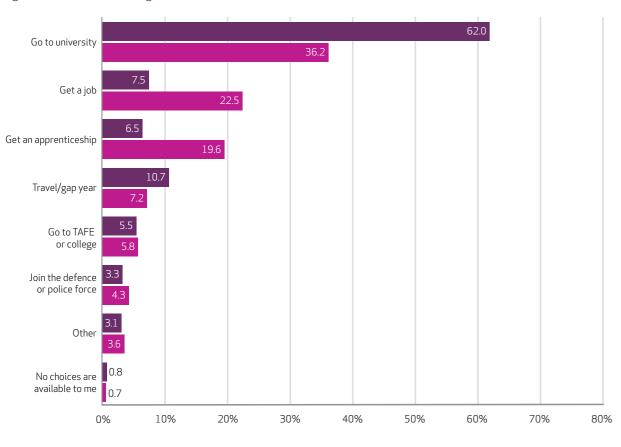
Close to three quarters of NT respondents reported studying full-time in 2021, the majority of whom intended to complete Year 12.



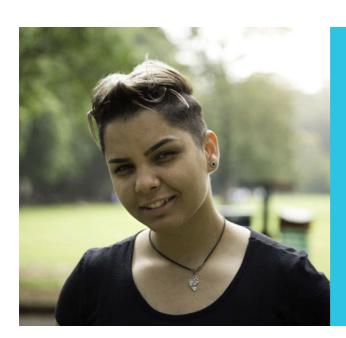
What are young people's plans after school?

Over one third (36.2%) of respondents in the NT planned to *go to university* after school, as shown in Figure 5.1. Close to one quarter (22.5%) planned to *get a job* and one in five (19.6%) indicated they planned to *get an apprenticeship*.

Figure 5.1: Plans after leaving school



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Respondents were only able to choose one option from the above list of predetermined items. Items are listed in order of NT frequency.



National % NT %

"[My biggest personal issue is] setting myself up after I graduate school. I would like to study at university after year 12, and a personal challenge I have had in the past year in terms of achieving that goal is focusing on the task at hand and having full concentration, commitment and asking for help when needed."

(Female, 15, NT, non-Indigenous)



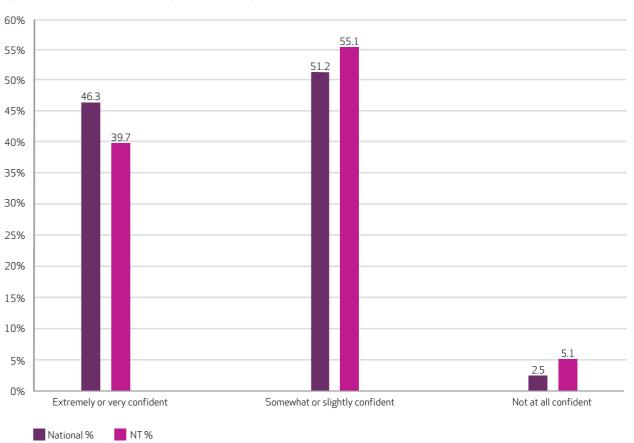
"There really is nothing that can be implemented to curb the stresses of grade 12. However, the support at school has done very well to facilitate any academic concerns we have."

(Female, 16, NT, non-Indigenous)

How confident are young people in achieving their study or work goals?

Close to four in 10 (39.7%) respondents in the NT indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study or work goals (see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2: Confidence in achieving study or work goals

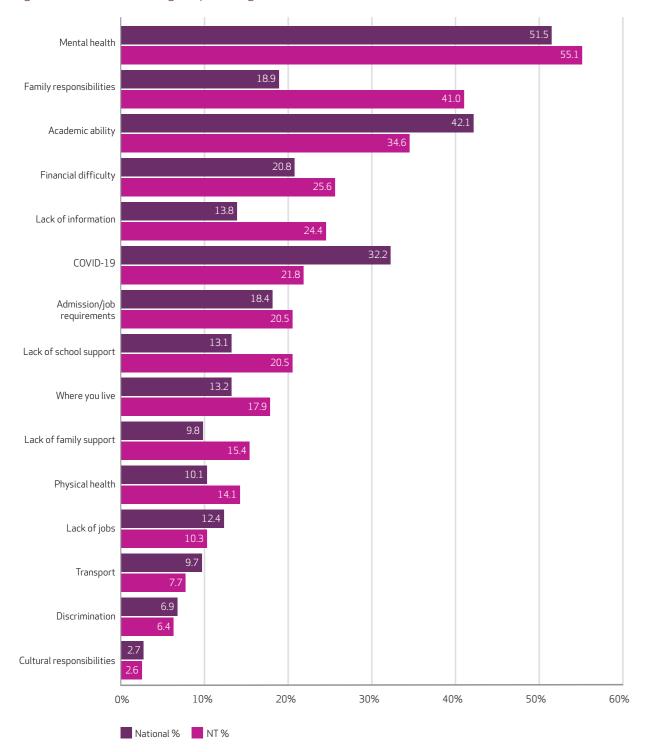


Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Responses for extremely confident and very confident have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat confident and slightly confident.

What are the barriers to achieving study or work goals?

Close to six in 10 (56.1%) respondents in the NT felt there were barriers that impacted on their achievement of their study or work goals. As shown in Figure 5.3, mental health (55.1%), family responsibilities (41.0%) and academic ability (34.6%) were the top three barriers impacting on respondent's achievement of study or work goals.

Figure 5.3: Barriers to achieving study or work goals



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying and felt there were barriers that impacted the achievement of study or work goals. Respondents were able to choose more than one option from the predetermined list of items. Items are listed in order of NT frequency.

Are young people employed?

Four in 10 (40.3%) respondents in the NT reported they were employed part-time, as shown in Table 5.3. Close to six in 10 (58.4%) indicated they were not in paid employment of any kind: 39.6% stated they were looking for work, while 18.8% were neither working nor looking for work.

Table 5.3: Participation in paid employment

	National %	NT %
Employed full-time	0.6	1.3
Employed part-time	45.4	40.3
Not in paid employment, looking for work	31.8	39.6
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	22.2	18.8

Note: Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average, how many hours they worked per week. Part-time employment is considered to be less than 35 hours per week, while full-time employment is considered to be 35 hours or more.



Four in 10 NT respondents reported being unemployed but looking for work.

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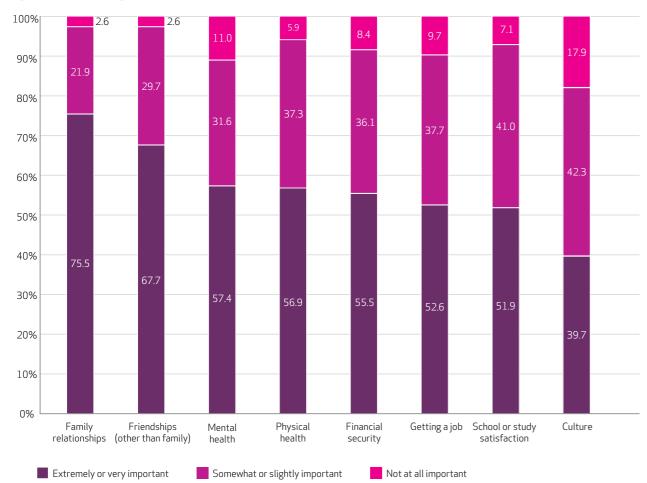
VALUES AND CONCERNS

What do young people value?

The three most highly valued items for NT young people were family relationships, friendships (other than family), and mental health (see Figure 5.4). The next most highly valued items were physical health and financial security.

- Three quarters (75.5%) of respondents in the NT reported family relationships as extremely or very important.
- More than two thirds (67.7%) of respondents in the NT saw friendships (other than family) as extremely or very important.
- Close to six in 10 (57.4%) NT respondents identified mental health as extremely or very important.

Figure 5.4: What young people value



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely and very important for each item.



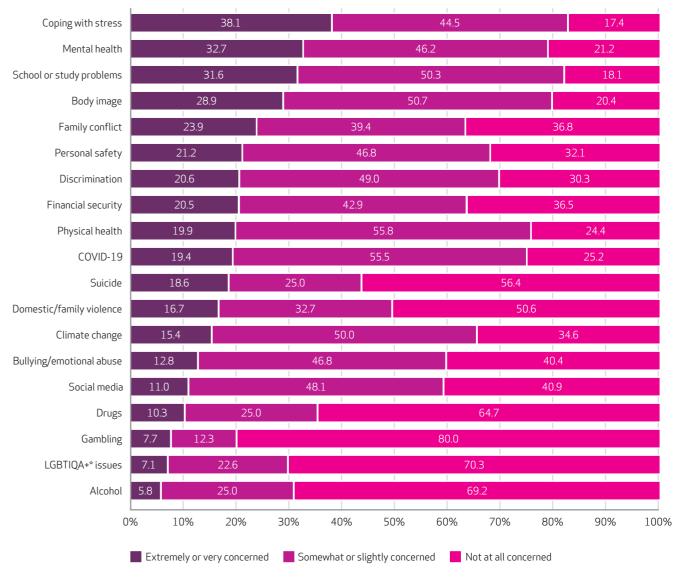
Three quarters of NT respondents highly valued family relationships.
Friendships were also extremely or very important to most NT respondents.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

The top three issues of personal concern for respondents in the NT were coping with stress (38.1%), mental health (32.7%) and school or study problems (31.6%) (see Figure 5.5).

- Close to three in 10 (28.9%) respondents in the NT were extremely or very concerned about body image.
- Close to one quarter (23.9%) of respondents in the NT were extremely or very concerned about family conflict.

Figure 5.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely concerned and very concerned for each item.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

COVID-19

How has COVID-19 impacted on young people?

The top three areas respondents in the NT identified as being negatively impacted by COVID-19 were participation in activities (53.6%), family (38.8%) and physical health (37.7%) (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Impact of COVID-19 on young people

	National %	NT %
Participation in activities	68.3	53.6
Family	37.9	38.8
Physical health	46.1	37.7
Mental health	50.3	36.4
Employment	30.1	34.4
Education	62.3	29.7
Friendships	33.8	27.9
Financial security	24.3	18.2
Housing	6.9	11.7

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, the ways COVID-19 has negatively impacted them. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of NT frequency.



"COVID has affected my education and studies in terms of online distanced learning. It has taken away the deeper connection from teachers to students... It has also postponed a lot of extra curricular activities I planned to partake in."

(Female, 15, NT, non-Indigenous)

UNFAIR TREATMENT

Have young people been treated unfairly?

More than one third (35.9%) of respondents in the NT reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year.

Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify whether they had been treated unfairly due to their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason.

Of the 35.9% of respondents in the NT who had been treated unfairly in the past year (see Table 5.5):

- Half (50.0%) of respondents from the NT reported being treated unfairly due to their race/cultural background.
- Close to one third (32.1%) of respondents reported being treated unfairly due to their age.
- Three in 10 (30.4%) respondents in the NT reported being treated unfairly due to their gender.

Table 5.5: Reasons for being treated unfairly

	National %	NT %
Race/cultural background	27.6	50.0
Age	18.3	32.1
Gender	37.3	30.4
Mental health	27.6	26.8
Other	21.5	19.6
Religion	11.4	8.9
Sexuality	21.7	8.9
Disability	7.0	5.4
Financial background	7.0	3.6

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of NT frequency.

Young people who responded that they had been treated unfairly due to their race/cultural background were offered an additional question about the nature and experience of the unfair treatment. Proportions are not reported due to the small number of respondents. However, the experience of unfair treatment reported by respondents in the NT included (in order of frequency): been insulted or had hurtful comments said to you; been harassed or intimidated; felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media; received insulting or hurtful comments online; felt unwelcome or excluded from sporting clubs or groups; felt unwelcome in school, employment or services; been excluded from social events or activities; and experienced physical violence.



More than one third of NT respondents reported they had been treated unfairly, half of whom had been treated unfairly due to their race/cultural background.

Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Close to six in 10 (59.0%) respondents in the NT reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year because of their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason.

What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

Of the respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 59.8% reported witnessing unfair treatment due to a person's race/cultural background (see Table 5.6). More than four in 10 (43.5%) respondents from the NT indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality and 39.1% reported they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's gender.

Table 5.6: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

	National %	NT %
Race/cultural background	57.6	59.8
Sexuality	48.0	43.5
Gender	43.7	39.1
Religion	25.3	37.0
Disability	32.4	23.9
Age	16.7	22.8
Mental health	26.1	20.7
Financial background	15.0	13.0
Other	9.6	7.6

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of NT frequency.



"Personally I have been struggling with mental health. Thankfully I am confident I am getting there!
Although it may be easier if people were more willing to ask each other and engage in real conversation.
This could be encouraged by events that can encourage friendships that are more likely to be supportive and meaningful."

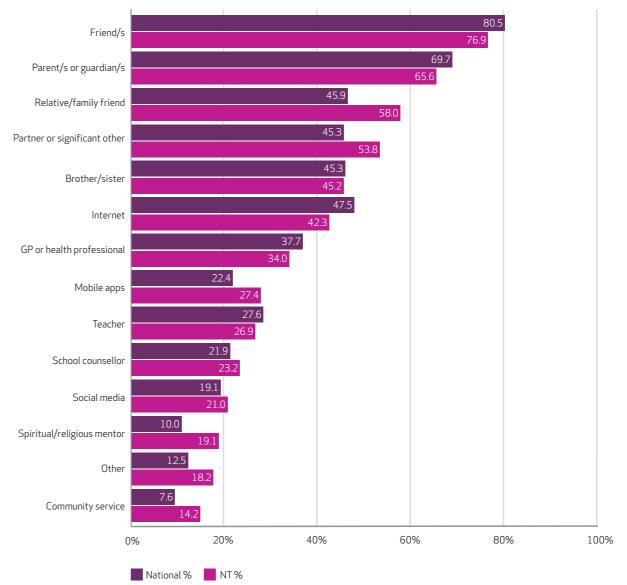
Male 16 NT non-Indigenous

SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND FAMILY'S ABILITY TO GET ALONG

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

As shown in Figure 5.6, friend/s (76.9%), parent/s or guardian/s (65.6%) and relative/family friend (58.0%) were the three most frequently named sources of help for respondents from the NT.

Figure 5.6: Where young people go for help with important issues

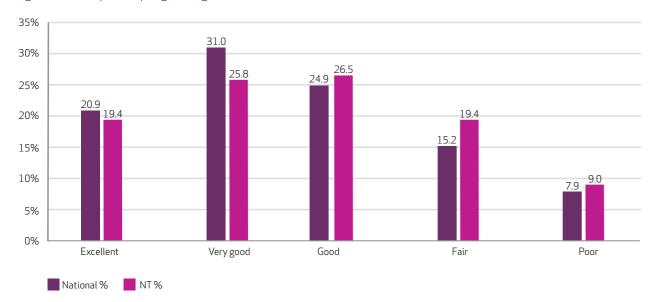


Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, where they go for help with important issues. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of NT frequency.

How do young people rate their family's ability to get along?

Close to half (45.2%) of respondents from the NT rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good (see Figure 5.7). However, close to three in 10 (28.4%) respondents from the NT indicated their family's ability to get along was either fair or poor.

Figure 5.7: Family's ability to get along with one another





Close to half of NT respondents rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good.

ENGAGEMENT IN ACTIVITIES

What activities are young people involved in?

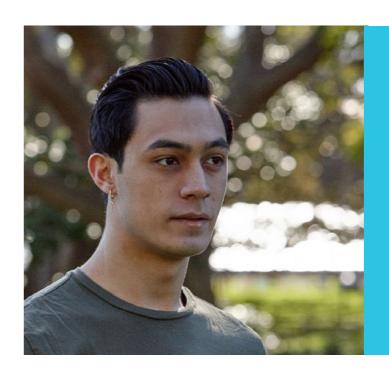
In the past year, the top three activities respondents from the NT were involved in were sports (as a participant) (69.9%), sports (as a spectator) (64.5%) and arts/cultural/music activities (41.7%) (see Table 5.7).

- More than one third (34.0%) of NT respondents reported they had participated in volunteer work in the past year.
- Three in 10 (30.1%) respondents in the NT indicated they had taken part in religious groups/activities.

Table 5.7: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

National %	NT %
participant) 71.0	69.9
spectator) 64.6	64.5
al/music activities 43.2	41.7
ork 41.1	34.0
pups/activities 23.4	30.1
s/activities 24.5	29.9
ership activities 33.9	27.6
al groups/activities 19.1	24.4
ps/activities 9.3	5.1
(F-2)	

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what activities they were involved in during the past year. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of NT frequency.



In the past year, a majority of respondents from the NT engaged in sports either as a participant or as a spectator.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

How stressed are young people?

Four in 10 (39.8%) respondents in the NT felt stressed either all of the time or most of the time in the past four weeks (see Table 5.8).

Table 5.8: Young people's level of stress

	National %	NT %
All of the time	11.6	12.2
Most of the time	32.9	27.6
Some of the time	32.0	26.9
A little of the time	19.0	24.4
None of the time	4.4	9.0

What do young people do to reduce stress?

The top three ways respondents in the NT reported reducing stress was to sleep (60.1%), spend time online (58.2%) and play games or watch TV/movies (53.2%) (see Table 5.9).

Table 5.9: Ways young people reduce stress

	National %	NT %
Sleep	59.5	60.1
Spend time online	62.3	58.2
Play games or watch TV/movies	61.4	53.2
Do something relaxing	63.2	52.5
Physical activity	49.0	39.2
Spend time with friends or family	46.9	39.2
Do a hobby	45.7	38.0
Nothing	16.5	25.3
Consume alcohol and/or other drugs	12.1	13.3
Other	6.7	8.9
Reach out to a professional	6.8	5.7
Take medication prescribed by a health professional	6.1	5.7

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what they do to reduce stress. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of NT frequency.

How much control do young people feel they have over their life?

Close to half (47.1%) of respondents in the NT felt they had control over their life, as shown in Table 5.10: 9.0% reported having complete control and 38.1% felt mostly in control. One in 10 (11.6%) respondents in the NT reported they had: almost no control (9.0%) or no control (2.6%) over their life.

Table 5.10: Young people's level of control over their life

	National %	NT %
Complete control	7.8	9.0
Mostly in control	45.5	38.1
Some control	34.5	41.3
Almost no control	9.9	9.0
No control	2.4	2.6

How lonely are young people?

Close to three in 10 (29.5%) respondents in the NT felt lonely all or most of the time (see Table 5.11).

Table 5.11: Young people's level of loneliness

	National %	NT %
All of the time	5.9	9.6
Most of the time	19.0	19.9
Some of the time	29.7	27.6
A little of the time	27.1	23.7
None of the time	18.2	19.2



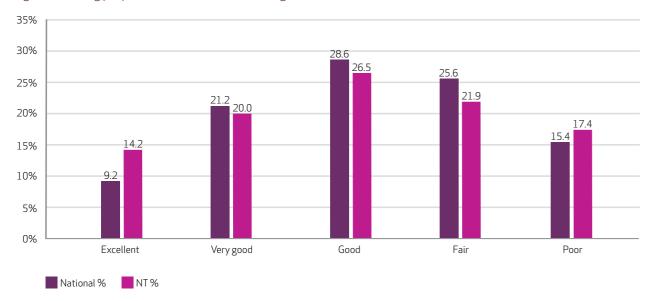
"The biggest personal challenge I have faced this past year is my mental health, it is getting worse as I get older and I am not enjoying how life is going."

(Female, 16, NT, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander).

How do young people rate their mental health and wellbeing?

More than one third (34.2%) of respondents in the NT rated their mental health and wellbeing as better than good (see Figure 5.8): 14.2% rated it as *excellent* and 20.0% rated it as *very good*. One in six (17.4%) respondents rated their mental health and wellbeing as *poor*.

Figure 5.8: Young people's mental health and wellbeing



How happy are young people?

Close to half (48.4%) of respondents from the NT indicated overall happiness with their lives (see Table 5.12).

Table 5.12: Young people's level of happiness

	National %	NT %
Happy/very happy (70-100)	53.4	48.4
Not happy or sad (40-60)	32.6	36.3
Very sad/sad (0-30)	13.9	15.3

Note: Respondents were asked to rate how happy they are with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes happy/very happy; 40-60 signifies not happy or sad; and 0-30 indicates very sad/sad.

How much time do young people spend on screens?

Four in 10 (41.8%) respondents in the NT spent 9 hours or more on screens per day (see Table 5.13).

Table 5.13: Young people's screen-time per day

	National %	NT %
No screen time	0.2	0.0
1-2 hours	5.5	7.0
3-4 hours	17.3	14.6
5-6 hours	22.7	23.4
7-8 hours	18.6	13.3
9 hours or more	35.7	41.8

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

More than one third (35.1%) of respondents from the NT spent 1-2 hours on screens connecting with others. Close to three in 10 NT respondents spent 1-2 hours on screens for entertainment (27.7%) and for learning (29.4%) (see Table 5.14).

Table 5.14: Young people's screen-time per day by purpose

Northern Territory respondents	Connecting with others	For entertainment %	For learning %
No screen time	2.6	1.9	17.0
1-2 hours	35.1	27.7	29.4
3-4 hours	20.1	26.5	9.8
5-6 hours	16.2	12.9	28.1
7-8 hours	7.8	11.0	11.8
9 hours or more	18.2	20.0	3.9

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day connecting with others, for entertainment and for learning. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

How much time do young people spend sleeping?

Close to half (45.6%) of respondents from the NT reported sleeping on average between 7-8 hours per night (see Table 5.15).

Table 5.15: Young people's sleep per night

	National %	NT %
6 hours or less	21.6	24.1
7-8 hours	52.8	45.6
9-10 hours	16.8	11.4
11 hours or more	8.8	19.0

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend sleeping per night. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

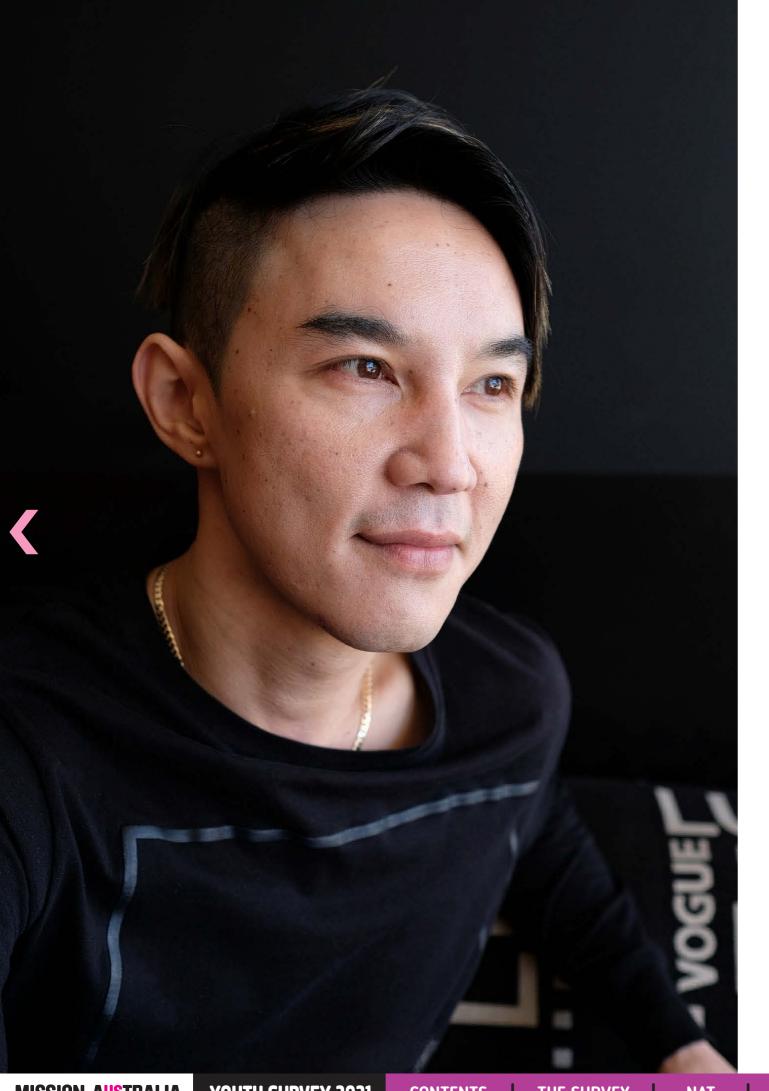
How much time do young people spend exercising?

Close to three in 10 (29.7%) respondents from the NT reported exercising on average 1-2 hours per week (see Table 5.16).

Table 5.16: Young people's exercise per week

	National %	NT %
No exercise	7.2	12.7
1-2 hours	25.0	29.7
3-4 hours	20.1	19.6
5-6 hours	15.1	7.0
7-8 hours	9.8	4.4
9 hours or more	22.8	26.6

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend exercising per week. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.



MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA AND THE FUTURE

What issues do young people think are the most important in Australia today?

In 2021, respondents in the NT reported that the top three issues in Australia were COVID-19 (44.2%), equity and discrimination (33.3%) and the environment (32.6%).

- One quarter (24.8%) of respondents in the NT reported mental health as an important national issue.
- Respondents from the NT have ranked the environment and equity and discrimination as a top concern for the past three years, while COVID-19 has continued to grow in importance since 2020.

Table 5.17: Most important issues in Australia today

	National 2021 %	NT 2021 %	NT 2020 %	NT 2019 %
COVID-19	45.7	44.2	35.0	-
Equity and discrimination	35.4	33.3	39.9	27.3
The environment	38.0	32.6	34.7	27.3
Mental health	34.6	24.8	26.8	29.5
Alcohol and drugs	10.6	15.5	9.6	28.1
Crime, safety and violence	10.9	15.5	9.0	18.3
The economy and financial matters	10.9	12.4	16.0	14.7
Homelessness/housing	7.0	8.5	4.4	7.6
Education	6.7	7.8	9.6	7.6
Bullying	4.2	6.2	6.4	14.7
LGBTIQA+ issues	7.0	6.2	6.1	6.1

Note: Respondents were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The responses provided were categorised into the items listed above. Items are listed in order of 2021 NT frequency.

How do young people feel about the future?

Around four in 10 (39.9%) respondents in the NT felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future (see Table 5.18). However, one in 10 (10.5%) young people indicated they felt *negative* or *very negative* about the future.

• The proportion of respondents from the NT reporting feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future has reduced over time from 51.6% in 2019, to 48.5% in 2020 and 39.9% in 2021.

Table 5.18: Feelings about the future

	National 2021 %	NT 2021 %	NT 2020 %	NT 2019%
Very positive or positive	51.6	39.9	48.5	51.6
Neither positive nor negative	32.5	49.7	32.9	37.8
Negative or very negative	16.0	10.5	18.7	10.5

Note: Responses for very positive and positive have been aggregated, as have the responses for negative and very negative.

Queensland

- Profile of respondents
- Education and employment
- Values and concerns
- COVID-19
- Unfair treatment

- Sources of support and family's ability to get along
- ► Engagement in activities
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Most important issues in Australia and the future



Queensland

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 4,652 young people from Queensland (QLD) aged between 15 and 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2021*.

Gender

Nearly half (49.4%) of QLD respondents were female, 45.3% were male, 3.9% were gender diverse and 1.4% preferred not to say.

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 231 (5.0%) young people from QLD identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. A slightly higher proportion of QLD females identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (5.0% compared with 4.3% of males).

Cultural background

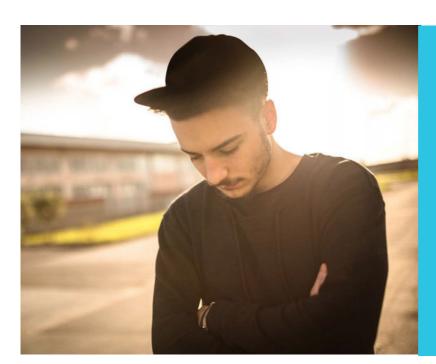
A total of 683 (14.8%) QLD respondents stated they were born overseas and 710 (15.4%) QLD young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the 78 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Chinese, Afrikaans, Mandarin and Spanish.

A total of 769 (16.7%) QLD young people reported a particular cultural or ethnic group with which they identified strongly. Of the more than 100 cultural or ethnic groups identified, the most common were (in order of frequency): Greek, Filipino, Chinese, Italian, Australian Aboriginal and Maori.

A total of 1,787 (38.8%) QLD respondents stated one or both of their parents were born overseas.

Disability

A total of 450 (9.7%) QLD respondents identified as living with disability. A greater proportion of males from QLD reported living with disability (9.5% compared with 7.4% of females). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, learning disability, physical disability and anxiety disorder.



4,652 young people from QLD took the time to share their values, aspirations and issues of concern in Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2021.



Are young people studying?

A majority (81.9%) of young people from QLD were studying full-time, which is lower than the 86.6% studying full-time in 2020 (Tiller et al., 2020), as indicated in Table 6.1. A notably higher proportion of QLD females reported studying full-time (85.0% compared with 79.0% of males). Higher proportions of QLD males reported studying part-time (10.9% compared with 6.2% females).

Table 6.1: Participation in education

	National %	QLD %	Females %	Males %
Studying full-time	84.5	81.9	85.0	79.0
Studying part-time	8.1	8.6	6.2	10.9
Not studying	7.4	9.5	8.8	10.1

How satisfied are young people with their studies?

As in previous years, the majority (64.0%) of QLD respondents who were currently studying reported they were either very satisfied or satisfied with their studies. A lower proportion of QLD young people indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied (7.5% compared with 9.0% of all national respondents), as shown in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2: Satisfaction with studies

	National %	QLD %	Females %	Males %
Very satisfied or satisfied	62.5	64.0	64.9	65.0
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	28.5	28.5	28.6	27.4
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	9.0	7.5	6.6	7.6

Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying. Responses for very satisfied and satisfied have been aggregated, as have the responses for dissatisfied and very dissatisfied.

Of those still at school, the majority (98.3%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. However, a slightly higher proportion of QLD males stated they were not planning on completing Year 12 (2.4% compared with 0.8% of females).

While a majority of young people from QLD were studying full-time, it is a slightly lower proportion than in 2020.



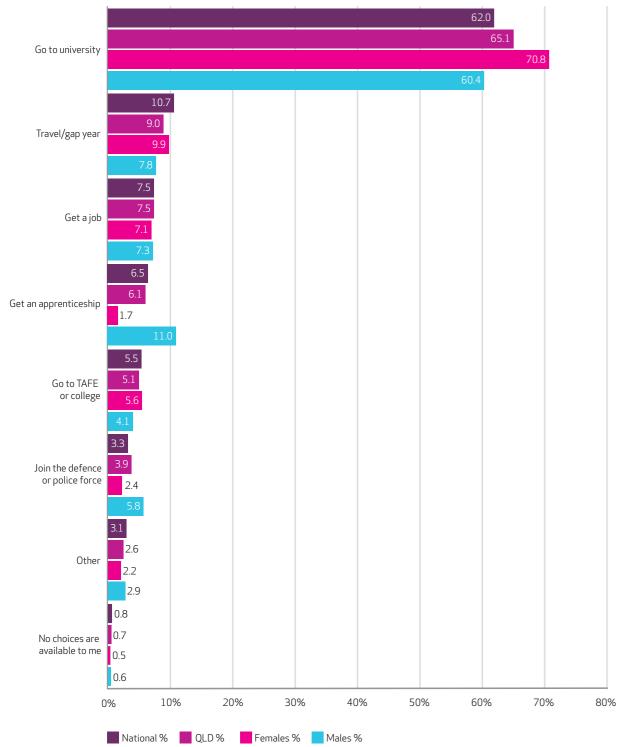
WA

What are young people's plans after school?

Nearly two thirds (65.1%) of QLD young people planned to *go to university* after school, as shown in Figure 6.1. Close to one in 10 (9.0%) QLD respondents reported *travel/gap year* plans after school, and one in 13 (7.5%) indicated plans to *get a job*.

While the most frequently reported plan was to *go to university* after finishing school, a higher proportion of QLD females indicated they planned to do so (70.8% compared with 60.4% of males). More than six times the proportion of QLD males reported plans to *get an apprenticeship* (11.0% compared with 1.7% of females).

Figure 6.1: Plans after leaving school



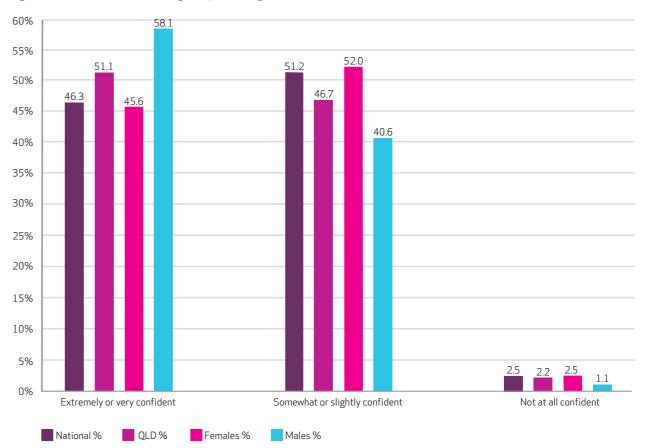
Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Respondents were only able to choose one option from the above list of predetermined items. Items are listed in order of QLD frequency.

How confident are young people in achieving their study or work goals?

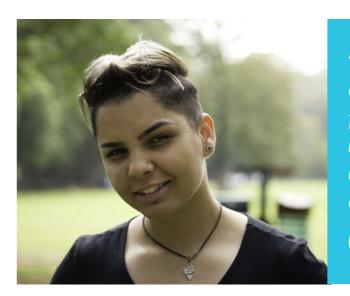
Half (51.1%) of QLD young people indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study or work goals (see Figure 6.2).

• A notably higher proportion of QLD males reported they were extremely or very confident in their ability to achieve their study or work goals after school (58.1% compared with 45.6% of females).

Figure 6.2: Confidence in achieving study or work goals



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Responses for extremely confident and very confident have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat confident and slightly confident.



"[My biggest personal issue is] the difficulties of the new ATAR system. We feel as though prior to year 12 we were not prepared enough and the expectations universities set for high ATARs are really difficult to achieve."

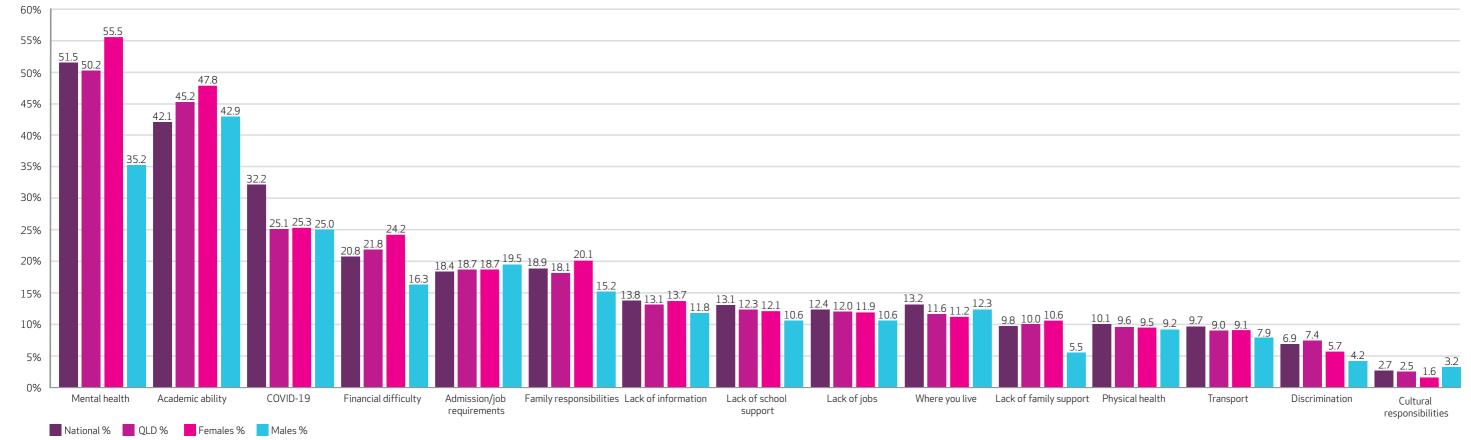
(Female, 16, QLD, non-Indigenous)

What are the barriers to achieving study or work goals?

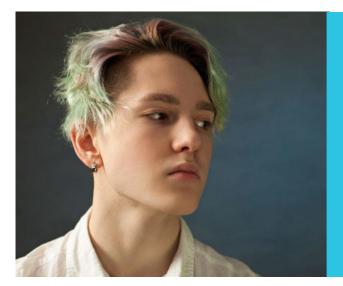
More than four in 10 (43.6%) QLD young people felt there were barriers that impacted on their achievement of their study or work goals. As shown in Figure 6.3, mental health (50.2%), academic ability (45.2%) and COVID-19 (25.1%) were the top three barriers impacting on young people's achievement of study or work goals.

- Close to one quarter (24.2%) of QLD females felt financial difficulty was a barrier to achieving their study or work goals.
- A notably higher proportion of QLD females felt *mental health* was a barrier impacting on the achievement of their study or work goals (55.5% compared with 35.2% of males).

Figure 6.3: Barriers to achieving study or work goals



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying and felt there were barriers that impacted the achievement of study or work goals. Respondents were able to choose more than one option from the predetermined list of items. Items are listed in order of QLD frequency.



Of the 43.6% of QLD young people who felt there were barriers impacting on their achievement of their study or work goals, half identified *mental* health as a barrier.

"The biggest challenge I have faced is struggling to cope with stress and deadlines with my school assessments. I am in my final year of high school and am really scared about graduating and getting into university."

(Female, 17, QLD, non-Indigenous)



Are young people employed?

Close to half (47.6%) of QLD young people reported they were employed part-time, as shown in Table 6.3. More than half (51.7%) indicated they were not in paid employment of any kind: 34.3% stated they were looking for work, while 17.4% were neither working nor looking for work. The proportion of QLD respondents in part-time employment in 2021 was higher than in 2020 (47.6% compared with 40.3% respectively) (Tiller et al., 2020). A higher proportion of males from QLD were looking for work (37.1% compared with 30.6% of females).

Table 6.3: Participation in paid employment

	National %	QLD %	Females %	Males %
Employed full-time	0.6	0.8	0.4	1.1
Employed part-time	45.4	47.6	53.5	42.6
Not in paid employment, looking for work	31.8	34.3	30.6	37.1
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	22.2	17.4	15.5	19.1

Note: Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average, how many hours they worked per week. Part-time employment is considered to be less than 35 hours per week, while full-time employment is considered to be 35 hours or more.



Close to half of QLD young people were engaged in part-time employment, a larger proportion than in 2020.

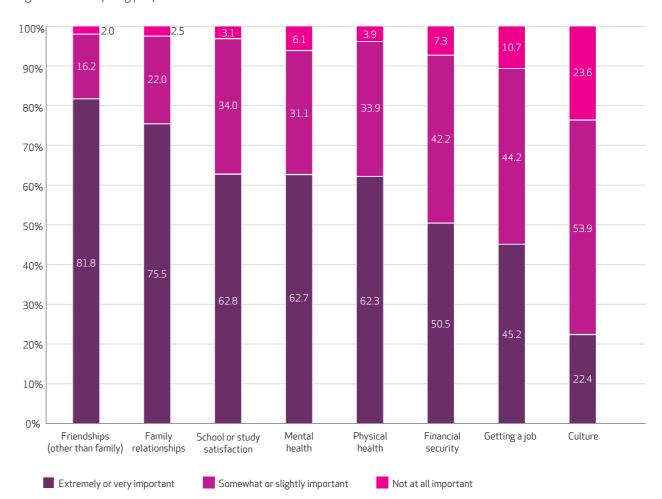
VALUES AND CONCERNS

What do young people value?

The three most highly valued items for QLD young people were friendships (other than family), family relationships and school or study satisfaction (see Figure 6.4). The next most highly valued items were mental health and physical health.

- More than eight in 10 (81.8%) QLD respondents saw friendships (other than family) as extremely or very important.
- Three quarters (75.5%) of young people from QLD saw family relationships as extremely or very important.

Figure 6.4: What young people value



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely and very important for each item.



Around 80% of QLD young people felt friendships and family relationships were extremely or very important.

Friendships (other than family) and family relationships were rated as the most important items by both QLD females and males, as shown in Table 6.4.

• Notably larger proportions of QLD females placed a high value upon *mental health* (68.3% compared with 56.5% of males) and school or study satisfaction (68.9% compared with 58.0% of males).

Table 6.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely or very important %			
Friendships (other than family)	82.3	16.3	1.4	
Family relationships	78.1	20.0	1.9	
School or study satisfaction	68.9	29.8	1.4	
Mental health	68.3	27.8	3.9	
Physical health	62.0	34.9	3.2	
Financial security	53.6	40.6	5.8	
Getting a job	48.3	42.2	9.5	
Culture	23.5	53.2	23.3	
Males	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %	
Males Friendships (other than family)				
1	important %	important %	important %	
Friendships (other than family)	important %	important %	important %	
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships	81.9 75.7	16.0 22.2	2.1 2.1	
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships School or study satisfaction	81.9 75.7 58.0	16.0 22.2 37.6	2.1 2.1 4.4	
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships School or study satisfaction Mental health	81.9 75.7 58.0 56.5	important % 16.0 22.2 37.6 35.3	2.1 2.1 4.4 8.1	
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships School or study satisfaction Mental health Physical health	important % 81.9 75.7 58.0 56.5	important % 16.0 22.2 37.6 35.3 31.4	2.1 2.1 4.4 8.1 3.8	

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are listed in order of QLD frequency.



"COVID-19 has affected how we treat each other and in my case it's how we help each other. Previously we wouldn't really appreciate the moments we got to spend with family and friends. When COVID-19 came you felt something missing. Once you get out of lockdown and see your friends and family you really do appreciate it."

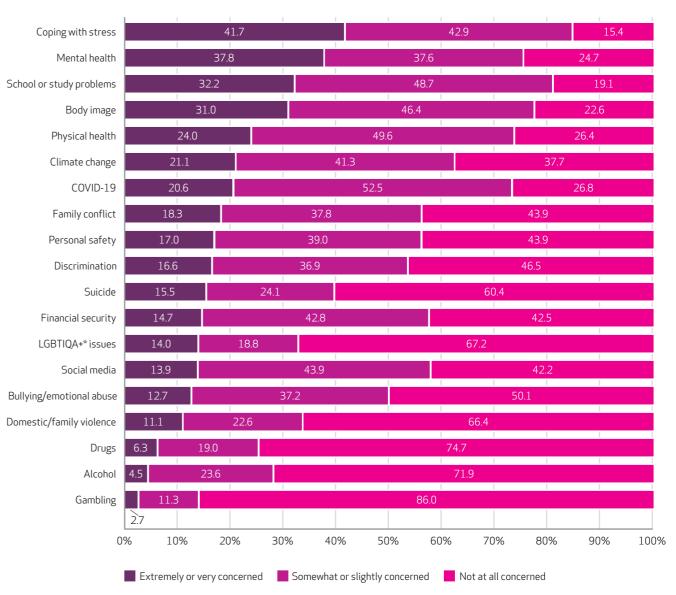
(Male, 15, QLD, non-Indigenous)

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

The top three issues of personal concern for QLD young people were coping with stress (41.7%), mental health (37.8%) and school or study problems (32.2%), as shown in Figure 6.5.

- More than three in 10 (31.0%) QLD young people were extremely or very concerned about body image.
- Close to one quarter (24.0%) of QLD respondents were extremely or very concerned about physical health.

Figure 6.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely concerned and very concerned for each item.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

The top issues of personal concern for QLD females were coping with stress, mental health and body image. Whereas the top three issues for QLD males were coping with stress, mental health and school and study problems, as shown in Table 6.5. QLD females reported higher levels of personal concern about all issues compared to males.

• Notably higher proportions of QLD females were extremely or very concerned about coping with stress (56.8% compared with 23.7% of males) and body image (44.6% compared with 14.7% of males).

Table 6.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

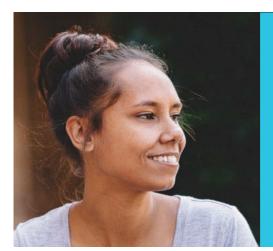
Females	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	56.8	36.8	6.5
Mental health	49.5	36.1	14.3
School or study problems	42.0	47.2	10.8
Body image	44.6	44.6	10.8
Physical health	29.3	51.0	19.7
Climate change	24.3	46.2	29.5
COVID-19	27.1	57.2	15.7
Family conflict	24.4	42.9	32.7
Personal safety	22.9	40.7	36.3
Discrimination	20.3	42.9	36.8
Suicide	20.2	26.9	52.9
Financial security	18.3	46.1	35.6
LGBTIQA+* issues	15.7	24.7	59.6
Social media	19.6	48.4	32.0
Bullying/emotional abuse	16.5	41.8	41.7
Domestic/family violence	14.4	25.9	59.7
Drugs	7.1	21.3	71.5
Alcohol	4.8	28.0	67.2
Gambling	2.4	11.6	85.9



Males	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	23.7	51.0	25.4
Mental health	22.1	41.0	36.9
School or study problems	20.4	51.1	28.5
Body image	14.7	49.2	36.1
Physical health	18.3	47.4	34.4
Climate change	14.6	36.7	48.7
COVID-19	12.6	48.1	39.3
Family conflict	9.5	32.1	58.4
Personal safety	9.3	36.0	54.7
Discrimination	9.3	30.7	60.0
Suicide	8.1	20.7	71.3
Financial security	9.6	38.7	51.7
LGBTIQA+* issues	6.0	12.4	81.6
Social media	7.1	38.7	54.2
Bullying/emotional abuse	6.7	32.1	61.2
Domestic/family violence	6.0	18.2	75.8
Drugs	4.6	15.7	79.7
Alcohol	3.2	18.5	78.3
Gambling	2.3	10.6	87.1

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are listed in order of QLD frequency.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

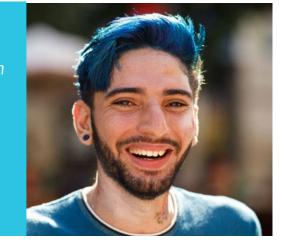


"I have dealt with the stress of school and juggling it with work and assessments. Also, dealing with my mental health, I have never dealt with these feelings so that was a challenge, but recently I have been feeling much better."

(Female. 15, QLD, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)

"Coping with my stress and anxiety has been a challenge so far this year throughout year 12. I am currently talking to a counsellor and continuing to do this will ensure that I learn about different strategies to relax and think positively."

(Male, 17, QLD, non-Indigenous)



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COVID-19

How has COVID-19 impacted on young people?

The top three areas QLD young people identified as being negatively impacted by COVID-19 were participation in activities (62.6%), education (52.9%) and mental health (39.8%), as shown in Table 6.6. Compared with QLD males, females reported experiencing greater negative impacts of COVID-19 across all areas.

• A notably higher proportion of QLD females identified their *mental health* was negatively impacted by COVID-19 (50.7% compared with 26.0% of males).

Table 6.6: Impact of COVID-19 on young people

	National %	QLD %	Females %	Males %
Participation in activities	68.3	62.6	64.4	62.0
Education	62.3	52.9	57.6	47.6
Mental health	50.3	39.8	50.7	26.0
Physical health	46.1	35.4	38.2	32.3
Family	37.9	34.9	39.8	28.6
Employment	30.1	28.3	31.5	24.3
Friendships	33.8	26.2	29.1	22.5
Financial security	24.3	22.8	25.6	18.8
Housing	6.9	6.2	6.1	5.6

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, the ways COVID-19 has negatively impacted them. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of QLD frequency.



"COVID-19 has led to a lot of stress and worry in my life. It has meant I have been restricted on many things and not been able to complete many activities I have looked forward to. For school in particular it has brought a lot of pressure and concern into my life."

(Female, 15, QLD, non-Indigenous)

UNFAIR TREATMENT

Have young people been treated unfairly?

More than one third (35.4%) of QLD young people reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of QLD females reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (39.2% compared with 27.6% of males).

Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify whether they had been treated unfairly due to their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason.

Of the 35.4% of QLD young people who had been treated unfairly in the past year (see Table 6.7):

• A notably higher proportion of QLD females had been treated unfairly due to their gender (40.5% compared with 16.0% of males).

Table 6.7: Reasons for being treated unfairly

	National %	QLD %	Females %	Males %
Gender	37.3	35.1	40.5	16.0
Mental health	27.6	27.3	30.5	20.2
Other	21.5	24.3	21.5	31.2
Race/cultural background	27.6	22.7	22.1	25.4
Sexuality	21.7	21.0	17.1	13.9
Age	18.3	19.6	20.8	17.2
Religion	11.4	11.0	10.5	11.8
Disability	7.0	7.7	5.8	8.2
Financial background	7.0	7.4	7.5	6.8

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of QLD frequency.

Young people who responded that they had been treated unfairly due to their race/cultural background were offered an additional question about the nature and experience of the unfair treatment (see Table 6.8). Of these QLD young people, a majority (86.4%) had been insulted or had hurtful comments said to them. Six in 10 (61.5%) QLD young people had been harassed or intimidated and half (51.4%) had felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media.

- A notably higher proportion of QLD females *felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media* (56.2% compared with 41.2% of males).
- A higher proportion of QLD males experienced physical violence (21.6% compared with 13.9% of females).

Table 6.8: Experiences of unfair treatment due to race/cultural background

	National %	QLD %	Females %	Males %
Been insulted or had hurtful comments said to you	89.0	86.4	86.4	84.2
Been harassed or intimidated	62.5	61.5	56.7	62.8
Felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media	54.2	51.4	56.2	41.2
Felt unwelcome in school, employment or services	46.6	47.0	51.1	36.3
Received insulting or hurtful comments online	43.1	44.7	41.6	47.0
Been excluded from social events or activities	27.2	29.7	31.7	23.1
Felt unwelcome or excluded from sporting clubs or groups	24.2	23.7	23.6	19.8
Experienced physical violence	14.5	19.0	13.9	21.6

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of QLD frequency.

Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Over half (55.8%) of QLD young people reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year because of their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason. A much higher proportion of QLD females reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (60.3% compared with 49.4% of males).

What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

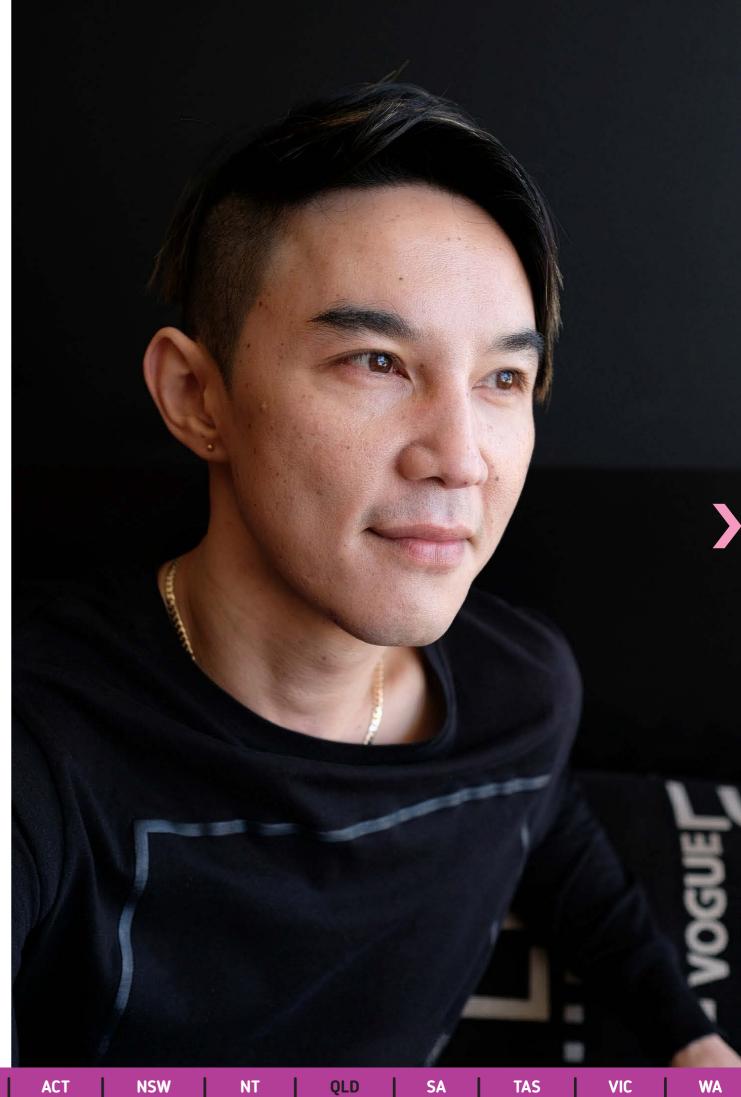
Of the respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 57.1% reported witnessing unfair treatment due to a person's race/cultural background (see Table 6.9). Half (50.8%) indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality. Close to half (45.7%) of QLD respondents who witnessed unfair treatment reported it was due to a person's qender.

• A notably higher proportion of QLD females reported witnessing unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality (55.1% compared with 41.4% of males) and gender (49.3% compared with 36.3% of males).

Table 6.9: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

	National %	QLD %	Females %	Males %
Race/cultural background	57.6	57.1	58.8	54.8
Sexuality	48.0	50.8	55.1	41.4
Gender	43.7	45.7	49.3	36.3
Disability	32.4	35.9	36.3	31.5
Mental health	26.1	27.8	30.2	21.6
Religion	25.3	26.5	27.0	24.9
Age	16.7	17.8	17.9	16.8
Financial background	15.0	17.4	17.3	16.2
Other	9.6	9.5	6.6	13.5

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of QLD frequency.



SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND FAMILY'S ABILITY TO GET ALONG

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

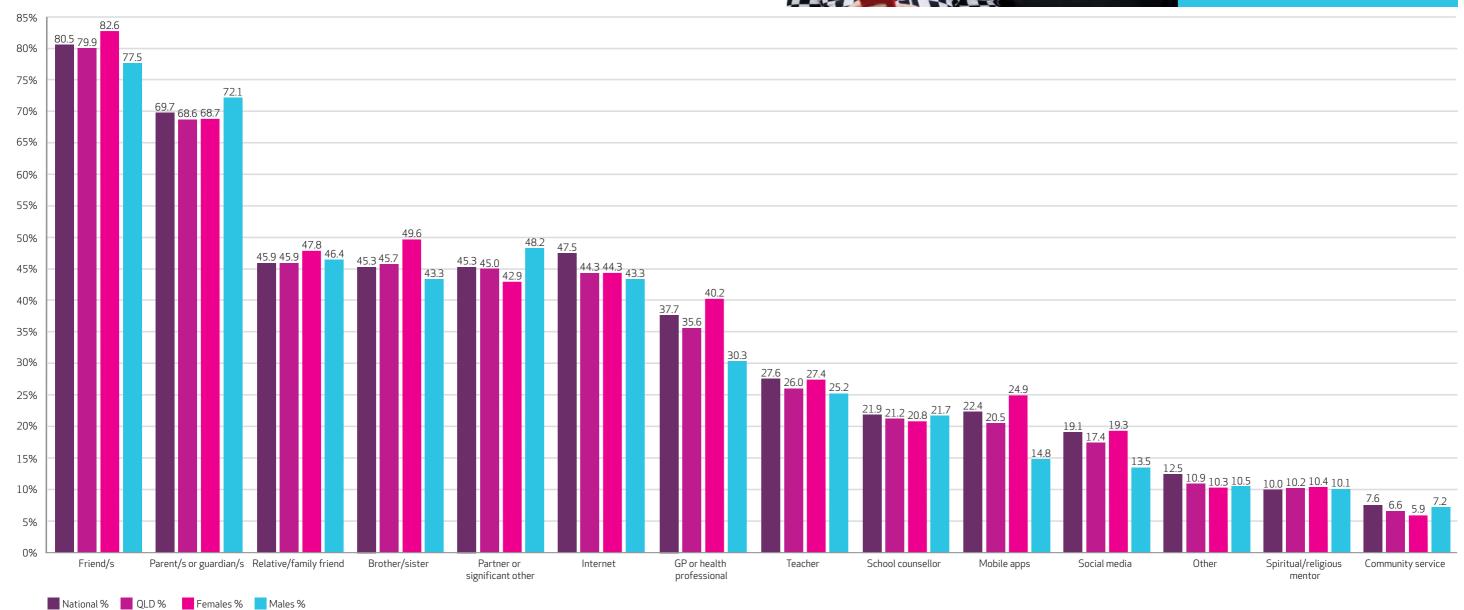
As shown in Figure 6.6, friend/s (79.9%), parent/s or guardian/s (68.6%) and relative/family friend (45.9%) were the three most frequently named sources of help for QLD young people.

- A higher proportion of QLD females said they would turn to *mobile apps* (24.9% compared with 14.8% of males) or *GP or health professional* (40.2% compared with 30.3% of males) for support with important issues in their lives.
- A higher proportion of QLD males stated they would go to their partner or significant other (48.2% compared with 42.9% of females).

Figure 6.6: Where young people go for help with important issues



A majority of QLD young people would seek support from close personal sources, such as friends, parents or guardians and relative/family friend.

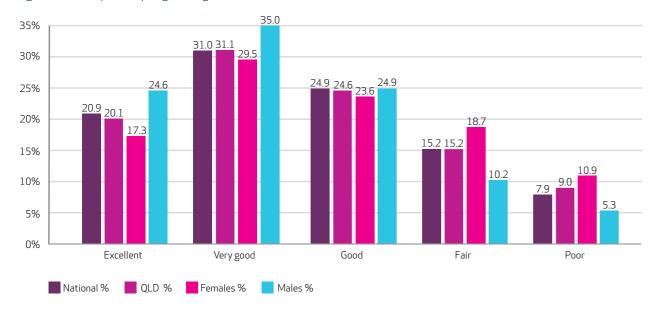


Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, where they go for help with important issues. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of QLD frequency.

How do young people rate their family's ability to get along?

More than half (51.2%) of QLD respondents rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good (see Figure 6.7). However, close to one quarter (24.2%) of QLD young people indicated their family's ability to get along was either fair or poor. A higher proportion of QLD males rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good (59.6% compared with 46.8% of females), while a much higher proportion of QLD females rated their family's ability to get along as fair or poor (29.6% compared with 15.5% of males).

Figure 6.7: Family's ability to get along with one another





More than half of QLD young people rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good.

ENGAGEMENT IN ACTIVITIES

What activities are young people involved in?

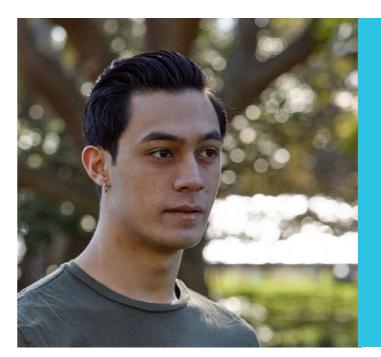
The top three activities QLD young people were involved in were sports (as a participant) (69.6%), sports (as a spectator) (65.1%) and arts/cultural/music activities (46.0%), as shown in Table 6.10.

- More than four in 10 (43.9%) QLD respondents reported they had participated in volunteer work in the past year.
- Notably higher proportions of QLD females reported taking part in *arts/cultural/music activities* in the past year (52.6% compared with 36.6% of males).

Table 6.10: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	National %	QLD %	Females %	Males %
Sports (as a participant)	71.0	69.6	67.1	75.2
Sports (as a spectator)	64.6	65.1	60.7	72.4
Arts/cultural/music activities	43.2	46.0	52.6	36.6
Volunteer work	41.1	43.9	45.6	42.8
Student leadership activities	33.9	35.3	39.7	31.4
Youth groups/activities	24.5	25.3	26.5	24.2
Religious groups/activities	23.4	23.8	25.3	23.0
Environmental groups/activities	19.1	20.6	21.4	18.9
Political groups/activities	9.3	8.5	9.0	6.8

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what activities they were involved in during the past year. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of QLD frequency.



Around two thirds of QLD young people have engaged in *sports* as either a *participant* or *spectator*.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

How stressed are young people?

More than four in 10 (43.0%) QLD young people felt stressed either *all of the time* or *most of the time* in the past four weeks (see Table 6.11).

- A notably higher proportion of QLD females felt stressed all of the time or most of the time (56.6% compared with 25.9% of males).
- Conversely, more than four times the proportion of QLD males felt stressed none of the time (8.7% compared with 2.0% of females).

Table 6.11: Young people's level of stress

	National %	QLD %	Females %	Males %
All of the time	11.6	10.7	14.7	4.5
Most of the time	32.9	32.3	41.9	21.4
Some of the time	32.0	31.6	29.4	35.0
A little of the time	19.0	20.2	11.9	30.4
None of the time	4.4	5.2	2.0	8.7

What do young people do to reduce stress?

The top three ways QLD young people reported reducing stress was to do something relaxing (62.7%), spend time online (61.3%) and sleep (59.9%), as shown in Table 6.12.

- A higher proportion of QLD females reported they would sleep to reduce stress (69.0% compared with 50.4% of males).
- A higher proportion of QLD males reported they would do a hobby to reduce stress (53.4% compared with 38.6% of females).

Table 6.12: Ways young people reduce stress

	National %	QLD %	Females %	Males %
Do something relaxing	63.2	62.7	66.4	59.5
Spend time online	62.3	61.3	61.4	60.9
Sleep	59.5	59.9	69.0	50.4
Play games or watch TV/movies	61.4	59.7	54.8	66.1
Physical activity	49.0	48.9	46.5	54.8
Spend time with friends or family	46.9	47.2	50.4	45.9
Do a hobby	45.7	45.4	38.6	53.4
Nothing	16.5	15.6	14.7	15.1
Consume alcohol and/or other drugs	12.1	11.8	12.8	9.6
Other	6.7	6.9	6.1	6.5
Reach out to a professional	6.8	6.6	8.3	4.0
Take medication prescribed by a health professional	6.1	6.3	8.5	3.0

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what they do to reduce stress. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of QLD frequency.

How much control do young people feel they have over their life?

Over half (53.7%) of QLD young people felt they had control over their life, as shown in Table 6.13: 8.6% reported having *complete* control and 45.1% felt *mostly in control*. Close to one in 10 (9.8%) QLD respondents reported they had *almost no control* over their life, and 2.7% had *no control*.

- A higher proportion of QLD males felt they had *complete control* or were *mostly in control* of their lives (65.2% compared with 45.9% of females).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of QLD females reported feeling *almost no control* or *no control* over their lives (14.7% compared with 7.3% of males).

Table 6.13: Young people's level of control over their life

	National %	QLD %	Females %	Males %
Complete control	7.8	8.6	4.8	12.9
Mostly in control	45.5	45.1	41.1	52.3
Some control	34.5	33.9	39.5	27.5
Almost no control	9.9	9.8	11.9	5.9
No control	2.4	2.7	2.8	1.4

How lonely are young people?

Close to one quarter (23.4%) of QLD young people felt lonely all or most of the time in the past four weeks (see Table 6.14).

• A notably higher proportion of QLD females felt lonely all or most of the time (28.2% compared with 16.4% of males).

Table 6.14: Young people's level of loneliness

	National %	QLD %	Females %	Males %
All of the time	5.9	5.6	6.4	3.8
Most of the time	19.0	17.8	21.8	12.6
Some of the time	29.7	30.1	33.6	26.4
A little of the time	27.1	26.7	24.3	30.2
None of the time	18.2	19.8	14.0	27.0



"I went through a lot of stress with trying to find my gender identity. I managed to figure it out, but the process was very mentally draining. I did end up seeing a counsellor who helped me a lot."

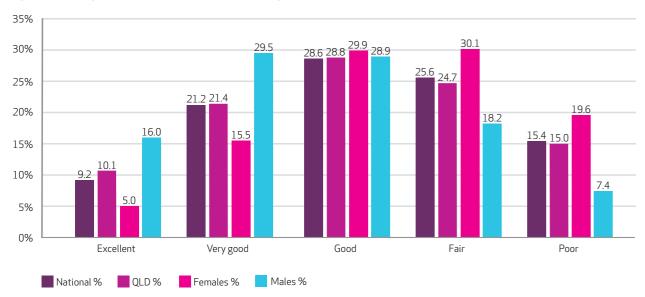
(Non-binary, 15, QLD, non-Indigenous)

How do young people rate their mental health and wellbeing?

More than three in 10 (31.5%) QLD young people rated their mental health and wellbeing as better than good (see Figure 6.8): 10.1% rated it as *excellent* and 21.4% rated it as *very good*. Close to one in six (15.0%) respondents rated their mental health and wellbeing as *poor*.

- A notably higher proportion of QLD males rated their mental health and wellbeing as excellent or very good (45.5% compared with 20.5% of females).
- A much higher proportion of QLD females rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor (19.6% compared with 7.4% of males).

Figure 6.8: Young people's mental health and wellbeing



How happy are young people?

More than half (54.6%) of QLD young people indicated overall happiness with their lives (see Table 6.15). A notably higher proportion of QLD males reported feeling happy/very happy with their lives as a whole (63.2% compared with 49.7% of females), whereas a greater proportion of QLD females indicated they felt very sad/sad (15.8% compared with 8.3% of males).

Table 6.15: Young people's level of happiness

	National %	QLD %	Females %	Males %
Happy/very happy (70-100)	53.4	54.6	49.7	63.2
Not happy or sad (40-60)	32.6	31.7	34.5	28.6
Very sad/sad (0-30)	13.9	13.7	15.8	8.3

Note: Respondents were asked to rate how happy they are with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes happy/very happy; 40-60 signifies not happy or sad; and 0-30 indicates very sad/sad.

How much time do young people spend on screens?

More than one third (34.8%) of QLD young people spent 9 hours or more on screens per day (see Table 6.16).

Table 6.16: Young people's screen-time per day

	National %	QLD %	Females %	Males %
No screen time	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.3
1-2 hours	5.5	5.7	5.3	6.2
3-4 hours	17.3	18.6	18.6	19.3
5-6 hours	22.7	21.8	22.5	21.5
7-8 hours	18.6	18.8	20.0	17.7
9 hours or more	35.7	34.8	33.3	35.0

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

Close to half (45.9%) of QLD young people spent 1-2 hours on screens connecting with others. More than four in 10 (43.0%) young people from QLD spent 1-2 hours on screens for entertainment. Three in 10 (30.7%) QLD respondents spent 5-6 hours on screens for learning (see Table 6.17).

Table 6.17: Young people's screen-time per day by purpose

Queensland respondents	Connecting with others	For entertainment %	For learning %
No screen time	6.7	2.5	8.9
1-2 hours	45.9	43.0	20.7
3-4 hours	22.7	29.5	19.7
5-6 hours	11.6	13.7	30.7
7-8 hours	4.6	5.4	14.8
9 hours or more	8.4	5.9	5.1

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day connecting with others, for entertainment and for learning. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

How much time do young people spend sleeping?

More than half (53.1%) of QLD young people reported sleeping on average between 7-8 hours per night (see Table 6.18).

Table 6.18: Young people's sleep per night

	National %	QLD %	Females %	Males %
6 hours or less	21.6	22.5	23.7	19.3
7-8 hours	52.8	53.1	54.3	53.4
9-10 hours	16.8	16.3	15.8	17.5
11 hours or more	8.8	8.2	6.2	9.8

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend sleeping per night. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

How much time do young people spend exercising?

One quarter (24.7%) of QLD young people reported exercising on average 1-2 hours per week (see Table 6.19). A notably higher proportion of QLD males reported engaging in 9 hours or more of exercise per week (31.7% compared with 16.5% of females).

Table 6.19: Young people's exercise per week

	National %	QLD %	Females %	Males %
No exercise	7.2	7.8	8.6	5.4
1-2 hours	25.0	24.7	27.6	20.8
3-4 hours	20.1	19.3	22.8	15.9
5-6 hours	15.1	15.5	16.9	14.6
7-8 hours	9.8	9.1	7.6	11.6
9 hours or more	22.8	23.7	16.5	31.7

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend exercising per week. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.



"More awareness and more mental health facilities need to be available. Basically just teaching students about mental illnesses so that they might pick up on what they are experiencing and not feel afraid to reach."

(Male, 15, QLD, non-Indigenous)

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA AND THE FUTURE

What issues do young people think are the most important in Australia today?

In 2021, QLD young people reported that the top three issues in Australia were COVID-19 (42.4%), equity and discrimination (34.8%) and mental health (34.6%), as shown in Table 6.20.

- One third (33.3%) of QLD young people reported the environment as an important national issue.
- A higher proportion of QLD females identified *mental health* as an important issue in Australia today (39.6% compared with 30.5% of males).
- More than double the proportion of QLD males reported politics as an important national issue (9.5% compared to 4.3% of females).
- Young people from QLD have ranked equity and discrimination and mental health in the top three issues of national concern for the past three years, while COVID-19 has continued to grow in importance since 2020.

Table 6.20: Most important issues in Australia today

	National 2021 %	QLD 2021 %	Females %	Males %	QLD 2020 %	QLD 2019 %
COVID-19	45.7	42.4	43.8	42.5	38.7	-
Equity and discrimination	35.4	34.8	38.7	30.1	36.9	23.1
Mental health	34.6	34.6	39.6	30.5	29.2	34.7
The environment	38.0	33.3	33.9	31.7	26.5	31.2
Crime, safety and violence	10.9	14.4	15.7	13.4	12.8	13.7
The economy and financial matters	10.9	12.0	9.8	14.6	16.0	14.8
Alcohol and drugs	10.6	11.2	9.6	13.0	12.1	21.0
LGBTIAQ+ issues	7.0	7.1	7.6	4.7	4.6	6.6
Homelessness/housing	7.0	7.0	7.4	6.7	7.0	5.6
Politics	6.5	6.9	4.3	9.5	8.2	11.5

Note: Respondents were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The responses provided were categorised into the items listed above. Items are listed in order of 2021 QLD frequency.

How do young people feel about the future?

More than half (53.6%) of QLD young people felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future, as shown in Table 6.21. However, one in seven (14.1%) QLD respondents indicated they felt *negative* or *very negative* about the future.

- A higher proportion of QLD males reported feeling very positive or positive about the future (60.4% compared with 49.7% of females).
- In line with the results from all national respondents, the proportion of QLD respondents reporting feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future has reduced over time from 59.7% in 2019, to 56.7% in 2020 and 53.6% in 2021.

Table 6.21: Feelings about the future

	National 2021 %	QLD 2021 %	Females %	Males %	QLD 2020 %	QLD 2019 %
Very positive or positive	51.6	53.6	49.7	60.4	56.7	59.7
Neither positive nor negative	32.5	32.4	35.6	28.8	30.8	29.5
Negative or very negative	16.0	14.1	14.7	10.7	12.4	10.8

Note: Responses for very positive and positive have been aggregated, as have the responses for negative and very negative.

South Australia

- Profile of respondents
- Education and employment
- Values and concerns
- COVID-19
- Unfair treatment

- Sources of support and family's ability to get along
- ► Engagement in activities
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Most important issues in Australia and the future



South Australia

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 2,255 young people from South Australia (SA) aged between 15 and 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2021*.

Gender

More than half (52.9%) of SA respondents were female, 41.5% were male, 3.6% were gender diverse and 2.0% preferred not to say.

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 102 (4.6%) young people from SA identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Similar proportions of SA females and males identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (4.6% and 4.3% respectively).

Cultural background

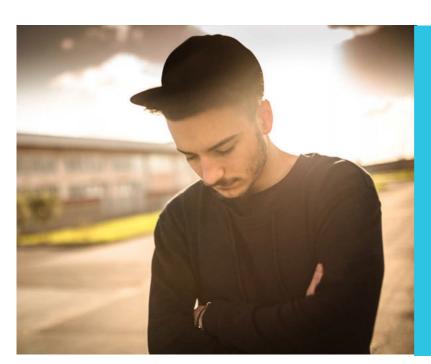
A total of 342 (15.4%) SA respondents stated they were born overseas and 404 (18.2%) SA young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the 68 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Vietnamese, Persian, Spanish, Filipino/Tagalog, Chinese and Dari.

A total of 355 (16.1%) SA young people reported a particular cultural or ethnic group with which they identified strongly. Of the more than 76 cultural or ethnic groups identified, the most common were (in order of frequency): Italian, Afghan, Australian, Indian and Vietnamese.

A total of 787 (35.7%) SA respondents stated one or both of their parents were born overseas.

Disability

A total of 223 (10.0%) SA respondents identified as living with disability. A slightly higher proportion of males from SA reported living with disability (9.5% compared with 8.8% of females). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): learning disability, autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and physical disability.



2,255 young people from SA took the time to share their values, aspirations and issues of concern in Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2021.



Are young people studying?

As indicated in Table 7.1, 88.0% of young people from SA were studying full-time. A higher proportion of SA females reported studying full-time (90.7% compared with 85.0% of males). Conversely, a larger proportion of SA males reported not studying (5.6% compared with 3.3% of females).

Table 7.1: Participation in education

	National %	SA %	Females %	Males %
Studying full-time	84.5	88.0	90.7	85.0
Studying part-time	8.1	7.8	6.0	9.5
Not studying	7.4	4.3	3.3	5.6

How satisfied are young people with their studies?

As in previous years, the majority (66.7%) of SA respondents who were currently studying reported they were either very satisfied or satisfied with their studies. A small (6.5%) proportion of SA young people indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, as shown in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2: Satisfaction with studies

	National %	SA %	Females %	Males %
Very satisfied or satisfied	62.5	66.7	68.4	68.1
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	28.5	26.8	26.0	26.0
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	9.0	6.5	5.6	5.9

Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying. Responses for very satisfied and satisfied have been aggregated, as have the responses for dissatisfied and very dissatisfied.

Of those still at school, the majority (96.7%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. A larger proportion of SA males stated they were not planning on completing Year 12 (4.8% compared with 1.8% of females).

Of the 95.8% of SA young people who were studying, two thirds were *very* satisfied or satisfied with their studies.



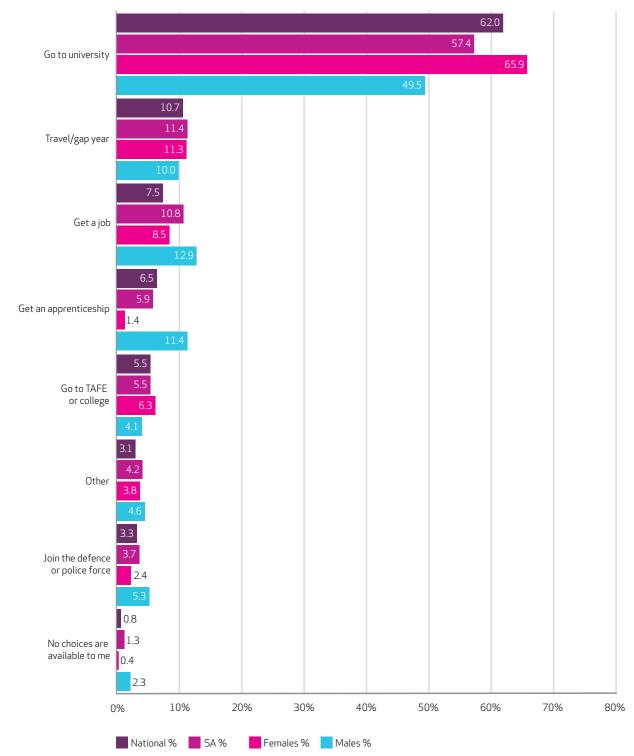
WA

What are young people's plans after school?

Close to six in 10 (57.4%) SA young people planned to go to university after school as shown in Figure 7.1. More than one in 10 SA respondents reported planning either a travel/gap year (11.4%) or to get a job (10.8%) after school.

While the most frequently reported plan was to *go to university* after finishing school, a higher proportion of SA females indicated they planned to do so (65.9% compared with 49.5% of males). Eight times the proportion of SA males reported plans to *get an apprenticeship* (11.4% compared with 1.4% of females).

Figure 7.1: Plans after leaving school



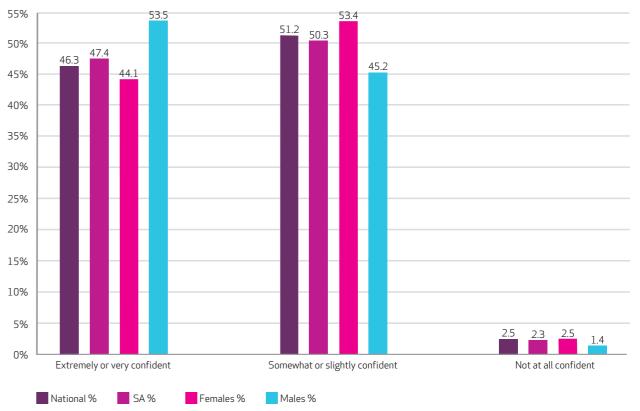
Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Respondents were only able to choose one option from the above list of predetermined items. Items are listed in order of SA frequency.

How confident are young people in achieving their study or work goals?

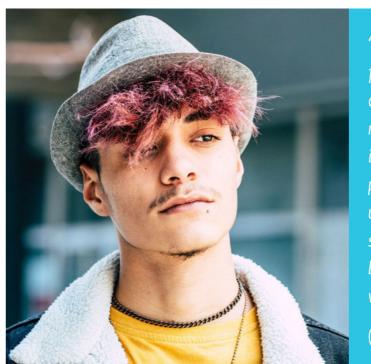
Close to half (47.4%) of SA young people indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study or work goals (see Figure 7.2).

• A larger proportion of SA males reported they were extremely or very confident in their ability to achieve their study or work goals after school (53.5% compared with 44.1% of females).

Figure 7.2: Confidence in achieving study or work goals



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Responses for extremely confident and very confident have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat confident and slightly confident.



"I have found it very challenging to find something I am passionate about and I am willing to stick to for the majority of my career. I have many interests but no passions, and the pressure from family is not helping. I understand that they want me to be successful and care about my future, but it seems too early to be sure on what my career will end up being."

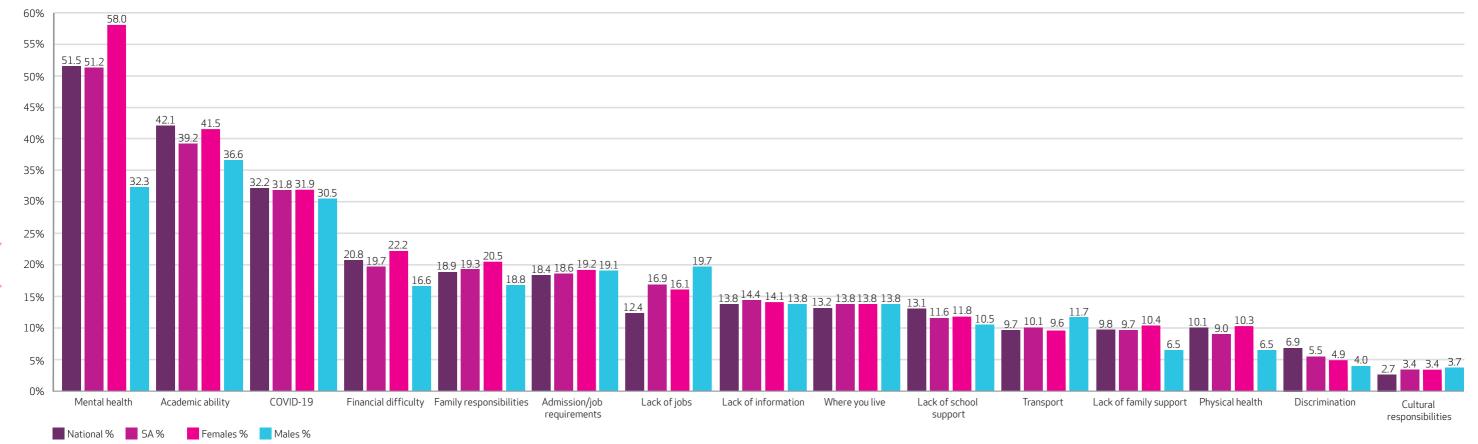
(Male, 15, SA, non-Indigenous)

What are the barriers to achieving study or work goals?

Close to half (47.0%) of SA young people felt there were barriers that impacted on their achievement of their study or work goals. As shown in Figure 7.3, mental health (51.2%), academic ability (39.2%) and COVID-19 (31.8%) were the top three barriers impacting on young people's achievement of study or work goals.

- Close to one in five SA respondents felt *financial difficulty* (19.7%) and *family responsibilities* (19.3%) were barriers to achieving study or work goals.
- A larger proportion of SA males reported that the *lack of jobs* was a barrier impacting on the achievement of study or work goals (19.7% compared with 16.1% of females).

Figure 7.3: Barriers to achieving study or work goals



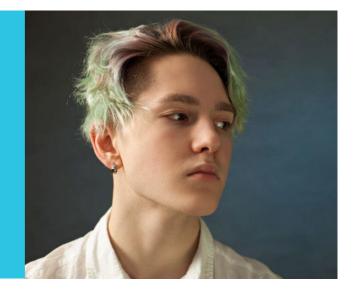
Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying and felt there were barriers that impacted the achievement of study or work goals. Respondents were able to choose more than one option from the predetermined list of items. Items are listed in order of SA frequency.



"[My biggest personal issue is] my mental health. I need to heal and pass the barriers that are stopping me achieving my goals and doing everyday things."

(Female, 17, SA, non-Indigenous)

Almost half of SA young people felt there were barriers impacting on the achievement of their work or study goals.



Are young people employed?

More than four in 10 (44.0%) SA young people reported they were employed part-time. More than half (55.7%) indicated they were not in paid employment: 34.3% stated they were looking for work, while 21.4% were neither working nor looking for work. A very small proportion of SA young people who reported being in paid employment were employed full-time (0.2%).

Table 7.3: Participation in paid employment

	National %	SA %	Females %	Males %
Employed full-time	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.3
Employed part-time	45.4	44.0	48.6	40.4
Not in paid employment, looking for work	31.8	34.3	31.5	35.3
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	22.2	21.4	19.8	24.0

Note: Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average, how many hours they worked per week. Part-time employment is considered to be less than 35 hours per week, while full-time employment is considered to be 35 hours or more.



"The biggest challenge I faced was reaching a work-school balance, as I was working lots of late shifts and lacking sleep. I have rearranged my shifts and it has become much more manageable, but still an issue."

(Male, 16, SA, non-Indigenous)

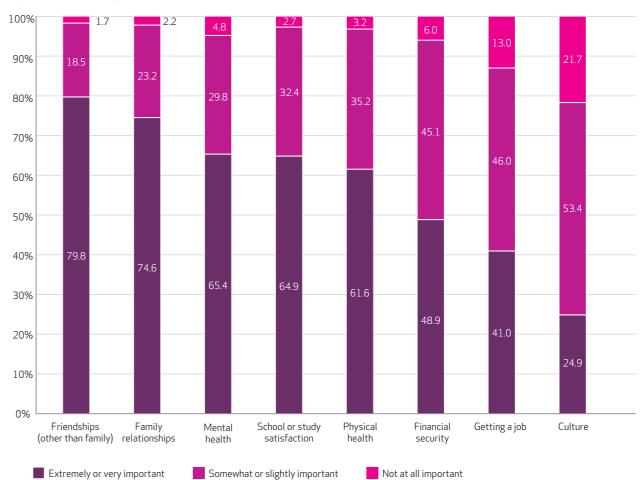
VALUES AND CONCERNS

What do young people value?

The three most highly valued items for SA young people were friendships (other than family), family relationships and mental health (see Figure 7.4). The next most highly valued items were school or study satisfaction and physical health.

- Eight in 10 (79.8%) SA respondents saw friendships (other than family) as extremely or very important.
- Three quarters (74.6%) of young people from SA saw family relationships as extremely or very important.
- Close to two thirds (65.4%) of SA respondents saw mental health as extremely or very important.

Figure 7.4: What young people value



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely and very important for each item.



Friendships and family relationships are extremely or very important to a majority of SA young people.

Friendships (other than family) and family relationships were rated as the most important items by both SA females and males, as shown in Table 7.4.

• Higher proportions of SA females placed a high value on school or study satisfaction (70.9% compared with 60.5% of males) and mental health (70.0% compared with 59.6% of males).

Table 7.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	80.3	18.2	1.5
Family relationships	77.1	21.2	1.7
Mental health	70.0	26.5	3.6
Physical health	60.6	36.6	2.8
School or study satisfaction	70.9	27.1	2.0
Financial security	51.3	43.6	5.1
Getting a job	43.5	45.5	11.0
Culture	24.2	53.6	22.2
Males	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Males Friendships (other than family)		Somewhat or slightly important %	
1	important %	important %	important %
Friendships (other than family)	important %	important %	important %
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships	80.1 75.1	18.1 22.9	1.7 2.1
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Mental health	80.1 75.1 59.6	18.1 22.9 35.2	1.7 2.1 5.2
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Mental health Physical health	80.1 75.1 59.6 65.8	18.1 22.9 35.2 31.4	1.7 2.1 5.2 2.9
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Mental health Physical health School or study satisfaction	important % 80.1 75.1 59.6 65.8 60.5	important % 18.1 22.9 35.2 31.4 36.3	1.7 2.1 5.2 2.9 3.2

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are listed in order of SA frequency.



"I think for me it has been having an encouraging environment around me. School and work can be tough so having strong friendships and family has been really important to try and strive for."

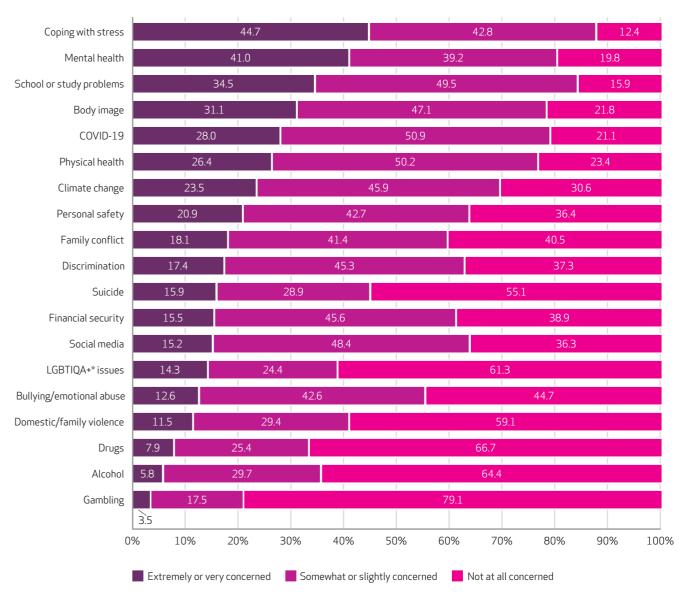
(Male, 17, SA, non-Indigenous)

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

The top three issues of personal concern for SA young people were coping with stress (44.7%), mental health (41.0%) and school or study problems (34.5%).

- More than three in 10 (31.1%) SA young people were extremely or very concerned about body image.
- Close to three in 10 (28.0%) SA respondents were extremely or very concerned about COVID-19.

Figure 7.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely concerned and very concerned for each item.

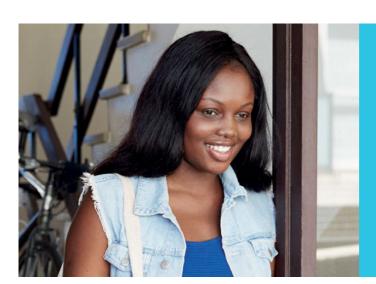
The top issues of personal concern for SA females were coping with stress, mental health and body image. Whereas the top three issues for SA males were coping with stress, mental health and school or study problems, as shown in Table 7.5. SA females reported higher levels of personal concern about almost all issues.

• Notably higher proportions of SA females were extremely or very concerned about coping with stress (57.5% compared with 27.3% of males) and mental health (51.3% compared with 24.5% of males).

^{*}Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Table 7.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

Females	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	57.5	37.8	4.6
Mental health	51.3	38.8	9.9
School or study problems	42.6	47.5	9.9
Body image	44.0	45.9	10.1
COVID-19	34.1	53.0	12.9
Physical health	31.3	52.8	15.9
Climate change	27.7	48.9	23.4
Personal safety	26.4	43.8	29.9
Family conflict	22.9	46.2	30.9
Discrimination	21.3	48.5	30.3
Suicide	20.1	30.9	49.0
Financial security	18.6	47.8	33.7
Social media	20.1	53.4	26.5
LGBTIQA+* issues	16.2	30.3	53.5
Bullying/emotional abuse	15.1	47.9	37.0
Domestic/family violence	13.5	30.9	55.6
Drugs	9.0	26.2	64.8
Alcohol	7.0	31.4	61.6
Gambling	2.5	16.0	81.5



"[My biggest personal issue is] studying at school and staying on top of my work to get good grades. It can be stressful when trying to manage that with working and friend and family relationships."

(Female, 15, SA, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)

Table 7.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

Males	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	27.3	49.9	22.7
Mental health	24.5	42.4	33.1
School or study problems	24.1	52.2	23.7
Body image	13.9	49.1	37.0
COVID-19	19.7	49.0	31.3
Physical health	20.6	46.3	33.1
Climate change	17.0	42.5	40.5
Personal safety	13.4	40.5	46.2
Family conflict	10.6	34.7	54.7
Discrimination	10.1	41.4	48.5
Suicide	8.4	24.7	66.9
Financial security	11.3	42.5	46.2
Social media	7.9	42.5	49.6
LGBTIQA+* issues	6.8	17.3	75.9
Bullying/emotional abuse	7.9	35.8	56.3
Domestic/family violence	7.8	26.2	66.0
Drugs	6.7	23.4	69.9
Alcohol	4.6	26.3	69.1
Gambling	4.4	18.3	77.3

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are listed in order of SA frequency.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

"The biggest challenge I faced was stress related to the increase of workload as I advance on the path to Year 12. I think I need skills to manage my time so I can maintain a balance between my academic performance and personal wellbeing."

(Male, 15, SA, non-Indigenous)



COVID-19

How has COVID-19 impacted on young people?

The top three areas SA young people identified as being negatively impacted by COVID-19 were participation in activities (65.5%), education (52.3%) and mental health (43.1%) (see Table 7.6). Compared with SA males, females reported greater negative impacts of COVID-19 across all areas.

• A notably higher proportion of SA females identified their *mental health* was negatively impacted by COVID-19 (53.0% compared with 28.5% of males).

Table 7.6: Impact of COVID-19 on young people

	National %	SA %	Females %	Males %
Participation in activities	68.3	65.5	65.5	65.2
Education	62.3	52.3	55.0	47.7
Mental health	50.3	43.1	53.0	28.5
Physical health	46.1	40.9	43.8	36.6
Employment	30.1	31.3	32.4	28.7
Family	37.9	31.3	40.5	32.3
Friendships	33.8	27.3	28.9	23.4
Financial security	24.3	26.1	30.2	20.0
Housing	6.9	7.4	7.9	5.6

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, the ways COVID-19 has negatively impacted them. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of SA frequency.



"Fear of uncertainty about my favourite activities being cancelled in my final year of school, and fear for those in other states struggling with loss, lockdown and sickness."

(Not listed, 17, SA, non-Indigenous)

UNFAIR TREATMENT

Have young people been treated unfairly?

More than three in 10 (31.1%) SA young people reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of SA females reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (36.4% compared with 21.0% of males).

Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify whether they had been treated unfairly due to their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason.

Of the 31.1% of SA young people who had been treated unfairly in the past year (see Table 7.7):

- Notably higher proportions of SA females had been treated unfairly due to their gender (40.7% compared with 17.7% of males).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of SA males reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *disability* (9.9% compared with 5.2% of females).

Table 7.7: Reasons for being treated unfairly

	National %	SA %	Females %	Males %
Gender	37.3	35.9	40.7	17.7
Mental health	27.6	27.7	26.7	21.4
Race/cultural background	27.6	25.3	26.0	26.6
Sexuality	21.7	22.1	18.9	13.0
Other	21.5	20.3	19.1	28.1
Age	18.3	18.1	18.9	15.1
Religion	11.4	9.9	9.7	11.5
Disability	7.0	7.3	5.2	9.9
Financial background	7.0	6.5	6.6	6.8

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of SA frequency



"[My biggest personal issue is]
discrimination. Casual homophobia in
schools has affected me greatly and I think
people need to become more informed on
how casual homophobia/queerphobia jokes
and slurs can affect others."

(Female, 15, SA, non-Indigenous)

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Young people who responded that they had been treated unfairly due to their race/cultural background were offered an additional question about the nature and experience of the unfair treatment (see Table 7.8). Of these SA young people, close to nine in 10 (88.4%) had been insulted or had hurtful comments said to them. More than six in 10 (62.2%) SA young people had been harassed or intimidated and half (52.1%) felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media.

- A notably higher proportion of SA females felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media (59.2% compared with 32.6%
- A larger proportion of males from SA had been harassed or intimidated (73.5% compared with 58.4% of females).

Table 7.8: Experiences of unfair treatment due to race/cultural background

	National %	SA %	Females %	Males %
Been insulted or had hurtful comments said to you	89.0	88.4	89.8	87.8
Been harassed or intimidated	62.5	62.2	58.4	73.5
Felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media	54.2	52.1	59.2	32.6
Felt unwelcome in school, employment or services	46.6	48.7	53.5	41.9
Received insulting or hurtful comments online	43.1	40.0	40.4	40.4
Been excluded from social events or activities	27.2	23.1	23.5	26.7
Felt unwelcome or excluded from sporting clubs or groups	24.2	20.8	23.0	17.8
Experienced physical violence	14.5	13.8	12.1	14.9

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of SA frequency.

Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Over half (53.5%) of SA young people reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year because of their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason. A higher proportion of SA females reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (59.4% compared with 44.4% of males).

What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

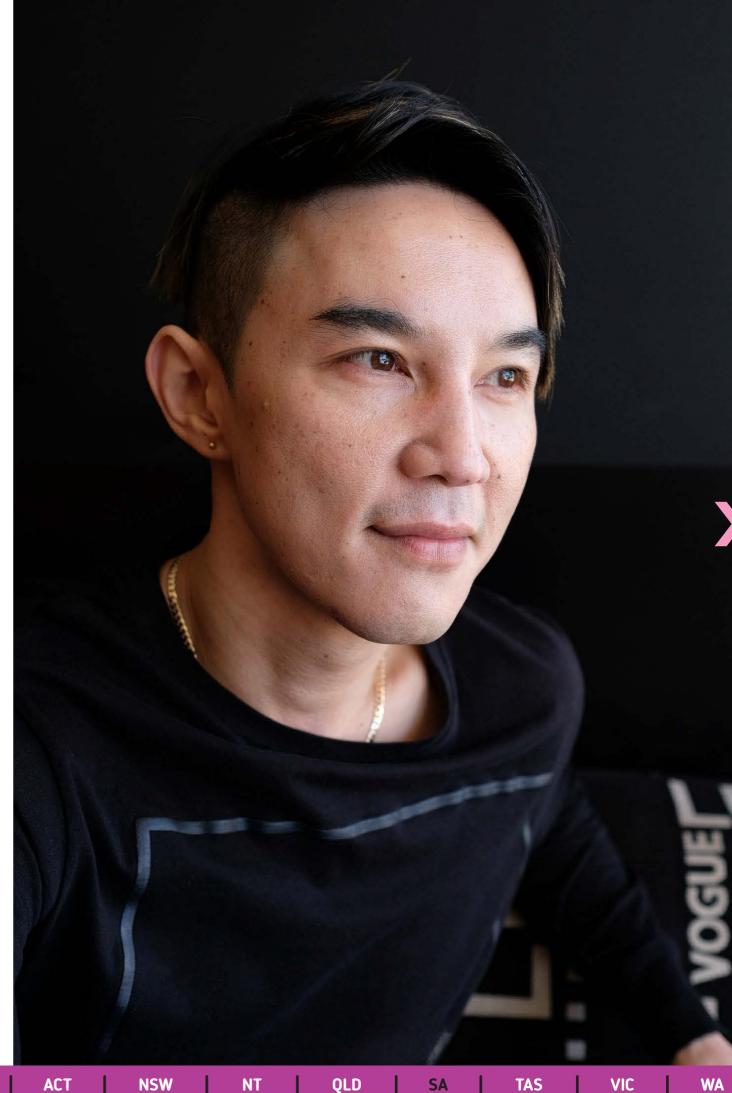
Of the respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 57.1% reported this was due to a person's race/cultural background (see Table 7.9). Just under half (46.3%) of SA young people indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality. Four in 10 (40.4%) SA respondents who witnessed unfair treatment reported it was due to a person's gender.

• Higher proportions of SA females reported witnessing unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality (48.6% compared with 37.8% of males) and gender (41.6% compared with 33.6% of males).

Table 7.9: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

	National %	SA %	Females %	Males %
Race/cultural background	57.6	57.1	58.4	55.1
Sexuality	48.0	46.3	48.6	37.8
Gender	43.7	40.4	41.6	33.6
Disability	32.4	36.1	34.3	35.1
Mental health	26.1	25.3	23.4	23.0
Religion	25.3	25.3	25.7	24.4
Age	16.7	15.6	13.3	17.0
Financial background	15.0	14.2	13.6	14.1
Other	9.6	11.0	9.8	13.6

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of SA frequency.



SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND FAMILY'S ABILITY TO GET ALONG

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

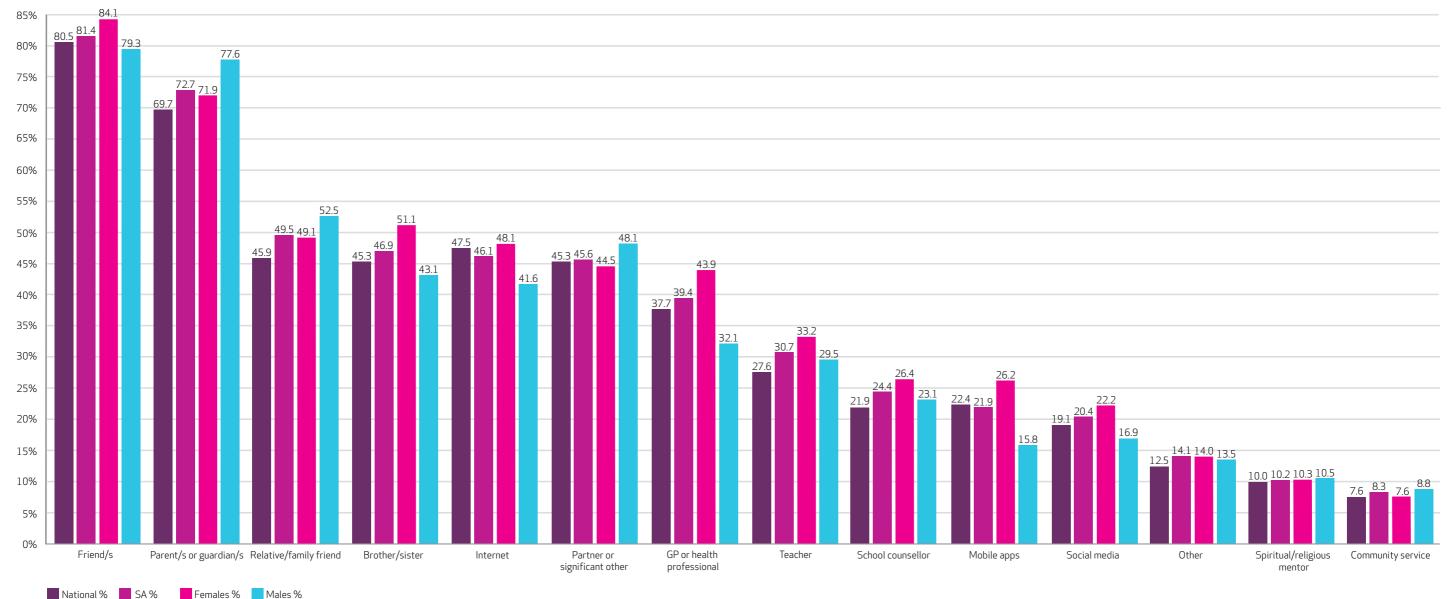
As shown in Figure 7.6, friend/s (81.4%), parent/s or guardian/s (72.7%) and relative/family friend (49.5%) were the three most frequently named sources of help for SA young people.

- A higher proportion of SA females said they would turn to a *GP or health professional* (43.9% compared with 32.1% of males) or *mobile apps* (26.2% compared with 15.8% of males) for support with important issues in their lives.
- A higher proportion of SA males stated they would go to a *parent/s or guardian/s* for support with important issues in their lives (77.6% compared with 71.9% of females).

Figure 7.6: Where young people go for help with important issues



Close personal relationships are important sources of support for SA young people, with a majority seeking support from *friends* and parents or quardians.

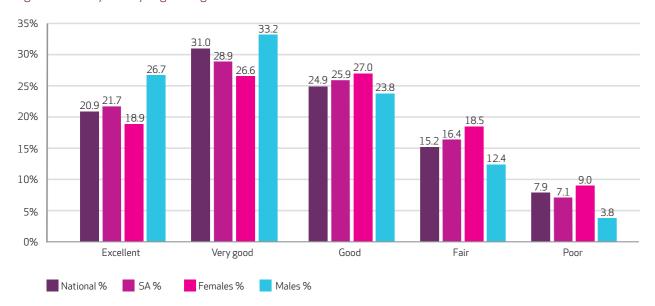


Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, where they go for help with important issues. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of SA frequency.

How do young people rate their family's ability to get along?

Half (50.6%) of SA respondents rated their family's ability to get along as *excellent* or *very good* (see Figure 7.7). However, close to one quarter (23.5%) of SA young people indicated their family's ability to get along was either *fair* or *poor*. A higher proportion of SA males rated their family's ability to get along as *excellent* or *very good* (59.9% compared with 45.5% of females), while a larger proportion of SA females rated their family's ability to get along as *fair* or *poor* (27.5% compared with 16.2% of males).

Figure 7.7: Family's ability to get along with one another





Half of young people from SA rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good.

ENGAGEMENT IN ACTIVITIES

What activities are young people involved in?

In the past year, the top three activities SA young people engaged with were sports (as a participant) (68.9%), sports (as a spectator) (63.2%) and volunteer work (37.7%), as shown in Table 7.10.

- Over one third (35.2%) of SA respondents reported they had participated in arts/cultural/music activities in the past year.
- Larger proportions of SA females reported taking part in arts/cultural/music activities (39.5% compared with 27.2% of males).
- Higher proportions of SA males reported taking part in *sports* (as a participant) (73.8% compared with 66.6% of females) and *sports* (as a spectator) (71.5% compared with 58.1% of females) in the past year.

Table 7.10: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	National %	SA %	Females %	Males %
Sports (as a participant)	71.0	68.9	66.6	73.8
Sports (as a spectator)	64.6	63.2	58.1	71.5
Volunteer work	41.1	37.7	39.5	34.8
Arts/cultural/music activities	43.2	35.2	39.5	27.2
Student leadership activities	33.9	23.3	26.2	20.6
Youth groups/activities	24.5	23.0	23.3	20.8
Religious groups/activities	23.4	21.7	22.4	21.2
Environmental groups/activities	19.1	15.7	17.4	13.5
Political groups/activities	9.3	7.6	7.0	6.7

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what activities they were involved in during the past year. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of SA frequency.



Around two thirds of SA young people engaged in *sports* as a participant or *spectator*.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

How stressed are young people?

Close to half (46.3%) of SA young people felt stressed either all of the time or most of the time in the past four weeks (see Table 7.11).

- A higher proportion of SA females felt stressed all of the time or most of the time (58.3% compared with 29.2% of males).
- Conversely, close to six times the proportion of SA males felt stressed none of the time (7.4% compared with 1.3% of females).

Table 7.11: Young people's level of stress

	National %	SA %	Females %	Males %
All of the time	11.6	11.4	14.9	5.7
Most of the time	32.9	34.9	43.4	23.5
Some of the time	32.0	31.3	27.9	36.3
A little of the time	19.0	18.5	12.6	27.1
None of the time	4.4	3.9	1.3	7.4

What do young people do to reduce stress?

The top three ways SA young people reported reducing stress was to do something relaxing (61.8%), play games or watch TV/movies (59.7%) and sleep (59.6%) (see Table 7.12).

- Compared with SA males, a higher proportion of SA females reported they would sleep (64.2% compared with 52.8%), spend time
 with family and friends (51.7% compared with 41.5%) and reach out to a professional (9.4% compared with 3.4%) to reduce stress.
- Compared with SA females, a higher proportion of SA males reported they would play games or watch TV/movies (65.8% compared with 54.3%), physical activity (55.1% compared with 43.6%) and do a hobby (50.7% compared with 36.6%) to reduce stress.

Table 7.12: Ways young people reduce stress

	National %	SA %	Females %	Males %
Do something relaxing	63.2	61.8	63.5	60.2
Play games or watch TV/movies	61.4	59.7	54.3	65.8
Sleep	59.5	59.6	64.2	52.8
Spend time online	62.3	57.5	57.1	56.5
Physical activity	49.0	47.6	43.6	55.1
Spend time with friends or family	46.9	46.4	51.7	41.5
Do a hobby	45.7	43.2	36.6	50.7
Nothing	16.5	13.3	12.6	13.3
Consume alcohol and/or other drugs	12.1	11.1	10.7	10.3
Reach out to a professional	6.8	7.2	9.4	3.4
Take medication prescribed by a health professional	6.1	6.0	7.9	2.6
Other	6.7	5.4	5.3	4.9

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what they do to reduce stress. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of SA frequency.

How much control do young people feel they have over their life?

Over half (53.4%) of SA young people felt they had control over their life, as shown in Table 7.13: 8.5% reported having *complete* control and 44.9% felt *mostly in control*. One in 10 (10.3%) SA respondents reported they had *almost no control* (8.8%) or *no control* (1.5%) over their life.

- A much higher proportion of SA males felt they had *complete control* or were *mostly in control* of their lives (63.9% compared with 47.6% of females).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of SA females reported feeling *almost no control* or *no control* over their lives (10.8% compared with 6.8% of males).

Table 7.13: Young people's level of control over their life

	National %	SA %	Females %	Males %
Complete control	7.8	8.5	5.2	13.0
Mostly in control	45.5	44.9	42.4	50.9
Some control	34.5	36.4	41.7	29.4
Almost no control	9.9	8.8	9.6	5.7
No control	2.4	1.5	1.2	1.1

How lonely are young people?

More than one in five (22.0%) SA young people felt lonely all or most of the time, in the past four weeks (see Table 7.14).

- A notably higher proportion of SA females felt lonely all or most of the time (24.6% compared with 15.8% of males).
- A notably higher proportion of SA males felt lonely none of the time (27.0% compared with 12.4% of females).

Table 7.14: Young people's level of loneliness

	National %	SA %	Females %	Males %
All of the time	5.9	4.7	5.3	3.2
Most of the time	19.0	17.3	19.3	12.6
Some of the time	29.7	32.3	37.0	26.1
A little of the time	27.1	27.4	26.1	31.1
None of the time	18.2	18.3	12.4	27.0



A notably larger proportion of SA females felt lonely all or most of the time.

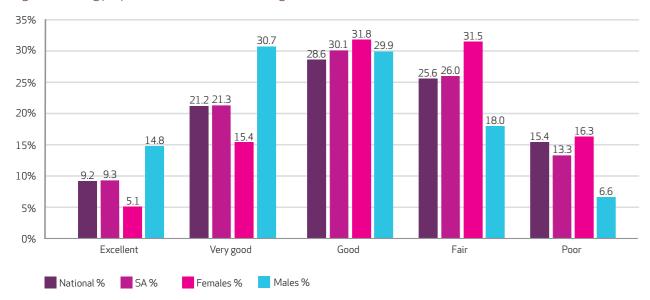
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How do young people rate their mental health and wellbeing?

Three in 10 (30.6%) SA young people rated their mental health and wellbeing as better than good (see Figure 7.8): 9.3% rated it as excellent and 21.3% rated it as very good. Close to one in seven (13.3%) respondents rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor.

- A notably higher proportion of SA males rated their mental health and wellbeing as excellent or very good (45.5% compared with 20.5% of females).
- Much higher proportions of SA females rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor (16.3% compared with 6.6% males).

Figure 7.8: Young people's mental health and wellbeing



How happy are young people?

More than half (52.9%) of SA young people indicated overall happiness with their lives (see Table 7.15). A notably higher proportion of SA males reported feeling *happy/very happy* with their lives as a whole (63.9% compared with 47.5% of females), whereas a larger proportion of SA females indicated they felt *very sad/sad* (13.8% compared with 8.5% of males).

Table 7.15: Young people's level of happiness

	National %	SA %	Females %	Males %
Happy/very happy (70-100)	53.4	52.9	47.5	63.9
Not happy or sad (40-60)	32.6	34.0	38.7	27.6
Very sad/sad (0-30)	13.9	13.1	13.8	8.5

Note: Respondents were asked to rate how happy they are with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes happy/very happy; 40-60 signifies not happy or sad; and 0-30 indicates very sad/sad.



More than half of SA young people were happy with their lives overall, although this was notably higher for SA males than females.

How much time do young people spend on screens?

More than one third (35.6%) of SA young people spent 9 hours or more on screens per day (see Table 7.16).

Table 7.16: Young people's screen-time per day

	National %	SA %	Females %	Males %
No screen time	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.3
1-2 hours	5.5	5.1	5.7	4.8
3-4 hours	17.3	17.4	18.3	17.7
5-6 hours	22.7	23.1	22.3	24.6
7-8 hours	18.6	18.6	18.7	18.2
9 hours or more	35.7	35.6	35.0	34.4

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

More than four in 10 (43.3%) SA young people spent 1-2 hours on screens connecting with others. Four in 10 (40.1%) young people from SA spent 1-2 hours on screens for entertainment. Close to three in 10 (28.1%) SA respondents spent 5-6 hours on screens for learning (see Table 7.17).

Table 7.17: Young people's screen-time per day by purpose

South Australian respondents	Connecting with others	For entertainment %	For learning %
No screen time	5.6	2.7	8.9
1-2 hours	43.3	40.1	20.5
3-4 hours	22.3	28.1	19.1
5-6 hours	12.5	14.7	28.1
7-8 hours	6.4	5.4	16.3
9 hours or more	9.9	9.0	7.1

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day connecting with others, for entertainment and for learning. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

How much time do young people spend sleeping?

More than half (52.4%) of SA young people reported sleeping on average between 7-8 hours per night (see Table 7.18).

Table 7.18: Young people's sleep per night

	National	National SA Females		Males	
	%	%	%	%	
6 hours or less	21.6	22.4	24.7	17.4	
7-8 hours	52.8	52.4	52.0	54.3	
9-10 hours	16.8	15.5	14.5	17.2	
11 hours or more	8.8	9.8	8.8	11.1	

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend sleeping per night. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

How much time do young people spend exercising?

Close to one quarter (23.9%) of SA young people reported exercising on average 1-2 hours per week, see Table 7.19. A notably higher proportion of SA males reported engaging in 9 hours or more hours of exercise per week (29.7% compared with 17.3% of females).

Table 7.19: Young people's exercise per week

	National %	SA %	Females %	Males %
No exercise	7.2	8.2	9.4	5.7
1-2 hours	25.0	23.9	24.7	22.6
3-4 hours	20.1	20.2	23.6	15.8
5-6 hours	15.1	16.3	16.8	16.5
7-8 hours	9.8	8.8	8.2	9.7
9 hours or more	22.8	22.5	17.3	29.7

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend exercising per week. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.



"Personally, no one challenge has negatively impacted me too severely, although issues like the inequalities and death in custody that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face as well as governmental inaction on climate change has concerned me."

(Male, 16, SA, non-Indigenous)

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA AND THE FUTURE

What issues do young people think are the most important in Australia today?

In 2021, SA young people reported that the top three issues in Australia were COVID-19 (47.7%), equity and discrimination (36.4%) and the environment (34.8%).

- Three in 10 (29.9%) SA young people reported mental health as an important national issue.
- Higher proportions of SA females identified mental health (33.2% compared with 25.5% of males) as an important issue facing Australia today, whereas a higher proportion of SA males identified alcohol and drugs (13.9% compared with 8.7% of males).
- Young people from SA have ranked the environment and equity and discrimination in the top three issues of national concern for the past three years, while COVID-19 has continued to grow in importance since 2020.

Table 7.20: Most important issues in Australia today

	National 2021 %	SA 2021 %	Females %	Males %	SA 2020 %	SA 2019 %
COVID-19	45.7	47.7	49.7	45.7	42.2	-
Equity and discrimination	35.4	36.4	39.8	33.3	37.6	28.1
The environment	38.0	34.8	38.1	30.7	28.2	30.0
Mental health	34.6	29.9	33.2	25.5	26.7	34.7
Crime, safety and violence	10.9	11.2	13.3	8.4	8.6	11.4
Alcohol and drugs	10.6	10.7	8.7	13.9	10.6	21.0
The economy and financial matters	10.9	9.1	7.5	11.5	15.3	15.6
Employment	6.5	8.3	7.0	9.3	9.2	10.5
LGBTIQA+ issues	7.0	6.6	7.3	4.1	5.1	7.0
Homelessness/housing	7.0	6.1	5.6	6.8	10.5	8.6

Note: Respondents were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The responses provided were categorised into the items listed above. Items are listed in order of 2021 SA frequency.

How do young people feel about the future?

Half (50.9%) of SA young people felt either very positive or positive about the future. However, around one in six (15.0%) young people indicated they felt negative or very negative about the future.

- A higher proportion of SA males reported feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future (59.0% compared with 47.6% of females).
- Similar to the trend for all respondents nationally, the proportion of SA respondents reporting feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future has reduced over time from 60.4% in 2019, to 54.3% in 2020 and 50.9% in 2021.

Table 7.21: Feelings about the future

	National 2021 %	SA 2021 %	Females %	Males %	SA 2020 %	SA 2019 %
Very positive or positive	51.6	50.9	47.6	59.0	54.3	60.4
Neither positive nor negative	32.5	34.0	37.0	28.9	32.8	29.2
Negative or very negative	16.0	15.0	15.4	12.1	12.9	10.4

 $Note: Responses \ for \ \textit{very positive} \ \text{and} \ \textit{positive} \ \text{have} \ \text{been aggregated}, \ \text{as have the responses} \ \text{for} \ \textit{negative}.$

Tasmania

- Profile of respondents
- Education and employment
- Values and concerns
- COVID-19
- Unfair treatment

- Sources of support and family's ability to get along
- ► Engagement in activities
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Most important issues in Australia and the future



Tasmania

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 974 young people from Tasmania (TAS) aged between 15 and 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2021*.

Gender

More than half (51.5%) of TAS respondents were male, 43.4% were female, 3.9% were gender diverse and 1.3% preferred not to say.

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 68 (7.0%) young people from TAS identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. A higher proportion of TAS males identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (7.4% compared with 5.8% of females).

Cultural background

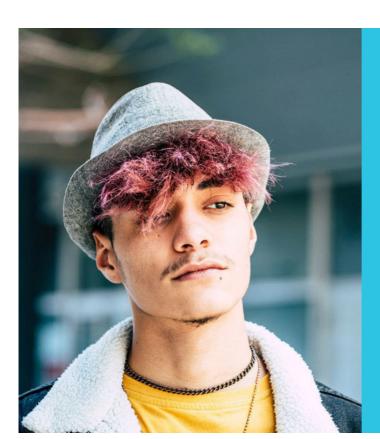
A total of 88 (9.1%) TAS respondents stated they were born overseas and 107 (11.2%) TAS young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the 37 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Greek, Spanish and Chinese.

A total of 123 (12.8%) TAS young people reported a particular cultural or ethnic group with which they identified strongly. Of the more than 40 cultural or ethnic groups identified, the most common were (in order of frequency): Indian, Polish and Australian.

A total of 257 (26.8%) TAS respondents stated one or both of their parents were born overseas.

Disability

A total of 84 (8.7%) TAS respondents identified as living with disability. A greater proportion of males from TAS reported living with disability (9.8% compared with 5.1% of females). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning disability and autism.



974 young people from TAS took the time to share their values, aspirations and issues of concern in Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2021.



Are young people studying?

As indicated in Table 8.1, 90.7% of young people from TAS were studying full-time. A higher proportion of TAS females reported studying full-time (94.9% compared with 87.0% of males). Conversely, more than three times the proportion of TAS males reported studying part-time (7.7% compared with 2.2% of females).

Table 8.1: Participation in education

	National %	TAS %	Females %	Males %
Studying full-time	84.5	90.7	94.9	87.0
Studying part-time	8.1	5.0	2.2	7.7
Not studying	7.4	4.3	2.9	5.3

How satisfied are young people with their studies?

As in previous years, the majority (62.7%) of TAS respondents who were currently studying reported they were either very satisfied or satisfied with their studies. One in 12 (8.8%) TAS young people indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, as shown in Table 8.2.

Table 8.2: Satisfaction with studies

	National %	TAS %	Females %	Males %
Very satisfied or satisfied	62.5	62.7	61.9	66.7
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	28.5	28.5	30.6	23.7
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	9.0	8.8	7.5	9.6

Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying. Responses for very satisfied and satisfied have been aggregated, as have the responses for dissatisfied and very dissatisfied.

Of those still at school, the majority (96.4%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. A higher proportion of TAS males stated they were not planning on completing Year 12 (4.4% compared with 2.7% of females).



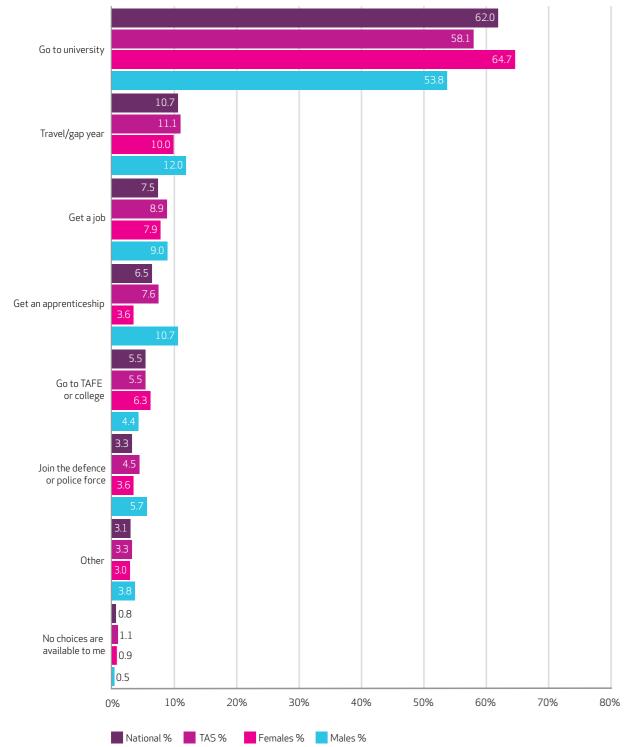
Nine in 10 TAS young people were studying full-time, and a majority of those studying intended to complete Year 12.

What are young people's plans after school?

Close to six in 10 (58.1%) TAS young people planned to *go to university* after school, as shown in Figure 8.1. One in nine (11.1%) TAS respondents reported *travel/gap year* plans after school, and close to one in 11 (8.9%) indicated plans to *get a job*.

While the most frequently reported plan was to *go to university* after finishing school, a higher proportion of TAS females indicated they planned to do so (64.7% compared with 53.8% of males). Close to three times the proportion of TAS males reported plans to *get an apprenticeship* (10.7% compared with 3.6% of females).

Figure 8.1: Plans after leaving school



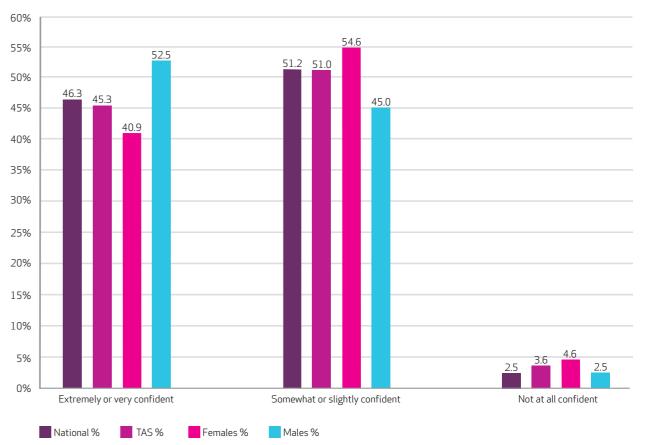
Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Respondents were only able to choose one option from the above list of predetermined items. Items are listed in order of TAS frequency.

How confident are young people in achieving their study or work goals?

Close to half (45.3%) of TAS young people indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study or work goals (see Figure 8.2).

 A notably higher proportion of TAS males reported they were extremely or very confident in their ability to achieve their study or work goals after school (52.5% compared with 40.9% of females).

Figure 8.2: Confidence in achieving study or work goals



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Responses for extremely confident and very confident have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat confident and slightly confident.



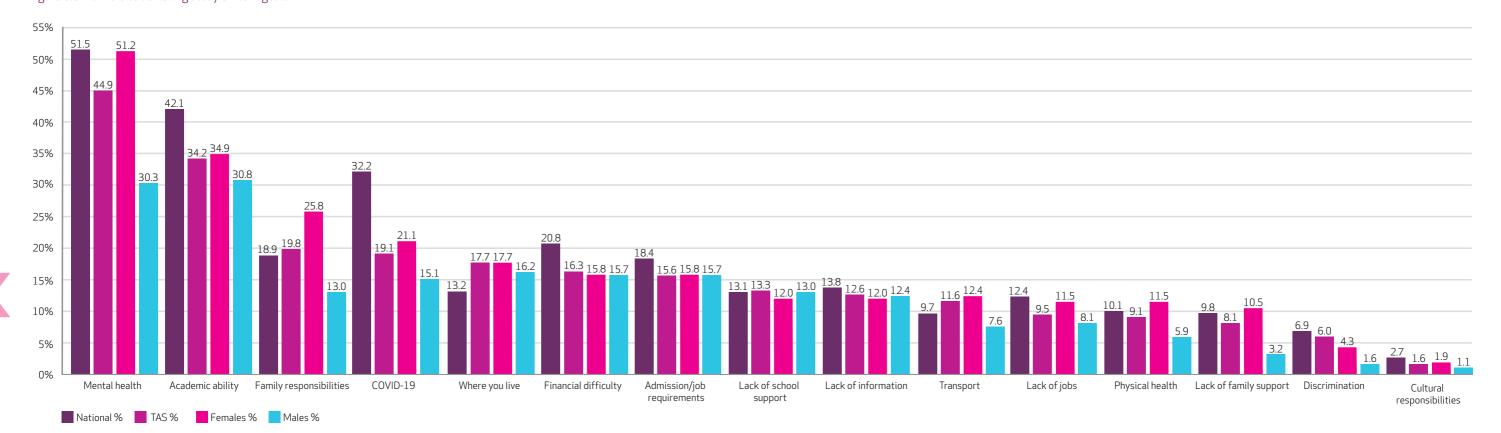
While close to half of TAS young people were extremely or very confident in their ability to achieve their study or work goals, this was much higher for TAS males.

What are the barriers to achieving study or work goals?

Close to half (46.7%) of TAS young people felt there were barriers that impacted on their achievement of their study or work goals. As shown in Figure 8.3, mental health (44.9%), academic ability (34.2%) and family responsibilities (19.8%) were the top three barriers impacting on young people's achievement of study or work goals.

- Close to one in five (19.1%) TAS respondents felt COVID-19 was a barrier to achieving study or work goals.
- A notably higher proportion of TAS females felt *mental health* (51.2% compared with 30.3% of males) and *family responsibilities* (25.8% compared with 13.0% of males) were barriers impacting on the achievement of study or work goals.

Figure 8.3: Barriers to achieving study or work goals



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying and felt there were barriers that impacted the achievement of study or work goals. Respondents were able to choose more than one option from the predetermined list of items. Items are listed in order of TAS frequency.



"I worry about academic achievement and being able to get into uni. I just need to study harder and access help but sometimes I think entry levels for ATAR levels are a bit crazy especially because I feel like they aren't a good representation of personal intelligence."

(Female, 16, TAS, non-Indigenous)

Close to half of TAS young people felt there were barriers impacting on their achievement of their study or work goals.



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Close to four in 10 young people in TAS were not in paid employment but were looking for work.

Are young people employed?

Close four in 10 (39.5%) TAS young people reported they were employed part-time. Close to six in 10 (59.4%) indicated they were not in paid employment: 37.1% stated they were looking for work, while 22.3% were neither working nor looking for work. A small proportion (1.2%) of TAS young people who reported being in paid employment were employed full-time. A higher proportion of males from TAS were looking for work (41.6% compared with 30.8% of females).

Table 8.3: Participation in paid employment

	National %	TAS %	Females %	Males %
Employed full-time	0.6	1.2	0.5	1.4
Employed part-time	45.4	39.5	48.9	33.4
Not in paid employment, looking for work	31.8	37.1	30.8	41.6
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	22.2	22.3	19.8	23.6

Note: Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average, how many hours they worked per week. Part-time employment is considered to be less than 35 hours per week, while full-time employment is considered to be 35 hours or more.

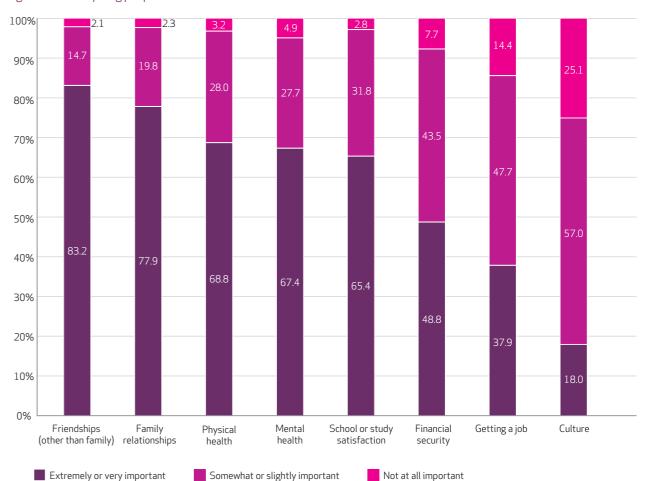
VALUES AND CONCERNS

What do young people value?

The three most highly valued items for TAS young people were friendships (other than family), family relationships and physical health (see Figure 8.4). The next most highly valued items were mental health and school or study satisfaction.

- More than eight in 10 (83.2%) TAS respondents saw friendships (other than family) as extremely or very important.
- Close to eight in 10 (77.9%) young people from TAS saw family relationships as extremely or very important.
- Close to seven in 10 (68.8%) TAS respondents saw physical health as extremely or very important.

Figure 8.4: What young people value



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely and very important for each item.

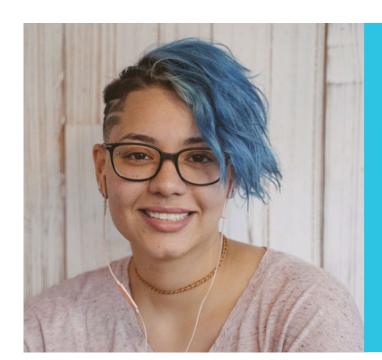
Friendships (other than family) and family relationships were rated as the most important items by both TAS females and males, as shown in Table 8.4.

- Notably higher proportions of TAS females placed a high value upon school or study satisfaction (73.8% compared with 61.3% of males) and mental health (71.1% compared with 64.3% of males).
- Higher proportions of TAS males rated physical health as extremely or very important (73.0% compared with 68.9% of females).

Table 8.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	83.7	15.1	1.2
Family relationships	79.6	19.4	1.0
Physical health	68.9	28.2	2.9
Mental health	71.1	26.9	1.9
School or study satisfaction	73.8	24.8	1.5
Financial security	49.3	43.1	7.6
Getting a job	39.1	47.6	13.3
Culture	17.7	58.0	24.3
Males	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Males Friendships (other than family)			
	important %	important %	important %
Friendships (other than family)	important % 83.9	important %	important %
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships	important % 83.9 79.9	13.8 17.8	2.3 2.3
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Physical health	important % 83.9 79.9 73.0	13.8 17.8 24.5	2.3 2.3 2.5
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Physical health Mental health	important % 83.9 79.9 73.0 64.3	13.8 17.8 24.5 29.5	2.3 2.3 2.5 6.2
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Physical health Mental health School or study satisfaction	important % 83.9 79.9 73.0 64.3 61.3	13.8 17.8 24.5 29.5 35.2	2.3 2.3 2.5 6.2 3.5

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are listed in order of TAS frequency.



"[My biggest personal issue is] keeping up with my study and getting good grades while maintaining healthy relations with family and friends and still being physically fit."

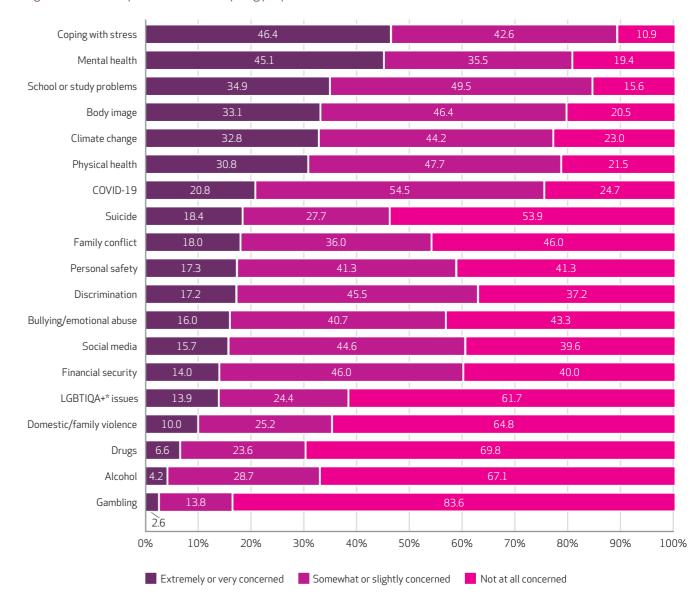
(Female, 16, TAS, non-Indigenous)

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

The top three issues of personal concern for TAS young people were coping with stress (46.4%), mental health (45.1%) and school or study problems (34.9%).

Close to one third of TAS young people were extremely or very concerned about body image (33.1%) and climate change (32.8%).

Figure 8.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely concerned and very concerned for each item.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

The top issues of personal concern for TAS females were coping with stress, mental health and body image. Whereas the top three issues for TAS males were mental health, coping with stress and climate change, as shown in Table 8.5. TAS females reported higher levels of personal concern about almost all issues.

• Notably higher proportions TAS females were extremely or very concerned about body image (52.1% compared with 16.6% of males) and coping with stress (64.7% compared with 29.7% of males).

Table 8.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

Females	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	64.7	30.4	4.8
Mental health	59.0	32.0	9.0
School or study problems	46.7	45.5	7.7
Body image	52.1	41.1	6.8
Climate change	36.8	46.7	16.5
Physical health	37.8	47.6	14.6
COVID-19	28.6	60.5	10.9
Suicide	21.0	31.7	47.3
Family conflict	25.0	37.9	37.1
Personal safety	22.9	42.1	35.0
Discrimination	20.8	51.1	28.1
Bullying/emotional abuse	22.7	46.1	31.2
Social media	25.7	49.8	24.5
Financial security	15.9	48.1	36.0
LGBTIQA+* issues	16.7	30.4	52.9
Domestic/family violence	11.9	26.3	61.8
Drugs	5.3	26.2	68.5
Alcohol	4.3	33.1	62.6
Gambling	1.9	13.6	84.4



"[My biggest personal issue is] school pressure as I entered Grade 11. I was unaware of the immense difference in workload and the stress of an undetermined future and not knowing how to achieve my personal goals."

(Female 16 TAS non-Indigenous

Table 8.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

Males	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	29.7	53.8	16.6
Mental health	31.4	39.5	29.1
School or study problems	24.6	52.2	23.2
Body image	16.6	50.5	32.9
Climate change	28.9	41.6	29.5
Physical health	25.7	46.0	28.3
COVID-19	14.6	50.1	35.3
Suicide	13.8	23.3	62.9
Family conflict	10.1	34.4	55.5
Personal safety	11.5	39.5	49.0
Discrimination	12.4	41.0	46.6
Bullying/emotional abuse	9.4	35.5	55.0
Social media	6.6	41.2	52.3
Financial security	11.1	43.1	45.8
LGBTIQA+* issues	6.4	19.5	74.1
Domestic/family violence	6.4	24.4	69.2
Drugs	7.0	20.9	72.2
Alcohol	3.7	23.7 72	
Gambling	2.5	12.9	84.6

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are listed in order of TAS frequency.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

"Personally [my biggest issue] would be body image, and stress with school. [I need to] get someone to help me study, figure out problems, work on myself mentally and physically focusing on myself for the better."

(Male, 15, TAS, non-Indigenous)



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COVID-19

How has COVID-19 impacted on young people?

The top three areas TAS young people identified as being negatively impacted by COVID-19 were participation in activities (65.7%), education (54.1%) and mental health (45.1%) (see Table 8.6). Compared with TAS males, females experienced greater negative impacts of COVID-19 across all areas.

A notably higher proportion of TAS females identified their mental health was negatively impacted by COVID-19 (57.3% compared with 32.2% of males).

Table 8.6: Impact of COVID-19 on young people

	National %	TAS %	Females %	Males %
Participation in activities	68.3	65.7	70.2	63.6
Education	62.3	54.1	57.7	50.6
Mental health	50.3	45.1	57.3	32.2
Physical health	46.1	38.1	39.5	36.5
Family	37.9	35.7	39.5	31.1
Friendships	33.8	27.4	31.1	23.0
Employment	30.1	21.0	22.9	19.3
Financial security	24.3	19.6	24.2	14.3
Housing	6.9	5.7	5.9	4.3

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, the ways COVID-19 has negatively impacted them. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of TAS frequency.

"The limited access to going outside and my mental health surrounding that. I get very 'in my head' when I'm by myself and I struggled when COVID hit, thankfully Tasmania was very lucky but it was still a big adjustment."

(Female, 16, TAS, non-Indigenous)



UNFAIR TREATMENT

Have young people been treated unfairly?

Close to four in 10 (36.7%) TAS young people reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of TAS females reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (44.2% compared with 27.6% of males).

Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify whether they had been treated unfairly due to their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason.

Of the 36.7% of TAS young people who had been treated unfairly in the past year (see Table 8.7):

- Notably higher proportions of TAS females had been treated unfairly due to their gender (33.9% compared with 14.8% of males).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of TAS males reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background* (26.7% compared with 14.8% of females).

Table 8.7: Reasons for being treated unfairly

	National %	TAS %	Females %	Males %
Gender	37.3	31.5	33.9	14.8
Mental health	27.6	27.8	28.4	20.7
Other	21.5	25.6	24.6	28.9
Race/cultural background	27.6	18.8	14.8	26.7
Age	18.3	18.5	18.6	14.1
Sexuality	21.7	18.3	15.3	8.9
Religion	11.4	9.6	8.2	7.4
Financial background	7.0	7.9	5.5	8.9
Disability	7.0	4.8	2.7	5.2

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of TAS frequency.

Young people who responded that they had been treated unfairly due to their race/cultural background were offered an additional question about the nature and experience of the unfair treatment (see Table 8.8). Of these TAS young people, more than nine in 10 (92.2%) had been insulted or had hurtful comments said to them. Close to six in 10 (59.4%) TAS young people had been harassed or intimidated and 39.1% had felt unwelcome in school, employment or services and received insulting or hurtful comments online.

Table 8.8: Experiences of unfair treatment due to race/cultural background

	National %	TAS %
Been insulted or had hurtful comments said to you	89.0	92.2
Been harassed or intimidated	62.5	59.4
Felt unwelcome in school, employment or services	46.6	39.1
Received insulting or hurtful comments online	43.1	39.1
Felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media	54.2	38.5
Been excluded from social events or activities	27.2	23.4
Felt unwelcome or excluded from sporting clubs or groups	24.2	21.9
Experienced physical violence	14.5	15.6

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of TAS frequency. A gender breakdown has not been reported due to the small number

Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

More than six in 10 (62.6%) TAS young people reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year because of their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason. A much higher proportion of TAS females reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (66.8% compared with 58.0% of males).

What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

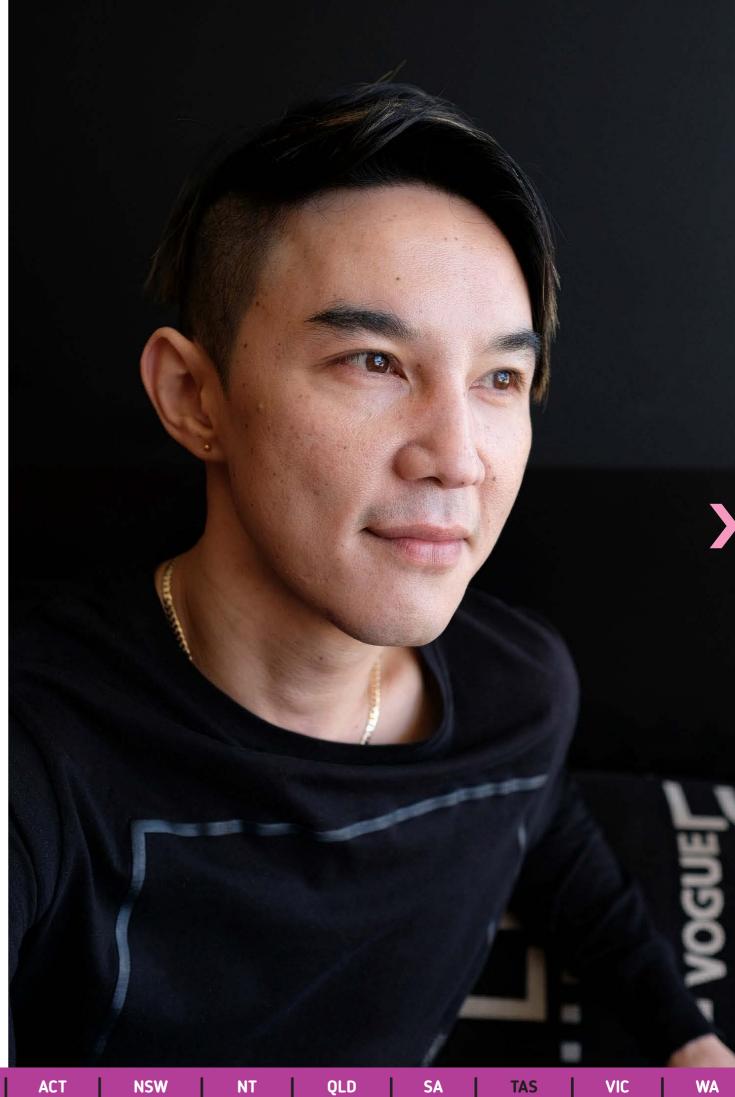
Of the respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 44.5% reported this was due to a person's race/cultural background (see Table 8.9). Close to four in 10 (37.9%) TAS young people indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality. More than one third (34.6%) of TAS respondents who witnessed unfair treatment reported it was due to a person's

• A notably higher proportion of TAS females reported witnessing unfair treatment due to a person's gender (38.0% compared with 25.9% of males) and sexuality (41.2% compared with 29.8% of males).

Table 8.9: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

	National %	TAS %	Females %	Males %
Race/cultural background	57.6	44.5	46.7	40.4
Sexuality	48.0	37.9	41.2	29.8
Gender	43.7	34.6	38.0	25.9
Disability	32.4	31.6	31.4	29.1
Mental health	26.1	23.1	24.5	17.7
Religion	25.3	18.9	17.9	16.3
Age	16.7	15.9	14.2	14.2
Financial background	15.0	15.0	12.8	14.2
Other	9.6	8.8	9.1	8.9

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of TAS frequency.



SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND FAMILY'S ABILITY TO GET ALONG

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

As shown in Figure 8.6, friend/s (80.4%), parent/s or guardian/s (73.0%) and partner or significant other (53.2%) were the three most frequently named sources of help for TAS young people.

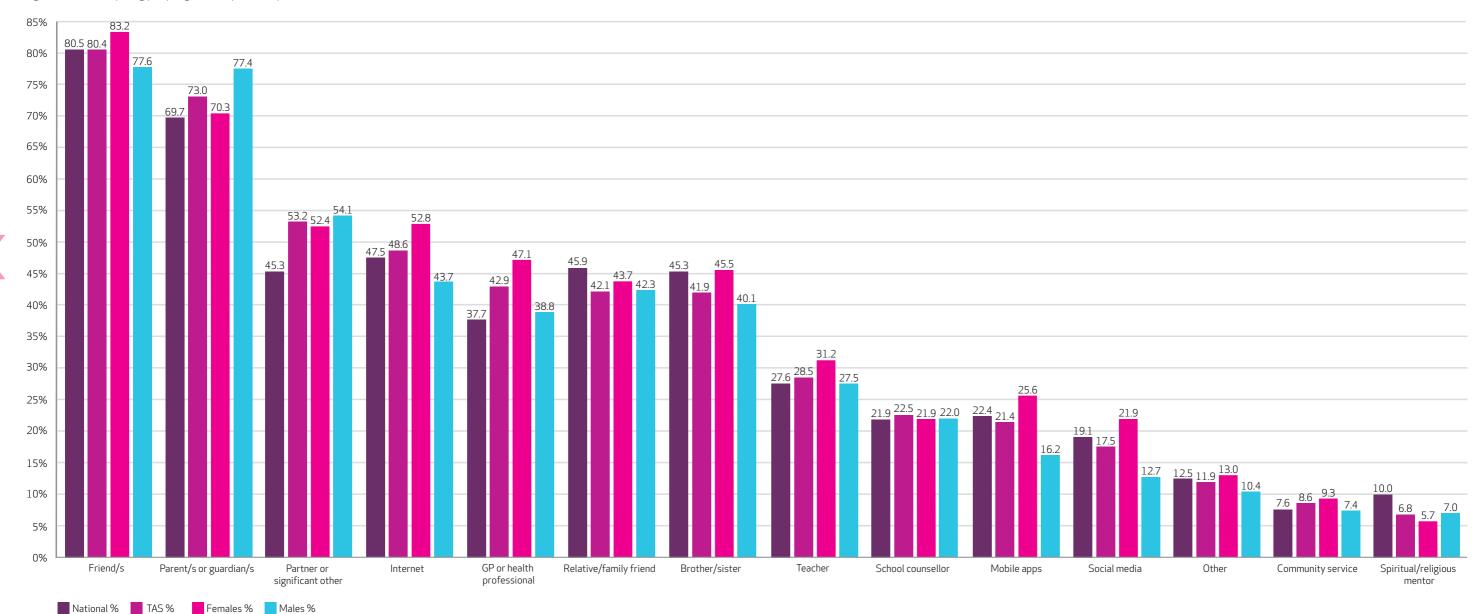
- Compared with TAS males, a higher proportion of TAS females said they would turn to mobile apps (25.6% compared with 16.2%), social media (21.9% compared with 12.7%) or the internet (52.8% compared with 43.7%) for support with important issues in their lives.
- A higher proportion of TAS males stated they would go to their parent/s or guardians/s (77.4% compared with 70.3% of females).

Figure 8.6: Where young people go for help with important issues



"[My biggest personal issue is] bad mental health. Support from family and friends helps, as well as thinking positively, getting enough sleep, eating well and drinking water."

(Male, 17, TAS, non-Indigenous)

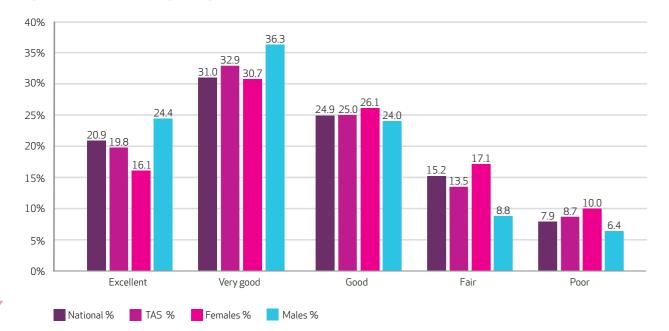


Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, where they go for help with important issues. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of TAS frequency.

How do young people rate their family's ability to get along?

More than half (52.7%) of TAS respondents rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good (see Figure 8.8). However, more than one in five (22.2%) TAS young people indicated their family's ability to get along was either fair or poor. A higher proportion of TAS males rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good (60.7% compared with 46.8% of females), while a much higher proportion of TAS females rated their family's ability to get along as fair or poor (27.1% compared with 15.2% of males).

Figure 8.7: Family's ability to get along with one another





A majority of young people from TAS rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good.

ENGAGEMENT IN ACTIVITIES

What activities are young people involved in?

Over the past year, the top three activities TAS young people were engaged in were sports (as a participant) (77.1%), sports (as a spectator) (70.8%) and volunteer work (47.3%), as shown in Table 8.10.

- Close to half (46.6%) of TAS respondents reported they had participated in arts/cultural/music activities in the past year.
- Notably higher proportions of TAS females reported taking part in *arts/cultural/music activities* (54.0% compared with 39.0% of males) and *volunteer work* (54.7% compared with 42.4% of males) in the past year.
- Higher proportions of TAS males reported taking part in *sports* (as a participant) (81.6% compared with 75.7% of females) and *sports* (as a spectator) (75.4% compared with 70.0% of females) in the past year.

Table 8.10: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	National %	TAS %	Females %	Males %
Sports (as a participant)	71.0	77.1	75.7	81.6
Sports (as a spectator)	64.6	70.8	70.0	75.4
Volunteer work	41.1	47.3	54.7	42.4
Arts/cultural/music activities	43.2	46.6	54.0	39.0
Student leadership activities	33.9	32.7	39.1	27.4
Environmental groups/activities	19.1	26.4	30.6	22.2
Youth groups/activities	24.5	25.9	27.4	23.6
Religious groups/activities	23.4	17.7	17.8	16.5
Political groups/activities	9.3	10.5	12.1	8.1

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what activities they were involved in during the past year. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of TAS frequency.



A majority of TAS young people engaged in sports as either a participant or a spectator.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

How stressed are young people?

More than four in 10 (43.7%) TAS young people felt stressed either *all of the time* or *most of the time* in the past four weeks (see Table 8.11).

- A higher proportion of TAS females felt stressed all of the time or most of the time (60.0% compared with 28.7% of males).
- Conversely, more than three times the proportion of TAS males felt stressed *none of the time* (7.3% compared with 1.9% of females).

Table 8.11: Young people's level of stress

	National %	TAS %	Females %	Males %
All of the time	11.6	11.1	17.4	4.3
Most of the time	32.9	32.6	42.6	24.4
Some of the time	32.0	32.9	26.9	37.5
A little of the time	19.0	18.5	11.1	26.5
None of the time	4.4	4.8	1.9	7.3

What do young people do to reduce stress?

The top three ways TAS young people reported reducing stress was to spend time online (63.4%), play games or watch TV/movies (61.6%) and do something relaxing (61.0%) (see Table 8.12).

- A higher proportion of TAS females reported they would sleep to reduce stress (64.0% compared with 52.2% of males).
- A higher proportion of TAS males reported they would *play games or watch TV/movies* (69.5% compared with 52.4% of females) and *do a hobby* (56.7% compared with 42.0% of females) to reduce stress.

Table 8.12: Ways young people reduce stress

	National %	TAS %	Females %	Males %
Spend time online	62.3	63.4	67.4	61.0
Play games or watch TV/movies	61.4	61.6	52.4	69.5
Do something relaxing	63.2	61.0	63.0	59.6
Sleep	59.5	56.9	64.0	52.2
Physical activity	49.0	53.9	50.2	61.2
Do a hobby	45.7	49.3	42.0	56.7
Spend time with friends or family	46.9	46.6	48.8	47.0
Nothing	16.5	17.7	17.9	17.1
Consume alcohol and/or other drugs	12.1	15.8	15.7	14.6
Reach out to a professional	6.8	8.2	11.6	4.9
Other	6.7	7.6	6.8	8.1
Take medication prescribed by a health professional	6.1	6.3	8.2	3.7

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what they do to reduce stress. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of TAS frequency.

How much control do young people feel they have over their life?

More than half (53.7%) of TAS young people felt they had control over their life, as shown in Table 8.13: 7.0% reported having *complete* control and 46.7% felt mostly in control. More than one in eight (13.3%) TAS respondents reported they had *almost no control* (9.5%) or no control (3.8%) over their life.

- A much higher proportion of TAS males felt they had *complete control* or were *mostly in control* of their lives (62.0% compared with 47.9% of females).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of TAS females reported feeling *almost no control* or *no control* over their lives (15.2% compared with 8.9% of males).

Table 8.13: Young people's level of control over their life

	National %	TAS %	Females %	Males %
Complete control	7.8	7.0	2.9	11.0
Mostly in control	45.5	46.7	45.0	51.0
Some control	34.5	33.0	36.8	29.1
Almost no control	9.9	9.5	11.1	7.1
No control	2.4	3.8	4.1	1.8

How lonely are young people?

Close to one quarter (24.2%) of TAS young people felt lonely all or most of the time, in the past four weeks (see Table 8.14).

- A notably higher proportion of TAS females felt lonely all or most of the time (27.8% compared with 17.9% of males).
- A notably higher proportion of TAS males felt lonely none of the time (24.1% compared with 11.5% of females).

Table 8.14: Young people's level of loneliness

	National %	TAS %	Females %	Males %
All of the time	5.9	6.2	6.3	3.9
Most of the time	19.0	18.0	21.5	14.0
Some of the time	29.7	26.2	29.5	23.5
A little of the time	27.1	32.0	31.2	34.6
None of the time	18.2	17.5	11.5	24.1



"[My biggest personal issue is] probably the period of isolation we incurred when we were sent home from school to prevent the spread of COVID."

(Male, 16, TAS, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander)

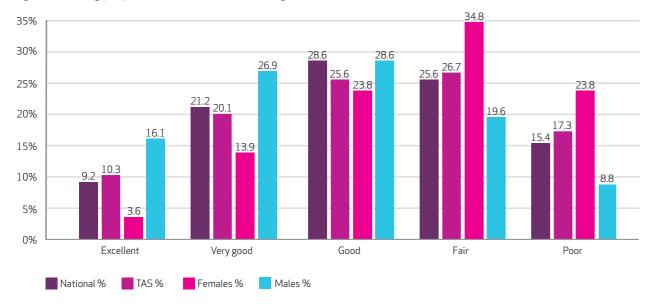
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How do young people rate their mental health and wellbeing?

Three in 10 (30.4%) TAS young people rated their mental health and wellbeing as better than good (see Figure 8.9): 10.3% rated it as excellent and 20.1% rated it as very good. More than one in six (17.3%) respondents rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor.

• A notably higher proportion of TAS males rated their mental health and wellbeing as excellent or very good (43.0% compared with 17.5% of females).

Figure 8.8: Young people's mental health and wellbeing



How happy are young people?

More than half (51.7%) of TAS young people indicated overall happiness with their lives. A notably higher proportion of TAS males reported feeling happy/very happy with their lives as a whole (60.8% compared with 44.7% of females), whereas a greater proportion of TAS females indicated they felt very sad/sad (16.9% compared with 10.2% of males).

Table 8.15: Young people's level of happiness

	National %	TAS %	Females %	Males %
Happy/very happy (70-100)	53.4	51.7	44.7	60.8
Not happy or sad (40-60)	32.6	33.4	38.4	29.1
Very sad/sad (0-30)	13.9	14.9	16.9	10.2

Note: Respondents were asked to rate how happy they are with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes happy/very happy; 40-60 signifies not happy or sad; and 0-30 indicates very sad/sad.



More than half of TAS young people felt overall happiness with their lives.

How much time do young people spend on screens?

Close to one third (32.1%) of TAS young people spent 9 hours or more on screens per day (see Table 8.16).

Table 8.16: Young people's screen-time per day

	National %	TAS %	Females %	Males %
No screen time	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.2
1-2 hours	5.5	4.9	4.8	5.3
3-4 hours	17.3	17.9	16.7	19.5
5-6 hours	22.7	26.9	30.2	25.4
7-8 hours	18.6	17.9	16.7	19.3
9 hours or more	35.7	32.1	31.6	30.3

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

Around half (46.3%) of TAS young people spent 1-2 hours on screens connecting with others. More than four in 10 (44.8%) young people from TAS spent 1-2 hours on screens for entertainment. Close to three in 10 (27.7%) TAS respondents spent 5-6 hours on screens for learning (see Table 8.17).

Table 8.17: Young people's screen-time per day by purpose

Tasmanian respondents	Connecting with others	For entertainment %	For learning %
No screen time	6.9	2.8	5.4
1-2 hours	46.3	44.8	25.0
3-4 hours	22.1	28.1	24.9
5-6 hours	11.0	13.6	27.7
7-8 hours	6.0	3.8	12.7
9 hours or more	7.7	6.9	4.2

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day connecting with others, for entertainment and for learning. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

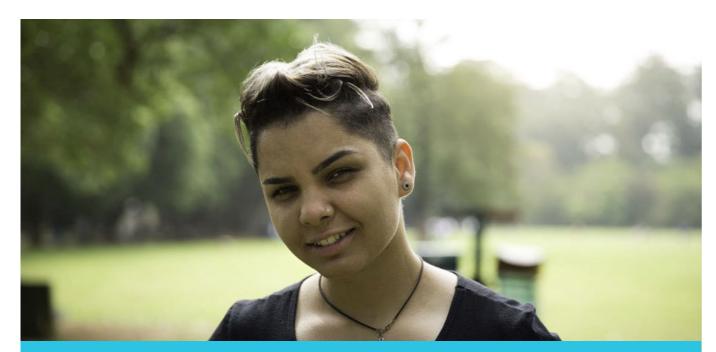
How much time do young people spend sleeping?

More than half (51.1%) of TAS young people reported sleeping on average between 7-8 hours per night (see Table 8.18).

Table 8.18: Young people's sleep per night

	National %	TAS %	Females %	Males %
6 hours or less	21.6	21.0	23.4	17.5
7-8 hours	52.8	51.1	53.9	51.4
9-10 hours	16.8	18.7	17.1	20.5
11 hours or more	8.8	9.1	5.6	10.6

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend sleeping per night. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.



"[My biggest issue is] activism burnout - trying to fix all the problems in the world at such a young age and worrying about the future. I ended up feeling quite worthless because only the people in power can make a difference and little to no action is being done about these things - climate change, discrimination, First Nation Australian rights and so much more."

(Female, 16, TAS, non-Indigenous)

How much time do young people spend exercising?

Close to three in 10 (29.1%) TAS young people reported exercising on average 9 hours or more per week (see Table 8.19). A notably higher proportion of TAS males reported engaging in 9 hours or more of exercise per week (37.4% compared with 20.0% of females).

Table 8.19: Young people's exercise per week

	National %	TAS %	Females %	Males %
No exercise	7.2	5.5	6.0	3.5
1-2 hours	25.0	19.0	21.0	16.7
3-4 hours	20.1	18.3	22.7	14.2
5-6 hours	15.1	16.8	18.4	16.7
7-8 hours	9.8	11.3	11.8	11.6
9 hours or more	22.8	29.1	20.0	37.4

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend exercising per week. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA AND THE FUTURE

What issues do young people think are the most important in Australia today?

In 2021, TAS young people reported that the top three issues in Australia were the environment (55.0%), COVID-19 (37.6%) and mental health (36.3%).

- One third (33.5%) of TAS young people reported equity and discrimination as an important national issue.
- A higher proportions TAS females identified *mental health* as an important issue facing Australia today (43.2% compared with 29.6% of males).
- Young people from TAS have ranked the environment and mental health in the top three issues of national concern for the past three years, while COVID-19 has continued to grow in importance since 2020.

Table 8.20: Most important issues in Australia today

	National 2021 %	TAS 2021 %	Females %	Males %	TAS 2020 %	TAS 2019 %
The environment	38.0	55.0	58.9	52.5	44.1	40.4
COVID-19	45.7	37.6	38.7	38.9	27.5	-
Mental health	34.6	36.3	43.2	29.6	34.2	33.9
Equity and discrimination	35.4	33.5	37.4	28.7	36.9	23.3
The economy and financial matters	10.9	11.4	9.0	13.7	17.4	15.1
Homelessness/housing	7.0	8.9	8.8	9.5	8.2	11.7
Employment	6.5	7.6	8.2	7.6	8.9	11.7
Health	5.1	7.5	8.0	7.2	11.3	11.8
Politics	6.5	7.3	4.0	11.1	9.7	10.9
Education	6.7	6.8	5.6	81	75	8.4

Note: Respondents were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The responses provided were categorised into the items listed above. Items are listed in order of 2021 TAS frequency.

How do young people feel about the future?

Close to half (49.2%) of TAS young people felt either very positive or positive about the future. However, one in five (20.6%) young people indicated they felt negative or very negative about the future.

- A higher proportion of TAS males reported feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future (55.2% compared with 47.1% of females).
- Similar to the trend of all respondents nationally, the proportion of TAS respondents reporting feeling very positive or positive about the future has slightly reduced over time from 55.4% in 2019, to 53.3% in 2020 and 49.2% in 2021.

Table 8.21: Feelings about the future

	National 2021 %	TAS 2021 %	Females %	Males %	TAS 2020 %	TAS 2019 %
Very positive or positive	51.6	49.2	47.1	55.2	53.3	55.4
Neither positive nor negative	32.5	30.2	32.0	27.2	31.3	30.9
Negative or very negative	16.0	20.6	21.0	17.6	15.4	13.6

 $Note: Responses for \textit{very positive} \ and \textit{positive} \ have been \textit{aggregated}, as have the \textit{responses} for \textit{negative} \ and \textit{very negative}.$

Victoria

- Profile of respondents
- Education and employment
- Values and concerns
- COVID-19
- Unfair treatment

- Sources of support and family's ability to get along
- ► Engagement in activities
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Most important issues in Australia and the future



Victoria

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 4,601 young people from Victoria (VIC) aged between 15 and 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2021*.

Gender

Close to six in 10 (59.2%) VIC respondents were female, 36.0% were male, 3.4% were gender diverse and 1.4% preferred not to say.

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 91 (2.0%) young people from VIC identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. A slightly higher proportion of VIC males identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (2.2% compared with 1.6% of females).

Cultural background

A total of 771 (16.9%) VIC respondents stated they were born overseas and 1,190 (26.2%) VIC young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the 84 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Chinese, Mandarin, Greek, Vietnamese and Cantonese.

A total of 1,062 (23.5%) VIC young people reported a particular cultural or ethnic group with which they identified strongly. Of the more than 100 cultural or ethnic groups identified, the most common were (in order of frequency): Chinese, Greek, Italian, Indian and Filipino.

A total of 2,043 (45.1%) VIC respondents stated one or both of their parents were born overseas.

Disability

A total of 322 (7.0%) VIC respondents identified as living with disability. A slightly higher proportion of males from VIC reported living with disability (6.6% compared with 5.7% of females). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning disability and physical disability.



4,601 young people from VIC took the time to share their values, aspirations and issues of concern in Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2021.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Are young people studying?

As indicated in Table 9.1, 86.7% of young people from VIC were studying full-time, which is slightly lower than the 88.8% studying full-time in 2020 (Tiller et al., 2020). A higher proportion of VIC females reported studying full-time (89.6% compared with 82.7% of males). Conversely, close to double the proportion of VIC males reported not studying (7.7% compared with 4.5% of females).

Table 9.1: Participation in education

	National %	VIC %	Females %	Males %
Studying full-time	84.5	86.7	89.6	82.7
Studying part-time	8.1	7.3	5.9	9.6
Not studying	7.4	6.0	4.5	7.7

How satisfied are young people with their studies?

As in previous years, the majority (62.9%) of VIC respondents who were currently studying reported they were either very satisfied or satisfied with their studies. Close to one in 10 (9.4%) VIC young people indicated they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, as shown in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2: Satisfaction with studies

	National %	VIC %	Females %	Males %
Very satisfied or satisfied	62.5	62.9	66.4	60.0
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	28.5	27.8	24.6	31.2
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	9.0	9.4	8.9	8.8

Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying. Responses for very satisfied and satisfied have been aggregated, as have the responses for dissatisfied and very dissatisfied.

Of those still at school, the majority (97.8%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. A slightly higher proportion of VIC males stated they were not planning on completing Year 12 (3.1% compared with 1.7% of females).



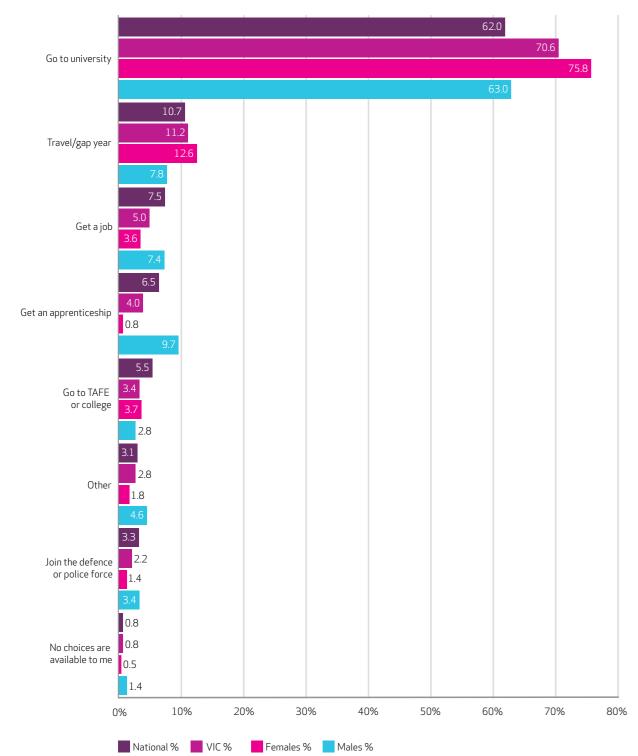
Close to nine in 10 VIC young people reported studying full-time, and a vast majority of those studying intended to complete Year 12.

What are young people's plans after school?

Seven in 10 (70.6%) VIC young people planned to *go to university* after school, as shown in Figure 9.1. One in nine (11.2%) VIC respondents reported *travel/gap year* plans after school and one in 20 (5.0%) indicated plans to *get a job*.

While the most frequently reported plan was to *go to university* after finishing school, a higher proportion of VIC females indicated they planned to do so (75.8% compared with 63.0% of males). A higher proportion of VIC males reported plans to *get an apprenticeship* (9.7% compared with 0.8% of females).

Figure 9.1: Plans after leaving school



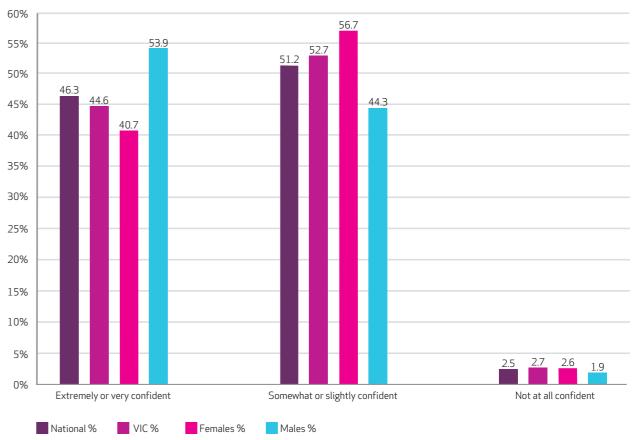
Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Respondents were only able to choose one option from the above list of predetermined items. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.

How confident are young people in achieving their study or work goals?

More than four in 10 (44.6%) VIC young people indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study or work goals (see Figure 9.2).

• A notably higher proportion of VIC males reported they were extremely or very confident in their ability to achieve their study or work goals after school (53.9% compared with 40.7% of females).

Figure 9.2: Confidence in achieving study or work goals



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Responses for extremely confident and very confident have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat confident and slightly confident.



"I've been working hard but not achieving the goals for my academics, or seeing my hard work reflected in my results. It's extremely disappointing and very taxing on your mental health because it makes you feel small and not enough."

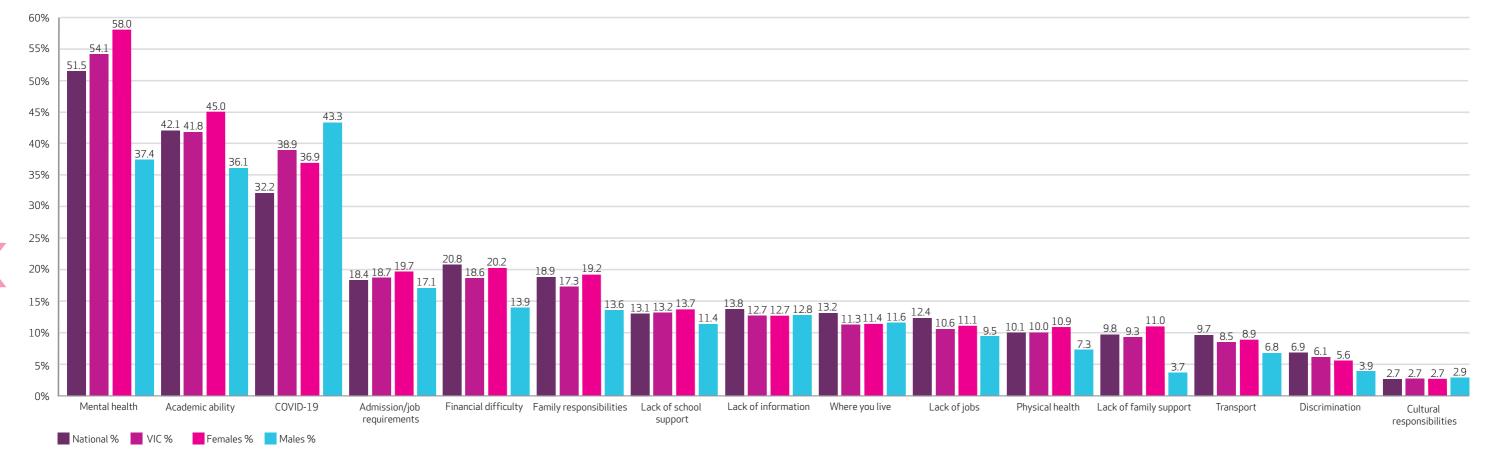
(Female, 16, VIC, non-Indigenous)

What are the barriers to achieving study or work goals?

Close to half (46.5%) of VIC young people felt there were barriers that impacted on their achievement of their study or work goals. As shown in Figure 9.3, mental health (54.1%), academic ability (41.8%) and COVID-19 (38.9%) were the top three barriers impacting on young people's achievement of study or work goals.

- A notably higher proportion of VIC females felt *mental health* was a barrier impacting on the achievement of study or work goals (58.0% compared with 37.4% of males).
- A higher proportion of VIC males felt *COVID-19* was a barrier impacting on the achievement of study or work goals (43.3% compared with 36.9% of females).

Figure 9.3: Barriers to achieving study or work goals



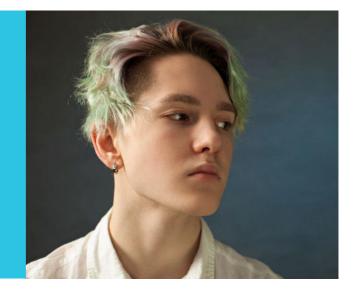
Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying and felt there were barriers that impacted the achievement of study or work goals. Respondents were able to choose more than one option from the predetermined list of items. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.



Notably larger proportions of VIC females identified *mental health* as a barrier impacting on the achievement of their study or work goals.

"COVID-19 has been the biggest challenge because it rocked my ability and motivation to study and started going into a downhill spiral.
Future pathways need to be adjusted for it."

(Male. 16. VIC. non-Indigenous)





More than half of VIC young people indicated they were not in paid employment, with three in 10 stating they were looking for work.

Are young people employed?

More than four in 10 (44.9%) VIC young people reported they were employed part-time. More than half (54.7%) indicated they were not in paid employment: 30.0% stated they were looking for work, while 24.7% were neither working nor looking for work. A very small proportion (0.4%) of VIC young people who reported being in paid employment were employed full-time.

Table 9.3: Participation in paid employment

	National %	VIC %	Females %	Males %
Employed full-time	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.4
Employed part-time	45.4	44.9	44.9	46.3
Not in paid employment, looking for work	31.8	30.0	28.8	31.0
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	22.2	24.7	26.0	22.4

Note: Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average, how many hours they worked per week. Part-time employment is considered to be less than 35 hours per week, while full-time employment is considered to be 35 hours or more.

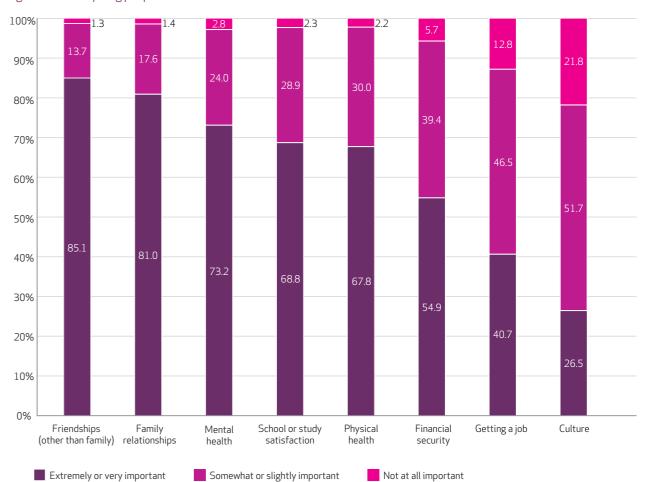
VALUES AND CONCERNS

What do young people value?

The three most highly valued items for VIC young people were friendships (other than family), family relationships and mental health (see Figure 9.4). The next most highly valued items were school or study satisfaction and physical health.

- Close to nine in 10 (85.1%) VIC respondents saw friendships (other than family) as extremely or very important.
- More than eight in 10 (81.0%) young people from VIC saw family relationships as extremely or very important.
- Close to three quarters (73.2%) of VIC respondents saw mental health as extremely or very important.

Figure 9.4: What young people value



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely and very important for each item.

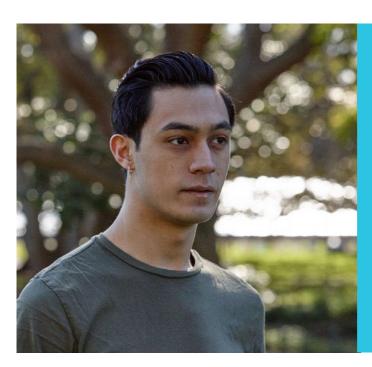
Friendships (other than family) and family relationships were rated as the most important items by both VIC females and males, as shown in Table 9.4.

- Notably larger proportions of VIC females placed a high value upon school or study satisfaction (74.2% compared with 62.0% of males) and mental health (77.0% compared with 67.1% of males).
- Higher proportions of VIC males rated physical health as extremely or very important (71.6% compared with 67.5% of females).

Table 9.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	86.5	12.7	0.7
Family relationships	83.2	15.8	1.0
Mental health	77.0	21.3	1.7
School or study satisfaction	74.2	24.1	1.7
Physical health	67.5	30.5	2.0
Financial security	57.6	38.1	4.3
Getting a job	40.3	46.5	13.2
Culture	28.4	50.1	21.5
Males	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Males Friendships (other than family)			
	important %	important %	important %
Friendships (other than family)	important %	important %	important %
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships	83.8 80.5	14.4 17.9	1.8 1.6
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Mental health	83.8 80.5 67.1	14.4 17.9 28.8	1.8 1.6 4.2
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Mental health School or study satisfaction	83.8 80.5 67.1 62.0	14.4 17.9 28.8 35.3	1.8 1.6 4.2 2.7
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Mental health School or study satisfaction Physical health	important % 83.8 80.5 67.1 62.0 71.6	14.4 17.9 28.8 35.3 26.8	1.8 1.6 4.2 2.7 1.6

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.



"The biggest problem I've encountered is finding motivation during lockdown. One way I have tried to resolve this is by using my family as my motivation. My family is one the most stable things in my life and is my drive to do better and achieve greater."

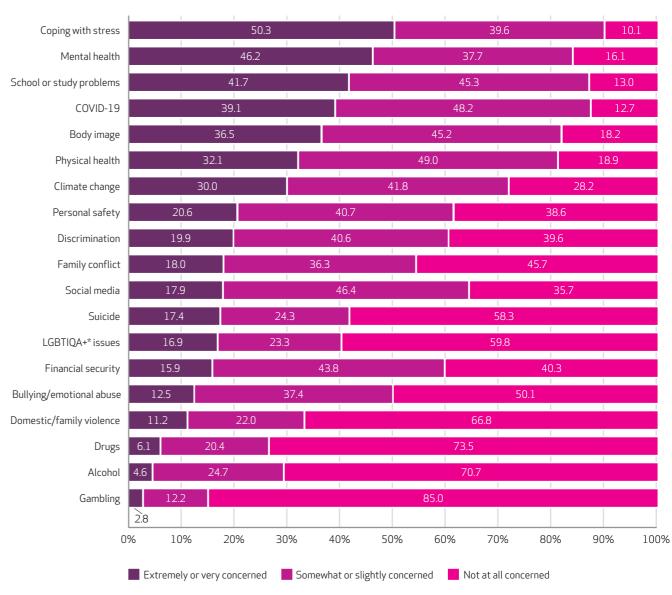
(Male, 16, VIC, non-Indigenous)

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

The top three issues of personal concern for VIC young people were coping with stress (50.3%), mental health (46.2%) and school or study problems (41.7%), as shown in Figure 9.5.

• Close to four in 10 (39.1%) VIC young people were extremely or very concerned about COVID-19.

Figure 9.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely concerned and very concerned for each item.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

The top issues of personal concern for VIC females were coping with stress, mental health and school or study problems. Whereas the top three issues for VIC males were coping with stress, mental health and COVID-19, as shown in Table 9.5. Compared to VIC males, VIC females reported higher levels of personal concern about almost all issues.

• Notably higher proportions of VIC females were extremely or very concerned about body image (48.4% compared with 15.3% of males) and coping with stress (61.0% compared with 30.4% of males).

Table 9.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

Females	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	61.0	34.8	4.2
Mental health	55.0	36.4	8.6
School or study problems	50.6	42.4	7.0
COVID-19	45.6	46.6	7.8
Body image	48.4	43.3	8.3
Physical health	36.7	50.2	13.1
Climate change	34.0	44.3	21.7
Personal safety	24.8	41.6	33.6
Discrimination	23.2	43.9	32.9
Family conflict	22.4	40.6	37.0
Social media	22.8	50.6	26.6
Suicide	19.5	27.2	53.4
LGBTIQA+* issues	19.1	27.5	53.4
Financial security	18.0	46.1	35.9
Bullying/emotional abuse	14.6	41.5	43.9
Domestic/family violence	12.9	23.9	63.2
Drugs	6.3	22.3	71.4
Alcohol	4.8	26.3	68.9
Gambling	2.1	12.3	85.6



"I have been very stressed about school and my future. There is a lot of pressure on teenagers to have a clear vision of what they want to do after school. The focus is too much on education/employment, rather than happiness and mental health."

(Female, 16, VIC, Aboriginal and/or Torres
Strait Islander)

Table 9.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

Males	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	30.4	49.1	20.5
Mental health	28.4	42.1	29.5
School or study problems	26.4	49.9	23.7
COVID-19	27.8	51.3	20.8
Body image	15.3	49.4	35.3
Physical health	25.8	45.7	28.5
Climate change	21.2	38.6	40.2
Personal safety	13.3	38.1	48.6
Discrimination	12.7	34.6	52.7
Family conflict	9.7	28.7	61.6
Social media	9.4	39.2	51.4
Suicide	11.1	19.2	69.7
LGBTIQA+* issues	6.6	17.0	76.4
Financial security	11.9	39.3	48.8
Bullying/emotional abuse	7.6	30.8	61.6
Domestic/family violence	7.8	17.8	74.4
Drugs	5.9	16.2	77.8
Alcohol	4.3	21.7	74.0
Gambling	3.7	12.5	83.8

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

"[My biggest personal issue is] coping with school work under tremendous amounts of stress whilst balancing between family, friends, school, and my feelings."

(Male, 15, VIC, non-Indigenous)



COVID-19

How has COVID-19 impacted on young people?

The top three areas VIC young people identified as being negatively impacted by COVID-19 were participation in activities (78.4%), education (77.7%) and mental health (68.9%), as shown in Table 9.6.

- A notably higher proportion of VIC females identified their *mental health* was negatively impacted by COVID-19 (76.3% compared with 54.8% of males).
- Compared with all respondents nationally, VIC young people experienced greater negative impacts of COVID-19 across almost all areas

Table 9.6: Impact of COVID-19 on young people

	National %	VIC %	Females %	Males %
Participation in activities	68.3	78.4	79.1	78.1
Education	62.3	77.7	78.4	76.2
Mental health	50.3	68.9	76.3	54.8
Physical health	46.1	62.8	65.8	57.6
Friendships	33.8	47.7	51.0	41.4
Family	37.9	40.2	42.9	34.1
Employment	30.1	32.6	31.0	35.4
Financial security	24.3	25.4	26.6	22.9
Housing	6.9	6.5	6.2	6.2

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, the ways COVID-19 has negatively impacted them. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.

"COVID-19 has most affected my education and mental health. Online sessions with psychiatrists and psychologists prove to be a lot more difficult than face to face whether mental health organisations are willing to admit that."

(Non-binary, 15, VIC, non-Indigenous)



UNFAIR TREATMENT

Have young people been treated unfairly?

Close to one third (32.4%) of VIC young people reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of VIC females reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (35.6% compared with 23.0% of males).

Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify whether they had been treated unfairly due to their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason.

Of the 32.4% of VIC young people who had been treated unfairly in the past year (see Table 9.7):

- A notably higher proportion of VIC females had been treated unfairly due to their *gender* (45.6% compared with 15.5% of males).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of VIC males reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background* (37.6% compared with 29.5% of females).

Table 9.7: Reasons for being treated unfairly

	National %	VIC %	Females %	Males %
Gender	37.3	40.1	45.6	15.5
Race/cultural background	27.6	30.1	29.5	37.6
Mental health	27.6	27.1	28.4	18.4
Sexuality	21.7	22.2	17.9	14.9
Other	21.5	19.8	17.8	28.5
Age	18.3	17.2	18.8	16.0
Religion	11.4	9.1	9.5	9.6
Disability	7.0	6.2	4.9	7.5
Financial background	7.0	5.7	5.5	7.2

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency



"I have been threatened, outed and discriminated against due to my sexuality. Especially since I have gotten a girlfriend. I think more needs to be done in schools and in the community about LGBTQIA+ issues."

(Female, 15, VIC, non-Indigenous)

Young people who responded that they had been treated unfairly due to their race/cultural background were offered an additional question about the nature and experience of the unfair treatment (see Table 9.8). Of these VIC young people, nine in 10 (90.9%) had been insulted or had hurtful comments said to them. Six in 10 (60.4%) VIC young people had been harassed or intimidated and more than half (53.9%) had felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media.

• Notably higher proportions of VIC males had been harassed or intimidated (74.3% compared with 53.5% of females).

Table 9.8: Experiences of unfair treatment due to race/cultural background

	National %	VIC %	Females %	Males %
Been insulted or had hurtful comments said to you	89.0	90.9	91.3	91.3
Been harassed or intimidated	62.5	60.4	53.5	74.3
Felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media	54.2	53.9	56.5	45.8
Felt unwelcome in school, employment or services	46.6	43.8	46.9	37.9
Received insulting or hurtful comments online	43.1	40.6	38.8	43.2
Been excluded from social events or activities	27.2	23.9	19.5	33.3
Felt unwelcome or excluded from sporting clubs or groups	24.2	20.6	22.9	15.2
Experienced physical violence	14.5	8.4	3.8	17.6

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.

Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

More than half (53.5%) of VIC young people reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year because of their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason. A much higher proportion of VIC females reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (56.6% compared with 45.6% of males).

What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

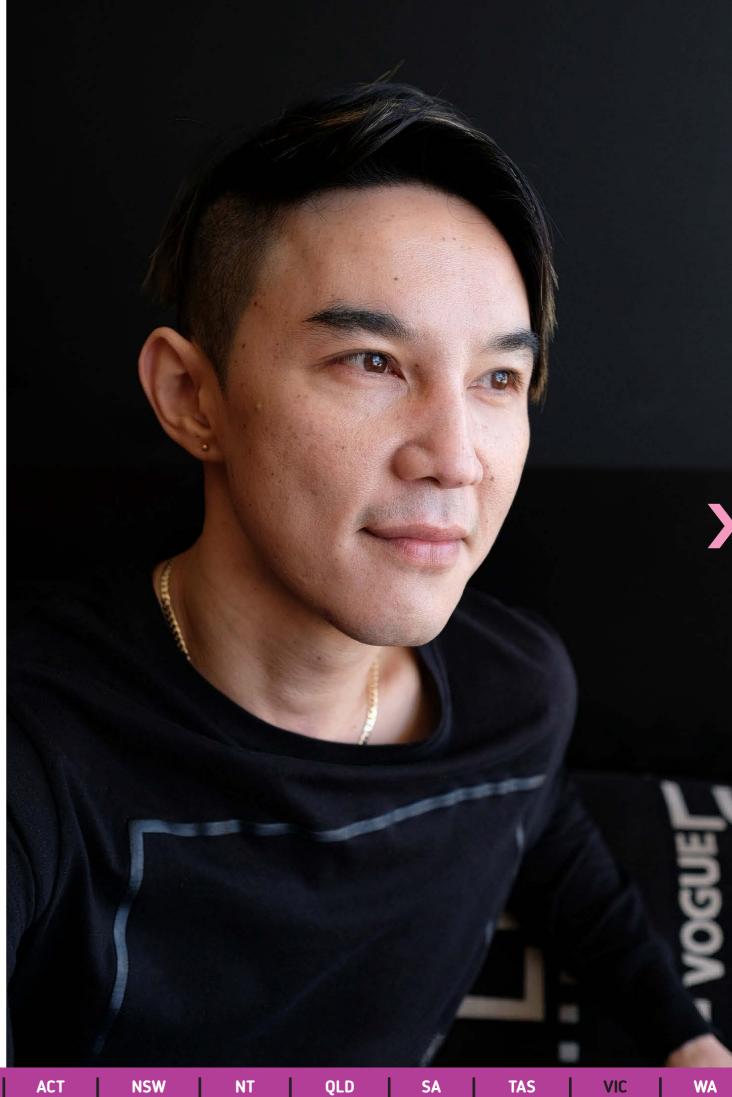
Of the respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 59.0% reported this was due to a person's race/cultural background (see Table 9.9). Close to half of VIC young people indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality (49.3%) and a person's gender (45.8%).

• A notably higher proportion of VIC females reported witnessing unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality (51.4% compared with 39.6% of males) and gender (48.1% compared with 37.2% of males).

Table 9.9: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

	National %	VIC %	Females %	Males %
Race/cultural background	57.6	59.0	57.8	61.9
Sexuality	48.0	49.3	51.4	39.6
Gender	43.7	45.8	48.1	37.2
Disability	32.4	26.6	25.8	24.2
Mental health	26.1	24.6	26.5	17.6
Religion	25.3	22.1	22.1	21.4
Age	16.7	15.1	15.5	14.2
Financial background	15.0	13.6	12.9	13.8
Other	9.6	10.2	9.0	12.8

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.



SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND FAMILY'S ABILITY TO GET ALONG

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

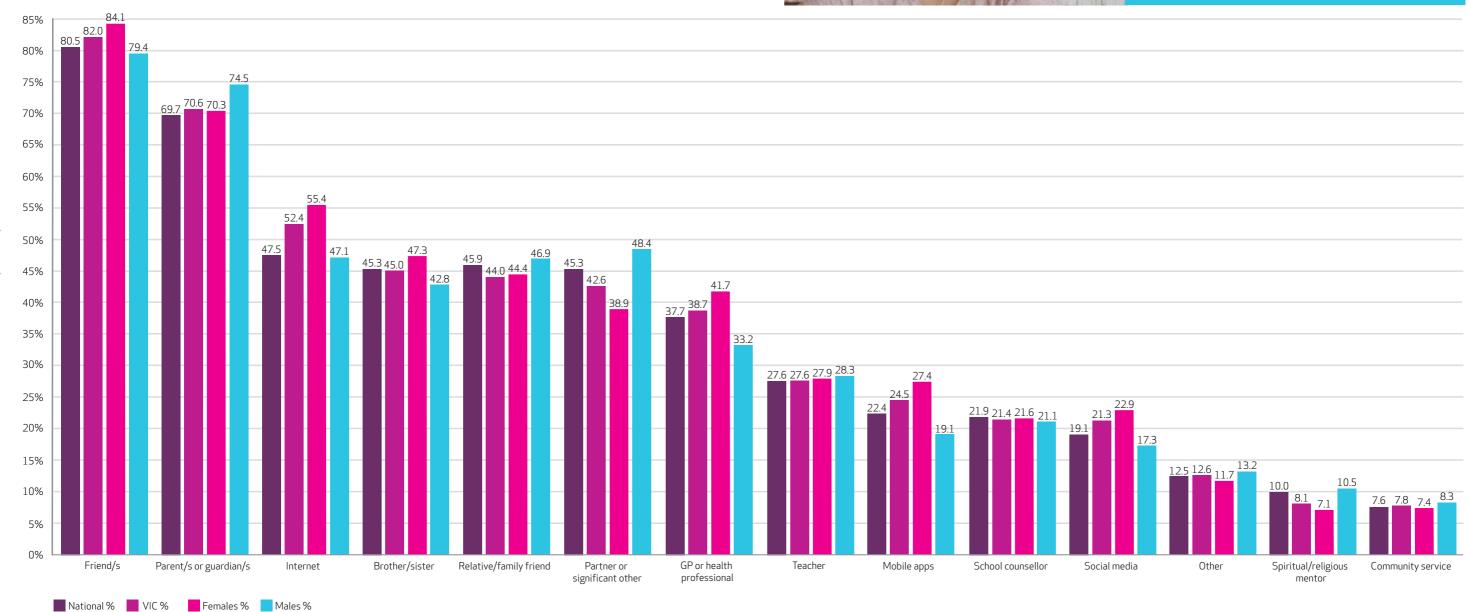
As shown in Figure 9.6, friend/s (82.0%), parent/s or guardian/s (70.6%) and the internet (52.4%) were the three most frequently named sources of help for VIC young people.

- Compared with VIC males, a higher proportion of VIC females said they would turn to a *GP or health professional* (41.7% compared with 33.2%), *mobile apps* (27.4% compared with 19.1%) or the *internet* (55.4% compared with 47.1%) for support with important issues in their lives.
- A higher proportion of VIC males stated they would go to their partner or significant other (48.4% compared with 38.9% of females).

Figure 9.6: Where young people go for help with important issues



Friends and parents and guardians were important sources of support for more than 70% of VIC young people.



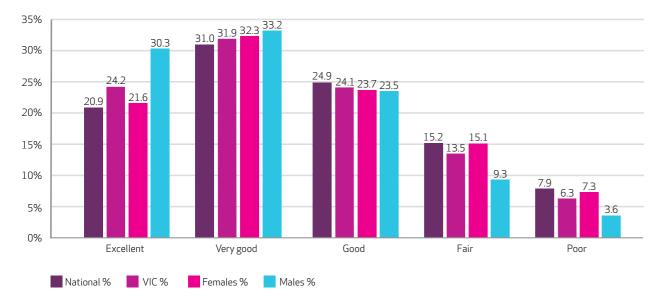
Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, where they go for help with important issues. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.

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How do young people rate their family's ability to get along?

Close to six in 10 (56.1%) VIC respondents rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good (see Figure 9.7). However, one in five (19.8%) VIC young people indicated their family's ability to get along was either fair or poor. A higher proportion of VIC males rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good (63.5% compared with 53.9% of females), while a much higher proportion of VIC females rated their family's ability to get along as fair or poor (22.4% compared with 12.9% of males).

Figure 9.7: Family's ability to get along with one another





Close to six in 10 young people felt their family's ability to get along was excellent or very good.

ENGAGEMENT IN ACTIVITIES

What activities are young people involved in?

Over the past year, the top three activities VIC young people were engaged in were sports (as a participant) (71.6%), sports (as a spectator) (64.2%) and arts/cultural/music activities (43.5%), as shown in Table 9.10.

- Notably higher proportions of VIC females reported taking part in *arts/cultural/music activities* (50.2% compared with 29.8% of males) and *student leadership activities* (39.8% compared with 25.4% of males) in the past year.
- Higher proportions of VIC males reported taking part in *sports* (as a spectator) (73.6% compared with 60.3% of females) and *sports* (as a participant) (76.2% compared with 70.6% of females) in the past year.

Table 9.10: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	National %	VIC %	Females %	Males %
Sports (as a participant)	71.0	71.6	70.6	76.2
Sports (as a spectator)	64.6	64.2	60.3	73.6
Arts/cultural/music activities	43.2	43.5	50.2	29.8
Volunteer work	41.1	35.5	38.1	31.7
Student leadership activities	33.9	34.2	39.8	25.4
Youth groups/activities	24.5	21.9	23.2	18.7
Religious groups/activities	23.4	20.4	22.3	18.5
Environmental groups/activities	19.1	18.2	19.9	14.3
Political groups/activities	9.3	9.8	10.3	7.6

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what activities they were involved in during the past year. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.



A majority of VIC young people have engaged in *sports* as a *participant* or a *spectator* in the past year.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

How stressed are young people?

More than four in 10 (44.8%) VIC young people felt stressed either all of the time or most of the time in the past four weeks (see Table 9.11).

- A higher proportion of VIC females felt stressed all of the time or most of the time (55.6% compared with 24.3% of males).
- Conversely, more than four times the proportion of VIC males felt stressed none of the time (6.6% compared with 1.4% of females).

Table 9.11: Young people's level of stress

	National %	VIC %	Females %	Males %
All of the time	11.6	11.3	14.7	4.5
Most of the time	32.9	33.5	40.9	19.8
Some of the time	32.0	32.6	30.9	36.2
A little of the time	19.0	19.2	12.2	32.9
None of the time	4.4	3.3	1.4	6.6

What do young people do to reduce stress?

The top three ways VIC young people reported reducing stress was to do something relaxing (66.3%), spend time online (66.0%) and play games or watch TV/movies (64.0%), as shown in Table 9.12.

- A higher proportion of VIC females reported they would sleep to reduce stress (65.3% compared with 49.6% of males).
- A higher proportion of VIC males reported they would *do a hobby* (57.5% compared with 42.3% of females) and *physical activity* (58.2% compared with 46.5% of females) to reduce stress.

Table 9.12: Ways young people reduce stress

	National %	VIC %	Females %	Males %
Do something relaxing	63.2	66.3	71.1	58.6
Spend time online	62.3	66.0	68.7	61.0
Play games or watch TV/movies	61.4	64.0	60.3	70.3
Sleep	59.5	59.2	65.3	49.6
Physical activity	49.0	49.6	46.5	58.2
Spend time with friends or family	46.9	48.9	52.2	46.3
Do a hobby	45.7	48.1	42.3	57.5
Nothing	16.5	16.8	16.0	16.4
Consume alcohol and/or other drugs	12.1	10.1	10.6	9.2
Reach out to a professional	6.8	6.9	8.5	3.6
Other	6.7	6.2	6.4	5.2
Take medication prescribed by a health professional	6.1	5.3	6.6	2.2

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what they do to reduce stress. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of VIC frequency.

How much control do young people feel they have over their life?

Close to six in 10 (56.1%) VIC young people felt they had control over their life, as shown in Table 9.13: 7.8% reported having *complete* control and 48.3% felt mostly in control. More than one in 10 (11.0%) VIC respondents reported they had almost no control (9.4%) or no control (1.6%) over their life.

- A much higher proportion of VIC males felt they had *complete control* or were *mostly in control* of their lives (67.8% compared with 51.7% of females).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of VIC females reported feeling *almost* or *no control* over their lives (11.2% compared with 7.1% of males).

Table 9.13: Young people's level of control over their life

	National %	VIC %	Females %	Males %
Complete control	7.8	7.8	5.5	12.5
Mostly in control	45.5	48.3	46.2	55.3
Some control	34.5	32.8	37.1	25.1
Almost no control	9.9	9.4	9.6	5.9
No control	2.4	1.6	1.6	1.2

How lonely are young people?

Close to one quarter (24.4%) of VIC young people felt lonely all or most of the time in the past four weeks (see Table 9.14).

- A notably higher proportion of VIC females felt lonely all or most of the time (27.0% compared with 17.3% of males).
- A notably higher proportion of VIC males felt lonely none of the time (26.0% compared with 12.9% of females).

Table 9.14: Young people's level of loneliness

	National %	VIC %	Females %	Males %
All of the time	5.9	5.2	5.3	4.2
Most of the time	19.0	19.2	21.7	13.1
Some of the time	29.7	30.6	33.4	25.4
A little of the time	27.1	27.7	26.6	31.2
None of the time	18.2	17.4	12.9	26.0



One quarter of VIC young people felt lonely all or most of the time.

How do young people rate their mental health and wellbeing?

More than three in 10 (31.1%) VIC young people rated their mental health and wellbeing as better than good (see Figure 9.8): 8.0% rated it as excellent and 23.1% rated it as very good. One in seven (14.4%) VIC respondents rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor

- A notably higher proportion of VIC males rated their mental health and wellbeing as excellent or very good (47.3% compared with 23.2% of females).
- A higher proportion of VIC females rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor (17.1% compared with 6.3% males).

Figure 9.8: Young people's mental health and wellbeing



How happy are young people?

Close to six in 10 (55.1%) VIC young people indicated overall happiness with their lives (see Table 9.15). A notably higher proportion of VIC males reported feeling *happy/very happy* with their lives as a whole (64.5% compared with 52.2% of females), whereas a much greater proportion of VIC females indicated they felt *very sad/sad* (14.2% compared with 7.3% of males).

Table 9.15: Young people's level of happiness

	National %	VIC %	Females %	Males %
Happy/very happy (70-100)	53.4	55.1	52.2	64.5
Not happy or sad (40-60)	32.6	32.2	33.6	28.2
Very sad/sad (0-30)	13.9	12.7	14.2	7.3

Note: Respondents were asked to rate how happy they are with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes happy/very happy; 40-60 signifies not happy or sad; and 0-30 indicates very sad/sad.



Compared with VIC females, a notably higher proportion of VIC males were happy/very happy with their lives.

How much time do young people spend on screens?

More than one third (35.8%) of VIC young people spent 9 hours or more on screens per day (see Table 9.16). A higher proportions of VIC females spent 9 hours or more on screens (36.2% compared with 33.1% of males).

Table 9.16: Young people's screen-time per day

	National %	VIC %	Females %	Males %
No screen time	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2
1-2 hours	5.5	4.5	3.5	6.1
3-4 hours	17.3	16.0	15.2	18.7
5-6 hours	22.7	23.4	23.4	24.2
7-8 hours	18.6	20.1	21.6	17.8
9 hours or more	35.7	35.8	36.2	33.1

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

Close to half (48.5%) of VIC young people spent 1-2 hours on screens connecting with others. More than four in 10 (42.4%) young people from VIC spent 1-2 hours on screens for entertainment. Close to one third (31.9%) of VIC respondents spent 5-6 hours on screens for learning (see Table 9.17).

Table 9.17: Young people's screen-time per day by purpose

Victorian respondents	Connecting with others %	For entertainment %	For learning %
No screen time	5.7	1.9	5.8
1-2 hours	48.5	42.4	21.4
3-4 hours	22.5	30.8	20.2
5-6 hours	10.4	14.7	31.9
7-8 hours	4.8	4.8	14.6
9 hours or more	8.1	5.5	6.0

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day connecting with others, for entertainment and for learning. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

How much time do young people spend sleeping?

More than half (55.1%) of VIC young people reported sleeping on average between 7-8 hours per night (see Table 9.18).

Table 9.18: Young people's sleep per night

	National %	VIC %	Females %	Males %
6 hours or less	21.6	20.5	21.7	16.2
7-8 hours	52.8	55.1	55.0	57.0
9-10 hours	16.8	16.5	16.7	17.3
11 hours or more	8.8	8.0	6.6	9.5

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend sleeping per night. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

How much time do young people spend exercising?

Close to three in 10 (27.7%) VIC young people reported exercising on average 1-2 hours per week (see Table 9.19). A notably higher proportion of VIC males reported engaging in 9 hours or more of exercise per week (31.5% compared with 14.6% of females).

Table 9.19: Young people's exercise per week

	National %	VIC %	Females %	Males %
No exercise	7.2	6.1	6.8	4.0
1-2 hours	25.0	27.7	29.9	22.8
3-4 hours	20.1	21.0	23.9	16.7
5-6 hours	15.1	14.3	14.9	13.8
7-8 hours	9.8	10.1	9.9	11.2
9 hours or more	22.8	20.8	14.6	31.5

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend exercising per week. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.



"Coming to understand the reality and seriousness of climate change and our environment in the future has most concerned me. I think that whatever is necessary must be done to address it."

(Male 17 VIC non-Indigenous

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA AND THE FUTURE

What issues do young people think are the most important in Australia today?

In 2021, VIC young people reported that the top issues in Australia were *COVID-19* (48.3%), the environment (43.0%), equity and discrimination (37.2%) and mental health (37.2%), as shown in Table 9.20.

- Higher proportions of VIC females identified *equity and discrimination* as an important issue facing Australia today (40.8% compared with 31.0% of males).
- A larger proportion of VIC males identified *COVID-19* as an important issue in Australia today (55.4% compared with 44.9% of females).
- Young people from VIC have ranked *equity* and *discrimination* and *mental health* in the top three issues of national concern for the past three years, while *COVID-19* has continued to grow in importance since 2020.

Table 9.20: Most important issues in Australia today

	National 2021 %	VIC 2021 %	Females %	Males %	VIC 2020 %	VIC 2019 %
COVID-19	45.7	48.3	44.9	55.4	41.9	-
The environment	38.0	43.0	45.1	38.2	30.4	37.3
Equity and discrimination	35.4	37.2	40.8	31.0	39.7	25.4
Mental health	34.6	37.2	40.4	31.9	33.6	37.6
Crime, safety and violence	10.9	10.3	12.0	7.5	9.0	14.9
The economy and financial matters	10.9	9.6	8.6	11.9	14.6	12.2
Alcohol and drugs	10.6	9.4	9.2	9.9	9.1	21.0
LGBTIQA+ issues	7.0	7.8	8.1	4.8	4.3	7.3
Politics	6.5	6.5	4.4	9.6	6.4	9.9
Health	5.1	6.0	5.8	6.6	7.1	8.6

Note: Respondents were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The responses provided were categorised into the items listed above. Items are listed in order of 2021 VIC frequency.

How do young people feel about the future?

More than half (53.3%) of VIC young people felt either very positive or positive about the future (see Table 9.21). However, close to one in six (15.3%) VIC respondents indicated they felt negative or very negative about the future.

- A higher proportion of VIC males reported feeling very positive or positive about the future (59.5% compared with 52.0% of females).
- Similar to the trend of all respondents nationally, the proportion of VIC respondents reporting feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future has slightly reduced over time from 59.2% in 2019, to 57.6% in 2020 and 53.3% in 2021.

Table 9.21: Feelings about the future

	National 2021 %	VIC 2021 %	Females %	Males %	VIC 2020 %	VIC 2019 %
Very positive or positive	51.6	53.3	52.0	59.5	57.6	59.2
Neither positive nor negative	32.5	31.4	31.9	29.6	29.1	28.2
Negative or very negative	16.0	15.3	16.1	10.9	13.4	12.8

Note: Responses for very positive and positive have been aggregated, as have the responses for negative and very negative.

Western Australia

- Profile of respondents
- Education and employment
- Values and concerns
- COVID-19
- Unfair treatment

- Sources of support and family's ability to get along
- ► Engagement in activities
- Mental health and wellbeing
- Most important issues in Australia and the future



Western Australia

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 2,288 young people from Western Australia (WA) aged between 15 and 19 years responded to Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2021*.

Gender

More than half (55.2%) of respondents in WA respondents were male, 40.5% were female, 3.4% were gender diverse and 0.9% preferred not to say.

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 129 (5.7%) young people from WA identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Similar proportions of WA females and males identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (4.9% and 5.8% respectively).

Cultural background

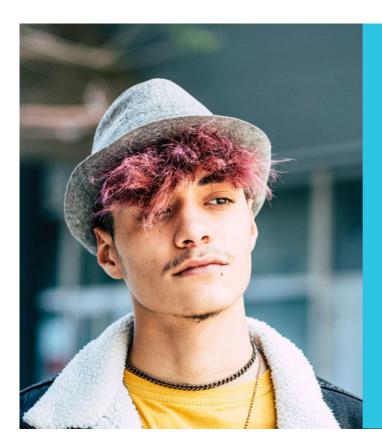
A total of 567 (25.2%) WA respondents stated they were born overseas and 468 (21.0%) WA young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the 63 languages other than English spoken at home, the most common were (in order of frequency): Filipino/Tagalog, Afrikaans, French, Arabic and Malayalam.

A total of 445 (19.9%) WA young people reported a particular cultural or ethnic group with which they identified strongly. Of the 86 cultural or ethnic groups identified, the most common were (in order of frequency): Australian Aboriginal, Indian, Italian, Māori and Filipino.

A total of 1,174 (52.7%) WA respondents stated one or both of their parents were born overseas.

Disability

A total of 226 (10.0%) WA respondents identified as living with disability. A larger proportion of males from WA reported living with disability (10.5% compared with 7.3% of females). The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning disability, autism and physical disability.



2,288 young people from WA took the time to share their values, aspirations and issues of concern in Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2021*.



Are young people studying?

As indicated in Table 10.1, 81.9% of young people from WA were studying full-time. A larger proportion of WA females reported studying full-time (86.7% compared with 78.9% of males). Conversely, a larger proportion of WA males reported not studying (11.0% compared with 7.6% of females).

Table 10.1: Participation in education

	National %	WA %	Females %	Males %
Studying full-time	84.5	81.9	86.7	78.9
Studying part-time	8.1	8.3	5.7	10.1
Not studying	7.4	9.8	7.6	11.0

How satisfied are young people with their studies?

As in previous years, the majority (58.3%) of WA respondents who were currently studying reported they were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their studies. More than one in nine (11.6%) WA young people indicated they were *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied*, as shown in Table 10.2.

Table 10.2: Satisfaction with studies

	National %	WA %	Females %	Males %
Very satisfied or satisfied	62.5	58.3	54.9	63.0
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	28.5	30.1	31.5	28.3
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	9.0	11.6	13.6	8.7

Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying. Responses for very satisfied and satisfied have been aggregated, as have the responses for dissatisfied and very dissatisfied.

Of those still at school, most (96.7%) WA young people stated they intended to complete Year 12. Similar proportions of WA females and males stated they were not planning on completing Year 12 (2.9% and 3.4% respectively).

What are young people's plans after school?

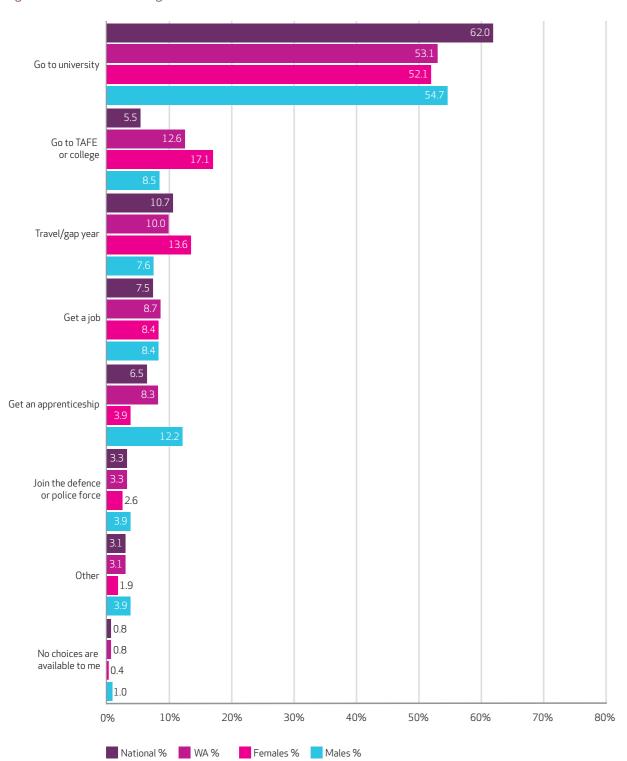
Over half (53.1%) planned to *go to university* after school, as shown in Figure 10.1. Close to one in eight (12.6%) WA respondents reported plans to *go to TAFE or college* after school, and one in 10 (10.0%) indicated *travel/gap year* plans.

While similar proportions of females and males (52.1% and 54.7% respectively) planned to *go to university* after finishing school, a higher proportion of WA females indicated they planned to *go to TAFE or college* (17.1% compared with 8.5% of males) or *travel/gap year* (13.6% compared with 7.6% of males). Three times the proportion of WA males reported plans to *get an apprenticeship* (12.2% compared with 3.9% of females).



Three times the proportion of WA males reported plans to get an apprenticeship after school.

Figure 10.1: Plans after leaving school



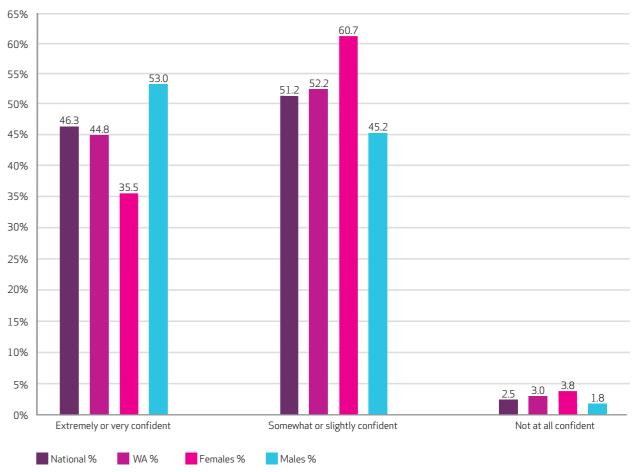
Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Respondents were only able to choose one option from the above list of predetermined items. Items are listed in order of WA frequency.

How confident are young people in achieving their study or work goals?

More than four in 10 (44.8%) WA young people indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study or work goals (see Figure 10.2).

• A notably higher proportion of WA males reported they were extremely or very confident in their ability to achieve their study or work goals after school (53.0% compared with 35.5% of females).

Figure 10.2: Confidence in achieving study or work goals



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying at school. Responses for extremely confident and very confident have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat confident and slightly confident.



"I will be in my last year of school next year which is really scary and I'm worried about not getting to be able to get my dream job and not knowing what to do if i don't get it and what to do after school."

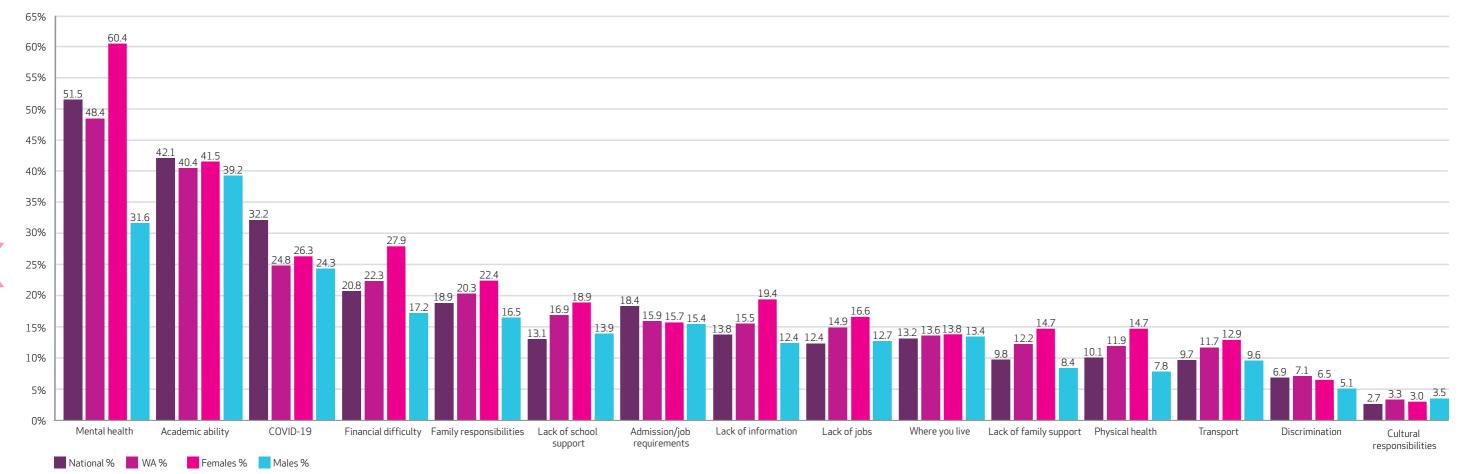
(Male, 16, WA, non-Indigenous)

What are the barriers to achieving study or work goals?

More than four in 10 (44.5%) WA young people felt there were barriers that impacted on their achievement of their study or work goals. As shown in Figure 10.3, *mental health* (48.4%), *academic ability* (40.4%) and *COVID-19* (24.8%) were the top three barriers impacting on young people's achievement of study or work goals.

- Around one in five WA respondents felt financial difficulty (22.3%) and family responsibilities (20.3%) were barriers to achieving study or work goals.
- A notably higher proportion of WA females felt *mental health* was a barrier impacting on the achievement of study or work goals (60.4% compared with 31.6% of males).

Figure 10.3: Barriers to achieving study or work goals



Note: This question was asked to respondents who reported they were currently studying and felt there were barriers that impacted the achievement of study or work goals. Respondents were able to choose more than one option from the predetermined list of items. Items are listed in order of WA frequency.



"My mental health is my biggest barrier. I don't know what to do or where to go, and I know that there are places but my issues don't feel extreme enough."

(Female, 15, WA, non-Indigenous)

"[My biggest personal issue is] financial stress. I think tertiary education should not be so expensive as it is very worrying and scary to think you could never pay something off due to the amount of money spent."

(Male, 16, WA, non-Indigenous)





More than half of WA young people were not in paid employment, and more than one third were looking for work.

Are young people employed?

More than four in 10 (42.5%) WA young people reported they were employed part-time (see Table 10.3). Close to six in 10 (56.8%) indicated they were not in paid employment: 34.5% stated they were looking for work, while 22.3% were neither working nor looking for work. A very small proportion of WA young people who reported being in paid employment were employed full-time (0.7%). A higher proportion of males from WA were not employed and not looking for work (27.4% compared with 15.3% of females).

Table 10.3: Participation in paid employment

	National %	WA %	Females %	Males %
Employed full-time	0.6	0.7	0.3	0.8
Employed part-time	45.4	42.5	51.0	37.3
Not in paid employment, looking for work	31.8	34.5	33.4	34.6
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	22.2	22.3	15.3	27.4

Note: Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify, on average, how many hours they worked per week. Part-time employment is considered to be less than 35 hours per week, while full-time employment is considered to be 35 hours or more.

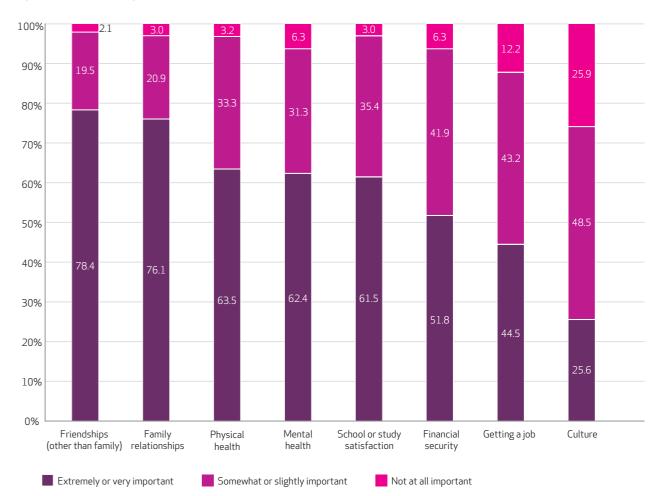
VALUES AND CONCERNS

What do young people value?

The three most highly valued items for WA young people were friendships (other than family), family relationships and physical health (see Figure 10.4). The next most valued items were mental health and school or study satisfaction.

- Close to eight in 10 (78.4%) WA respondents saw friendships (other than family) as extremely or very important.
- Three quarters (76.1%) of WA respondents saw family relationships as extremely or very important.
- Close to two thirds (63.5%) of WA young people saw physical health as extremely or very important.

Figure 10.4: What young people value



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely and very important for each item.

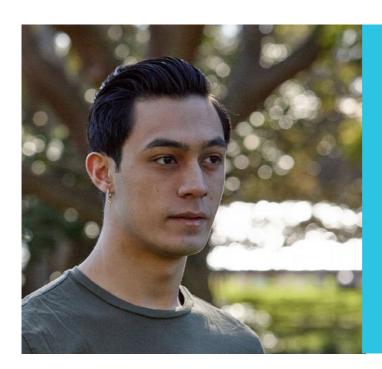
Friendships (other than family) and family relationships were rated as the most important items by both WA females and males, as shown in Table 10.4.

- Higher proportions of WA males rated physical health as extremely or very important (68.7% compared with 57.9% of females).
- Higher proportions of WA females placed a high value upon financial security (55.9% compared with 48.8% of males).

Table 10.4: What young people value by gender

Females	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Friendships (other than family)	78.2	19.8	2.0
Family relationships	74.7	23.2	2.0
Physical health	57.9	38.6	3.5
Mental health	66.4	29.3	4.4
School or study satisfaction	65.8	32.3	1.9
Financial security	55.9	39.8	4.3
Getting a job	49.2	41.9	8.9
Culture	25.9	48.3	25.8
Males	Extremely or very important %	Somewhat or slightly important %	Not at all important %
Males Friendships (other than family)			
	important %	important %	important %
Friendships (other than family)	important %	important %	important %
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships	80.0 78.6	18.4 18.6	1.6 2.8
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Physical health	important % 80.0 78.6 68.7	18.4 18.6 29.3	1.6 2.8 2.0
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Physical health Mental health	important % 80.0 78.6 68.7 59.7	18.4 18.6 29.3 33.4	1.6 2.8 2.0 6.9
Friendships (other than family) Family relationships Physical health Mental health School or study satisfaction	important % 80.0 78.6 68.7 59.7 59.1	18.4 18.6 29.3 33.4 37.8	important % 1.6 2.8 2.0 6.9 3.1

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how important each of the above items had been in their lives in the past year. Responses for extremely important and very important have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat important and slightly important. Items are listed in order of WA frequency.



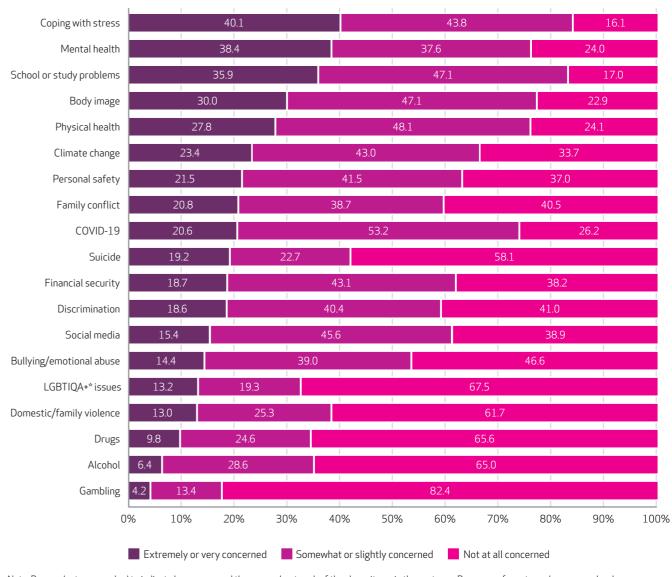
More than three quarters of WA young people highly valued their friendships and family relationships.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

The top three issues of personal concern for WA young people were coping with stress (40.1%), mental health (38.4%) and school or study problems (35.9%), as shown in Figure 10.5.

- Three in 10 (30.0%) WA young people were extremely or very concerned about body image.
- Close to three in 10 (27.8%) WA respondents were extremely or very concerned about physical health.

Figure 10.5: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are ranked according to the summed responses for extremely concerned and very concerned for each item.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

WA females reported higher levels of personal concern about almost all issues, as shown in Table 10.5.

• Compared with WA males, notably higher proportions of WA females were extremely or very concerned about body image (48.9% compared with 14.9%), coping with stress (58.8% compared with 25.1%), mental health (55.4% compared with 24.2%) and school or study problems (51.1% compared with 24.4%).

Table 10.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender

Females	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	58.8	35.4	5.8
Mental health	55.4	33.7	10.9
School or study problems	51.1	39.4	9.5
Body image	48.9	43.5	7.6
Physical health	35.5	48.4	16.1
Climate change	30.0	47.7	22.3
Personal safety	29.6	44.3	26.0
Family conflict	30.4	42.8	26.8
COVID-19	28.0	58.8	13.2
Suicide	26.5	27.5	46.0
Financial security	24.9	47.8	27.3
Discrimination	24.5	46.5	28.9
Social media	21.9	49.9	28.2
Bullying/emotional abuse	21.7	44.7	33.6
LGBTIQA+* issues	17.5	25.0	57.5
Domestic/family violence	16.4	30.8	52.7
Drugs	10.7	28.0	61.2
Alcohol	6.5	32.3	61.2
Gambling	3.6	13.6	82.8

Males	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	25.1	51.2	23.7
Mental health	24.2	41.7	34.1
School or study problems	24.4	52.9	22.7
Body image	14.9	50.9	34.2
Physical health	22.1	47.3	30.5
Climate change	16.5	40.0	43.4
Personal safety	14.4	39.9	45.8
Family conflict	12.9	34.9	52.2
COVID-19	13.7	50.6	35.7
Suicide	11.9	19.1	69.0
Financial security	13.4	39.8	46.8
Discrimination	12.0	36.1	52.0
Social media	10.6	41.6	47.8
Bullying/emotional abuse	8.1	34.7	57.2
LGBTIQA+* issues	6.3	15.1	78.6
Domestic/family violence	9.6	20.9	69.6
Drugs	8.3	22.4	69.3
Alcohol	5.7	25.8	68.5
Gambling	4.0	13.2	82.9

Note: Respondents were asked to indicate how concerned they were about each of the above items in the past year. Responses for extremely concerned and very concerned have been aggregated, as have the responses for somewhat concerned and slightly concerned. Items are listed in order of WA frequency.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.



"My biggest challenge has been getting through the stress of my last year in high school, I need to learn how to cope with stress and time management."

(Female, 17, WA, non-Indigenous)

"School has been the biggest challenge and facing the stress of tests and exams and the expectations to do well, it's hard to stay level headed and leads to me getting extremely stressed."

Table 10.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

(Male, 17, WA. non-Indigenous)



COVID-19

How has COVID-19 impacted on young people?

The top three areas WA young people identified as being negatively impacted by COVID-19 were participation in activities (63.0%), education (57.4%) and physical health (39.5%) (see Table 10.6). Compared with WA males, females experienced greater negative impacts of COVID-19 across almost all areas.

- A higher proportion of WA males identified their *participation in activities* was negatively impacted by COVID-19 (66.4% compared with 59.7% of females).
- A notably higher proportion of WA females identified their *mental health* was negatively impacted by COVID-19 (51.1% compared with 27.5% of males).

Table 10.6: Impact of COVID-19 on young people

	National %	WA %	Females %	Males %
Participation in activities	68.3	63.0	59.7	66.4
Education	62.3	57.4	59.5	55.8
Physical health	46.1	39.5	40.2	38.6
Family	37.9	38.3	41.7	35.0
Mental health	50.3	38.3	51.1	27.5
Employment	30.1	27.7	31.2	23.5
Friendships	33.8	26.4	28.0	24.8
Financial security	24.3	25.5	29.9	21.1
Housing	6.9	9.2	9.8	7.6

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, the ways COVID-19 has negatively impacted them. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of WA frequency.

"[COVID-19 has] affected me mentally, as it has been hard not being able to see family for almost 3 years now."

(Female. 16, WA, Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander)



UNFAIR TREATMENT

Have young people been treated unfairly?

More than one third (36.6%) of WA young people reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year. A higher proportion of WA females reported they had been treated unfairly in the past year (46.0% compared with 27.8% of males).

Why have young people been treated unfairly?

Young people who reported being treated unfairly in the past year were asked to identify whether they had been treated unfairly due to their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason.

Of the 36.6% of WA young people who had been treated unfairly in the past year (see Table 10.7):

- Notably higher proportions of WA females had been treated unfairly due to their gender (42.7% compared with 18.9% of males).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of WA males reported they had been treated unfairly due to their *race/cultural background* (37.9% compared with 27.3% of females).

Table 10.7: Reasons for being treated unfairly

	National %	WA %	Females %	Males %
Gender	37.3	34.8	42.7	18.9
Race/cultural background	27.6	31.8	27.3	37.9
Mental health	27.6	24.9	28.8	18.9
Sexuality	21.7	22.2	20.0	15.1
Other	21.5	21.6	19.8	25.4
Age	18.3	18.0	19.5	14.8
Religion	11.4	11.4	11.0	11.8
Financial background	7.0	8.1	7.3	9.8
Disability	7.0	6.9	3.7	7.7

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of WA frequency.

Young people who responded that they had been treated unfairly due to their race/cultural background were offered an additional question about the nature and experience of the unfair treatment (see Table 10.8). Of these WA young people, close to nine in 10 (87.4%) had been insulted or had hurtful comments said to them. Close to two thirds (65.0%) had been harassed or intimidated and more than half (52.4%) had felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media.

- Larger proportions of WA females had *felt unwelcome* in school, employment or services (51.9% compared with 35.3% of males) and been harassed or intimidated (70.2% compared with 58.2% of males).
- Close to double the proportion of males from WA had experienced physical violence (20.8% compared with 10.7% of females).

Table 10.8: Experiences of unfair treatment due to race/cultural background

	National %	WA %	Females %	Males %
Been insulted or had hurtful comments said to you	89.0	87.4	89.8	85.4
Been harassed or intimidated	62.5	65.0	70.2	58.2
Felt targeted or unfairly represented by the media	54.2	52.4	54.7	46.3
Felt unwelcome in school, employment or services	46.6	45.1	51.9	35.3
Received insulting or hurtful comments online	43.1	42.6	40.2	41.2
Felt unwelcome or excluded from sporting clubs or groups	24.2	28.4	27.2	23.5
Been excluded from social events or activities	27.2	27.7	28.2	19.5
Experienced physical violence	14.5	18.0	10.7	20.8

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of WA frequency.

Have young people witnessed unfair treatment?

Close to six in 10 (59.3%) WA young people reported they had witnessed someone being treated unfairly in the past year because of their age, disability, financial background, gender, mental health, race/cultural background, religion, sexuality or any other reason. A larger proportion of WA females reported witnessing someone being treated unfairly in the past year (66.7% compared with 52.9% of males).

What was the reason for the unfair treatment witnessed?

Of the respondents who had witnessed unfair treatment in the past year, 58.5% reported this was due to a person's race/cultural background (see Table 10.9). More than four in 10 WA young people indicated they had witnessed unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality (44.4%) and gender (41.2%).

• A notably higher proportion of WA females reported witnessing unfair treatment due to a person's sexuality (52.8% compared with 35.4% of males) and mental health (28.4% compared with 19.3% of males).

Table 10.9: Reasons for unfair treatment witnessed

	National %	WA %	Females %	Males %
Race/cultural background	57.6	58.5	59.3	58.5
Sexuality	48.0	44.4	52.8	35.4
Gender	43.7	41.2	43.2	37.8
Disability	32.4	32.3	33.3	29.5
Religion	25.3	27.3	27.9	26.7
Mental health	26.1	23.9	28.4	19.3
Age	16.7	18.6	19.0	19.0
Financial background	15.0	15.5	13.8	17.2
Other	9.6	10.5	8.7	12.5

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of WA frequency.



SOURCES OF SUPPORT AND FAMILY'S ABILITY TO GET ALONG

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

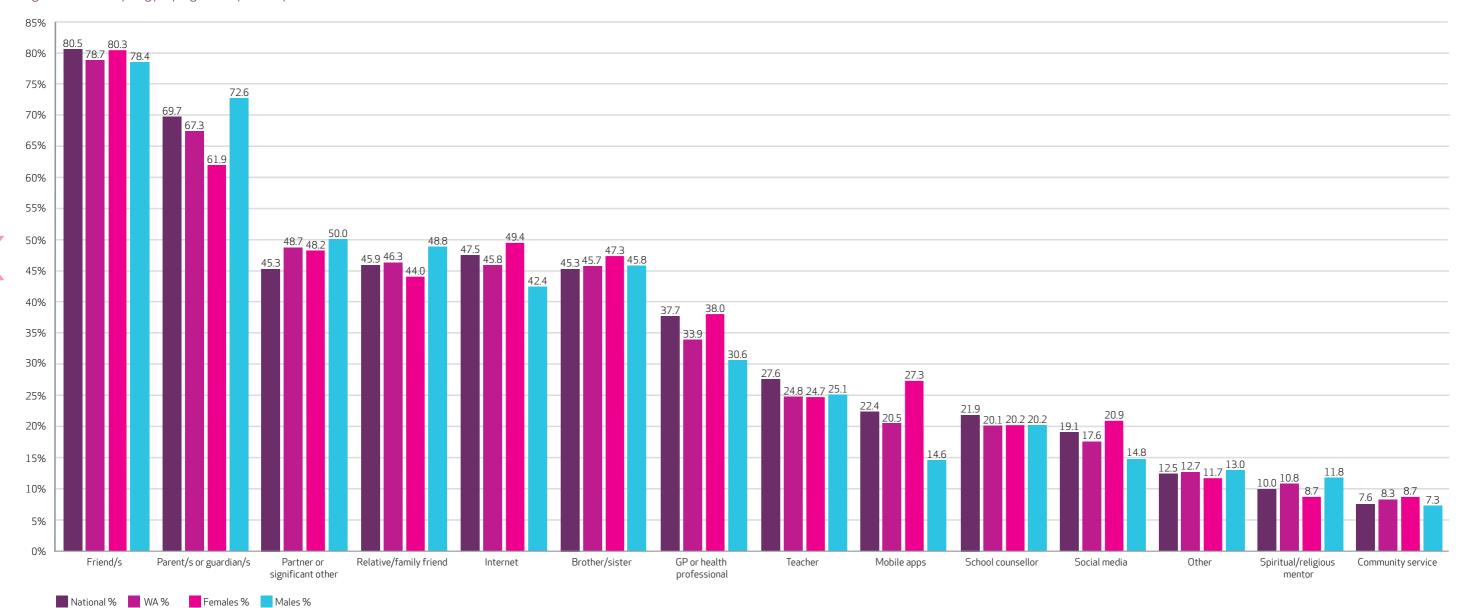
As shown in Figure 10.6, friend/s (78.7%), parent/s or guardian/s (67.3%) and partner or significant other (48.7%) were the three most frequently named sources of help for WA young people.

- Compared with WA males, a higher proportion of WA females said they would turn to *mobile apps* (27.3% compared with 14.6%), *GP or health professional* (38.0% compared with 30.6%) or the *internet* (49.4% compared with 42.4%) for support with important issues in their lives
- A higher proportion of WA males stated they would go to their parent/s or guardian/s (72.6% compared with 61.9% of females).

Figure 10.6: Where young people go for help with important issues



Close personal relationships were important sources of support for WA young people, with friends, parents or guardians and partner or significant other identified as the most common support options.

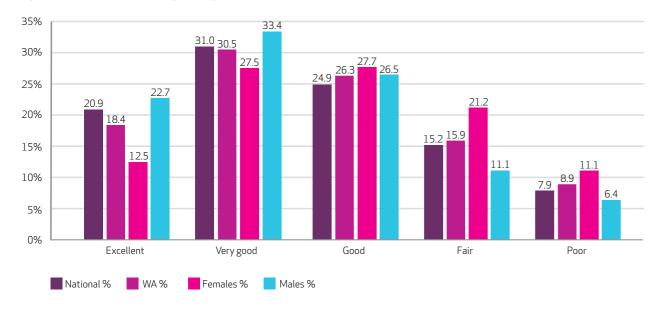


Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, where they go for help with important issues. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of WA frequency.

How do young people rate their family's ability to get along?

Close to half (48.9%) of WA respondents rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good (see Figure 10.7). However, close to one quarter (24.8%) of WA young people indicated their family's ability to get along was either fair or poor. A higher proportion of WA males rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good (56.1% compared with 40.0% of females), while a much higher proportion of WA females rated their family's ability to get along as fair or poor (32.3% compared with 17.5% of males).

Figure 10.7: Family's ability to get along with one another





Compared with WA females, notably higher proportions of WA males rated their family's ability to get along as excellent or very good.

ENGAGEMENT IN ACTIVITIES

What activities are young people involved in?

Over the past year, the top three activities WA young people were engaged in were sports (as a participant) (72.1%), sports (as a spectator) (68.1%) and arts/cultural/music activities (44.6%), as shown in Table 10.10.

- More than four in 10 (44.1%) WA respondents reported they had participated in volunteer work in the past year.
- A higher proportion of WA females reported taking part in arts/cultural/music activities (50.0% compared with 39.9% of males).
- Higher proportions of WA males reported taking part in *sports* (as a participant) (80.5% compared with 62.7% of females) and *sports* (as a spectator) (75.2% compared with 61.9% of females) in the past year.

Table 10.10: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

	National %	WA %	Females %	Males %	
Sports (as a participant)	71.0	72.1	62.7	80.5	
Sports (as a spectator)	64.6	68.1	61.9	75.2	
Arts/cultural/music activities	43.2	44.6	50.0	39.9	
Volunteer work	41.1	44.1	40.6	47.8	
Student leadership activities	33.9	35.6	30.8	39.6	
Youth groups/activities	24.5	26.8	26.7	26.2	
Environmental groups/activities	19.1	22.3	22.3	21.1	
Religious groups/activities	23.4	21.2	22.6	20.1	
Political groups/activities	9.3	9.5	8.4	9.4	

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what activities they were involved in during the past year. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of WA frequency.



In the past year, more than two thirds of WA young people were engaged in *sports* as either a *participant* or a *spectator*.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

How stressed are young people?

Four in 10 (41.8%) WA young people felt stressed either all of the time or most of the time in the past four weeks (see Table 10.11).

- A higher proportion of WA females felt stressed all of the time or most of the time (57.0% compared with 28.9% of males).
- Conversely, more than three times the proportion of WA males felt stressed *none of the time* (6.8% compared with 1.8% of females).

Table 10.11: Young people's level of stress

	National %	WA %	Females %	Males %
All of the time	11.6	10.4	15.6	5.7
Most of the time	32.9	31.4	41.4	23.2
Some of the time	32.0	32.7	29.5	36.3
A little of the time	19.0	20.7	11.7	28.0
None of the time	4.4	4.9	1.8	6.8

What do young people do to reduce stress?

The top three ways WA young people reported reducing stress was to play games or watch TV/movies (60.3%), sleep (58.5%) and spend time online (58.2%) (see Table 10.12).

- A higher proportion of WA females reported they would sleep to reduce stress (68.0% compared with 51.8% of males).
- Compared with WA females, a higher proportion of WA males reported they would engage in *physical activity* (57.2% compared with 36.6%), *do a hobby* (52.4% compared with 35.5%), or *play games or watch TV/movies* (66.5% compared with 52.6%) to reduce stress.

Table 10.12: Ways young people reduce stress

	National %	WA %	Females %	Males %
Play games or watch TV/movies	61.4	60.3	52.6	66.5
Sleep	59.5	58.5	68.0	51.8
Spend time online	62.3	58.2	61.4	56.4
Do something relaxing	63.2	58.1	59.9	57.6
Physical activity	49.0	47.3	36.6	57.2
Spend time with friends or family	46.9	44.8	44.1	47.2
Do a hobby	45.7	44.3	35.5	52.4
Nothing	16.5	18.2	21.0	15.6
Consume alcohol and/or other drugs	12.1	14.5	14.5	13.8
Other	6.7	7.3	7.5	6.4
Reach out to a professional	6.8	5.6	7.7	4.1
Take medication prescribed by a health professional	6.1	5.6	6.7	4.3

Note: Respondents were asked to identify from the above list of predetermined items, what they do to reduce stress. Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of WA frequency.

How much control do young people feel they have over their life?

Half (52.8%) of WA young people felt they had control over their life, as shown in Table 10.13: 8.2% reported having *complete control* and 44.6% felt *mostly in control*. More than one in eight (13.6%) WA respondents reported they had *almost no control* (11.1%) or *no control* (2.5%) over their life.

- A much higher proportion of WA males felt they had *complete control* or were *mostly in control* of their lives (62.1% compared with 42.4% of females).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of WA females reported feeling *almost no control* or *no control* over their lives (17.2% compared with 9.3% of males).

Table 10.13: Young people's level of control over their life

	National %	WA %	Females %	Males %
Complete control	7.8	8.2	3.6	11.4
Mostly in control	45.5	44.6	38.8	50.7
Some control	34.5	33.5	40.5	28.5
Almost no control	9.9	11.1	14.7	7.7
No control	2.4	2.5	2.5	1.6

How lonely are young people?

One quarter (25.5%) of WA young people felt lonely all or most of the time in the past four weeks (see Table 10.14).

- A notably higher proportion of WA females felt lonely all or most of the time (32.6% compared with 18.6% of males).
- A notably higher proportion of WA males felt lonely none of the time (26.5% compared with 10.7% of females).

Table 10.14: Young people's level of loneliness

	National %	WA %	Females %	Males %
All of the time	5.9	6.5	7.3	5.2
Most of the time	19.0	19.0	25.3	13.4
Some of the time	29.7	27.7	31.3	25.0
A little of the time	27.1	27.4	25.4	29.9
None of the time	18.2	19.4	10.7	26.5



One quarter of WA young people felt lonely *all* or *most of the time* in the past four weeks.

How do young people rate their mental health and wellbeing?

Three in 10 (30.9%) WA young people rated their mental health and wellbeing as better than good (see Figure 10.8): 10.1% rated it as excellent and 20.8% rated it as very good. One in six (15.6%) respondents rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor.

- A notably higher proportion of WA males rated their mental health and wellbeing as excellent or very good (43.0% compared with 16.1% of females).
- Much higher proportions of WA females rated their mental health and wellbeing as poor (23.2% compared with 7.7% males).

Figure 10.8: Young people's mental health and wellbeing



How happy are young people?

More than half (51.4%) of WA young people indicated overall happiness with their lives. A notably higher proportion of WA males reported feeling happy/very happy with their lives as a whole (62.8% compared with 38.2% of females), whereas a greater proportion of WA females indicated they felt very sad/sad (19.5% compared with 8.5% of males).

Table 10.15: Young people's level of happiness

	National %	WA %	Females %	Males %
Happy/very happy (70-100)	53.4	51.4	38.2	62.8
Not happy or sad (40-60)	32.6	34.3	42.3	28.7
Very sad/sad (0-30)	13.9	14.3	19.5	8.5

Note: Respondents were asked to rate how happy they are with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes happy/very happy; 40-60 signifies not happy or sad; and 0-30 indicates very sad/sad.



While more than half of WA young people were happy/very happy, a larger proportion of WA males indicated overall happiness with their lives.

How much time do young people spend on screens?

Close to one third (32.4%) of WA young people spent 9 hours or more on screens per day (see Table 10.16).

Table 10.16: Young people's screen-time per day

	National %	WA %	Females %	Males %
No screen time	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2
1-2 hours	5.5	7.0	6.3	7.2
3-4 hours	17.3	20.0	19.5	21.1
5-6 hours	22.7	24.2	26.3	22.7
7-8 hours	18.6	16.2	17.3	15.5
9 hours or more	35.7	32.4	30.4	33.2

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

More than four in 10 (44.2%) WA young people spent 1-2 hours on screens connecting with others. Close to four in 10 (39.7%) young people from WA spent 1-2 hours on screens for entertainment and more than one quarter (27.0%) of WA respondents spent 1-2 hours on screens for learning (see Table 10.17).

Table 10.17: Young people's screen-time per day by purpose

Western Australia respondents	Connecting with others	For entertainment %	For learning %
No screen time	7.2	1.8	11.7
1-2 hours	44.2	39.7	27.0
3-4 hours	20.6	27.5	19.2
5-6 hours	11.4	15.3	25.8
7-8 hours	6.3	6.1	12.2
9 hours or more	10.2	9.6	4.2

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend in front of screens per day connecting with others, for entertainment and for learning. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

How much time do young people spend sleeping?

Half (50.1%) of WA young people reported sleeping on average between 7-8 hours per night (see Table 10.18).

Table 10.18: Young people's sleep per night

	National %	WA %	Females %	Males %
6 hours or less	21.6	23.0	26.0	20.2
7-8 hours	52.8	50.1	50.7	50.7
9-10 hours	16.8	17.7	15.5	19.4
11 hours or more	8.8	9.2	7.8	9.7

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend sleeping per night. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.

How much time do young people spend exercising?

More than one quarter (26.5%) of WA young people reported exercising on average 9 hours or more per week (see Table 10.19). A notably higher proportion of WA males reported engaging in 9 hours or more of exercise per week (34.0% compared with 17.1% of females).

Table 10.19: Young people's exercise per week

	National %	WA %	Females %	Males %
No exercise	7.2	7.7	10.9	4.6
1-2 hours	25.0	22.2	26.7	18.3
3-4 hours	20.1	18.0	22.6	14.7
5-6 hours	15.1	15.0	14.9	15.7
7-8 hours	9.8	10.5	7.8	12.6
9 hours or more	22.8	26.5	17.1	34.0

Note: Respondents were asked to report, on average, how many hours they spend exercising per week. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into the above groupings.



"[My biggest personal issue is] racism and homophobia at school, and just in general. Especially being someone of Asian descent during COVID, it's scary because people discriminate even more against Asians now."

(Female, 16, WA, non-Indigenous)

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA AND THE FUTURE

What issues do young people think are the most important in Australia today?

In 2021, WA young people reported that the top three issues in Australia were *COVID-19* (43.3%), equity and discrimination (36.1%) and the environment (34.6%), as shown in Table 10.20.

- Three in 10 (31.5%) WA young people reported mental health as an important national issue.
- Higher proportions of WA females identified *equity and discrimination* (41.0% compared with 32.5% of males) and *the environment* (39.0% compared with 30.9% of males) as important issues facing Australia today.
- Young people from WA have ranked *equity and discrimination* in the top three issues of national concern for the past three years, while *COVID-19* has continued to grow in importance for since 2020.

Table 10.20: Most important issues in Australia today

	National 2021 %	WA 2021 %	Females %	Males %	WA 2020 %	WA 2019 %
COVID-19	45.7	43.3	47.4	42.3	38.7	-
Equity and discrimination	35.4	36.1	41.0	32.5	44.5	27.1
The environment	38.0	34.6	39.0	30.9	23.4	31.4
Mental health	34.6	31.5	36.3	28.8	27.3	34.5
Alcohol and drugs	10.6	15.4	14.0	16.5	13.4	25.2
The economy and financial matters	10.9	9.3	7.4	10.8	14.8	15.4
Education	6.7	8.8	7.7	9.7	7.5	10.1
Employment	6.5	8.6	8.4	9.1	6.8	9.8
Homelessness/housing	7.0	8.6	10.2	7.9	9.6	6.1
Crime, safety and violence	10.9	7.9	9.3	6.5	6.9	8.4

Note: Respondents were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The responses provided were categorised into the items listed above. Items are listed in order of 2021 WA frequency.

How do young people feel about the future?

Half (50.0%) of WA young people felt either very positive or positive about the future, as shown in Table 10.21. However, close to one in five (18.1%) young people indicated they felt negative or very negative about the future.

- A higher proportion of WA males reported feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future (57.3% compared with 41.4% of females).
- Similar to the trend seen for all respondents nationally, the proportion of WA respondents reporting feeling very positive or positive about the future has slightly reduced over time from 56.2% in 2019, to 52.9% in 2020 and 50.0% in 2021.

Table 10.21: Feelings about the future

	National 2021 %	WA 2021 %	Females %	Males %	WA 2020 %	WA 2019 %
Very positive or positive	51.6	50.0	41.4	57.3	52.9	56.2
Neither positive nor negative	32.5	31.9	36.1	29.3	32.1	29.2
Negative or very negative	16.0	18.1	22.5	13.4	15.0	14.5

Note: Responses for very positive and positive have been aggregated, as have the responses for negative and very negative.

Acknowledgements

Mission Australia would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of the State/Territory Departments of Education and the Catholic Schools Offices from across the country. This valuable research would not be possible without their support. Mission Australia would also like to thank the very many educational institutions, youth and community organisations, government agencies, corporates, philanthropic organisations and others who helped to engage young people in the Youth Survey 2021 and raise awareness by promoting through their networks and on social media.

- ACT Council of Social Service (ACTCOSS)
- Alpine Shire Council (VIC)
- Anti-Discrimination NSW
- ARACY
- Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS)
- Australian Theatre for Young People (NSW)
- Australian Youth Affairs Coalition
- Brain & Mind Centre The University of Sydney (NSW)
- Brimbank Youth Services (VIC)
- Brisbane City Council (QLD)
- Byron Shire Council (NSW)
- Circular Head Council (TAS)
- City of Ballarat (VIC)
- City of Boroondara (VIC)
- City of Fremantle (WA)
- City of Joondalup (WA)
- City of Mandurah (WA)
- City of Prospect (SA)
- City of Rockingham (WA)
- City of South Perth (WA)
- City of Wodonga (VIC)
- Colac Area Health (VIC)
- Community Industry Group South East NSW
- Council to Homeless Persons Vic
- District Council of Streaky Bay (SA)
- Economic Justice Australia
- Foundation for Young Australians
- Foyer Foundation
- Georges River Council (NSW)
- Grand Pacific Health (NSW)
- headspace Bega (NSW)
- headspace Goulburn (NSW)
- headspace Joondalup (WA)
- headspace Osborne Park (WA)
- · Hillsong Australia Youth
- Hinchinbrook Shire Council (QLD)
- Hope Unlimited Church (NSW)
- Hume Whittlesea Local Learning & Employment Network (HWLLEN) (VIC)
- Inner North West Primary Care Partnership (VIC)
- Institute of Child Protection Studies Australian Catholic University

- Knox City Council, Youth Services (VIC)
- · Leading for Kids
- Maribyrnong Youth Services @ Phoenix Youth Centre (VIC)
- Mental Health Coordinating Council (NSW)
- Mental Health Victoria
- Mid-Western Regional Council (NSW)
- Mornington Peninsula Shire (VIC)
- · National Rural Health Alliance
- National Youth Commission Australia (NYCA)
- NDRI Curtin University (WA)
- North East Local Learning & Employment Network (VIC)
- Northern Territory Council of Social Service (NTCOSS)
- Orygen
- Presbyterian Youth NSW
- Queensland Council of Social Service (QCOSS)
- Raise Foundation
- Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale (WA)
- Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre (NSW)
- Shoalhaven Suicide Prevention & Awareness Network (SSPAN) (NSW)
- Sir David Martin Foundation
- South Australian Council of Social Service (SACOSS)
- Stride Mental Health
- Sydney Region Aboriginal Corporation (NSW)
- Tasmanian Council of Social Service (TasCOSS)
- The Burdekin Association (NSW)
- The Matilda Centre The University of Sydney (NSW)
- The Y NSW
- Town of Gawler (SA)
- Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS)
- · Volunteering Australia
- Warrumbungle Shire Council (NSW)
- Welfare Rights NSW
- Western Australia Council of Social Service (WACOSS)
- Whitehorse City Council (VIC)
- · Yfoundations (NSW)
- · Youth Affairs Council of SA

CONTENTS

· Youth Affairs Council Victoria





Who is Mission Australia?

Mission Australia is a national Christian charity motivated by a shared vision of an Australia where everyone has a safe home and can thrive.

Since 1859, we've been standing alongside people and communities in need across Australia, offering real hope that has lasting impact. Backed by our supporters, churches, partners and funders, we work together for the long-term wellbeing of anyone who needs us by collaborating with them to tackle the root causes of their challenges.

Every day we deliver homelessness crisis and prevention services, provide social and affordable housing, assist struggling families and children, address mental health issues, fight substance dependencies, support people with disability and much more.

We measure our impact, collecting evidence of what works to inform our service design and delivery, and to advocate for change.

Mission Australia believes a person's circumstances shouldn't define their future and that given the right support, everyone can reach their full potential.

That's why we stand together with Australians in need, for as long as they need us.

Thank you

This publication would not have been possible without the 20,207 young people who completed Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2021. We extend special thanks to them, the staff of Mission Australia, and the many schools and organisations who supported their involvement.

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CONTENTS

THE SURVEY