

A group of young people, mostly women, are shown in profile, looking out over a field at sunset. The warm, golden light of the setting sun illuminates their faces and the background, creating a soft, hopeful atmosphere. The focus is sharp on the woman in the foreground, with others slightly blurred behind her.

YOUTH SURVEY REPORT 2024



MISSION
AUSTRALIA

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Acknowledgment

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of lands throughout Australia, and we pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future for 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 our future leaders.

Citation

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Mission Australia

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this report may contain photographs of deceased persons.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

MISSION **AU**STRALIA

As we celebrate the 23rd year of the Mission Australia Youth Survey, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to the 17,480 young people across Australia aged 15 to 19 who shared their experiences, hopes and concerns with us this year. Your voices are invaluable and are a guiding light in helping us understand and address the challenges faced by young people in 2024.

Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2024* paints a nuanced picture of today's young people. Cost of living has emerged as the top national concern according to young people, more than doubling in the past two years. It is clear financial struggles are considerably impacting young lives and their views about our country. While climate change remains an important issue for young people, ranking second this year, it currently takes a back seat to the urgent financial challenges many are facing due to Australia's cost of living crisis.

Young people also believe that violence, safety and crime is a key issue that Australia must address, soaring to third place in their list of concerns, up from ninth place in 2022. This was followed closely by mental health. Young people want quick action and support, especially to address domestic and family violence, violence against women, and mental health concerns.

I was concerned to see that some young people have continued to struggle to find safe, secure housing over the past year. This highlights that we need to do more as a country to help young people find and keep stable, affordable homes if we want to make any real progress in ending youth homelessness.

We explored young people's views on alcohol and drug use including vaping. While young people perceived these as being among the big national issues Australia grapples with, they were less problematic in their own lives and communities.

Yet again, our survey this year revealed that discrimination and inequality unfairly and disproportionately affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and young people who are gender diverse. Australia has a long way to go towards greater inclusivity, support and reconciliation.

Mental health was a major concern for young people. Many struggled with stress, anxiety, loneliness, and depression, with more than one in five facing high psychological distress. Some young people also struggled to achieve their education and employment goals because of barriers like motivation, confidence and mental health challenges. This stark reality highlights the urgent need for greater support and understanding and is an important reminder that we all must work together to help young people reach their full potential.

It is inspiring and energising that despite the challenges some young people face, most feel in control of their lives and remain optimistic, resilient and engaged, drawing strength from their social connections, aspirations and community involvement.

Empowering young people to start their journey to adulthood on a solid footing can transform lives. At Mission Australia, we remain deeply committed to supporting young people to thrive at every stage of their journey through our range of youth-focused programs, services and community housing. These include case management, youth homelessness support, youth housing, community-based mental health, residential

rehabilitation and alternative education programs and services.

We also believe that young people's opinions should be at the heart of designing programs and housing for them. That's why our *Youth Survey* report insights are used to inform the planning, development and delivery of many of our youth and family programs and services.

As a Child Safe Organisation, Mission Australia is dedicated to creating a safe and supportive environment for everyone. If young people responding to the *Youth Survey* show they might be at risk of harm, we quickly connect them with the right support services. In other words, our *Youth Survey* helps save young lives.

The insights from our annual *Youth Survey* remain crucial for young people, their parents, educators, policymakers, community services and everyone who support them. By listening to their voices and addressing the issues they raise, we can work together to build a more inclusive and supportive Australia to grow up and thrive in.

To the young people who participated and to all those you represent: your voices are heard and deeply valued. We will continue to work together towards a future where everyone in your generation can achieve their full potential.

Sharon Callister
CEO, Mission Australia



2024 OVERVIEW

To the young people who participated in the *Youth Survey* in 2024: we sincerely appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts and experiences. We are committed to ensuring your voices are heard and make a meaningful impact.

The Mission Australia Youth Survey continues to provide an essential platform for young people in Australia, elevating their voices and empowering them to share their thoughts, aspirations and concerns on a wide range of issues. The 2024 survey, which gathered insights from 15 to 19-year-olds across the country, offers a detailed look into the evolving opportunities and challenges facing young people today.

A total of 17,480 young people completed the survey in 2024. They shared their views on the biggest issues facing Australia and the personal challenges they encountered over the past year. They also provided insights into their social connections, education, employment, housing, financial situation and mental health, among other important areas.

The top four biggest issues facing Australia this year, as identified by young people, were: the *cost of living*; *climate change and the environment*; *violence, safety and crime*; and *mental health*. Other issues that moved into the top ten were: *global affairs*; and *internet, social media and technology*.

More than half (56%) of young people identified **cost of living** as the top national issue, reflecting the broader economic challenges that have gripped the nation this year and the widespread media coverage it has attracted. This indicates a broad consensus amongst young people who are observing or directly feeling the negative effects of inflation and higher interest rates on their standard of living. Issues related to **housing stability and homelessness** remained prevalent in the *Youth Survey* results, with a small yet consistent percentage of young people reporting experiences of living in refuges or transitional housing, and/or staying away from home because they felt they could not return.

"[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] cost of living. Due to unforeseen circumstances I had to move out of home. It is really stressful to afford all basic necessities while studying. There [was] nothing left once all necessities that need to be paid for are paid, I'm working to survive not to live."

Female, 19, Victoria

The top national issue, the *cost of living*, overtook **climate change and the environment** which ranked first in recent years but now ranks second. Although concern for the environment remains high, with more than one quarter (27%) identifying the issue, the increased focus on economic hardship highlights the shifting priorities for young people amid rising costs and the immediacy of its impact.

Violence, safety and crime was a concern, with increased mentions as a national issue. Young people particularly acknowledged the challenges of domestic and family violence, as well as gender-based violence, which have been prominent in national discussions this year. Closely tied to this was the issue of **discrimination and inequality**, particularly among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth and gender diverse young people, who reported higher rates of unfair treatment. Three in 10 (30%) respondents indicated they had experienced discrimination in the past year. This increased to 42% for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and 69% for gender diverse respondents, underscoring the need for greater support and inclusivity for marginalised groups.

Most young people continued to engage in **education**, with six in 10 (61%) reporting satisfaction with their studies. Just over half (52%) were in paid **employment**, with the vast majority working part-time. Most felt able to achieve their study and work goals, but of those who faced barriers, **lack of motivation** and **self-confidence** hindered their achievements, a shift from previous years when *academic ability* and *financial difficulties* were more prominent.

Mental health continued to be a critical issue, with many young people reporting challenges related to stress, anxiety, loneliness and depression. Over one in five (22%) young people were classified as having high psychological distress, a measure of how frequently a person experienced symptoms of anxiety and depression over the past four weeks*. Despite these challenges, many young people continued to demonstrate their resilience as more than half (56%) indicated they had complete control or were mostly in control of their life, with a similar proportion (47%) feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future.

Young people shared their personal challenges. **School and study pressures** remained a central theme, with many respondents highlighting the struggles of managing perceived heavy workloads, high expectations and stress. Many young people responded to these challenges by adopting strategies such as prioritising sleep, becoming more organised, and making time for recreation and hobbies – activities that bring them joy and fulfillment.

Other personal challenges related to **personal relationships** and **mental health**. For young people who said *personal relationships*, the main challenges faced were associated with their social life and issues with family members and friends. Those who reported *mental health* as their biggest challenge talked about the various mental health issues they faced (e.g. depression or anxiety symptoms), lack of motivation, school stress, issues with body image and eating disorders.

Social connections continue to play a vital role in the lives of young people. Young people were most likely to turn to friends (64%) or parents/guardians (59%) when they need help with important issues in their lives. The majority (86%) were actively engaged in extracurricular activities such as sports, student leadership, and arts and cultural programs. Half (51%) of young people felt proud to be part of their community, with two in five (39%) undertaking volunteer work. However, close to two thirds (64%) had mixed feelings or disagreed that their community gives them a voice on important issues. This highlights an opportunity for governments, organisations and schools to involve young people more in decisions that affect their lives.

The 2024 *Youth Survey* included questions about **alcohol, drugs and vaping**. The most utilised sources of information for young people about alcohol and drugs were: *from my teachers or at school*; *in the media via news or advertising*; and *online via social media*. More than half (55%) of young people agreed that **alcohol** is a significant problem in Australia, although fewer believed it was an issue in their own communities or family and friendship circles. Similarly, while 64% of respondents agreed that **drug** use was a major issue nationally, only about one third (35%) felt that it was a problem in their local communities and a lower proportion in their family and friendship circles. A little more than one third (35%) of young people voiced concerns about **vaping**. With new national laws aimed at tightening control over the supply of e-cigarettes and related products, we hope this concern will decrease over time. These findings highlight young people's awareness of the harmful effects of these substances, demonstrating their thoughtful consideration of issues that impact everyone.

The 2024 *Youth Survey* illustrates the complexities that face young people in Australia, who are grappling with **significant societal and personal challenges**. From economic pressures and mental health struggles to concerns about safety and discrimination, young people are acutely aware of the world around them. Yet, amid these difficulties, many remain hopeful about the future, demonstrating both strength and optimism.

To the young people who participated in this survey, and to all 15 to 19-year-olds across Australia who they represent: we want you to know that we hear you. We call on governments, schools, communities and families to take note of these findings and actively engage with young people in Australia. By listening and responding to their concerns, we can help ensure that all young people, regardless of their background, have the support they need to thrive.

*Further information relating to psychological distress and how it is measured can be found on page 25.

MISSION AUSTRALIA

The Mission Australia *Youth Survey* is the largest national annual survey of young people in Australia. Now in its 23rd year, the *Youth Survey* aims to identify the values, aspirations and issues of concern to young people aged 15-19. In 2024, **17,480 young people from across the country** took part.

2024 YOUTH SURVEY RESPONDENTS

46% female

49% male

3.0% gender diverse

7.7% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

24% strongly identified with a cultural or ethnic group

8.7% identified as a person with disability

16% identified as a person with a mental health condition

17,480
RESPONDENTS
aged 15-19 years

All data in this report, including demographic and historical data, has been weighted by state, gender and socio-economic advantage/disadvantage by area. See 'About this survey' section (page 68) for more information regarding our weighting method.

KEY FINDINGS

Most young people felt good about their lives and their education and employment opportunities, but some faced housing and financial hardships and worried about their future

Young people shared their perspectives and experiences across a range of topics.

Education and employment

81% of respondents were studying full time and 95% planned to complete Year 12

After leaving school, 61% planned to go to university, 37% planned to get a job and 27% planned to travel or take a gap year

29% reported barriers to achieving their work or study goals, including lack of motivation (37%), mental health (33%) and lack of confidence (31%)

52% of young people were in paid work and 98% of these worked part-time

Housing and financial situation

95% of young people lived with their parents or guardians. Of those living elsewhere, most lived with other students at their boarding school (41%), alone (11%) or with relatives or siblings (11%)

In the past year, 11% of young people reported worrying about having a safe place to stay and 7.4% spent time away from home because they felt they could not go back

In the past year, many respondents said that they and their families had to be careful with money (35%) or had trouble paying for things (18%), while 3.9% accessed support from Mission Australia or another charitable organisation

Wellbeing

Over half of young people (57%) reported feeling happy with their life and 56% felt completely or mostly in control of their life

However, 21% felt lonely all or most of the time in the past four weeks

20% of respondents said that climate change impacts their thinking, feelings or behaviour

22% of young people were classified as having high psychological distress

KEY FINDINGS

Respondents felt connected to those close to them and their community, and knew where to get information about important issues, but can find it hard to fit in, have a say and be treated fairly

Support and connectedness

Young people reported that they would go to friends (64%), parents/guardians (59%) or siblings (33%) for help with important issues in their lives

However, 30% said they had trouble fitting in, 29% found it hard to turn to friends and family if they needed help, and 23% found it hard to make choices and feel independent

While 51% of young people felt proud to be a part of their community, only 36% felt that young people in their community have a say on issues that matter to them

Unfair treatment and discrimination

In the past year, 30% of respondents reported being treated unfairly or discriminated against

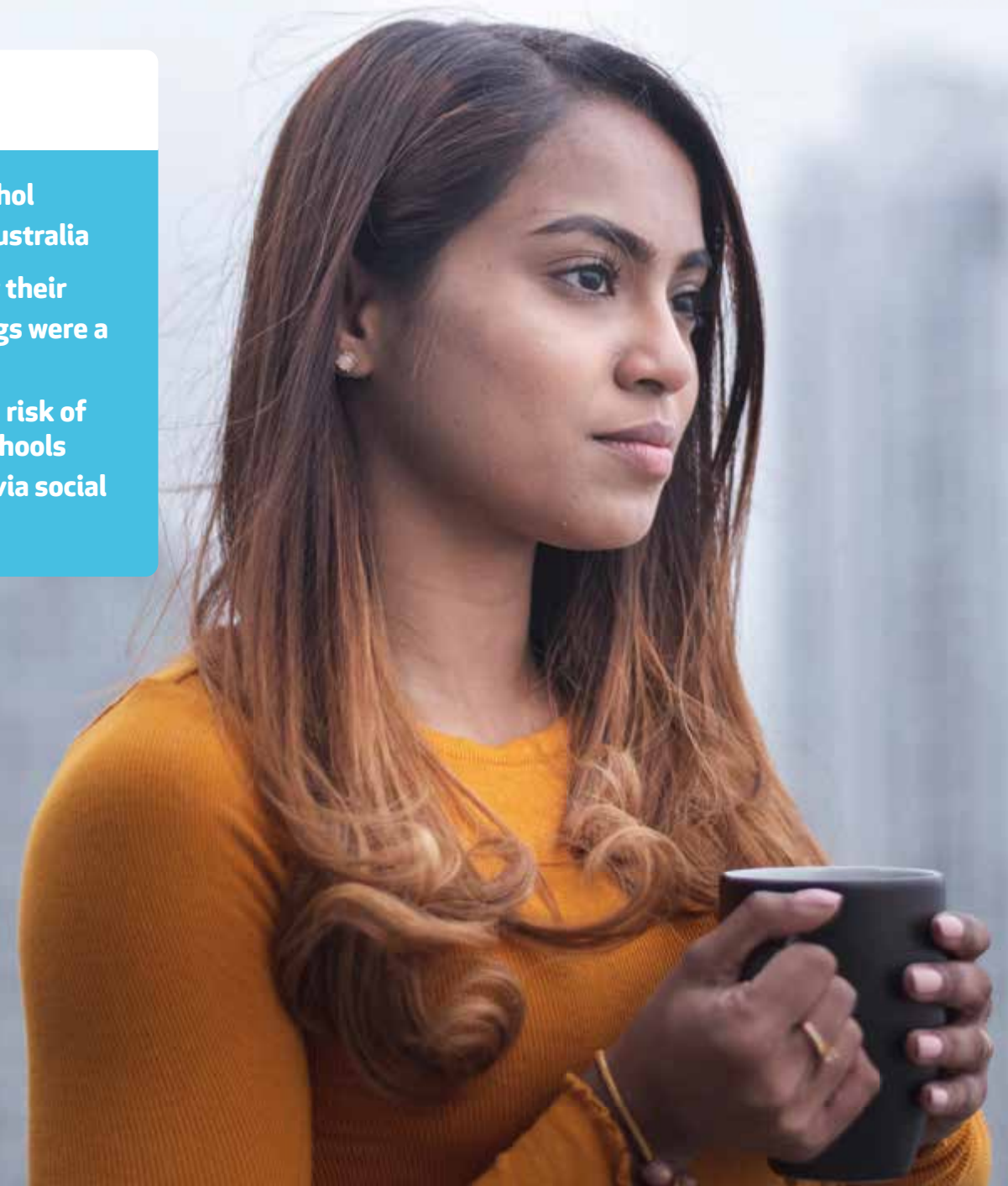
The top three reasons for unfair treatment or discrimination were physical appearance (37%), race/cultural background (33%) and gender (26%)

Alcohol and drugs

A majority of young people believed that alcohol (55%) and drugs (64%) are a problem in Australia

18% reported that alcohol was a problem for their family or friends and 13% reported that drugs were a problem for their family or friends

Young people accessed information about the risk of alcohol or drug use from their teachers and schools (60%), via news or advertising (43%) and via social media (42%)



KEY FINDINGS

Most important issues facing Australia today

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The open-ended responses were then thematically analysed and listed in order of frequency.

1

Cost of living: 56%
(31% in 2023, 23% in 2022)

What did young people say?

A large majority of young people referred to 'cost of living' or 'cost of living crisis', highlighting their awareness of the current economic conditions and rising expenses. Many expressed concerns about interest rates, inflation and food prices, with some emphasising the impact on their personal finances and future prospects.

2

Climate change and the environment: 27%
(38% in 2023, 45% in 2022)

What did young people say?

Respondents stressed the importance of climate change and environmental issues in Australia today. Most used the terms 'climate change' or 'global warming'. Some wrote about the need for renewable energy and reductions in fossil fuel use. Others noted the detrimental effects of climate change on the environment or concerns about natural disasters such as bushfires.

3

Violence, safety and crime: 25%
(18% in 2023, 10% in 2022)

What did young people say?

Young people expressed many concerns related to violence, safety and crime. Domestic and family violence was a top issue, as was youth crime and gender-based violence, which included violence against women, sexual assault and sexual harassment. Crime rates were also seen as an issue.

4

Mental health: 23%
(29% in 2023, 32% in 2022)

What did young people say?

Respondents highlighted the importance of addressing mental health as a national issue. They were particularly worried about suicide rates, the mental health of young people and men, and school stress. They wrote about the need for increased mental health support and mental health awareness.



KEY FINDINGS

Biggest personal challenge faced in the past year

Young people told us in their own words and unprompted what their biggest personal challenge was in the last year.

The open-ended responses were then thematically analysed and listed in order of frequency.

THE BIGGEST PERSONAL CHALLENGE I FACED WAS...



1

SCHOOL AND STUDY:

45%

(47% in 2023,
38% in 2022)

What did young people say?

Young people experienced a range of school and study related challenges over the past year. Many wrote about trying to balance school with other activities or commitments and effective time management. Others described issues in their social lives or with moving schools, managing workloads and achieving good grades.

"[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] finding the motivation to study, and the loss of interest in my grades. Didn't understand what school would do for me in the future."

Female, 16, Victoria

"A personal challenge I have faced is difficulty with the formality of the education system. I find that it caters to written results rather than generally providing a solid education for a child. The education system hasn't changed in decades and its outdated and doesn't account for modern issues."

Transgender, 15, South Australia

2

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS:

21%

(20% in 2023,
14% in 2022)

What did young people say?

Personal relationships were a source of difficulty for many respondents. Problems in their social lives and friendship issues were often mentioned and included troubles with friend groups and making new friends. Challenges with family members were also frequently noted.

"[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] family conflict, which brings challenges to my mental [and] well-being, and reduces my support system at home. Having to move house to separate from conflict also impacted my studies."

Female, 18, Queensland

"In the past year my biggest challenge was finding out who are good mates and who I want to be around and have in my life."

Male, 15, Queensland

3

MENTAL HEALTH:

20%

(22% in 2023,
24% in 2022)

What did young people say?

Many young people wrote about the mental health issues they faced over the past year. Lack of motivation, body image and eating disorders were some of the top concerns. Some mental health difficulties were related to schoolwork or stress, family issues and physical health.

"In the last year, I have faced numerous mental health struggles which I have had to get medicated for. I've also had to start therapy. This includes depression, anxiety and some other issues which are still untreated and undiagnosed."

Male, 17, Queensland

"I struggle with academic related anxiety because of perfectionist tendencies. I'm currently waiting to find medication that works for me. I don't face many physical barriers or challenges, so almost all of my failures and barriers are mental health related."

Female, 17, Tasmania

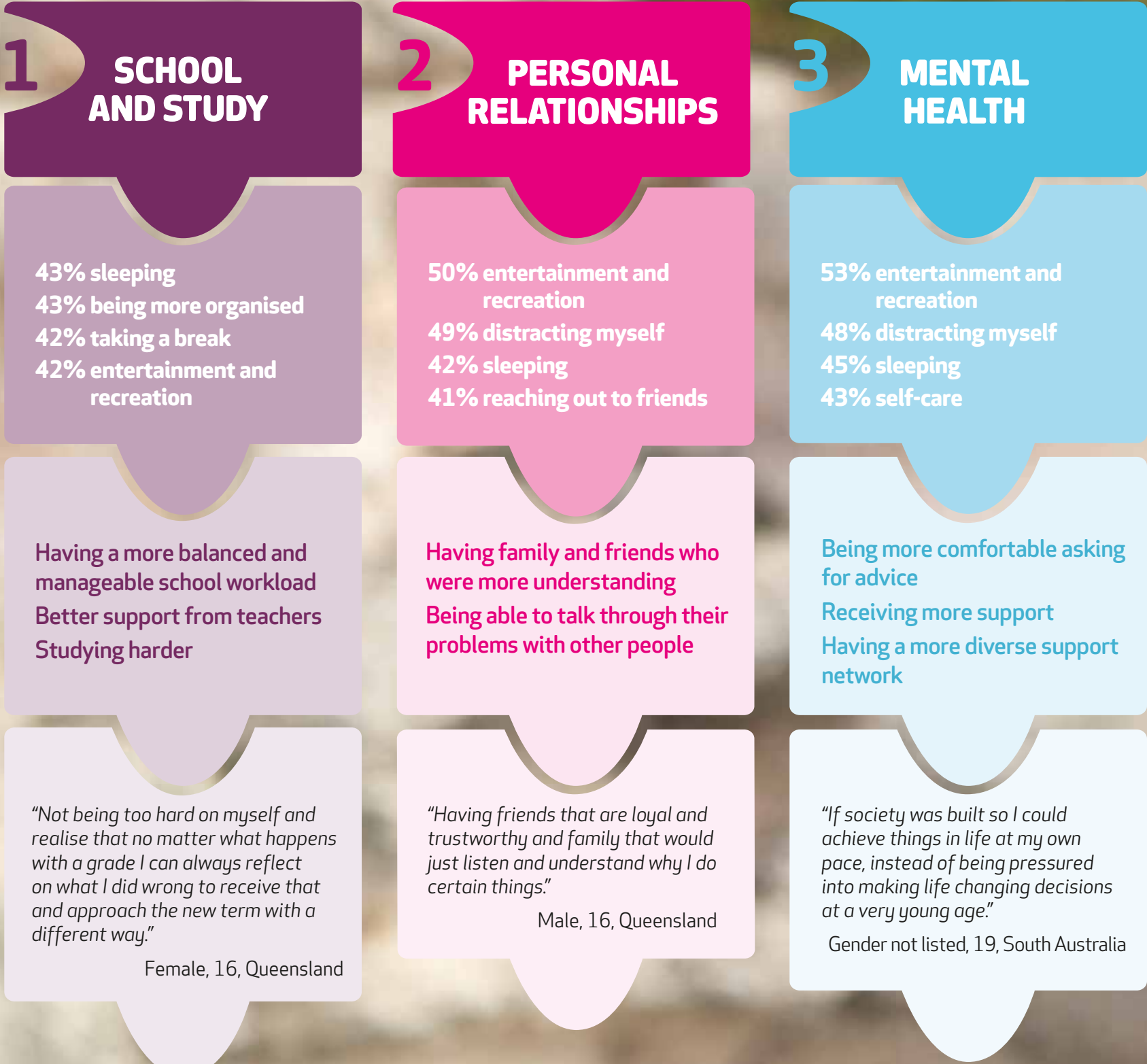
KEY FINDINGS

Biggest personal challenge
faced in the past year

Young people also told us in their own words what they found helpful in dealing with their challenge, and what more would have helped them overcome this challenge.

WHAT DID
I DO THAT
HELPED?

WHAT
MORE
WOULD
HAVE
HELPED?





National results

- ▶ Profile of respondents
- ▶ Personal challenges and concerns
- ▶ National issues
- ▶ Education and employment
- ▶ Housing, homelessness and financial situation
- ▶ Wellbeing
- ▶ Support and connectedness
- ▶ Unfair treatment and discrimination
- ▶ Alcohol and drugs

National results

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

State and territory distribution

The Mission Australia 2024 Youth Survey was completed by 17,480 young people aged 15-19 years from across the country. All data included in this report, including demographic information, has been weighted by state, gender and socio-economic advantage/disadvantage by area. See 'About the survey' section (page 68) for more information regarding our weighting method and base sizes by state.

Figure 1.1 indicates the weighted proportion of responses for each Australian state and territory.

Gender

The gender breakdown of respondents was male (49%), female (46%), gender diverse (3.0%) and 1.1% preferred not to say.

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

Around one in 13 (7.7%) respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Among this group, 78% of respondents identified as Aboriginal, 11% identified as Torres Strait Islander and 11% identified as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Cultural and ethnic identity

One quarter (24%) of respondents said that they strongly identify with a cultural or ethnic group. The most common were Asian ethnic groups, European ethnic groups and religious groups. A similar proportion (23%) said they spoke a language other than English at home. The most common (in order of frequency) were Chinese languages, Arabic, Hindi, Vietnamese, Spanish, Italian and Tagalog.

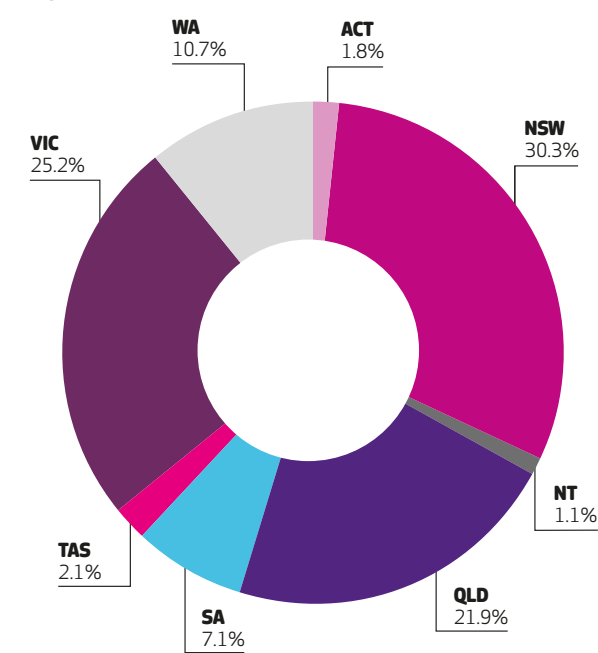
Disability

Less than one in 10 (8.7%) respondents identified as a person with disability, with 5.1% preferring not to say. The most frequently cited disabilities were autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and dyslexia.

Mental health

One in six (16%) respondents identified as a person with a mental health condition and 12% preferred not to say. The proportions varied by gender; more than half (53%) of gender diverse respondents identified as living with a mental health condition compared with 19% of females and 10% of males. The most frequently cited mental health conditions were anxiety disorders, depressive disorders and neurodevelopmental disorders which include ASD and ADHD.

Figure 1.1: Proportion of respondents by Australian state/territory (weighted)



PERSONAL CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

What is the biggest personal challenge experienced by young people in the past year?

Respondents were asked an unprompted, open-ended question about the biggest personal challenge they have faced in the past year. Young people responded in their own words with the themes of their responses displayed in Table 2.1. The most common personal challenges cited by young people were in the areas of *school and study* (45%), *personal relationships* (21%) and *mental health* (20%).

In *school and study* challenges, young people reported experiencing challenges with their schoolwork, balancing school with other activities and responsibilities in their life and time management. For those who said *personal relationships*, the main challenges they faced related to their social life and issues with members of their family or friends. Those who reported *mental health* talked about the different types of mental health challenges they had experienced (e.g. depression or anxiety), lack of motivation, school stress, issues with body image and eating disorders.

- *School and study* was the most common challenge among females (49%) and males (42%). Among gender diverse young people, *mental health* was the most frequently stated challenge (32%).
- A higher proportion of females than males experienced each of the top three challenges.
- More males said they were unsure or did not have any challenges (10% of males compared with 5.0% of females and 3.3% of gender diverse respondents).
- More gender diverse young people reported *finance and housing* challenges (10% compared with 6.4% of males and 4.5% of females) and *other* challenges such as bullying or discrimination (23% compared with 18% of males and 9.8% of females).

Table 2.1: Biggest personal challenge experienced in the past year

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
School and study	44.7	49.1	42.1	26.5
Personal relationships	20.6	25.4	15.6	22.6
Mental health	19.6	26.7	11.9	32.0
Finance and housing	5.6	4.5	6.4	10.3
Physical health	5.3	4.8	5.8	6.5
Other (includes various low frequency challenges not listed above)	14.6	9.8	18.5	23.4
Not sure/no challenges identified	7.4	5.0	9.9	3.3

Base: all respondents. National n = 15052, females n = 7002, males n = 7228, gender diverse n = 448. Note: items based on content analysis of 100% of responses to this question. The percentages may not total 100% as responses can fall into multiple items. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

“[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] finding the motivation to study, and the loss of interest in my grades. Didn’t understand what school would do for me in the future, as my thoughts were that if you get a job you’ll be focused on paying the bills and education wouldn’t really matter.”

Female, 16, Victoria

“[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] mental health. I have had a lot of changes in my life that have been positive and negative that have affected me last year and this year.”

Male, 16, South Australia

“[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] caring for my mother who has an acquired brain injury and is unable to do most things on her own anymore. I have done this while also struggling with many health problems myself and having no other family support to help such as siblings apart from my father.”

Female, 17, New South Wales

What did young people find helpful in facing their personal challenge?

After respondents were asked about their biggest personal challenge in the past year, they were asked to select what helped with their challenge from a range of options or, if not listed, to specify what helped. Table 2.2 shows the top five supports young people made use of for *school and study*, *personal relationships* and *mental health* challenges.

Young people who experienced *school and study* challenges tackled this by prioritising *sleep* or *being more organised*, while those experiencing *personal relationships* and *mental health* challenges tried to overcome their challenge through *entertainment and recreation* or by *distracting themselves*.

- A higher proportion of females addressed their *school and study* related challenge by *taking a break* (47% compared with 37% of males and 35% for gender diverse respondents) or *being more organised* (45% compared with 42% of males and 21% for gender diverse respondents).
- More females reported that they tackled their *mental health* challenge through *sleeping* (49% compared with 39% of males and 35% of gender diverse young people) or *self-care* (48% compared with 35% of gender diverse young people and 33% of males).
- A lower proportion of males who experienced a *personal relationships* challenge reported *reaching out to friends* to help them with their challenge (36% compared with 56% of gender diverse and 44% of females).

Table 2.2: Top five supports when facing their challenge, by biggest personal challenge experienced in the past year

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
School and study challenge				
Sleeping	43.5	46.8	40.1	36.4
Being more organised	42.6	44.8	41.6	21.0
Taking a break	42.0	46.8	36.9	34.5
Entertainment and recreation	41.9	45.2	38.0	47.8
Studying	37.2	36.7	38.9	14.8
Personal relationships challenge				
Entertainment and recreation	49.9	51.2	47.6	56.6
Distracting myself	49.1	51.4	45.1	55.8
Sleeping	41.7	47.0	34.3	39.2
Reaching out to friends	41.2	44.4	36.0	55.7
Self-care	36.6	42.3	28.6	27.4
Mental health challenge				
Entertainment and recreation	53.2	53.4	51.2	56.4
Distracting myself	48.4	49.9	44.3	50.6
Sleeping	45.2	48.9	38.7	34.9
Self-care	42.9	48.1	33.4	35.3
Taking a break	40.3	42.4	36.9	35.0

Base: all respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per challenge. Items are listed in order of national frequency within each challenge.

What else would have helped young people overcome their personal challenge?

After selecting what they found helpful in dealing with their personal challenge, young people were asked what else would have helped them overcome their challenge. These unprompted responses are useful for understanding young peoples’ perspectives about the type of support they need and what they perceive to be missing in supports that are currently available to them. Despite taking various actions to manage their personal challenge, young people still felt there was more that could be done to help them.

Young people suggested that having a more balanced and manageable workload at school, better support from teachers and studying harder would have helped them address their *school or study* challenge.

“I think I would have been able to overcome this challenge more if my teachers were more understanding of my specific workload, including academics and rehearsals outside of school.”

Male, 17, South Australia

For those who experienced a *personal relationship* challenge, having family and friends who were more understanding and being able to talk through their concerns with those around them would have helped.

“Having people I love most understand how I’m feeling and how these things affect me [would have helped overcome my challenge].”

Female, 16, New South Wales

Being more comfortable asking for advice, receiving more support and having a more diverse support network were suggestions from young people about what could have helped them address their *mental health* challenges.

“Receiving additional support inside and outside school. I was not receiving enough support during the times I was struggling, which didn’t help me much.”

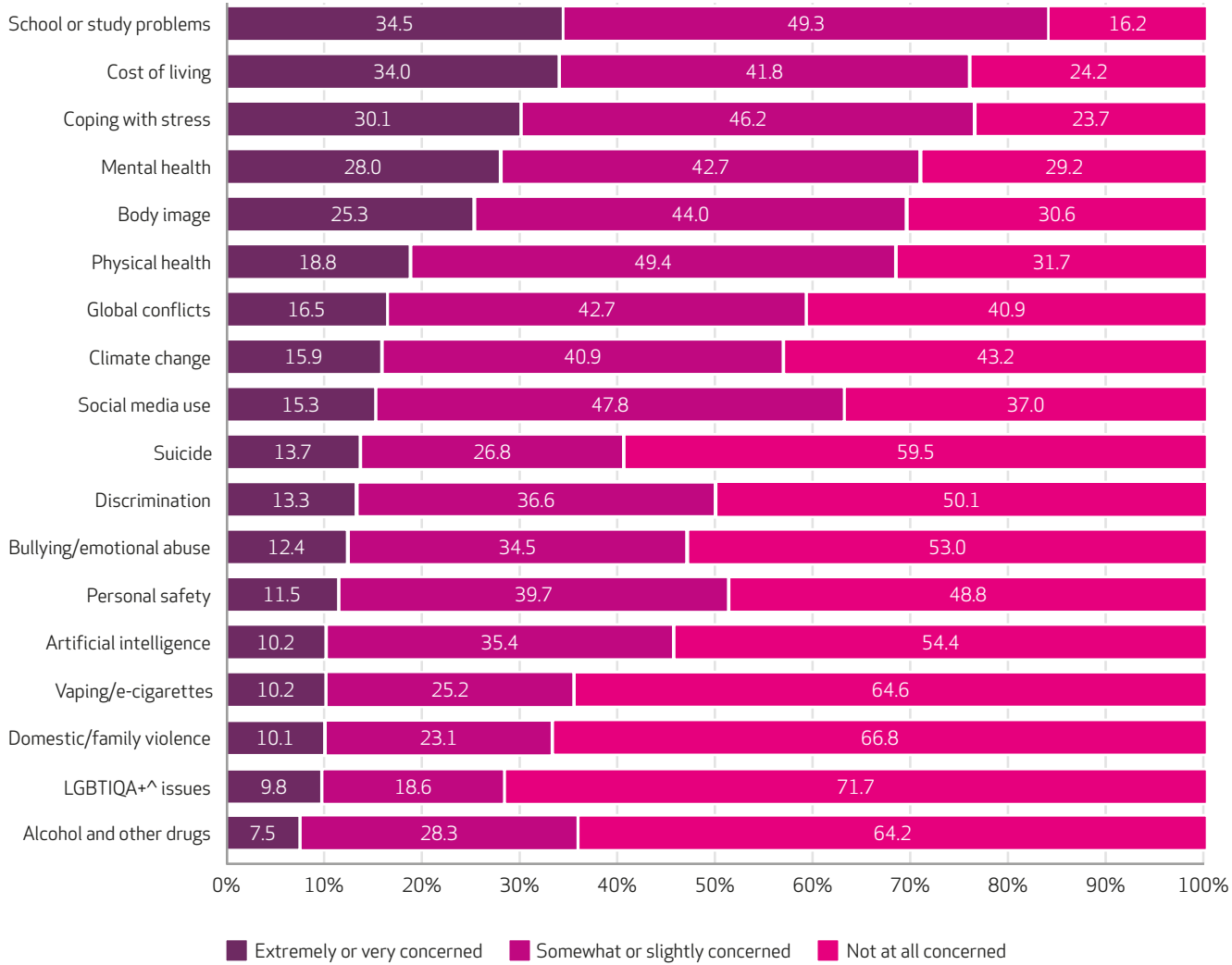
Non-binary, 16, Western Australia



What issues were of concern to young people in the past year?

The Youth Survey asked young people to rate their level of concern in the past year on a range of listed issues, as shown in Figure 2.1. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that spanned *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*. The top four issues of concern for young people this year were *school or study problems* (34%), *cost of living* (34%), *coping with stress* (30%) and *mental health* (28%).

Figure 2.1: Issues of concern to young people in the past year



Base: all respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement. Items ranked high to low according to responses for *extremely or very concerned*.
^Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Gender differences

As shown in Table 2.3a, the top four issues of concern for females this year were *school or study problems* (45%), *coping with stress* (42%), *mental health* (37%) and *body image* (37%), while for males it was *cost of living* (30%), *school or study problems* (24%), *mental health* (17%) and *coping with stress* (17%) (see Table 2.3b). Gender diverse young people were concerned about *cost of living* (63%), *LGBTIQA+ issues* (61%), *mental health* (57%) and *coping with stress* (48%) as seen in Table 2.3c.

- More gender diverse young people reported they were *extremely or very concerned* across almost all issues compared with females and males. A greater proportion were *extremely or very concerned* about *LGBTIQA+ issues* (61% compared with 8.1% for males and 7.4% for females) and *discrimination* (43% compared with 16% for females and 8.7% for males).
- More females than males reported being *extremely or very concerned* about *coping with stress* (42% compared with 17%) and *body image* (37% compared with 13%).

Table 2.3a: Issues of concern to females in the past year

	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
School or study problems	45.2	45.7	9.1
Coping with stress	42.3	46.1	11.6
Mental health	36.9	44.8	18.3
Body image	36.7	46.0	17.2
Cost of living	36.2	42.5	21.3
Physical health	21.6	53.9	24.6
Global conflicts	19.5	46.6	33.9
Social media use	19.0	52.2	28.8
Climate change	18.1	46.5	35.4
Discrimination	15.8	42.5	41.7
Bullying/emotional abuse	15.4	40.4	44.2
Suicide	14.9	30.8	54.2
Personal safety	13.2	44.6	42.2
Domestic/family violence	11.9	25.2	62.8
Artificial intelligence	10.9	40.4	48.7
Vaping/e-cigarettes	9.4	29.8	60.8
LGBTIQA+^ issues	7.4	23.4	69.2
Alcohol and other drugs	7.4	32.0	60.6

Base: all female respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement. Items ranked high to low according to responses for *extremely or very concerned*.
^Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Table 2.3b: Issues of concern to males in the past year

	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Cost of living	29.6	42.7	27.7
School or study problems	23.6	53.7	22.7
Mental health	17.4	41.9	40.7
Coping with stress	16.8	47.3	35.8
Physical health	15.2	45.5	39.3
Body image	13.3	42.7	43.9
Climate change	11.4	36.3	52.3
Global conflicts	11.4	39.6	49.0
Social media use	11.3	43.5	45.2
Suicide	10.5	22.5	67.0
Vaping/e-cigarettes	10.0	20.5	69.5
Discrimination	8.7	31.0	60.3
Personal safety	8.5	34.7	56.8
Bullying/emotional abuse	8.2	28.6	63.2
LGBTIQA+^ issues	8.1	13.6	78.4
Artificial intelligence	7.8	30.3	61.9
Domestic/family violence	7.1	20.6	72.4
Alcohol and other drugs	6.6	24.6	68.8

Base: all male respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement. Items ranked high to low according to responses for *extremely* or *very* concerned.
^Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Table 2.3c: Issues of concern to gender diverse people in the past year

	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Cost of living	62.7	22.4	14.9
LGBTIQA+^ issues	61.3	20.8	17.9
Mental health	56.9	29.7	13.4
Coping with stress	48.4	35.6	16.0
Climate change	43.5	33.7	22.8
Body image	43.5	34.1	22.4
School or study problems	43.1	37.1	19.7
Global conflicts	42.8	35.9	21.3
Discrimination	42.6	35.7	21.8
Suicide	40.4	31.9	27.7
Physical health	32.7	46.9	20.4
Artificial intelligence	31.4	36.4	32.3
Bullying/emotional abuse	31.3	38.3	30.4
Personal safety	28.6	41.2	30.2
Domestic/family violence	25.3	32.5	42.2
Social media use	22.2	47.1	30.6
Vaping/e-cigarettes	20.4	31.0	48.6
Alcohol and other drugs	19.2	33.1	47.8

Base: all gender diverse respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement. Items ranked high to low according to responses for *extremely* or *very* concerned.
^Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.



NATIONAL ISSUES

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

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The open-ended responses were thematically analysed and listed in order of national frequency in Table 3.1. The top issues identified by young people in 2024 were *cost of living* (56%), *climate change and the environment* (27%), *violence, safety and crime* (25%) and *mental health* (23%). We have seen increased awareness among young people this year about contemporary issues relating to *cost of living; violence, safety and crime; alcohol and other drugs; global affairs; and internet, social media and technology*. The largest increase in awareness was for *cost of living* which increased from 31% in 2023 to 56% in 2024.

Although the overall national results are well-defined, there are clear differences in the thinking of young people based on their gender.

- A higher proportion of females than males identified *climate change and the environment* (31% compared with 22%) and *discrimination and inequality* (26% compared with 17%) as important issues facing Australia today.
- Conversely, higher proportions of males than females regarded *housing and homelessness* (19% compared with 15%) and *global affairs* (8.6% compared with 5.3%) as key issues in Australia.
- The cohort that reported the highest proportion for *discrimination and inequality* and *global affairs* as important issues facing Australia today were gender diverse young people (30% compared with 17% of males, and 10% compared with 5.3% of females respectively).

“[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] cost of living. Due to unforeseen circumstances I had to move out of home. It is really stressful to afford all basic necessities while studying. There [was] nothing left once all necessities that need to be paid for are paid, I’m working to survive not to live.

Female, 19, Victoria

Table 3.1: Top 10 most important issues in Australia today

	National 2024 %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %	National 2023 %*	National 2022 %*
Cost of living	56.2	56.4	56.4	50.7	31.3	23.4
Climate change and the environment	26.6	30.7	22.4	30.1	38.0	45.4
Violence, safety and crime	25.3	30.0	21.8	13.8	18.2	9.9
Mental health	23.3	30.1	17.4	15.3	29.4	32.5
Discrimination and inequality	21.7	25.8	17.2	29.8	28.9	32.2
Housing and homelessness	17.0	15.4	18.8	15.8	18.1	11.8
Alcohol and other drugs	16.7	15.0	18.8	11.1	13.4	8.4
Education	7.5	8.1	7.2	4.7	8.0	8.1
Global affairs	7.1	5.3	8.6	10.4	2.7	4.7
Internet, social media and technology	6.2	6.8	5.9	2.9	4.5	3.2

Base: all respondents. National n = 15044, females n = 6912, males n = 7318, gender diverse n = 446. Note: respondents were able to write up to three issues. Items are listed in order of 2024 national frequency. Labels describing some issues have been updated in 2024 to better reflect contemporary language. Details of the changes can be accessed in the 'About the Survey' section of this report. National 2023 n = 15266 and National 2022 n = 16707. *2022 and 2023 data is weighted, based on methodology implemented for this report, and will not match reports published in these years.

“I have ‘shut-downs’ when I hear or read about negative stories around the environment. I.e. going non-verbal and in a freeze response. While I know that there are scientists, engineers, etc fixing the problem, that good news is completely overshadowed by the negativity of the media.”

Transgender, 15, New South Wales

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Are young people studying?

As shown in Table 4.1, 81% of young people were studying full-time and another 9.1% were studying part-time.

- A higher proportion of females reported studying full-time (86% compared with 76% of males and 74% of gender diverse young people).
- A higher proportion of gender diverse respondents reported that they were not studying (18% compared with 12% of males and 7.1% of females).

Table 4.1: Participation in education

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Studying full-time	80.8	86.5	76.2	73.8
Studying part-time	9.1	6.5	11.5	8.1
Not studying	10.1	7.1	12.3	18.1

Base: all respondents. National n = 17434, females n = 7970, males n = 8496, gender diverse n = 514.

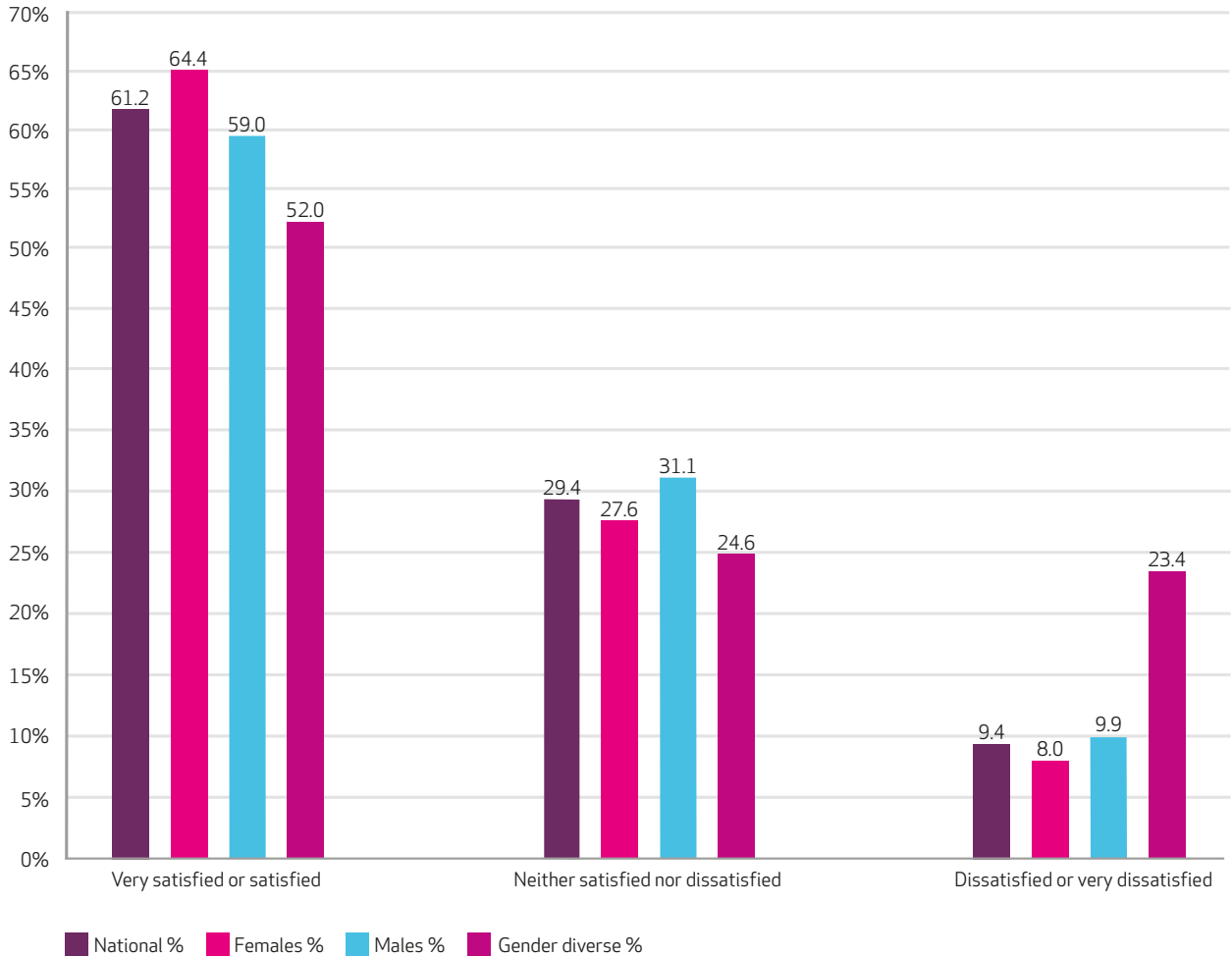


How satisfied are young people with their studies?

Of those currently studying, respondents were asked how satisfied they were with their studies. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very satisfied* to *very dissatisfied*. A large proportion of young people reported they were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* (61%) with their studies, while one in 10 (9.4%) indicated they were *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* (see Figure 4.1).

- A higher proportion of females reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their studies (64% compared with 59% of males and 52% of gender diverse young people).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of gender diverse young people indicated they felt *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* (23% compared with 9.9% of males and 8.0% of females), and more males reported feeling *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied* (31% compared with 28% of females and 25% of gender diverse respondents).

Figure 4.1: Satisfaction with studies



Base: respondents currently studying. National n = 15547, females n = 7359, males n = 7390, gender diverse n = 415.

“Being able to enjoy the schoolwork and what I was learning, being able to understand what I was learning and what I had to do [would have helped overcome my school related challenge].”
Female, 16, New South Wales



Do young people plan on finishing school?

Of respondents still at school, the majority (95%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. A higher proportion of females reported that they planned to complete Year 12 (98% compared with 93% of males and 92% of gender diverse young people).

What are the plans of young people after school?

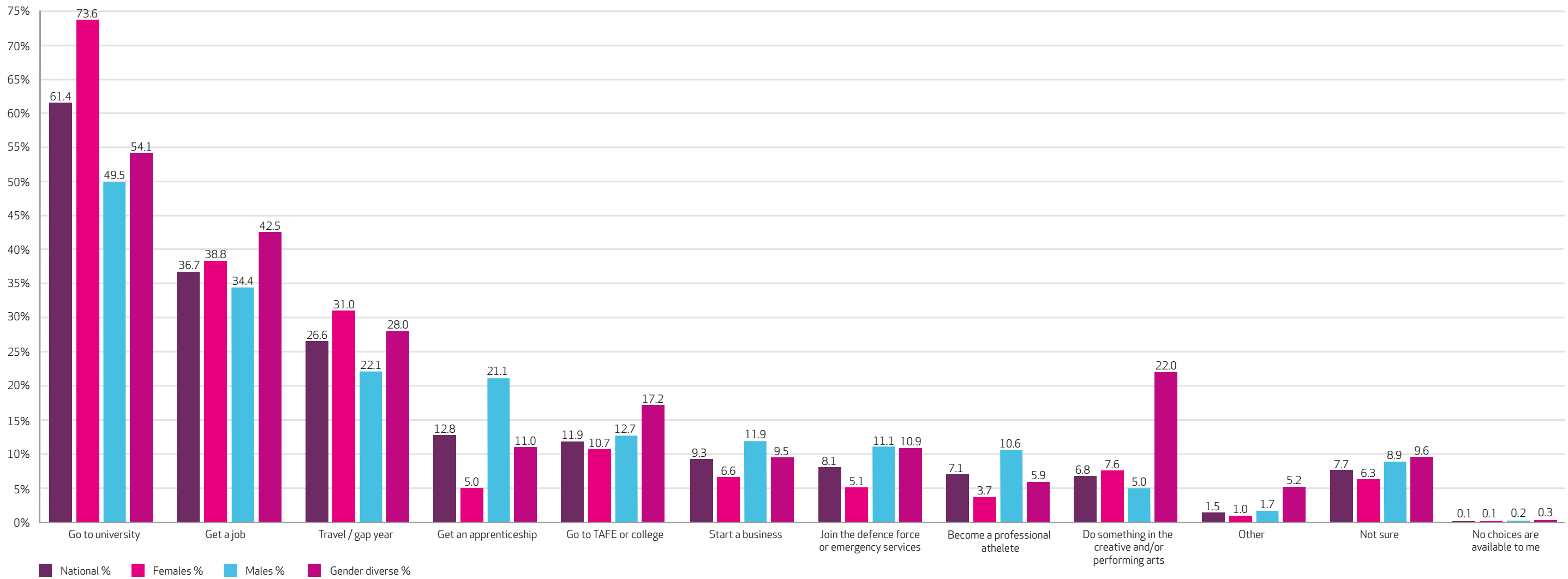
As indicated in Figure 4.2, three in five young people (61%) plan to go to university after school. More than one third of respondents (37%) indicated they are planning to get a job and more than one quarter (27%) reported travel/gap year plans.

- The top three plans after leaving school were the same for females, males and gender diverse young people.
- While the most frequently reported plan among all respondents was to go to university, a higher proportion of females indicated they planned to do so (74% compared with 54% of gender diverse young people and 50% of males).
- A higher proportion of males reported plans to become a professional athlete (11% compared with 5.9% of gender diverse young people and 3.7% of females).
- More gender diverse respondents planned to do something in the creative and/or performing arts (22% compared with 7.6% of females and 5.0% of males) or go to TAFE or college (17% compared with 13% of males and 11% of females).

"[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] keeping up to date with coursework at school, as well as considering my future and what I wanted to do after school (since I was originally planning on going to uni but decided against it)."

Transgender, 17, Victoria

Figure 4.2: Plans after leaving school



Base: respondents currently studying at school or equivalent. National n = 14913, females n = 7153, males n = 7026, gender diverse n = 386. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

What are the barriers to achieving study/work goals?

Respondents were asked if they felt there were any barriers which impact on the achievement of their study/work goals after leaving school. As shown in Table 4.2, three in 10 (29%) felt there were barriers that would impact on the achievement of their study/work goals.

Of the respondents who felt that there were barriers, more than one third (37%) selected *lack of motivation* as a barrier (see Table 4.3). The second and third highest barriers reported were *mental health* (33%) and *lack of confidence* (31%).

- A higher proportion of gender diverse young people (56%) indicated that there were barriers to achieving their study/work goals compared with females (30%) and males (25%).
- More gender diverse respondents reported barriers relating to *mental health* (68% compared with 38% of females and 23% of males), *disability* (37% compared with 8.6% of males and 5.9% of females) and *discrimination* (24% compared with 5.6% of males and 3.4% of females).
- A lower proportion of males reported *lack of confidence* as a barrier (27% compared with 43% of gender diverse respondents and 33% of females).

Table 4.2: Are there any barriers to young people achieving their study/work goals

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Yes	28.8	30.3	25.4	55.8
No	71.2	69.7	74.6	44.2

Base: respondents currently studying at school or equivalent. National n = 14713, females n = 7074, males n = 6927, gender diverse n = 371.

Table 4.3: Barriers to achieving study/work goals

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Lack of motivation	37.3	39.2	34.0	45.1
Mental health	33.4	37.5	23.3	67.7
Lack of confidence	31.2	32.7	27.2	43.1
Financial difficulties	29.3	32.8	25.4	26.4
Academic ability	26.7	28.8	23.7	23.5
Where you live	18.2	17.1	19.1	23.0
Transport	13.3	12.3	13.5	18.8
Family responsibilities	12.3	12.8	11.9	12.1
Lack of information	11.7	11.0	11.2	20.5
Lack of jobs	10.5	10.1	10.6	13.8
Admission/job requirements	10.4	11.3	9.4	10.7
Disability	8.9	5.9	8.6	36.9
Lack of family support	8.7	9.3	7.0	15.6
Lack of school support	8.6	9.1	7.8	11.1
Physical health	8.5	7.5	8.9	16.0
Lack of stable housing	5.7	5.8	5.4	9.4
Discrimination	5.4	3.4	5.6	24.3
Cultural responsibilities	3.1	2.3	3.5	7.7
Other	5.4	4.5	6.4	7.8

Base: respondents who said there were barriers to achieving study/work goals. National n = 4182, females n = 2132, males n = 1723, gender diverse n = 204.
Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

“Barriers keep arising which prevent me from achieving goals that are commonly achieved at my age, such as getting a driver’s licence, etc. This is disheartening to my self-confidence.”

Female, 18, Tasmania



Are young people working?

Young people were asked whether they currently have paid work, and if so, how many hours they work in an average week. Table 4.4 shows that more than half of respondents (52%) reported they were in paid employment. Less than half (48%) reported they were a casual employee and 4.3% reported they were a permanent employee.

- Less than half of young people (48%) indicated they were not in paid employment. Three in 10 respondents (29%) reported they were looking for work, while 19% were not looking for work.
- More gender diverse respondents reported being a permanent employee (9.5% compared with 4.3% of males and 3.9% of females) or not being in paid employment and not looking for work (25% compared with 20% of females and 18% of males).

Of the respondents in paid work (see Table 4.5), a small proportion of young people were working full-time (1.9%).

- A notably higher proportion of gender diverse young people reported they were working full-time (14% compared with 2.3% of males and 0.6% of females).

Table: 4.4: Participation in paid employment

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Permanent employee	4.3	3.9	4.3	9.5
Casual employee	47.6	49.2	46.8	37.0
Not in paid employment, looking for work	28.9	26.9	30.7	28.2
Not in paid employment, not looking for work	19.2	19.9	18.2	25.3

Base: all respondents. National n = 17437, females n = 7972, males n = 8498, gender diverse n = 512.

“In the past year I had to decide whether or not to leave my casual employment even if I liked the people there and I enjoyed having financial independence. I decided to quit because I thought the pay was unfair, especially considering the amount of work I had to do.”

Female, 16, New South Wales

Table 4.5: Employment type

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Working full-time	1.9	0.6	2.3	13.7
Working part-time	98.1	99.4	97.7	86.3

Base: respondents in paid employment. National n = 8953, females n = 4207, males n = 4295, gender diverse n = 233.

Note: 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.

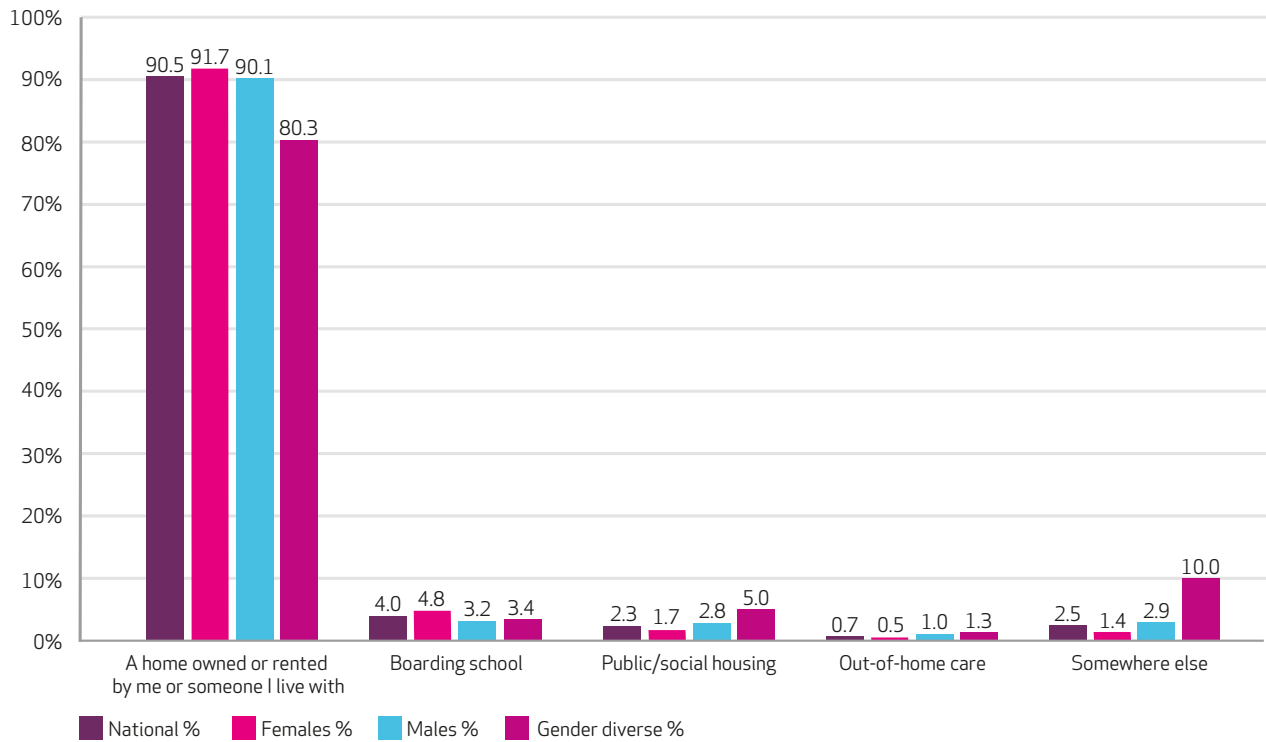
HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS AND FINANCIAL SITUATION

Where were young people living in the past three months?

As shown in Figure 5.1, 90% of respondents reported living in a privately owned or rented home in the past three months. One in 25 (4.0%) were in *boarding school*, 2.3% were living in *public/social housing* and 0.7% were in *out-of-home care*.

- A higher proportion of females were living in a home owned or rented by the young person or someone else (92% compared with 90% of males and 80% of gender diverse young people).
- A higher proportion of gender diverse young people reported living in *public/social housing* (5.0% compared with 2.8% of males and 1.7% of females) or *somewhere else* (10% compared with 2.9% of males and 1.4% of females).

Figure 5.1: Residential setting in the past three months



Base: all respondents. National n = 16975, females n = 7840, males n = 8200, gender diverse n = 498. Note: items are listed in order of national frequency.

What was their living situation in the past three months?

Respondents were asked if they had been living with their parents/guardians or somewhere else in the past three months. As show in Table 5.1, the majority (95%) of young people reported they had been *living with parent(s) or guardians(s)*.

Among the 5.4% of young people who had been living elsewhere in the past three months, Figure 5.2 shows the top places that they had been living were with *other students at my boarding school* (41%), alone (11%) or with *relatives/siblings* (11%).

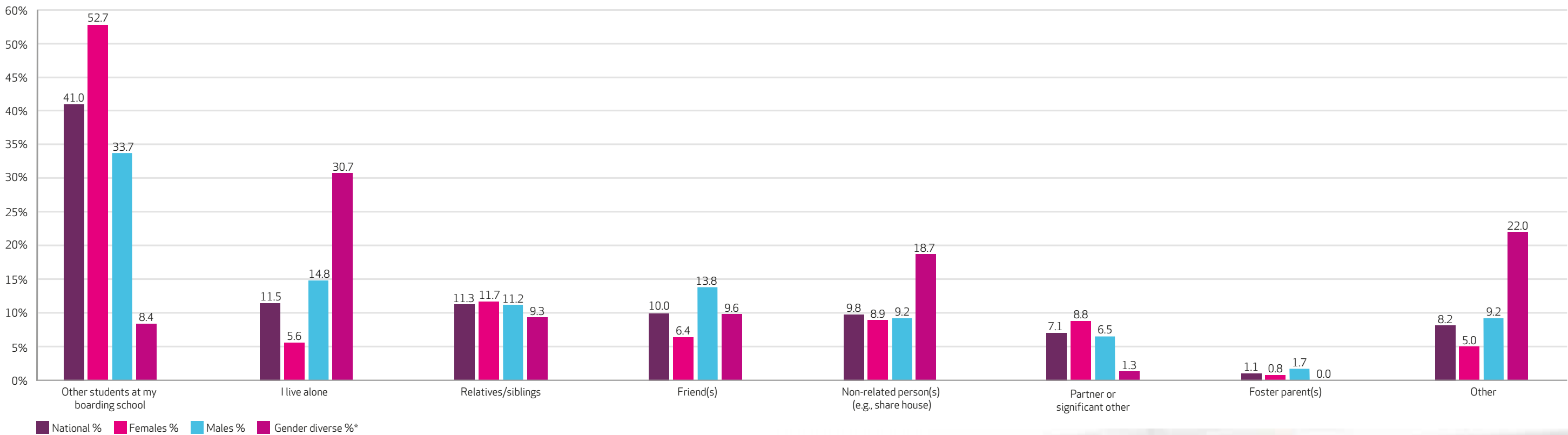
- A higher proportion of gender diverse young people reported living alone (31% compared with 15% of males and 5.6% of females).

Table 5.1: Living with parents or somewhere else in the past three months

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Living with parent(s) or guardian(s)	94.6	94.4	95.5	86.4
Living somewhere else	5.4	5.6	4.5	13.6

Base: all respondents. National n = 17032, females n = 7857, males n = 8233, gender diverse n = 501.

Figure 5.2: Living somewhere else in the past three months



Base: respondents living somewhere else (not with parent(s) or guardian(s)). National n = 906, females n = 444, males n = 362, gender diverse n = 67.
Note: items are listed in order of national frequency. *Interpret with caution due to sample size less than 100.

“[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] moving to VIC from NSW and living with my aunt after I was kicked out of my house.”

Female, 15, Victoria

Have young people experienced homelessness?

To understand if young people had ever experienced homelessness, they were asked if they had ever had no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation. Table 5.2 shows that nine in 10 respondents (91%) had not lived in either of these settings. Of the remainder, 3.0% had no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation in the last year and another 5.7% had experienced this, but not within the last year.

- A higher proportion of gender diverse young people had no fixed address or had lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation in the last year (15% compared with 3.0% of males and 2.0% of females) and in prior years (13% compared with 5.7% of males and 5.1% of females).

Table 5.2: No fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Yes, in the last year	3.0	2.0	3.0	14.6
Yes, but not in the last year	5.7	5.1	5.7	13.4
No	91.3	92.9	91.2	72.0

Base: all respondents. National n = 16960, females n = 7834, males n = 8197, gender diverse n = 495.



Did young people feel that they could not go home or worried about having a safe place to stay?

Table 5.3 shows that more than one in 10 respondents (14%) reported that they had spent time away from home because they felt they could not go back, with 7.4% reporting that this had occurred in the last year.

- A higher proportion of gender diverse young people spent time away from home in the last year (25% compared with 8.1% of females and 5.7% of males) or in prior years (15% compared with 6.8% of females and 5.1% of males).

One in 10 young people (11%) had also worried about having a safe place to stay within the past year, as shown in Table 5.4.

- More gender diverse respondents reported worrying about having a safe place to stay within the past year (30% compared with 11% of females and 10% of males).

Table 5.3: Spent time away from home because they felt that they could not go back

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Yes, in the last year	7.4	8.1	5.7	25.5
Yes, but not in the last year	6.2	6.8	5.1	14.6
No	86.3	85.1	89.2	59.9

Base: all respondents. National n = 16985, females n = 7844, males n = 8213, gender diverse n = 496.

“[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] facing homelessness - couch surfing, then entering emergency accommodation before transitioning to the Youth Foyer.”

Male, 18, Victoria

Table 5.4: Worried about having a safe place to stay in the past year

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Yes	11.2	10.5	10.2	30.4
No	88.8	89.5	89.8	69.6

Base: all respondents. National n = 17024, females n = 7837, males n = 8252, gender diverse n = 496.

“It can be scary not having a stable safe space but eventually you’ll find a spot for you! But when struggling in your housing situation, keep reaching out to the people closer to you and accessing services even when it feels pointless.”

A-gender/non-gendered, 18, Queensland

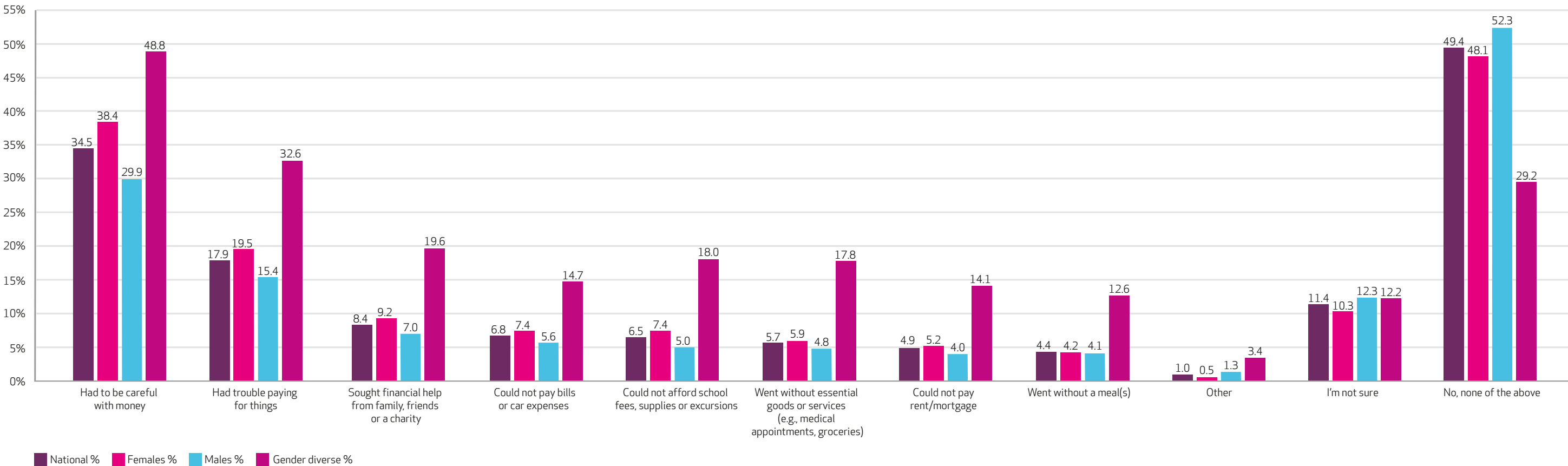


Have young people experienced financial concerns in the past year?

Each respondent was asked if they or their family had experienced a range of financial concerns in the past year, as shown in Figure 5.3. More than one third of young people (35%) reported that they or their family *had to be careful with money*. The second and third most common financial concerns were that they or their family *had trouble paying for things* (18%) or *sought financial help from family, friends or a charity* (8.4%).

- Gender diverse young people reported all listed financial concerns more frequently than either females or males.

Figure 5.3: Financial concerns experienced in the past year by young person and/or their family



Base: all respondents. National n = 16647, females n = 7717, males n = 8011, gender diverse n = 494. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

Have young people or their family received support from a charity or foundation in the past year?

Seven out of 10 young people (69%) said that they and/or their family did not need support or assistance from a charity or foundation in the past year and a further 24% were unsure (see Table 5.5). One in 25 respondents (3.9%) said they or their family received support from a charity or foundation, while 3.3% said they did not receive assistance, but they needed support.

- The proportions of males and females who had received support from a charity or foundation was similar (4.0% and 3.2% respectively), while the proportion of gender diverse young people who received support was more than twice as high at 9.2%.
- The proportion of gender diverse young people who did not seek support from a charity despite needing support was also higher (13% compared with 3.2% of females and 2.8% of males).

“In the past year, I have had financial difficulty in paying for things that benefits my growth. For example, buying a car was really hard for me and my laptop broke so my school has been harder to do at home.”
Female, 16, New South Wales

Table 5.5: Support/assistance received from a charity/foundation in the past year for young person and/or their family

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Yes, Mission Australia and/or a different charity or foundation (e.g., The Salvation Army, The Smith Family, Beyond Blue)	3.9	3.2	4.0	9.2
No, but I needed support or assistance	3.3	3.2	2.8	13.3
No, I did not need support or assistance from a charity or foundation	68.5	72.7	65.8	55.8
I'm not sure	24.2	20.9	27.3	21.7

Base: all respondents. National n = 16429, females n = 7605, males n = 7934, gender diverse n = 480.

WELLBEING

How happy are young people?

Each respondent was asked to rate how happy they are with their life as a whole on a scale of zero to 10. More than half (57%) of young people indicated overall happiness with their life as a whole, as shown in Table 6.1.

- A notably higher proportion of males reported feeling *very happy* or *happy* (61% compared with 54% of females and 35% of gender diverse young people).
- A greater proportion of gender diverse respondents indicated they felt *sad* or *very sad* (33% compared with 8.5% of females and 7.8% of males).

Table 6.1: Level of happiness with their life as a whole

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Very happy or happy (70-100)	57.0	54.5	61.5	35.0
Not happy or sad (40-60)	33.9	37.0	30.7	31.6
Sad or very sad (0-30)	9.0	8.5	7.8	33.4

Base: all respondents. National n = 17061, females n = 7834, males n = 8290, gender diverse n = 499. 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 very happy or happy; 40-60 signifies not happy or sad; and 0-30 indicates sad or very sad.

“[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] deciding to be happy and authentic despite many obstacles.”

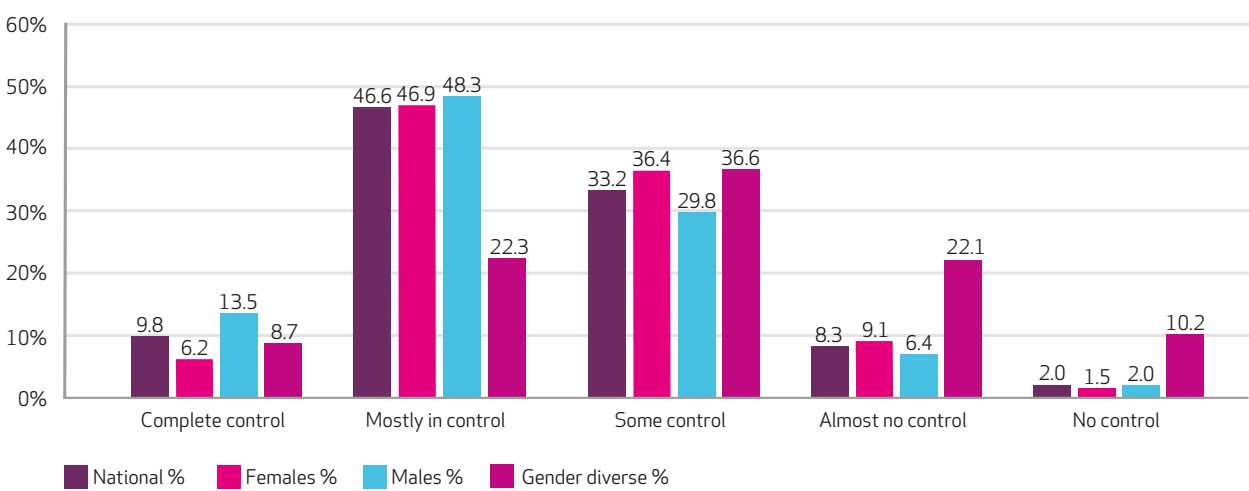
Female, 16, South Australia

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

As shown in Figure 6.1, each respondent was asked to rate how much control they felt they have over their life on a 5-point scale ranging from *complete control* to *no control*. One in 10 (9.8%) respondents said that they had *complete control* over their lives, with 47% selecting they were *mostly in control*. One in 10 young people (10%) reported that they had *almost no control* (8.3%) or *no control* (2.0%) over their lives.

- A higher proportion of males said they had *complete control* over their lives (13% compared with 8.7% of gender diverse young people and 6.2% of females), while more gender diverse young people said they had *no control* or *almost no control* over their lives (32% compared with 11% of females and 8.4% of males).

Figure 6.1: Level of control over their life



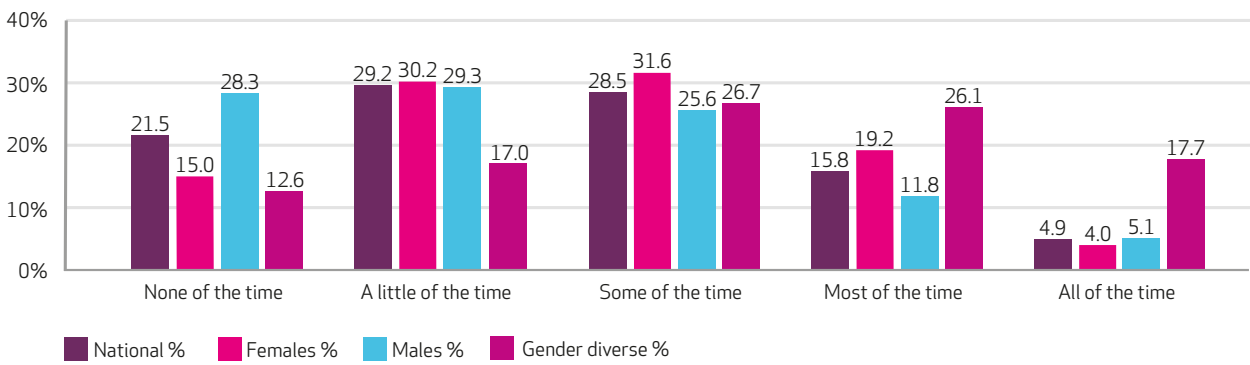
Base: all respondents. National n = 16889, females n = 7771, males n = 8190, gender diverse n = 499.

How lonely are young people?

Young people were asked to select how much of the time in the past four weeks they had felt lonely. They were provided with a 5-point scale ranging from *none of the time* to *all of the time* as shown in Figure 6.2. Half of the respondents (51%) said they felt lonely *none of the time* (22%) or *a little of the time* (29%).

- More than two in five gender diverse young people said they felt lonely *most of the time* or *all of the time* (44% compared with 23% of females and 17% of males).
- A higher proportion of males reported feeling lonely *none of the time* (28% compared with 15% of females and 13% of gender diverse young people).

Figure 6.2: Level of loneliness in the past four weeks



Base: all respondents. National n = 16932, females n = 7782, males n = 8214, gender diverse n = 501.

“My issue isn’t that big of a deal, but I would say that sometimes just feeling lonely, like I don’t have anyone to talk to. I feel much better about it now, things have worked out.”

Female, 15, Queensland

How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked to select how they feel when thinking about the future on a 5-point scale that ranged from *very positive* to *very negative*. Table 6.2 shows that 47% of young people felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future. One third of respondents (34%) reported neutral feelings about the future and the remaining 19% felt *negative* or *very negative* about the future.

- A higher proportion of gender diverse young people reported feeling *very negative* or *negative* about the future (42% compared with 18% of females and 18% of males).

Table 6.2: Feelings about the future

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Very positive or positive	47.1	47.3	48.9	25.5
Neither positive nor negative	34.2	35.1	33.5	32.1
Negative or very negative	18.7	17.7	17.7	42.4

Base: all respondents. National n = 16930, females n = 7798, males n = 8207, gender diverse n = 496.

Does climate change impact the way young people feel or act?

Young people were asked if climate change impacts their thinking, feelings and/or behaviour. Table 6.3 shows that more than half of respondents (54%) said that climate change does not impact their thinking, feelings and/or behaviour. One in five respondents (20%) reported that climate change does impact how they think, feel or act and a further 27% were unsure.

- More than two in five gender diverse young people (44%) reported that climate change impacts their thinking, feelings and/or behaviour. This is almost double the proportion of females (23%) and over three times the proportion of males (14%) reporting the same response.

Table 6.3: Impact of climate change on thinking, feelings and/or behaviour

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Yes	19.7	23.4	14.2	44.0
No	53.5	44.7	64.1	29.5
I'm not sure	26.8	32.0	21.6	26.5

Base: all respondents. National n = 16764, females n = 7751, males n = 8094, gender diverse n = 495.

“Climate change impacts my thinking and feelings into a much more negative view on the world and my future. My behaviour is impacted as I try to be more environmentally aware of my actions.”
Female, 16, Tasmania



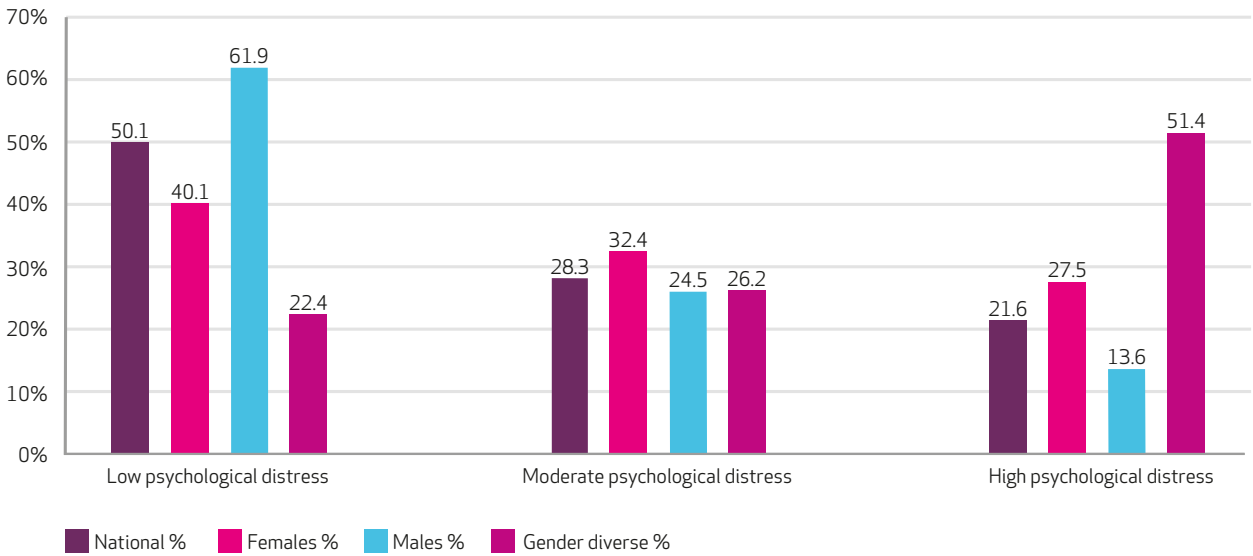
What is the level of psychological distress in young people?

The Kessler 6 (K6) is a measure of non-specific psychological distress (Kessler et al., 2002). It includes a six-item scale that asks respondents how frequently in the past four weeks they have felt: 1) nervous; 2) hopeless; 3) restless or fidgety; 4) so sad that nothing could cheer them up; 5) that everything was an effort; and 6) worthless. Based on scoring criteria used by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (Rioseco, Warren & Daraganova, 2020), the K6 has been used to classify respondents into the following three groups: low psychological distress (mental disorder unlikely), moderate psychological distress (mental disorder possible) and high psychological distress (mental disorder very likely).

As shown in Figure 6.3, half of respondents (50%) were classified as having low psychological distress based on their K6 responses. K6 scores for 28% of young people pointed to moderate psychological distress. More than one in five respondents (22%) had K6 scores that indicated high psychological distress.

- K6 scores for more than six in 10 males (62%) indicated low psychological distress (compared with 40% of females and 22% of gender diverse young people).
- Half of gender diverse young people had high psychological distress (51% compared with 27% of females and 14% of males).

Figure 6.3: Level of psychological distress



Base: all respondents. National n = 16628, females n = 7671, males n = 8053, gender diverse n = 485.
Note: cut-off scores for categories of psychological distress are as follows: low = 0 to 7, moderate = 8 to 12 and high = 13 to 24 (Hilton et al., 2008). These cut-off scores are used by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (Rioseco, Warren & Daraganova, 2020).

“My mental health has been an ongoing struggle, but I also do high school online. I’m constantly depressed, isolated, anxious, and lonely.”
Non-binary, 16, Northern Territory

SUPPORT AND CONNECTEDNESS

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

Each respondent was asked to indicate where they would go for help with important issues in their life. Table 7.1 shows that, from a list of sources, almost two thirds (64%) of young people would go to their *friend(s)* for support, with six in 10 going to their *parent(s)* or *guardian(s)* (59%). Following the top six sources of support, all of which related to personal relationships, one in five (20%) of young people said they would turn to the *internet* for help with important issues in their life.

- For help with important issues, a higher proportion of females indicated they would turn to their *friend(s)* (70% compared with 60% of gender diverse young people and 58% of males), *parents(s)* or *guardian(s)* (62% compared with 58% of males and 30% of gender diverse young people) and *brother/sister* (37% compared with 30% of males and 22% of gender diverse young people).
- A greater proportion of gender diverse young people turned to the *internet* (30% compared with 20% of females and 19% of males) and their *GP or health professional* (30% compared with 22% of females and 12% of males) for support with important issues in their lives. Gender diverse young people sought support from their *parent(s)* or *guardian(s)*, *brother/sister* or *relative(s)* in lower proportions than females and males.

Table 7.1: Where young people go for help with important issues

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Friend(s)	63.6	70.0	58.1	60.0
Parent(s) or guardian(s)	58.7	61.9	57.6	30.4
Brother/sister	32.9	37.3	29.7	22.2
Relative(s)	27.7	28.8	27.4	15.6
Pet(s)	23.7	29.0	17.4	33.8
Partner or significant other	21.1	21.5	20.4	26.5
Internet	20.2	20.2	19.4	29.9
GP or health professional	17.2	21.6	12.2	29.6
Teacher/coach	16.9	16.7	17.5	12.8
Social media	13.2	15.2	10.6	23.1
School counsellor	11.0	11.6	9.9	18.8
Mobile apps	8.1	8.8	6.9	14.2
Spiritual/religious mentor	6.4	6.4	6.5	6.3
Community service	5.0	4.4	5.2	12.9
Other	2.7	1.5	3.4	10.1
None of the above, I would keep the issue to myself	11.6	8.1	14.8	12.4

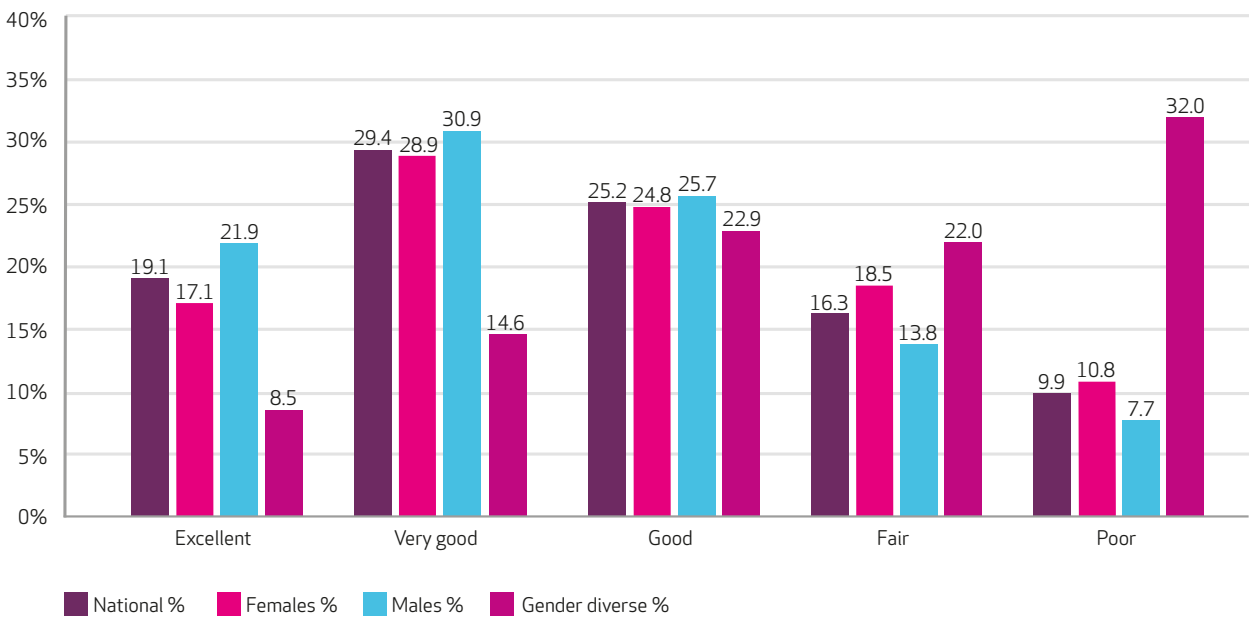
Base: all respondents. National n = 17126, females n = 7900, males n = 8280, gender diverse n = 505. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

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

As shown in Figure 7.1, young people were asked to rate their family’s ability to get along with one another on a 5-point scale that ranged from *excellent* to *poor*. Half (49%) of respondents rated their family’s ability to get along as *excellent* (19%) or *very good* (29%). One quarter (26%) of young people said their family’s ability to get along was either *fair* (16%) or *poor* (10%).

- Males gave the most positive ratings of their family’s ability to get along, with 53% rating *excellent* or *very good* (compared with 46% of females and 23% of gender diverse young people).
- Gender diverse young people had the highest negative rating of their family’s ability to get along, with 32% rating *poor* (compared with 11% of females and 7.7% of males).

Figure 7.1: Family’s ability to get along with one another



Base: all respondents. National n = 16958, females n = 7802, males n = 8226, gender diverse n = 497.

What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities they had been involved in over the past year from the list of options shown in Table 7.2. The top three activities for young people were *sports (as a participant)* (62%), *sports (as a spectator)* (47%) and *volunteer work* (39%). More than one quarter (27%) of respondents reported they had participated in *student leadership groups/activities* in the past year. A similar proportion indicated they had taken had part in *arts/cultural/music groups/activities* (26%).

- In line with national results, *sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *volunteer work* were the top three activities for both females and males. The top activity for gender diverse young people was *arts/cultural/music groups/activities* (42%).
- Higher proportions of males reported taking part in *sports (as a participant)* (66% compared with 60% of females and 30% of gender diverse young people) and *sports (as a spectator)* (53% compared with 43% of females and 28% of gender diverse young people) in the past year.
- Conversely, higher proportions of females participated in *volunteer work* (44% compared with 36% of gender diverse young people and 35% of males), and *student leadership groups/activities* (32% compared with 22% of males and 22% of gender diverse young people) in the past year.

“Because all of my friends are going through the same thing, we can all help each other and it makes it a little less stressful.”

Female, 16, Victoria

Table 7.2: Activities involved in during the past year

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Sports (as a participant)	61.8	60.5	65.8	30.4
Sports (as a spectator)	47.3	43.1	53.2	28.1
Volunteer work	39.0	44.0	34.7	36.1
Student leaderships groups/activities	26.8	32.4	22.1	22.2
Arts/cultural/music groups/activities	26.4	32.9	18.8	42.4
Youth groups/activities	20.4	20.6	20.0	28.4
Religious groups/activities	17.3	18.8	16.2	14.2
Environmental groups/activities	6.9	6.8	6.6	12.7
Political groups/activities	3.6	2.9	3.6	12.2
None of the above	14.4	13.1	15.1	21.1

Base: all respondents. National n = 17012, females n = 7841, males n = 8234, gender diverse n = 498. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

“The main thing that helped me overcome the challenge was sport as I was able to use energy in a way that benefited my health.”

Male, 17, Australian Capital Territory



What activities do young people find hard to do?

Each respondent was presented with a range of activities and asked if they find them hard to do. Table 7.3 shows that three in 10 (30%) young people said they found it hard to *fit in and socialise with everyone* and 29% found it hard to *turn to friends and family if you need help*. A quarter (23%) said they find it hard to *make choices and feel independent*. One in five felt it is hard to *turn to services/organisations* if they need help (21%).

- A larger proportion of gender diverse young people compared with either females or males reported they found each listed activity hard to do, particularly *fitting in and socialising with everyone* (55% compared with 35% for females and 23% for males) and *turn to friends and family if you need help* (50% compared with 35% for females and 23% for males).

Table 7.3: Activities young people find hard to do

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Fit in and socialise with everyone? (e.g., at school, work or socially)	29.6	34.5	22.8	55.1
Turn to friends and family if you need help?	29.5	34.9	22.8	49.5
Make choices and feel independent?	22.5	27.1	16.6	37.4
Turn to services/organisations if you need help?	20.8	24.4	16.1	40.3
Do everyday activities as young people your age usually do?	20.0	22.9	15.0	49.9
Do things in public places with friends? (e.g., go to shopping centres, sporting or music events)	16.3	16.9	13.9	37.0
Travel around the community? (e.g., using footpaths or public transport)	9.9	11.1	7.9	23.0
None of the above	43.9	35.6	53.9	19.9

Base: all respondents. National n = 17012, females n = 7841, males n = 8234, gender diverse n = 498. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

“At the end of last year, I was struggling with social anxiety which made me need to leave class and prevented me from reaching out to friends or getting a job.”

Female, 15, New South Wales

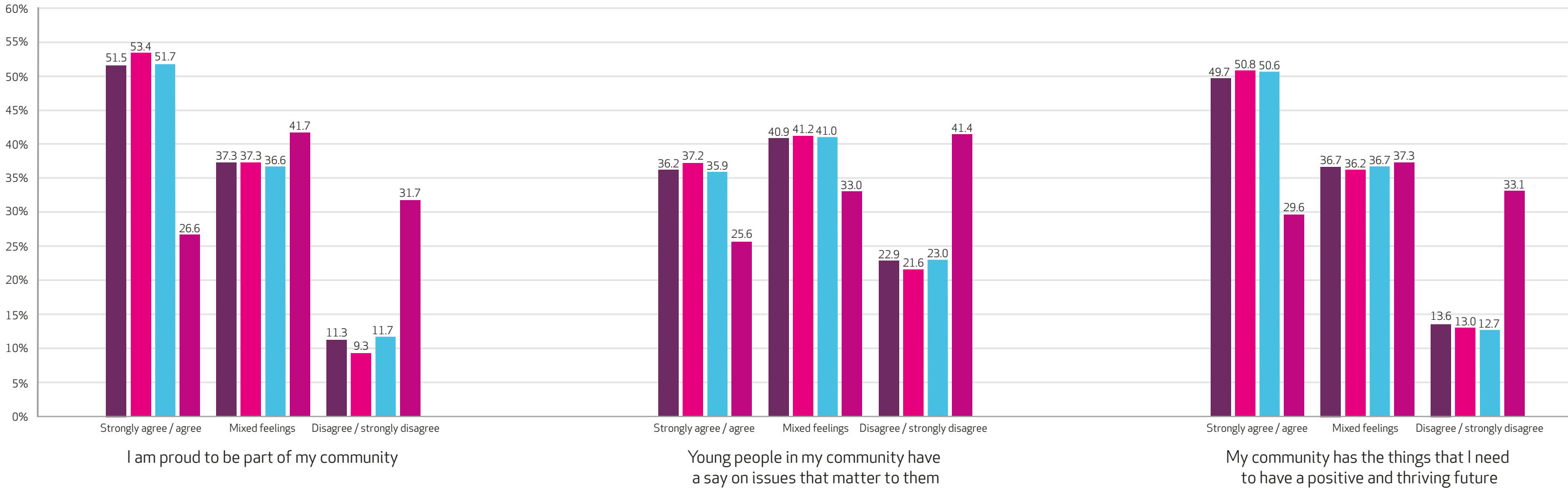
How do young people feel about their community?

Each young person was asked the extent to which they agree with three statements about their community, as shown in Figure 7.2. Half (51%) of young people *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement *I am proud to be part of my community*. Half (50%) of respondents also agreed that *my community has the things that I need to have a positive and thriving future*. The statement *young people in my community have a say on issues that matter to them* had lower levels of agreement than the prior statements, with 36% of respondents selecting *agree* or *strongly agree*. It also had higher levels of disagreement with 23% of young people *disagreeing* or *strongly disagreeing*.

- Gender diverse young people reported higher levels of disagreement across all three of the statements.

The level of disagreement with the statement *I am proud to be part of my community* was three times higher than the average of other genders, and approximately twice as high for the other statements.

Figure 7.2: Feelings young people have about their community



Base: all respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement.



Do young people have cultural and spiritual beliefs?

As shown in Table 7.4, almost one in five (18%) young people said they have *both spiritual and cultural beliefs*, with one in five (20%) reporting just *spiritual beliefs* and over one in 10 (12%) just *cultural beliefs*. The remainder (50%) said they had *no spiritual or cultural beliefs*.

- A higher proportion of females than males said they had *both spiritual and cultural beliefs* (22% compared with 16%).

Table 7.4: Whether young people have cultural and/or spiritual beliefs

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Yes – both spiritual and cultural beliefs	18.5	21.6	15.5	17.6
Yes – spiritual beliefs	19.9	20.4	19.2	24.8
Yes – cultural beliefs	11.7	11.8	11.8	7.0
No spiritual or cultural beliefs	50.0	46.2	53.5	50.6

Base: all respondents. National n = 16899, females n = 7800, males n = 8187, gender diverse n = 486.

UNFAIR TREATMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Have young people been treated unfairly or faced discrimination?

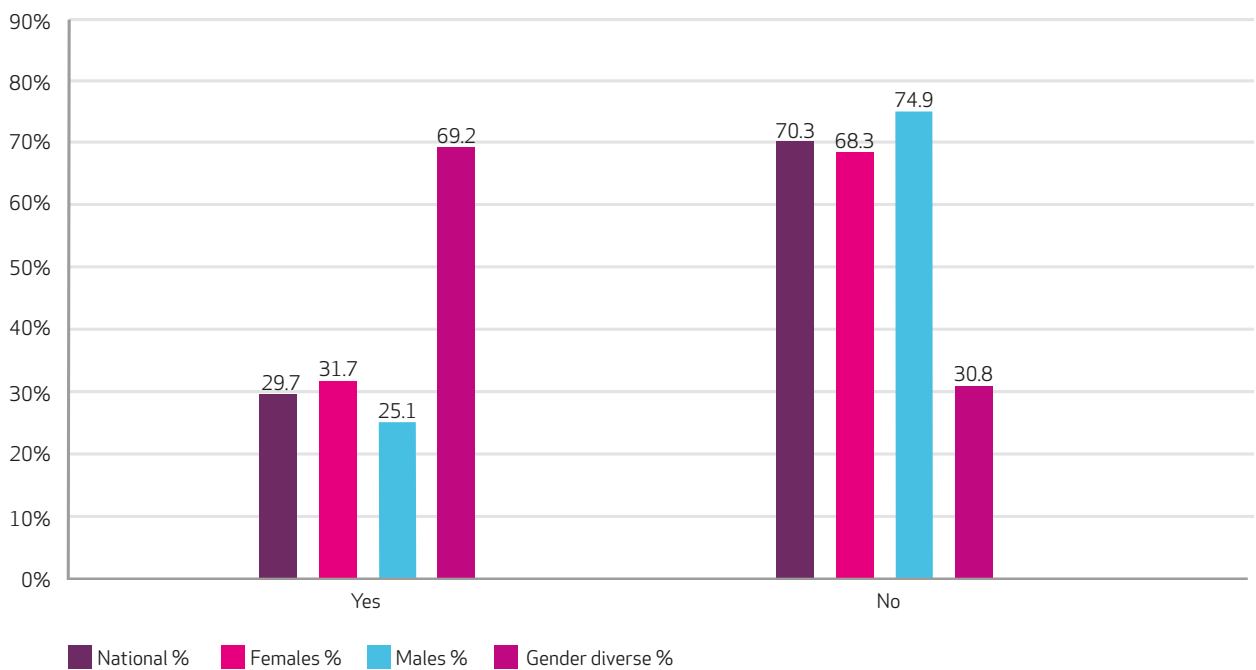
As shown in Figure 8.1, three in 10 (30%) young people said that they had experienced unfair treatment or discrimination in the past year.

- Experiences of unfair treatment or discrimination were reported by seven in 10 (69%) gender diverse young people.
- Females were more likely than males to have felt they were treated unfairly in the past year (32% compared with 25%).

Young people who reported being treated unfairly or discriminated against in the past year were then asked to identify reasons for being treated unfairly from a list of suggested items as shown in Table 8.1. Among these respondents, the top three reasons given for the unfair treatment were their *physical appearance* (37%), *race/cultural background* (33%) and *gender* (26%). Among them:

- Twice the proportion of females than males had been treated unfairly due to their *gender* (29% compared with 14%) and a higher proportion of females than males had been treated unfairly due to their *mental health* (24% compared with 18% of males).
- Almost twice the proportion of males than females had been treated unfairly due to their *disability* (11% compared with 5.9% of females).
- More than two thirds of gender diverse young people felt they had been treated unfairly due to their *gender* (67%) or their *sexuality* (67%). Unfair treatment due to *mental health* was also higher among gender diverse young people (39% compared with 24% for females and 18% for males), *personal views* (39% compared with 24% for both females and males) and *disability* (37% compared with 11% for males and 5.9% for females).

Figure 8.1. Unfair treatment or discrimination in the past year



Base: all respondents. National n =17089, females n = 7874, males n = 8275, gender diverse n = 501.



Table 8.1: Reason(s) for being treated unfairly in the past year

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Physical appearance	37.5	35.3	39.0	42.6
Race/cultural background	33.4	33.2	35.2	25.2
Gender	25.6	28.9	13.7	67.4
Personal views	25.1	23.9	24.1	38.8
Mental health	22.5	23.6	17.6	39.4
Sexuality	17.1	13.6	11.8	66.6
Age	13.8	14.0	11.7	23.2
Religion	13.8	13.0	14.0	18.5
Disability	10.3	5.9	11.0	37.0
Financial background	6.8	5.2	7.5	13.1
Other	7.8	6.1	9.4	11.0
I'm not sure	8.7	9.5	8.6	3.2

Base: respondents who reported they had been treated unfairly or faced discrimination. National n = 4990, females n = 2457, males n = 2046, gender diverse n = 344.
Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

“I struggle with lots of self-doubt and I am extremely insecure about my appearance; this gets in the way of things I want to do, such as going to the beach with friends or being able to feel comfortable in the thing I love most: dance.”

Female, 15, South Australia



ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Do young people think alcohol is a problem?

Each young person was asked the extent to which they agree with three statements about alcohol, as shown in Table 9.1. More than half (55%) of young people *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement *alcohol is a problem in Australia*. Three in 10 (29%) agreed that *alcohol is a problem in my community*. The statement *alcohol is a problem for my family/friends* had lower levels of agreement than the prior statements, with 18% of respondents selecting *agree* or *strongly agree*. It also had higher levels of disagreement with 58% of young people *disagreeing* or *strongly disagreeing* that *alcohol is a problem for my family/friends*.

- Six in 10 (61%) gender diverse young people had a level of agreement that *alcohol is a problem in Australia* (compared with 49% for males), less than two in five (38%) had a level of agreement that *alcohol is a problem in my community* (compared with 30% for females and 27% for males) and three in 10 (31%) had a level of agreement that *alcohol is a problem for my family/friends* (compared with 19% for females and 17% for males).
- A larger proportion of males (20%) had a level of disagreement that *alcohol is a problem in Australia* compared with females (7.9%).

Table 9.1: Feelings young people have about alcohol

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Alcohol is a problem in Australia				
Strongly agree / agree	54.5	59.8	49.1	61.2
Neither agree nor disagree	31.1	32.3	30.8	18.3
Disagree / strongly disagree	14.4	7.9	20.2	20.5
Alcohol is a problem in my community				
Strongly agree / agree	28.7	29.8	27.0	37.6
Neither agree nor disagree	37.9	40.6	35.7	30.0
Disagree / strongly disagree	33.5	29.6	37.4	32.4
Alcohol is a problem for my family/friends				
Strongly agree / agree	18.3	19.1	16.6	31.3
Neither agree nor disagree	23.2	23.3	23.2	19.5
Disagree / strongly disagree	58.5	57.6	60.1	49.1

Base: all respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement.

“[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] the challenge of staying away from drugs and alcohol and trying not to be peer pressured.”

Female, 15, Tasmania

Do young people think drugs are a problem?

As shown in Table 9.2, young people were asked the extent to which they agree with three statements about drugs. Less than two thirds (64%) of young people *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement *drugs are a problem in Australia*. Over one third (35%) also agreed that *drugs are a problem in my community*. The statement *drugs are a problem for my family/friends* had lower levels of agreement than the prior statements, with 13% of respondents selecting *agree* or *strongly agree*. It also had higher levels of disagreement with 68% of young people *disagreeing* or *strongly disagreeing* that *drugs are a problem for my family/friends*.

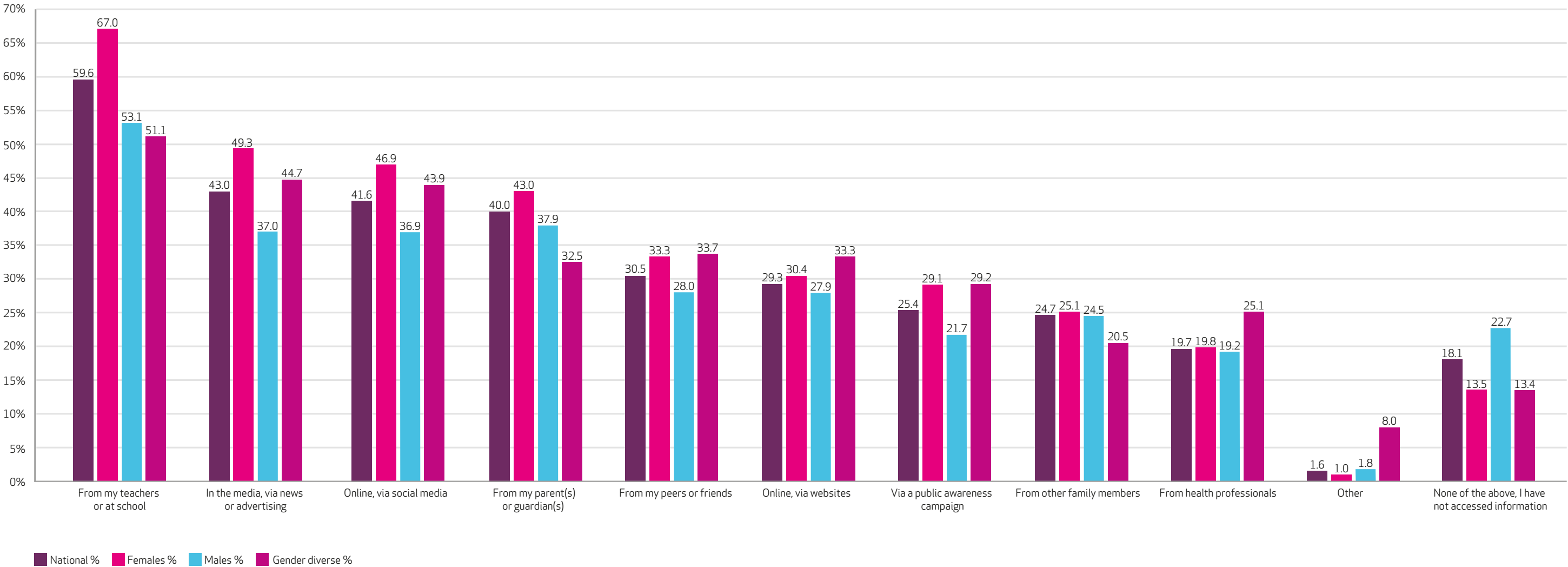
- One in five (19%) gender diverse young people had a level of disagreement that *drugs are a problem in Australia* (compared with 13% of males and 6.1% of females), more than two in five (44%) had a level of agreement that *drugs are a problem in my community* (compared with 36% of males and 34% of females) and one quarter (25%) had a level of agreement that *drugs are a problem for my family/friends* (compared with 13% for both males and females).
- More than twice as many males (13%) had a level of disagreement that *drugs are a problem in Australia* compared with females (6.1%).

Table 9.2: Feelings young people have about drugs

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Drugs are a problem in Australia				
Strongly agree / agree	64.1	67.1	61.7	61.1
Neither agree nor disagree	25.8	26.8	25.1	19.6
Disagree / strongly disagree	10.1	6.1	13.3	19.3
Drugs are a problem in my community				
Strongly agree / agree	35.1	33.6	35.9	43.9
Neither agree nor disagree	32.8	35.5	30.8	23.4
Disagree / strongly disagree	32.1	30.9	33.3	32.7
Drugs are a problem for my family/friends				
Strongly agree / agree	13.3	12.9	13.0	24.9
Neither agree nor disagree	18.7	17.8	19.7	16.7
Disagree / strongly disagree	67.9	69.3	67.3	58.3

Base: all respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement.

Figure 9.1: Sources of information about risk of alcohol or drug use in the last year



Base: all respondents. National n = 16536, females n = 7628, males n = 8000, gender diverse n = 493. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

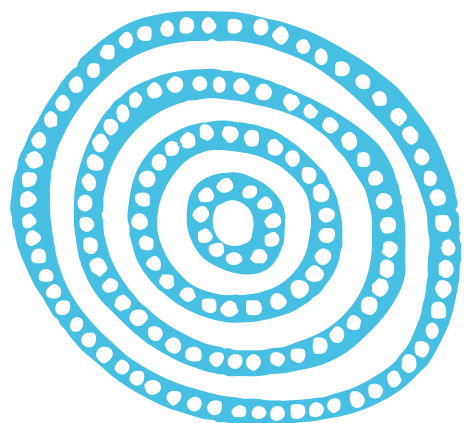
Where do young people find information about the risk of alcohol or drug use?

Each respondent was asked to indicate where they have accessed information about the risk of alcohol or drug use in the last year. Figure 9.1 shows that from a list of sources, six in 10 (60%) young people have accessed information from a teacher or school, with more than two in five (43%) seeking information in the media via news or advertising, online via social media (42%) and from my parent(s) or guardian(s) (40%). Only one in five (20%) accessed information from health professionals.

- A higher proportion of females indicated they had sought information from my teachers or at school (67% compared with 53% of males and 51% of gender diverse young people). Similarly, a higher proportion of females than males indicated they had sought information in the media, via news or advertising (49% compared with 37%), and online, via social media (47% compared with 37%).
- A higher proportion of gender diverse young people sought information from health professionals (25% compared with 20% of females and 19% of males).

“[To help young people with risky alcohol or drug use] consider group talk sessions in schools run by students who have quit vaping/drugs/alcohol and want to help others do the same. This empowers the people most effected (sic) and grants them the respect they deserve. Substance abuse is a systemic issue that requires reform of welfare and social conditions.”

Female, 19, New South Wales



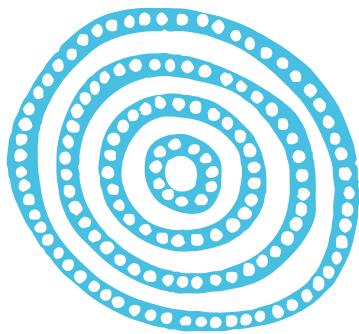
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander results

- ▶ Profile of respondents
- ▶ Personal challenges and concerns
- ▶ National issues
- ▶ Education and employment
- ▶ Housing, homelessness and financial situation
- ▶ Wellbeing
- ▶ Support and connectedness
- ▶ Unfair treatment and discrimination
- ▶ Alcohol and drugs

All quotes in this section are from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander results



PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 1,308 (7.7%) respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 78% of respondents identified as Aboriginal, 11% identified as Torres Strait Islander and 11% identified as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Figure 10.1 indicates the number and proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents for each Australian state and territory.

Gender

The gender breakdown of respondents was male (52%), followed by female (38%), with 8.2% gender diverse and 1.7% preferred not to say.

Cultural and ethnic identity

Three in 10 (29%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents said that they strongly identify with a cultural or ethnic group, most commonly Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander or specific Indigenous groups.

More than one in five (22%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported speaking a language other than English at home. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages were most commonly spoken.

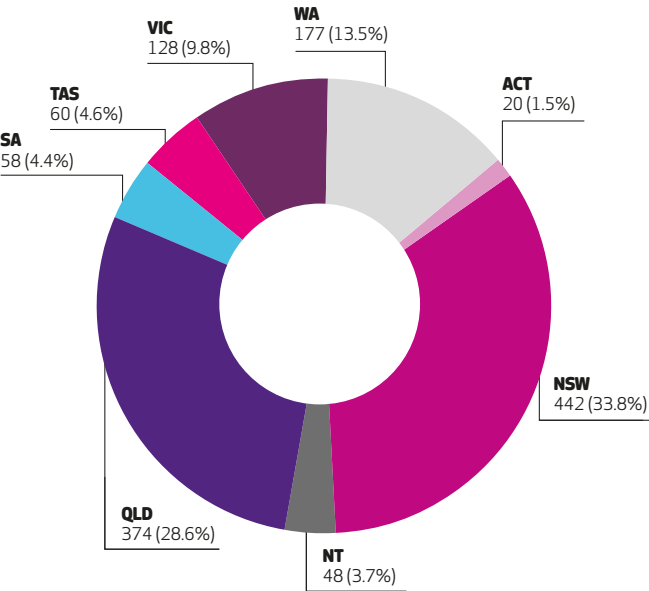
Disability

One in seven (14%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents identified as a person with disability, with 1.2% preferring not to say. The most frequently cited disabilities (in order of frequency) were autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Mental health

One quarter (24%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents identified as a person with a mental health condition and 19% preferred not to say. The most frequently cited mental health conditions (in order of frequency) were anxiety disorders, depressive disorders and neurodevelopmental disorders which include ASD and ADHD.

Figure 10.1: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents by Australian state/territory



PERSONAL CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

Biggest personal challenge

As shown in Table 10.1, the top personal challenges cited by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were in the areas of *school and study* (34%) and *personal relationships* (20%).

In *school and study* challenges, young people reported struggling with their schoolwork and trying to manage their education with other responsibilities in their life. For those who said *personal relationships*, a lot of the challenges they faced related to issues with members of their family or friends.

"I have found it difficult to complete my studies and find affordable housing."

Female, 18, Western Australia

Young people who experienced *school and study* challenges tackled this by engaging in *entertainment and recreation* or prioritising *sleep*, while those experiencing *personal relationship* challenges tried to overcome their challenge by *distracting themselves* or through *entertainment and recreation* (see Table 10.2).

"Doing what I love and making sure I was distracted and unable to think about it [would have helped me overcome my challenge]."

Male, 15, Tasmania

Although young people reported taking various steps to manage their personal challenges, they still felt that more support was needed to assist them.

Young people suggested that being more organised and talking to someone about their issues would have helped them address their *school or study* challenges, while those with *personal relationship* challenges wished they had someone they could talk to about their issue.

"Maybe more space to talk to my family and the people directly involved with me, because I can tell my friends and peers about it but at the end of the day they can't really do much."

Female, 17, Queensland

Table 10.1: Biggest personal challenge experienced in the past year for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
School and study	33.6	39.7	32.3	45.7
Personal relationships	20.1	26.6	16.1	20.8
Mental health	14.2	20.0	10.7	20.2
Finance and housing	11.3	11.0	11.2	5.2
Physical health	4.9	4.2	5.3	5.4
Other (includes various low frequency challenges not listed above)	17.7	8.1	20.1	14.2
Not sure/no challenges identified	10.0	8.8	11.3	7.0

Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1115, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 420, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 565, non-Indigenous respondents n = 13650. Note: items based on content analysis of 100% of responses to this question. The percentages may not total 100% as responses can fall into multiple items. Items are listed in order of total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency.

Table 10.2: Top five supports for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people when facing their biggest personal challenge

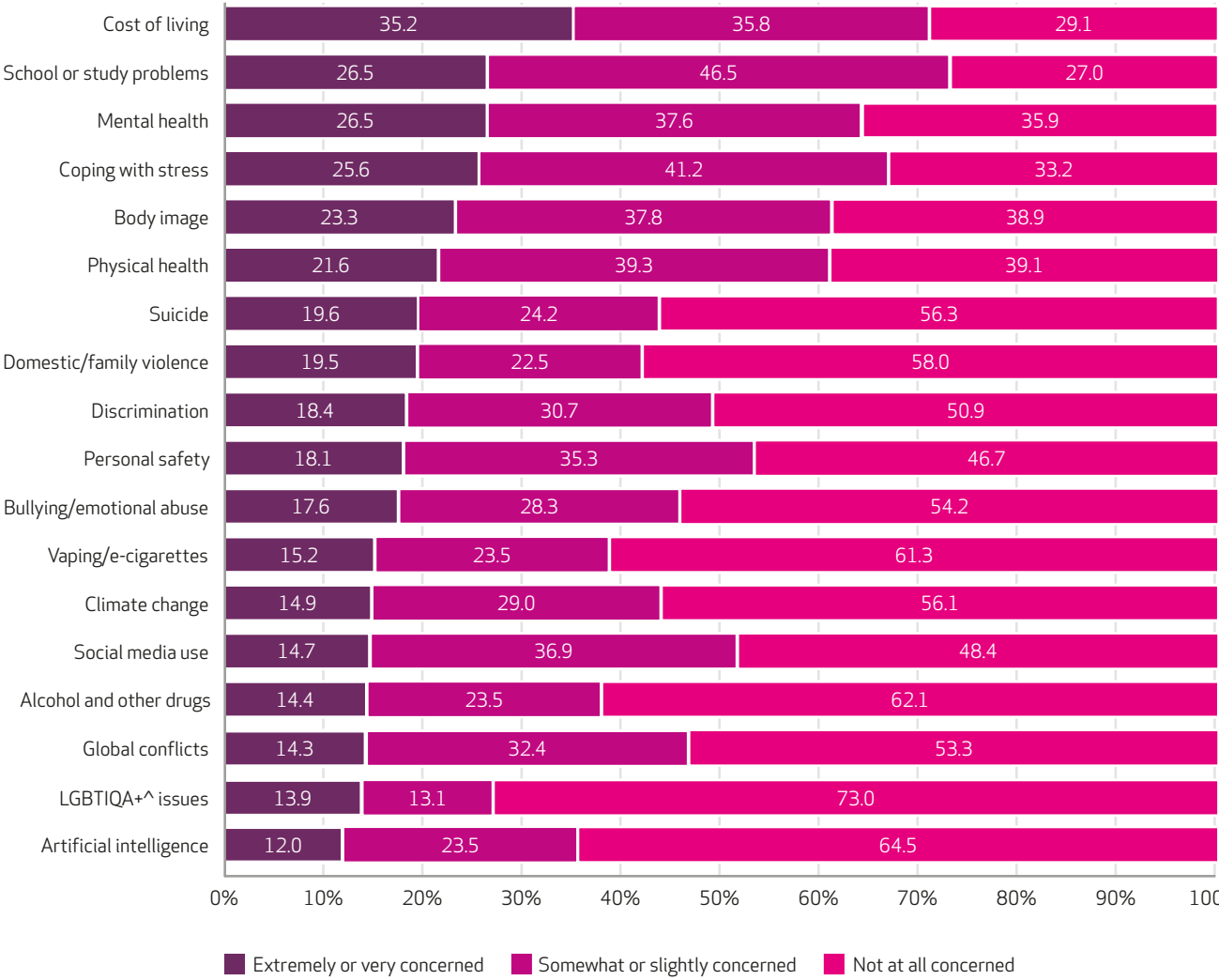
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %*	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %*	Non-Indigenous respondents %
School and study challenge				
Entertainment and recreation	38.1	36.2	41.5	42.3
Sleeping	35.9	39.4	30.9	43.9
Taking a break	33.2	32.5	34.5	42.4
Self-care	27.9	35.9	19.6	32.5
Studying	25.8	22.4	30.6	37.9
Personal relationships challenge				
Distracting myself	48.9	49.1	47.8	49.3
Entertainment and recreation	40.4	44.8	33.6	51.1
Sleeping	35.7	43.7	27.0	42.0
Reaching out to family	31.7	38.9	28.2	33.6
Self-care	31.5	40.9	16.9	36.9
Mental health challenge				
Distracting myself	57.3	56.1	59.7	48.0
Entertainment and recreation	51.4	62.9	33.0	53.5
Self-care	48.3	48.8	51.1	42.4
Sleeping	44.6	47.0	43.5	45.1
Taking a break	38.7	47.0	26.8	40.3

Base: all respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per challenge. Items are listed in order of total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency. *Sample size for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males was below 100 for *mental health challenges*. Sample size for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males was below 100 for *personal relationship* challenges. Please interpret with caution.

Issues of concern

As shown in Figure 10.2, the top four issues of concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people this year were *cost of living* (35%), *school or study problems* (27%), *mental health* (27%), and *coping with stress* (26%).

Figure 10.2: Issues of concern to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the past year



Base: all respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement. Items ranked high to low according to responses for *extremely* or *very* concerned. ^Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Table 10.3a: Issues of concern to female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the past year

	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Cost of living	35.9	38.9	25.1
Body image	35.9	38.2	25.9
School or study problems	34.7	47.6	17.7
Mental health	33.9	42.1	24.0
Coping with stress	33.3	46.0	20.8
Physical health	22.6	46.1	31.4
Suicide	19.7	31.1	49.3
Bullying/emotional abuse	18.7	38.1	43.3
Discrimination	17.9	40.3	41.8
Domestic/family violence	17.7	26.2	56.1
Personal safety	16.1	42.6	41.3
Social media use	14.3	49.3	36.4
Alcohol and other drugs	13.8	29.6	56.7
Climate change	13.3	38.0	48.6
Global conflicts	12.1	36.2	51.7
Vaping/e-cigarettes	11.6	30.8	57.6
Artificial intelligence	8.9	28.7	62.3
LGBTIQA+^ issues	6.5	17.9	75.6

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female respondents. Sample sizes vary per row. Note: items ranked high to low according to the female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander responses for *extremely or very concerned* for each item. ^Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Table 10.3b: Issues of concern to male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the past year

	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Cost of living	30.5	38.0	31.5
School or study problems	19.2	48.9	31.9
Mental health	18.3	36.1	45.6
Physical health	18.0	36.3	45.8
Domestic/family violence	17.5	20.0	62.5
Personal safety	16.9	30.5	52.6
Coping with stress	16.2	41.5	42.3
Suicide	15.5	19.4	65.1
Vaping/e-cigarettes	15.1	18.5	66.4
Discrimination	14.9	24.9	60.2
Bullying/emotional abuse	14.2	21.2	64.6
Social media use	12.7	30.0	57.3
Climate change	12.2	23.4	64.4
LGBTIQA+^ issues	12.1	9.6	78.3
Alcohol and other drugs	12.0	20.9	67.1
Global conflicts	11.5	31.5	57.0
Body image	10.9	39.2	49.9
Artificial intelligence	10.2	19.3	70.5

Base: all male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander male respondents. Sample sizes vary per row. Note: items ranked high to low according to the male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander responses for *extremely or very concerned* for each item. ^Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.



NATIONAL ISSUES

As shown in Table 10.4, the most important issues in Australia as identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in 2024 were *cost of living* (39%), *violence, safety and crime* (26%), *alcohol and other drugs* (23%) and *discrimination and inequality* (20%). We have seen increased awareness among young people this year about contemporary issues relating to *cost of living*, *violence, safety and crime*, *alcohol and other drugs* and *housing and homelessness*.

“[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] watching my parents struggle to pay the bills in the growing economy.”

Female, 15, New South Wales

Table 10.4: Top 10 most important issues in Australia today for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2024 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females 2024 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males 2024 %	Non-Indigenous respondents 2024 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2023 %*	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2022 %*
Cost of living	39.2	44.3	37.2	57.8	25.6	17.8
Violence, safety and crime	25.6	30.8	24.8	25.4	17.9	12.1
Alcohol and other drugs	22.8	21.3	26.0	16.2	18.5	12.7
Discrimination and inequality	20.3	26.7	14.8	22.0	24.0	24.5
Housing and homelessness	19.9	20.1	20.9	16.9	16.9	13.2
Mental health	18.4	24.9	14.7	23.7	23.0	27.9
Climate change and the environment	15.3	17.9	14.0	27.7	20.7	31.5
Australian politics	6.7	3.2	8.1	5.6	8.8	9.8
Education	6.4	7.4	6.7	7.5	7.5	6.2
Employment	6.0	3.4	7.8	4.2	4.4	7.8

Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1138, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 424, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 583, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 13685. Note: respondents were able to write up to three issues. Items are listed in order of 2024 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents’ frequency. Labels describing some issues have been updated in 2024 to better reflect contemporary language – details of the changes can be accessed in the ‘About the Survey’ section of this report. *2022 and 2023 data is weighted, based on methodology implemented for this report, and will not match reports published in these years.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Education

As shown in Table 10.5, over six in 10 (62%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were studying full-time and one in six (16%) were studying part-time. Of those currently studying, half of respondents (49%) reported they were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their studies, while 15% indicated they were *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* (see Figure 10.3).

Of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents still at school, close to nine in 10 (88%) stated that they intended to complete Year 12.

As shown in Figure 10.4, more than one third (37%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents plan to *get a job* after school. One third (33%) reported plans to *go to university* and 27% indicated they would *get an apprenticeship*.

As shown in Table 10.6, more than one third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (35%) felt there were barriers that would impact on the achievement of their study/work goals after leaving school. Of these respondents, 37% reported *mental health* was a barrier impacting their achievement of study/work goals (see Table 10.7). The second and third highest barriers reported were *where you live* (36%) and *lack of motivation* (34%).

“My mental health has been the biggest challenge. Being in grade 11 while only being 15 has been hard, as everyone around you is older and doing older things, like driving and going out. A lot of pressure is put on me to do well in school and go to university, therefore causing stress.”

Female, 15, Queensland

Table 10.5: Participation in education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Studying full-time	61.7	64.1	60.8	82.8
Studying part-time	16.1	13.6	19.5	8.3
Not studying	22.2	22.3	19.7	8.9

Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1303, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 486, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 666, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15584.

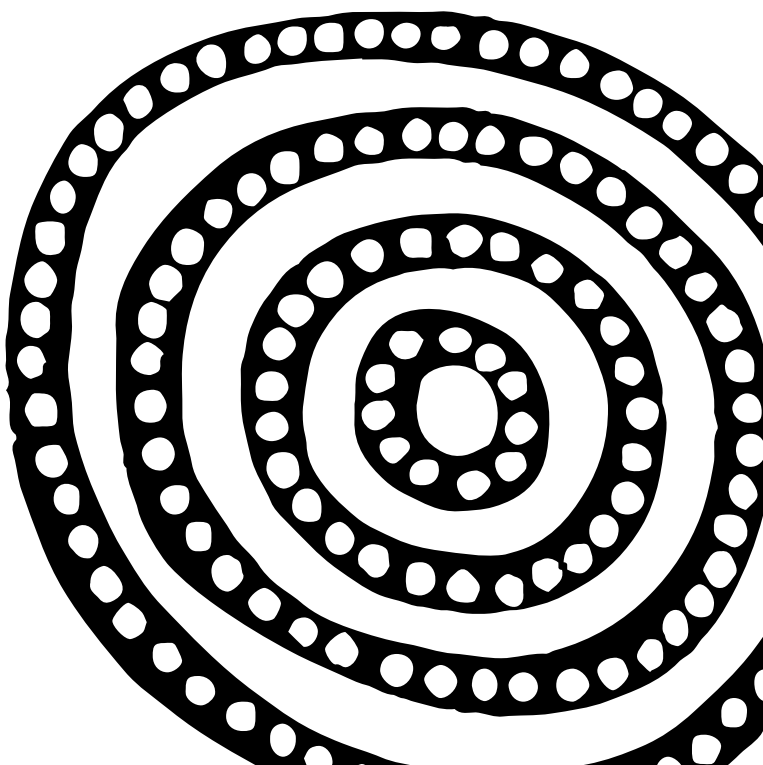
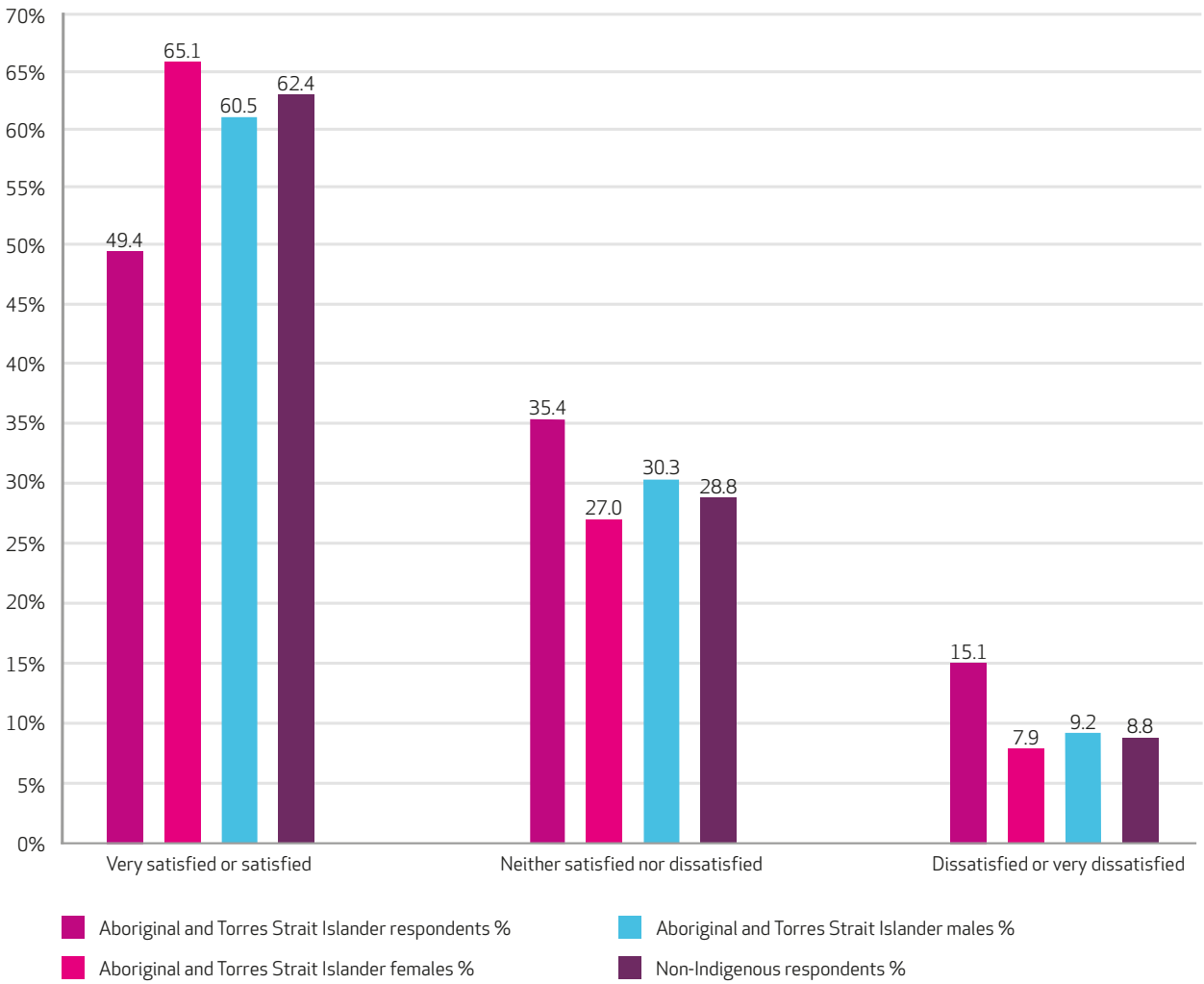
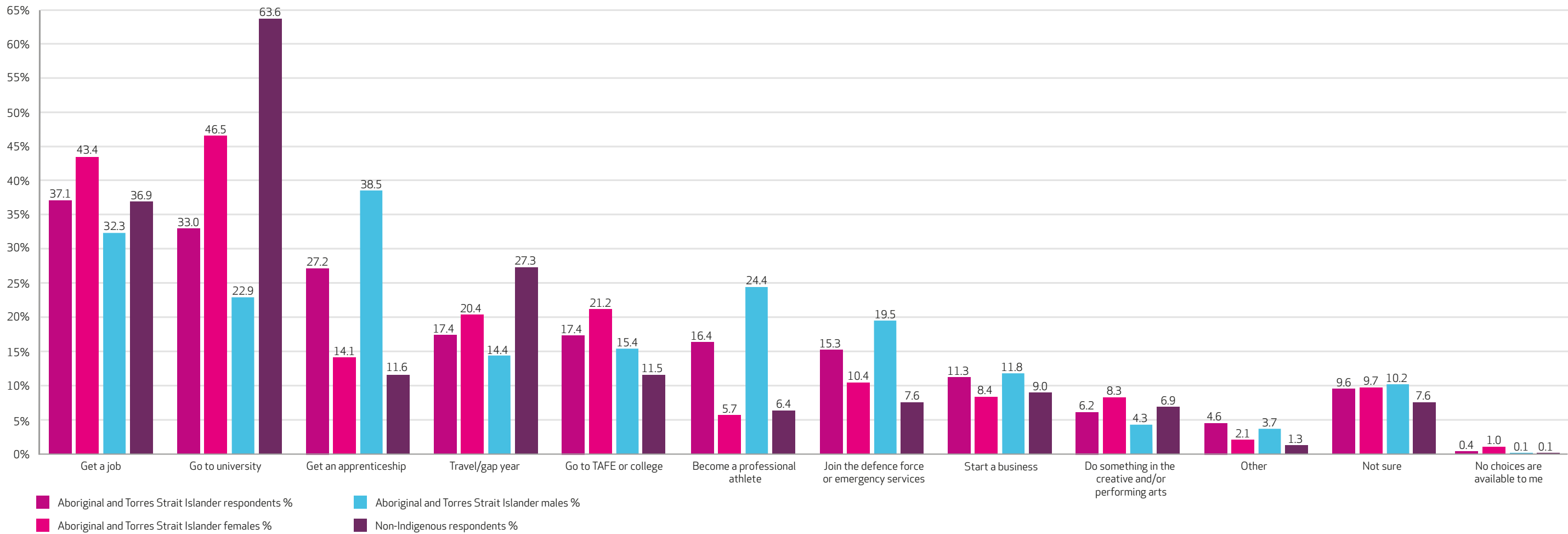


Figure 10.3: Satisfaction with studies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people



Base: all respondents currently studying. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1010, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 377, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 535, non-Indigenous respondents n = 14091.

Figure 10.4: Plans after leaving school for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people



Base: all respondents currently studying at school or equivalent. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 900, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 335, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 479, non-Indigenous respondents n = 13603.
Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency.



Table 10.6: Are there any barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people achieving study/work goals

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Yes	34.8	37.3	29.5	28.5
No	65.2	62.7	70.5	71.5

Base: all respondents currently studying at school or equivalent. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 878, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 325, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 471, non-Indigenous respondents n = 13441.

Table 10.7: Barriers to achieving study/work goals for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %*	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Mental health	36.6	38.5	32.9	33.3
Where you live	35.6	22.5	43.1	17.0
Lack of motivation	33.8	26.1	43.0	37.9
Financial difficulties	31.5	30.5	32.8	29.4
Transport	30.3	23.3	37.2	12.0
Lack of confidence	29.1	26.0	25.4	31.5
Academic ability	24.6	20.4	24.1	26.9
Family responsibilities	22.8	18.6	29.7	11.6
Lack of jobs	21.2	17.4	24.1	9.6
Physical health	16.8	10.6	21.5	7.9
Discrimination	16.6	6.6	23.9	4.4
Cultural responsibilities	16.0	4.4	21.5	2.1
Lack of information	15.2	8.1	19.3	11.4
Lack of school support	14.9	12.5	16.8	8.0
Disability	14.9	5.2	16.3	8.3
Lack of family support	14.1	17.4	8.6	8.4
Lack of stable housing	12.7	11.7	14.3	5.3
Admission/job requirements	8.6	4.7	10.8	10.6
Other	6.9	6.8	1.5	5.3

Base: all respondents who said there were barriers to achieving study/work goals. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 301, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 121, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 137, non-Indigenous respondents n = 3794.
Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency.

Employment

Table 10.8 shows that almost half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (49%) reported they were in paid employment. Of those not in paid employment, 37% were looking for work and 14% were not looking for work. As shown in Table 10.9, of those who were employed, 7.3% of respondents were working full-time and 93% were in part-time employment.

“I have been looking for work recently for the past year to help our family.”
Male, 16, New South Wales

Table 10.8: Participation in paid employment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Permanent employee	7.2	3.9	8.3	4.0
Casual employee	41.5	40.5	42.7	48.0
Not in paid employment, looking for work	37.0	43.8	35.8	28.4
Not in paid employment, not looking for work	14.3	11.8	13.2	19.6

Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1307, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 486, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 670, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15588.

Table 10.9: Employment type for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Working full-time	7.3	1.1	7.5	1.3
Working part-time	92.7	98.9	92.5	98.7

Base: all respondents in paid employment. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 622, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 208, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 338, non-Indigenous respondents n = 8047. Note: 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.

HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS AND FINANCIAL SITUATION

Housing

As shown in Figure 10.5, 73% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported living in a privately owned or rented home in the past three months. One in ten (9.3%) were in boarding school, 7.4% were living in public/social housing and 3.0% were in out-of-home care.

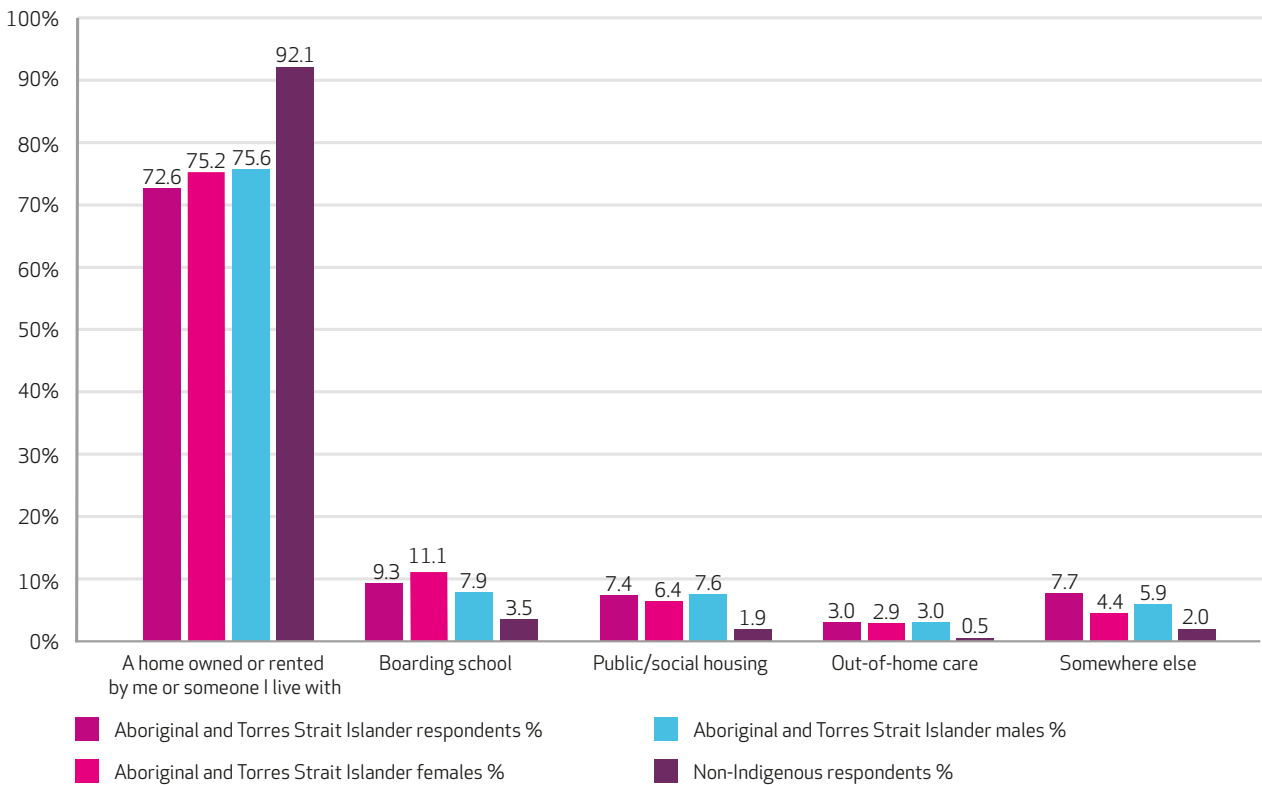
As shown in Table 10.10, the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (85%) reported they had been living with their parents or guardians in the past three months.

Among the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who had been living elsewhere in the past three months, Figure 10.6 shows the top places that they had been living were with other students at my boarding school (22%), with relatives/siblings (18%) or alone (18%).

“[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] homelessness for 8 months now after being unable to secure housing due to being low income and having no family support. Not being able to get access as well to NDIS supports or any supports.”

Non-binary, 18, Victoria

Figure 10.5: Residential setting in the past three months for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people



Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1269, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 470, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 652, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15409. Note: items are listed in order of total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents’ frequency.

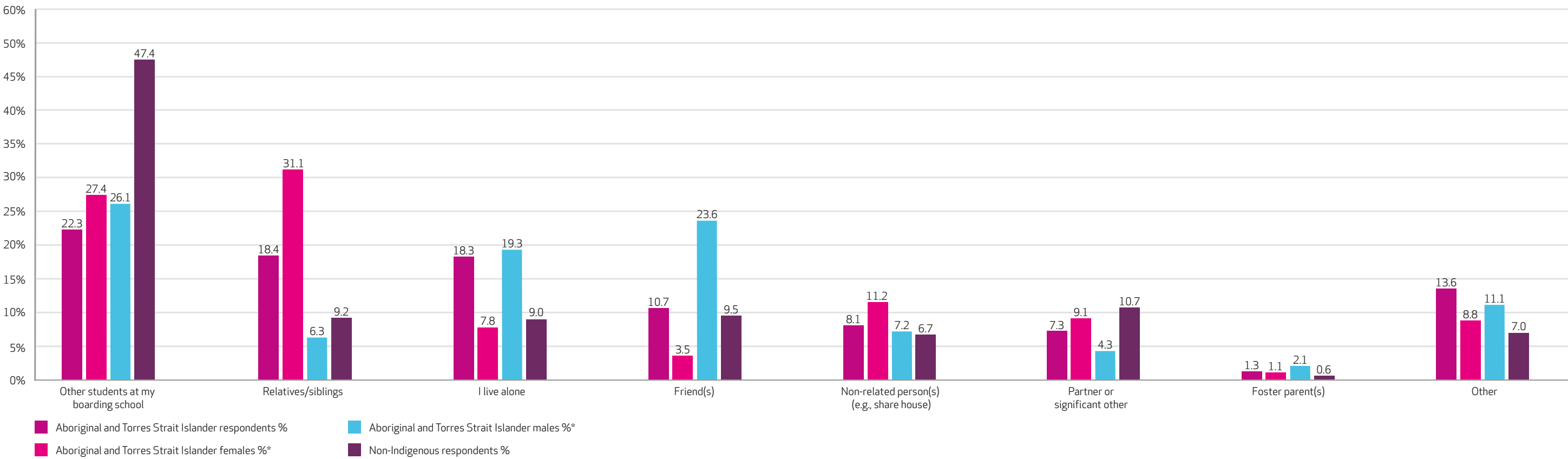
Table 10.10: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people living with parents or somewhere else in the past three months

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Living with parent(s) or guardian(s)	84.6	82.2	88.6	95.6
Living somewhere else	15.4	17.8	11.4	4.4

Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1273, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 479, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 647, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15450.



Figure 10.6: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people living somewhere else in the past three months



Base: all respondents living somewhere else (not with parent(s) or guardian(s)). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 195, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 84, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 74, non-Indigenous respondents n = 677.
Note: items are listed in order of total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency. *Interpret with caution due to sample size less than 100.



Homelessness

Table 10.11 shows that three quarters of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (76%) had never lived without a fixed address or in a refuge or transitional accommodation. There were 10% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who had no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation in the last year and another 14% had experienced this, but not within the last year.

Table 10.12 shows that more than one third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (35%) said that they had spent time away from home because they felt they could not go back, with 22% reporting that this had occurred in the last year. Three in 10 (29%) had also worried about having a safe place to stay within the past year, as shown in Table 10.13.

Table 10.11: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people with no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Yes, in the last year	10.0	6.4	8.2	2.3
Yes, but not in the last year	14.2	15.1	12.4	5.0
No	75.8	78.5	79.4	92.7

Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1267, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 471, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 650, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15433.

Table 10.12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who spent time away from home because they felt that they could not go back

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Yes, in the last year	22.1	24.0	17.7	6.1
Yes, but not in the last year	12.9	14.9	11.3	5.7
No	65.1	61.1	70.9	88.1

Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1270, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 471, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 653, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15450.

Table 10.13: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who were worried about having a safe place to stay in the past year

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Yes	28.6	32.2	23.7	9.6
No	71.4	67.8	76.3	90.4

Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1273, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 469, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 658, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15463.

Financial situation

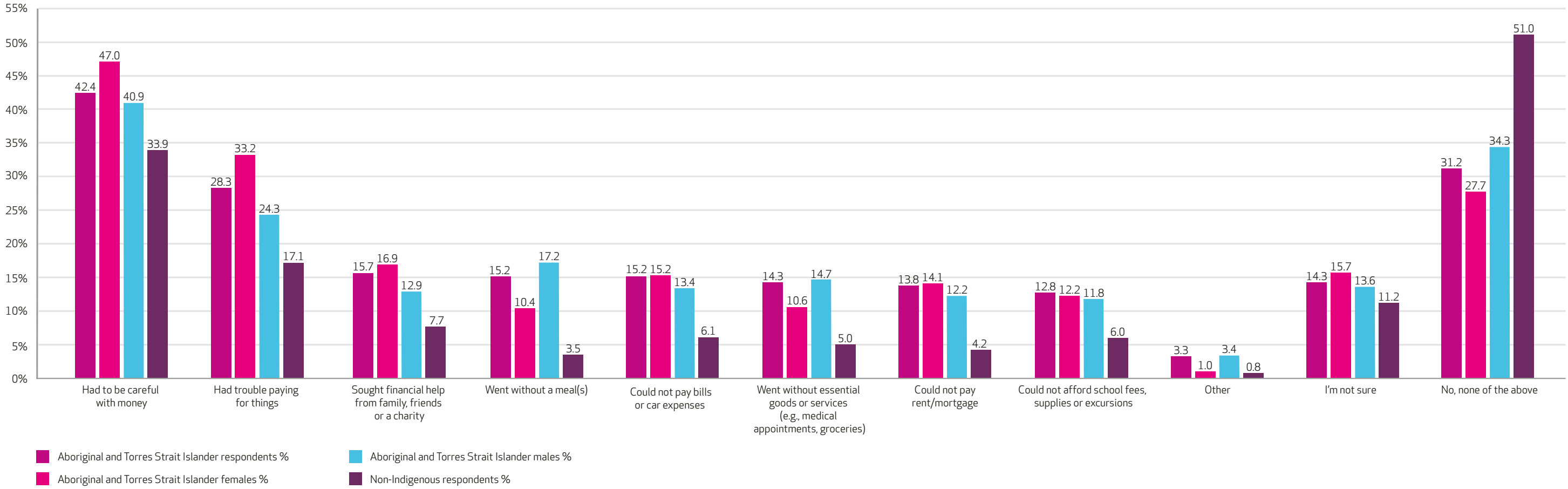
As shown in Figure 10.7, more than two in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (42%) reported that they or their family *had to be careful with money* in the past year. The second and third most common financial concerns were that they or their family *had trouble paying for things* (28%) or *sought financial help from family, friends or a charity* (16%).

As shown in Table 10.14, 38% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people said that they and/or their family did not need support or assistance from a charity or foundation in the past year and a further 42% were unsure. One in eight (13%) said they or their family received support from a charity or foundation, while 7.5% said they did not receive assistance, but they needed support.

“[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] fear of being kicked out of house due to rent not being able to be paid and not having enough money to last the week for food.”
Gender not listed, 17, Queensland



Figure 10.7: Financial concerns experienced in the past year by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young person and/or their family

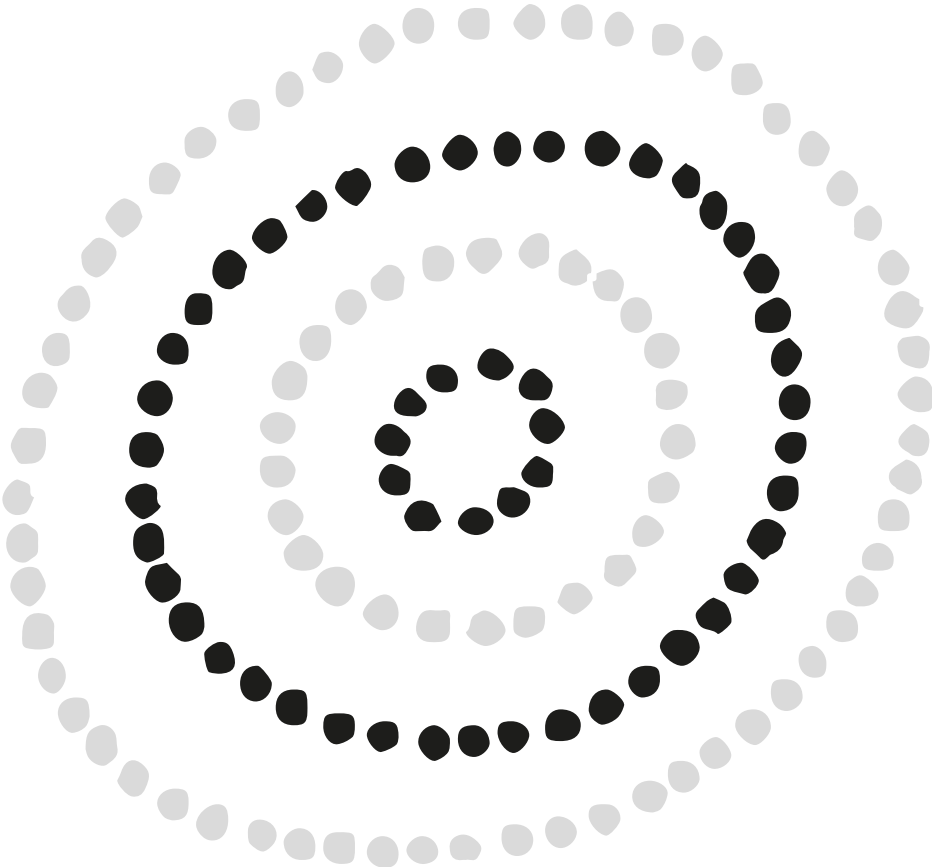


Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1260, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 478, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 636, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15180.
Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency.

Table 10.14: Support/assistance received from a charity/foundation in the past year for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young person and/or their family

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Yes, Mission Australia and/or a different charity or foundation (e.g., The Salvation Army, The Smith Family, Beyond Blue)	12.5	9.7	12.3	3.1
No, but I needed support or assistance	7.5	5.2	7.5	3.0
No, I did not need support or assistance from a charity or foundation	37.6	39.9	35.9	71.2
I'm not sure	42.3	45.2	44.3	22.7

Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1200, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 439, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 617, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15039.



WELLBEING

As shown in Table 10.15, 45% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated that they were *very happy* or *happy* with their life as a whole.

As shown in Figure 10.8, 12% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people said that they had *complete control* over their lives, and a further 35% reported that they were *mostly in control*. One in five (20%) said that they had *almost no control* (13%) or *no control* (6.9%) over their lives.

More than one in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (22%) reported feeling lonely *none of the time*, and a further 24% felt lonely *a little of the time* (see Figure 10.9).

“[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] leaving home to go to boarding school, feeling homesick and alone.”

Female, 15, South Australia

Two in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (39%) felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future, as shown in Table 10.16. Two in five (40%) reported neutral feelings about the future and the remaining 21% felt *negative* or *very negative* about the future.

Table 10.17 shows that half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (51%) said that climate change does not impact their thinking, feelings and/or behaviour. Less than one in five (18%) reported that climate change does impact how they think, feel or act and a further 31% were unsure.

As shown in Figure 10.10, 44% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were classified as having *low psychological distress* based on their K6 responses. K6 scores for more than one quarter (27%) pointed to *moderate psychological distress*, while 30% of respondents had K6 scores that indicated *high psychological distress*.

“I’ve faced a lot of mental health and suicidal problems, in this passing year. But I get used to the feeling.”

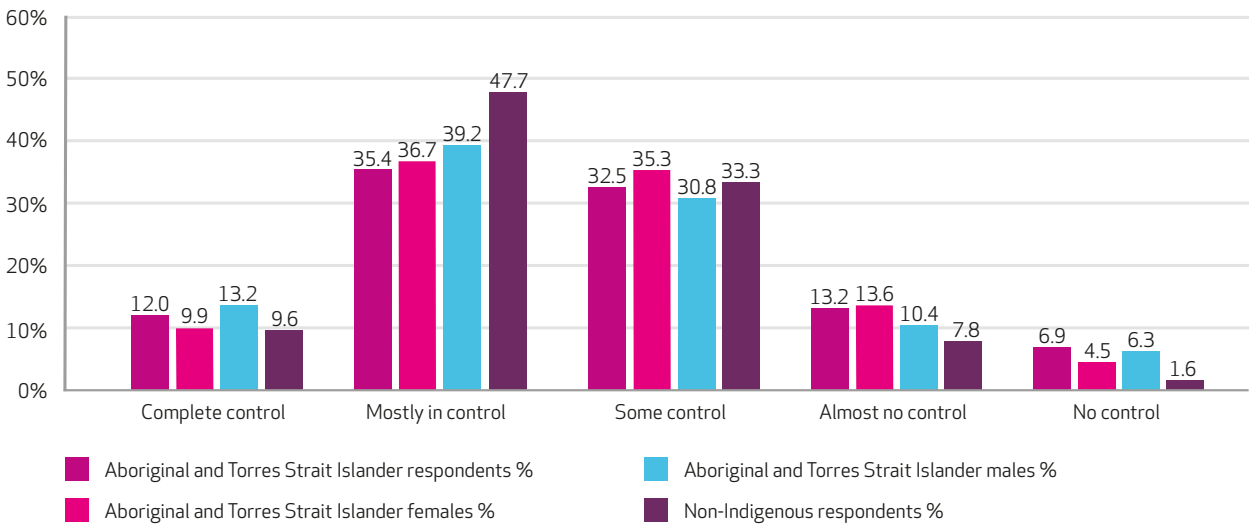
Male, 17, Queensland

Table 10.15: Level of happiness with their life as a whole for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Very happy or happy (70-100)	45.1	39.0	52.0	58.0
Not happy or sad (40-60)	37.9	47.4	33.6	33.6
Sad or very sad (0-30)	17.0	13.6	14.4	8.3

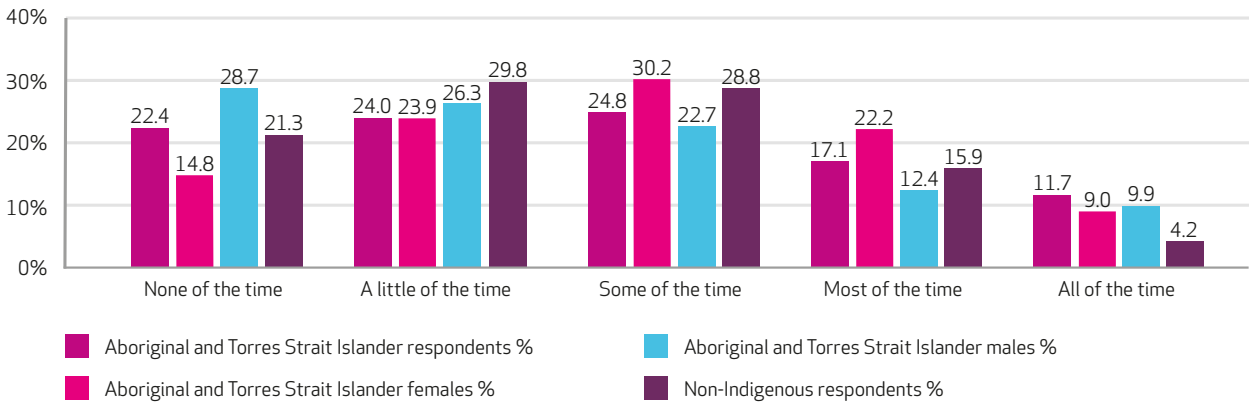
Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1254, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 468, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 642, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15448. Note: respondents were asked to rate how happy they are with their life 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 very happy or happy; 40-60 signifies not happy or sad; and 0-30 indicates sad or very sad.

Figure 10.8: Level of control over their life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people



Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1219, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 455, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 621, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15328.

Figure 10.9: Level of loneliness in past four weeks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people



Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1226, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 455, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 627, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15361.

Table 10.16: Feelings about the future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Very positive or positive	38.7	39.8	43.1	47.9
Neither positive nor negative	39.8	44.7	37.4	33.6
Negative or very negative	21.4	15.5	19.5	18.5

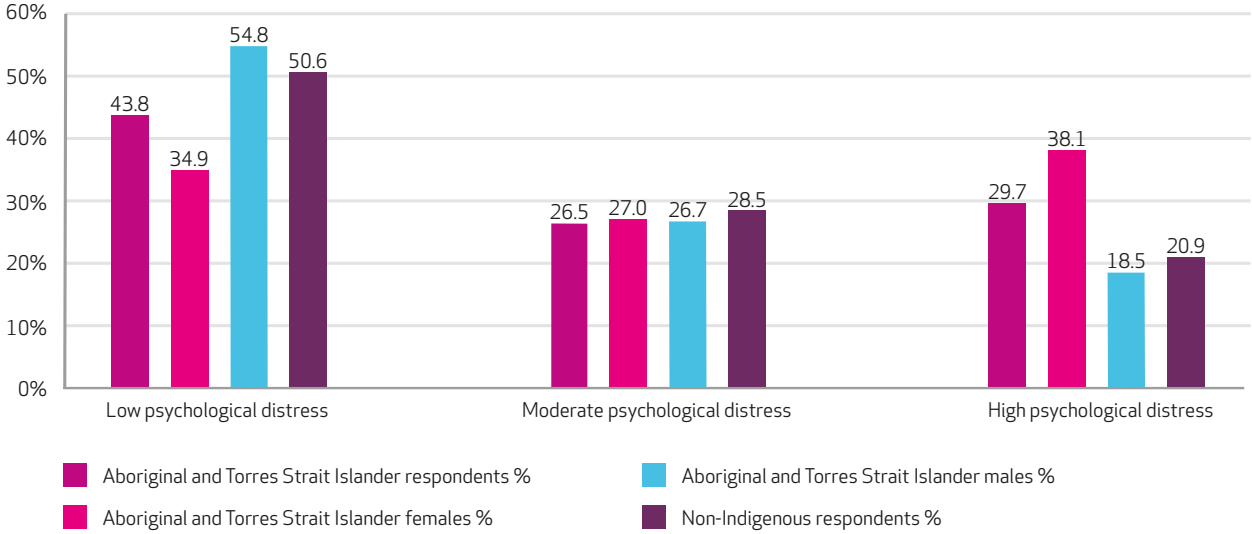
Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1246, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 460, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 641, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15342.

Table 10.17: Impact of climate change on thinking, feelings and/or behaviour for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Yes	18.2	17.8	15.7	19.8
No	51.1	45.8	55.9	53.7
I’m not sure	30.7	36.4	28.5	26.4

Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1272, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 467, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 658, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15402.

Figure 10.10: Level of psychological distress for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people



Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1232, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 466, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 623, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15091. Note: cut-off scores for categories of psychological distress are as follows: low = 0 to 7, moderate = 8 to 12 and high = 13 to 24 (Hilton et al., 2008). These cut-off scores are used by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (Rioseco, Warren & Daraganova, 2020).

SUPPORT AND CONNECTEDNESS

Table 10.18 shows that from a list of sources, more than half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people would go to *friend(s)* (52%) for help with important issues in their life, followed by their *parent(s)* or *guardian(s)* (46%).

As shown in Figure 10.11, two in five (40%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents rated their family’s ability to get along as *excellent* (16%) or *very good* (23%). More than one third (36%) of young people said their family’s ability to get along was either *fair* (20%) or *poor* (16%).

“Talking to my close friends and family as they care about me and my well-being [would have helped me overcome my challenge].”

Male, 17, Queensland

The top three activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were *sports (as a participant)* (53%), *sports (as a spectator)* (42%) and *volunteer work* (29%) (see Table 10.19). One quarter (26%) of respondents reported they had participated in *youth groups/activities* and *arts/cultural/music groups/activities* respectively in the past year.

Table 10.20 shows that more than one third of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (36%) said they found it hard to *fit in and socialise with everyone* and one third (32%) found it hard to *turn to friends and family if you need help*. More than one quarter (27%) said they found it hard to *do everyday activities as young people your age usually do*. A similar number felt it was hard to *make choices and feel independent* (27%).

Two in five (39%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement *I am proud to be part of my community*, as shown in Figure 10.12. One third (33%) also agreed that *my community has the things that I need to have a positive and thriving future*. The statement *young people in my community have a say on issues that matter to them* had lower levels of agreement than the prior statements, with 28% of respondents selecting *agree* or *strongly agree*. It also had the highest levels of disagreement with 33% of young people *disagreeing* or *strongly disagreeing* that young people have a say.

As shown in Table 10.21, more than one quarter (27%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people said they have *both spiritual and cultural beliefs*, with more than one in 10 (13%) reporting just *spiritual beliefs* and more than one in five (22%) just *cultural beliefs*. The remainder (38%) said they had *no spiritual or cultural beliefs*.

“The biggest personal challenge I have faced is learning to like the fact I’m Aboriginal and to view my culture with admiration instead of disdain.”

Male, 16, South Australia

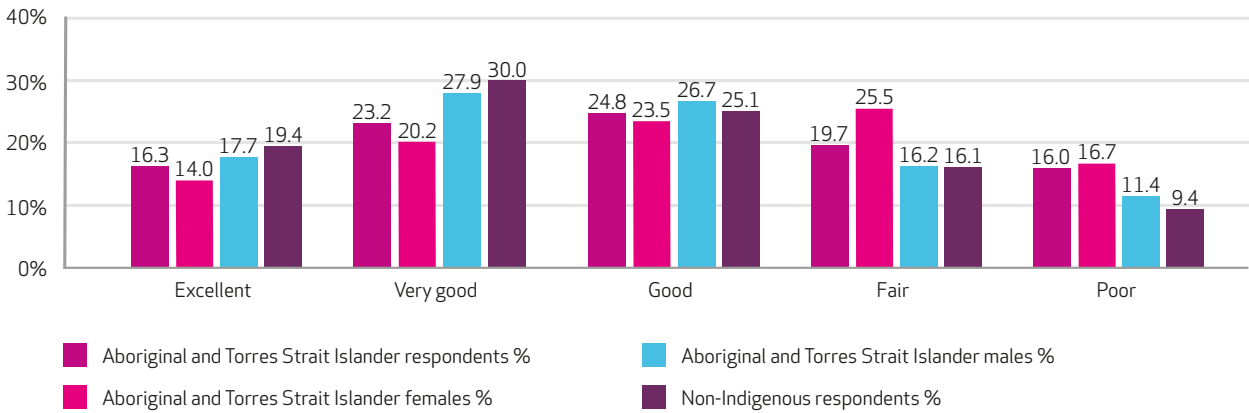


Table 10.18: Where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people go for help with important issues

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Friend(s)	52.2	62.1	47.4	64.8
Parent(s) or guardian(s)	46.3	51.9	47.1	60.0
Brother/sister	30.8	39.2	27.5	33.2
Relative(s)	27.9	31.8	27.0	27.8
Partner or significant other	20.6	22.5	19.9	21.2
Pet(s)	19.6	22.3	15.5	24.0
GP or health professional	15.8	20.3	12.3	17.5
Internet	14.8	11.3	16.2	20.7
Teacher/coach	14.8	15.9	14.1	17.2
Community service	13.9	13.0	14.0	4.3
Social media	13.6	11.0	12.5	13.1
School counsellor	12.1	15.6	9.1	10.9
Spiritual/religious mentor	10.8	8.1	11.2	6.1
Mobile apps	8.9	8.1	7.3	8.0
Other	5.3	1.6	3.5	2.5
None of the above, I would keep the issue to myself	13.3	9.8	17.2	11.4

Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1290, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 483, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 659, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15481. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency.

Figure 10.11: Family's ability to get along with one another for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people



Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1244, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 458, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 641, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15374.

Table 10.19: Activities involved in during the past year for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Sports (as a participant)	53.3	48.3	61.2	62.5
Sports (as a spectator)	42.2	35.1	49.8	47.8
Volunteer work	28.5	30.8	27.4	40.0
Youth groups/activities	26.1	23.9	26.0	20.0
Arts/cultural/music groups/activities	25.6	34.2	17.4	26.7
Student leaderships groups/activities	23.4	23.5	22.5	27.2
Religious groups/activities	16.8	12.8	18.6	17.3
Environmental groups/activities	9.8	5.8	11.8	6.6
Political groups/activities	5.9	3.2	5.6	3.3
None of the above	19.5	19.7	18.8	14.1

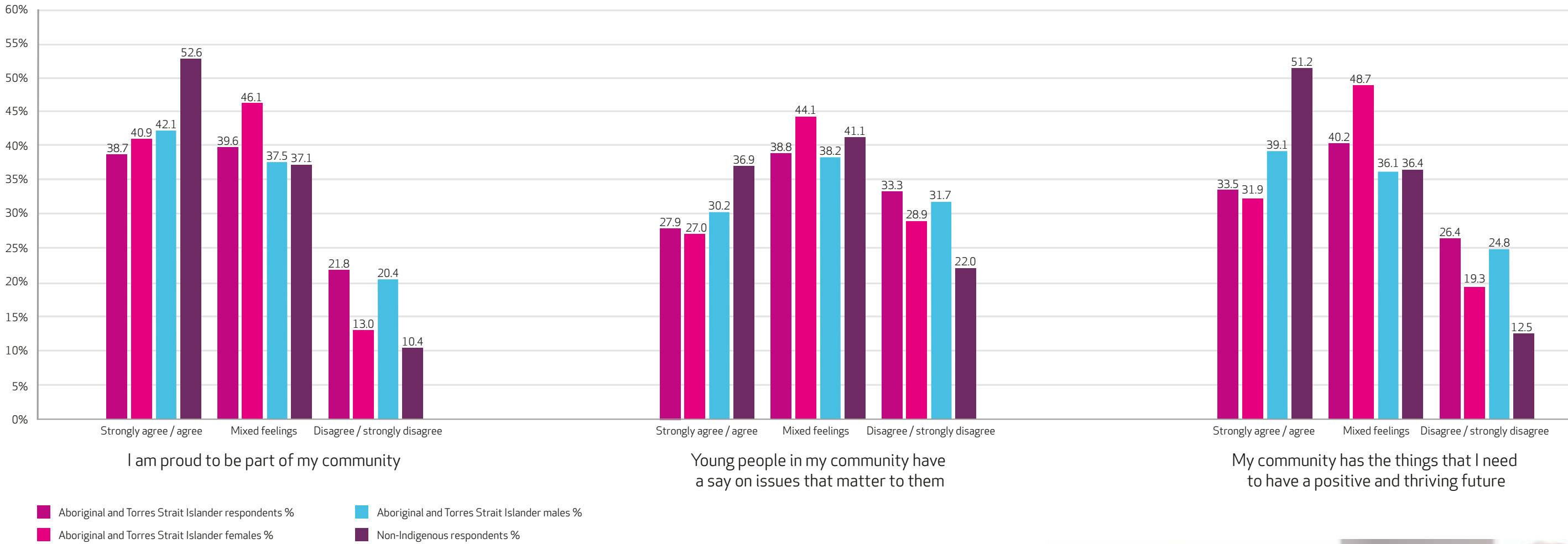
Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1286, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 480, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 657, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15350. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency.

Table 10.20: Activities Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people find hard to do

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Fit in and socialise with everyone? (e.g., at school, work or socially)	35.6	45.3	26.5	29.1
Turn to friends and family if you need help?	32.5	46.3	20.9	29.2
Do everyday activities as young people your age usually do?	26.8	31.8	18.4	19.5
Make choices and feel independent?	26.6	33.3	18.0	22.2
Do things in public places with friends? (e.g., go to shopping centres, sporting or music events)	24.1	25.5	18.7	15.7
Turn to services/organisations if you need help?	23.6	28.2	18.2	20.6
Travel around the community? (e.g., using footpaths or public transport)	16.2	16.9	11.6	9.4
None of the above	38.0	25.4	49.6	44.4

Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1252, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 472, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 632, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15177. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency.

Figure 10.12: Feelings Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have about their community



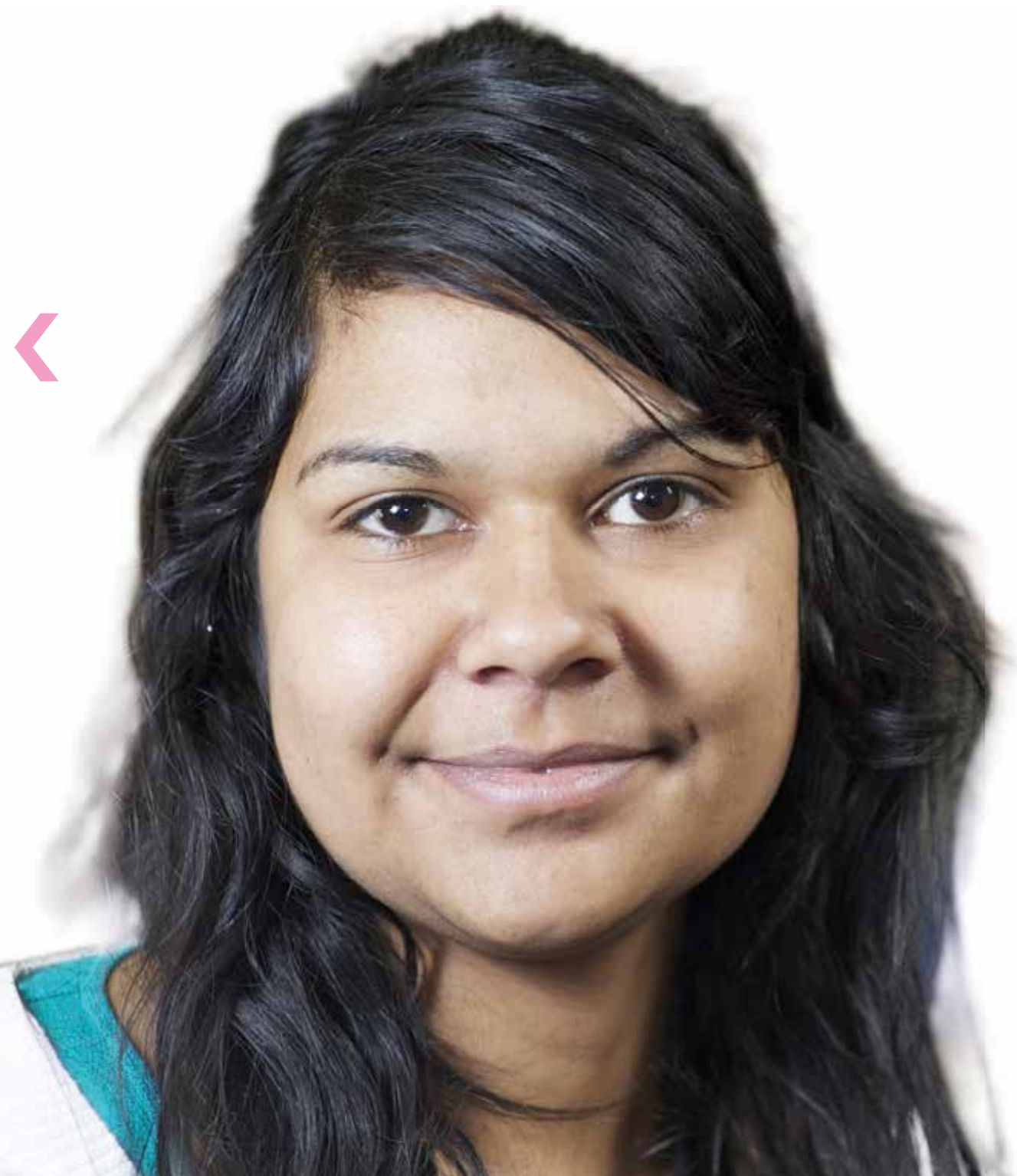
Base: all respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement.



Table 10.21: Whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have cultural and/or spiritual beliefs

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Yes – both spiritual and cultural beliefs	27.0	31.1	22.1	17.8
Yes – spiritual beliefs	13.4	11.8	13.7	20.4
Yes – cultural beliefs	22.1	21.0	24.7	10.7
No spiritual or cultural beliefs	37.6	36.1	39.5	51.1

Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1274, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 478, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 653, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15294.



UNFAIR TREATMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

As shown in Figure 10.13, more than two in five (42%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people said that they had experienced unfair treatment or discrimination in the past year.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who reported being treated unfairly or discriminated against in the past year identified *race/cultural background* (55%), *physical appearance* (43%) and *mental health* (34%) as the top three reasons for unfair treatment (see Table 10.22).

"[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] lack of motivation and care for school, no confidence, bullying due to being part of minorities."
A-gender/non-gendered, 15, Tasmania

Figure 10.13. Unfair treatment or discrimination in the past year for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people



Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1295, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 483, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 663, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15534.

Table 10.22: Reason(s) for being treated unfairly in the past year for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Race/cultural background	55.0	50.8	63.1	30.9
Physical appearance	42.9	40.2	42.9	36.9
Mental health	33.9	36.3	29.7	20.9
Personal views	27.5	24.3	25.9	24.6
Gender	25.4	19.6	19.7	25.8
Sexuality	21.5	8.0	16.7	16.7
Age	21.2	15.2	20.2	13.0
Financial background	20.5	11.1	25.0	5.2
Disability	19.0	5.4	19.8	9.2
Religion	16.3	5.5	20.0	13.6
Other	10.9	2.8	13.0	7.5

Base: all respondents who reported they had been treated unfairly or faced discrimination. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 533, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 203, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 235, non-Indigenous respondents n = 4381. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents’ frequency.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

As shown in Table 10.23, less than six in 10 (56%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement *alcohol is a problem in Australia*. More than two in five (44%) agreed that *alcohol is a problem in my community*. The statement *alcohol is a problem for my family/friends* had lower levels of agreement than the prior statements, with 33% of respondents selecting *strongly agree* or *agree*. It also had higher levels of disagreement with 39% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people *disagreeing* or *strongly disagreeing*.

As shown in Table 10.24, two thirds (65%) of respondents *strongly agreed* or *agreed* with the statement *drugs are a problem in Australia*. More than half (53%) also agreed that *drugs are a problem in my community*. The statement *drugs are a problem for my family/friends* had lower levels of agreement than the prior statements, with 28% of respondents selecting *agree* or *strongly agree*. It also had higher levels of disagreement with 47% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people *disagreeing* or *strongly disagreeing*.

Figure 10.14 shows that two in five (41%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people accessed information about the risk of alcohol or drug use *from teachers or at school*, with one third (32%) seeking information *from parents or guardians* and 30% *online via social media*. Only one in five (20%) accessed information *from health professionals*.

“I’ve been involved in this space with volunteering but to be honest I don’t know much [about what kind of help young people with risky alcohol or drug use need]. I think the biggest thing is a culture shift, and more sober events/spaces. Additionally, outside support like better mental health services and LGBTQIA+ support so less people turn to alcohol/drugs to cope.”

Transgender, 19, Victoria

Table 10.23: Feelings Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have about alcohol

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Alcohol is a problem in Australia				
Strongly agree / agree	56.5	64.6	51.6	54.4
Neither agree nor disagree	23.6	28.1	22.7	31.8
Disagree / strongly disagree	20.0	7.3	25.7	13.9
Alcohol is a problem in my community				
Strongly agree / agree	44.2	51.3	38.3	27.3
Neither agree nor disagree	31.8	34.2	33.0	38.4
Disagree / strongly disagree	23.9	14.6	28.8	34.3
Alcohol is a problem for my family/friends				
Strongly agree / agree	33.3	37.7	28.5	17.0
Neither agree nor disagree	27.5	29.3	29.2	22.8
Disagree / strongly disagree	39.2	33.0	42.3	60.2

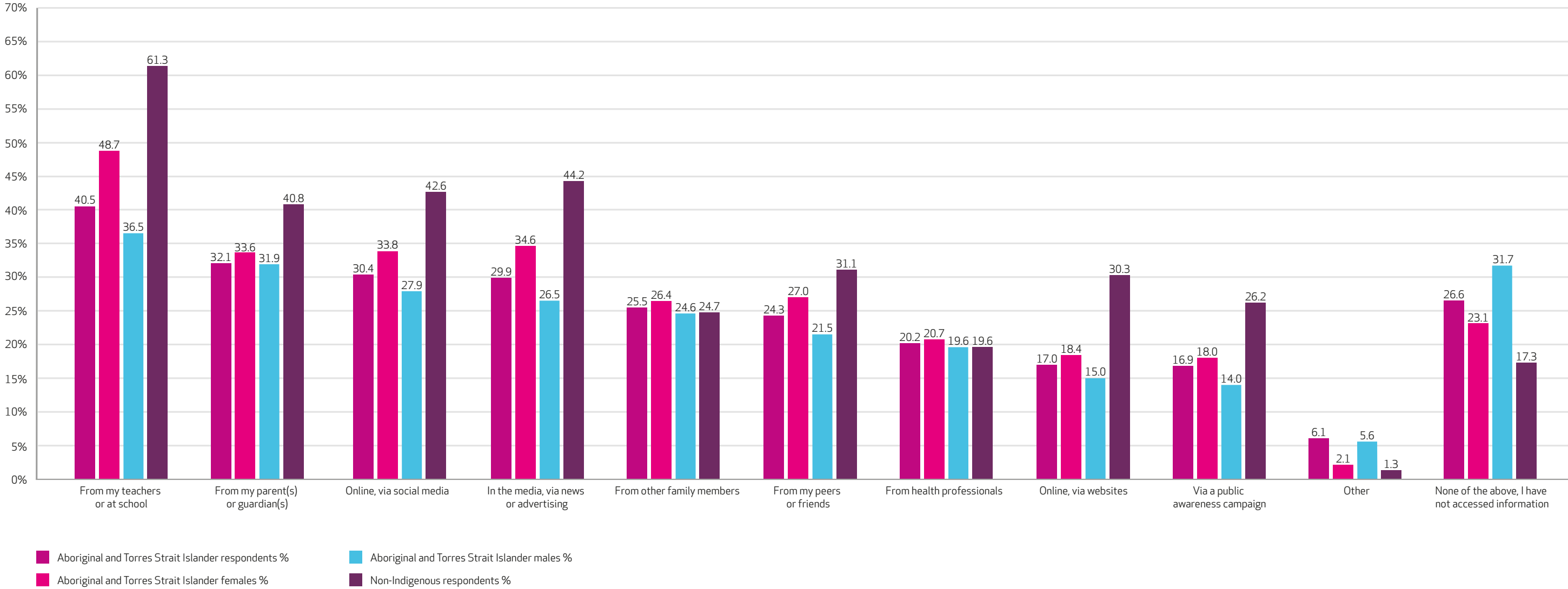
Base: all respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement.

Table 10.24: Feelings Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have about drugs

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Drugs are a problem in Australia				
Strongly agree / agree	64.5	71.6	63.9	64.1
Neither agree nor disagree	21.6	22.7	22.5	26.1
Disagree / strongly disagree	13.9	5.8	13.6	9.8
Drugs are a problem in my community				
Strongly agree / agree	52.9	54.9	52.3	33.6
Neither agree nor disagree	26.7	31.7	26.4	33.3
Disagree / strongly disagree	20.4	13.3	21.3	33.1
Drugs are a problem for my family/friends				
Strongly agree / agree	27.5	29.0	24.0	12.1
Neither agree nor disagree	25.6	26.3	27.2	18.1
Disagree / strongly disagree	46.9	44.7	48.8	69.8

Base: all respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement.

Figure 10.14: Sources of information about risk of alcohol or drug used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the past year



Base: all respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1235, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 453, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 637, non-Indigenous respondents n = 15190.
Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency.



State and Territory Key Findings

- ▶ Australian Capital Territory
- ▶ New South Wales
- ▶ Northern Territory
- ▶ Queensland
- ▶ South Australia
- ▶ Tasmania
- ▶ Victoria
- ▶ Western Australia



Australian Capital Territory

KEY FINDINGS

Young people shared their perspectives and experiences across a range of topics.

28% FEMALE
68% MALE
2.8% GENDER DIVERSE

Biggest personal challenge

- 1 School and study, **41%**
(43% in 2023, 43% in 2022)
- 2 Mental health, **17%**
(22% in 2023, 23% in 2022)
- 3 Personal relationships, **16%**
(21% in 2023, 11% in 2022)

Education and employment

81% of respondents were studying full time
97% planned to complete Year 12
After school, **52%** planned to go to university and **35%** planned to get a job
63% were in paid work

Housing, homelessness and financial situation

99% of young people lived with their parents or guardians
6.9% worried about having a safe place to stay in the past year
26% said that they and their families had to be careful with money

Wellbeing

59% of respondents reported feeling happy with their life
61% felt completely or mostly in control of their life
However, **15%** felt lonely all or most of the time in the past four weeks
15% were classified as having high psychological distress

Support and connectedness

65% of young people would go to friends and **62%** to parents/guardians for help with important issues in their lives
However, **24%** found it hard to turn to friends and family if they needed help
58% felt proud to be a part of their community
41% felt that young people in their community have a say on issues that matter to them

Unfair treatment and discrimination

25% of respondents reported being treated unfairly or discriminated against in the past year
Physical appearance (**41%**), race/cultural background (**30%**) and personal views (**28%**) were the top reasons for discrimination

Alcohol and drugs

50% of young people believed that alcohol and **61%** believed that drugs are a problem in Australia
15% reported that alcohol was a problem for their family or friends, **9.9%** for drugs
62% accessed information about the risk of alcohol or drug use from their teachers and schools, **40%** from social media and **36%** via news or advertising



Australian Capital Territory

KEY FINDINGS

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today.



The open-ended responses were then thematically analysed and listed in order of frequency.

1

Cost of living, 60%
(32% in 2023, 26% in 2022)

2

Climate change and the environment, 28%
(44% in 2023, 59% in 2022)

3

Discrimination and inequality, 24%
(31% in 2023, 37% in 2022)

4

Violence, safety and crime, 24%
(13% in 2023, 4.6% in 2022)

"[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] being poor and having no money to buy anything."

Male, 16, Australian Capital Territory

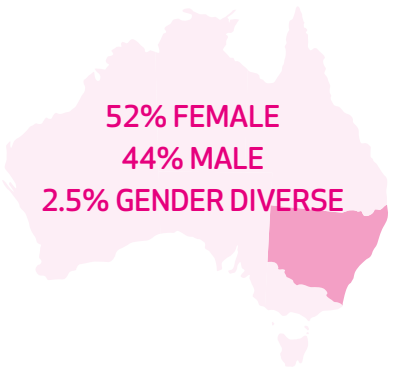
"My farm, and childhood home was burnt in the 2020 bushfires, so I am very aware of the effects it [climate change] has on the community and how it can affect a family for years to come."

Female, 16, Australian Capital Territory



New South Wales KEY FINDINGS

Young people shared their perspectives and experiences across a range of topics.



52% FEMALE
44% MALE
2.5% GENDER DIVERSE

Biggest personal challenge

- 1 School and study, **46%**
(50% in 2023, 43% in 2022)
- 2 Personal relationships, **24%**
(23% in 2023, 19% in 2022)
- 3 Mental health, **20%**
(22% in 2023, 25% in 2022)

Education and employment

79% of respondents were studying full time
92% planned to complete Year 12
After school, **60%** planned to go to university and **39%** planned to get a job
53% were in paid work

Housing, homelessness and financial situation

96% of young people lived with their parents or guardians
Of those living elsewhere, **42%** lived at their boarding school and **13%** lived with friends
10% worried about having a safe place to stay in the past year
35% said that they and their families had to be careful with money

Wellbeing

58% of respondents reported feeling happy with their life
56% felt completely or mostly in control of their life
However, **21%** felt lonely all or most of the time in the past four weeks
22% were classified as having high psychological distress

Support and connectedness

64% of young people would go to friends and **58%** to parents/guardians for help with important issues in their lives
However, **30%** found it hard to turn to friends and family if they needed help
52% felt proud to be a part of their community
35% felt that young people in their community have a say on issues that matter to them

Unfair treatment and discrimination

29% of respondents reported being treated unfairly or discriminated against in the past year
Physical appearance (**38%**), race/cultural background (**32%**) and gender (**27%**) were the top reasons for discrimination

Alcohol and drugs

53% of young people believed that alcohol and **63%** believed that drugs are a problem in Australia
16% reported that alcohol was a problem for their family or friends, **12%** for drugs
62% accessed information about the risk of alcohol or drug use from their teachers and schools, **45%** via news or advertising and **42%** from social media

New South Wales KEY FINDINGS

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today.



The open-ended responses were then thematically analysed and listed in order of frequency.

1 **Cost of living, 55%**
(32% in 2023, 23% in 2022)

2 **Mental health, 28%**
(33% in 2023, 34% in 2022)

3 **Climate change and the environment, 24%**
(35% in 2023, 46% in 2022)

4 **Violence, safety and crime, 23%**
(16% in 2023, 9.7% in 2022)

"[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was that] I was homeless and wasn't getting enough money to sustain myself."

Male, 16, New South Wales

"[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] navigating my mental health struggles and relationship with my parents, because I have a lot of issues with depression and self-worth, especially since I put a lot of effort into my schoolwork and am trans in a non-accepting environment, and this gets exasperated by them being toxic to and around me."

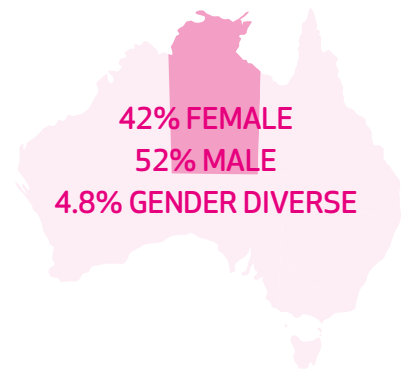
Non-binary, 17, New South Wales



Northern Territory

KEY FINDINGS

Young people shared their perspectives and experiences across a range of topics.



Biggest personal challenge

- 1 School and study, **47%**
(49% in 2023, 37% in 2022)
- 2 Personal relationships, **18%**
(18% in 2023, 23% in 2022)
- 3 Mental health, **16%**
(18% in 2023, 24% in 2022)

Education and employment

78% of respondents were studying full time
96% planned to complete Year 12
After school, **49%** planned to go to university and **39%** planned to get a job
53% were in paid work

Housing, homelessness and financial situation

94% of young people lived with their parents or guardians
14% worried about having a safe place to stay in the past year
35% said that they and their families had to be careful with money

Wellbeing

53% of respondents reported feeling happy with their life
45% felt completely or mostly in control of their life
However, **25%** felt lonely all or most of the time in the past four weeks
22% were classified as having high psychological distress

Support and connectedness

57% of young people would go to friends and **50%** to parents/guardians for help with important issues in their lives
However, **34%** found it hard to turn to friends and family if they needed help
49% felt proud to be a part of their community
28% felt that young people in their community have a say on issues that matter to them

Unfair treatment and discrimination

29% of respondents reported being treated unfairly or discriminated against in the past year
Race/cultural background (**45%**), physical appearance (**33%**) and personal views (**31%**) were the top reasons for discrimination

Alcohol and drugs

73% of young people believed that alcohol and **80%** believed that drugs are a problem in Australia
22% reported that alcohol was a problem for their family or friends, **18%** for drugs
46% accessed information about the risk of alcohol or drug use from their teachers and schools, **44%** via news or advertising and **40%** from parents/guardians

Northern Territory

KEY FINDINGS

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today.



The open-ended responses were then thematically analysed and listed in order of frequency.

1 **Cost of living, 50%**
(30% in 2023, 25% in 2022)

2 **Violence, safety and crime, 33%**
(32% in 2023, 14% in 2022)

3 **Climate change and the environment, 21%**
(36% in 2023, 42% in 2022)

4 **Alcohol and other drugs, 20%**
(17% in 2023, 12% in 2022)

"It [climate change] concerns me and I think about it as it is a real problem facing the globe, so I am in a school club to help the school become more environmentally friendly and I try to choose sustainable and environmentally friendly options in my personal life."

Female, 16, Northern Territory

"I think that the more we try and restrict young people from drugs and alcohol the more they want to do it. Because it is human nature for us to want what we can't have."

Male, 15, Northern Territory



Queensland KEY FINDINGS

Young people shared their perspectives and experiences across a range of topics.

41% FEMALE
56% MALE
2.7% GENDER DIVERSE

Biggest personal challenge

- 1 School and study, **47%**
(47% in 2023, 42% in 2022)
- 2 Personal relationships, **19%**
(19% in 2023, 20% in 2022)
- 3 Mental health, **17%**
(20% in 2023, 24% in 2022)

Education and employment

79% of respondents were studying full time
98% planned to complete Year 12
After school, **63%** planned to go to university and **33%** planned to get a job
54% were in paid work

Housing, homelessness and financial situation

93% of young people lived with their parents or guardians
Of those living elsewhere, **58%** lived at their boarding school and **11%** lived with friends
11% worried about having a safe place to stay in the past year
35% said that they and their families had to be careful with money

Wellbeing

58% of respondents reported feeling happy with their life
57% felt completely or mostly in control of their life
However, **20%** felt lonely all or most of the time in the past four weeks
19% were classified as having high psychological distress

Support and connectedness

62% of young people would go to friends and **60%** to parents/guardians for help with important issues in their lives
However, **29%** found it hard to fit in and socialise with everyone
51% felt proud to be a part of their community
35% felt that young people in their community have a say on issues that matter to them

Unfair treatment and discrimination

29% of respondents reported being treated unfairly or discriminated against in the past year
Physical appearance (**37%**), race/cultural background (**36%**) and gender (**24%**) were the top reasons for discrimination

Alcohol and drugs

53% of young people believed that alcohol and **64%** believed that drugs are a problem in Australia
19% reported that alcohol was a problem for their family or friends, **13%** for drugs
57% accessed information about the risk of alcohol or drug use from their teachers and schools, **42%** via news or advertising and **40%** from social media

Queensland KEY FINDINGS

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today.



The open-ended responses were then thematically analysed and listed in order of frequency.

1

Cost of living, 57%
(32% in 2023, 24% in 2022)

2

Violence, safety and crime, 32%
(26% in 2023, 13% in 2022)

3

Climate change and the environment, 22%
(29% in 2023, 40% in 2022)

4

Mental health, 21%
(28% in 2023, 31% in 2022)

"[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] being in child safety and transitioning into adulthood. And lack of services given to me to help me."

Female, 19, Queensland

"In the last year I greatly struggled with mental health due to my gender identity and trust with my limited abilities caused by neurodivergence and was almost sent to the hospital because of this. Thankfully I am doing significantly better now, though the study I missed continues to impact me."

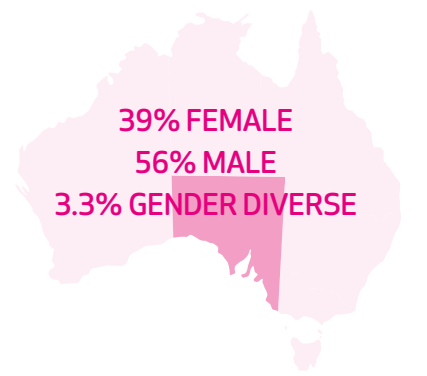
Transgender, 15, Queensland



South Australia

KEY FINDINGS

Young people shared their perspectives and experiences across a range of topics.



Biggest personal challenge

- 1 School and study, **46%**
(42% in 2023, 36% in 2022)
- 2 Personal relationships, **19%**
(19% in 2023, 18% in 2022)
- 3 Mental health, **16%**
(22% in 2023, 27% in 2022)

Education and employment

86% of respondents were studying full time
95% planned to complete Year 12
After school, **55%** planned to go to university and **35%** planned to get a job
44% were in paid work

Housing, homelessness and financial situation

93% of young people lived with their parents or guardians
Of those living elsewhere, **45%** lived at their boarding school and **15%** lived with relatives or siblings
11% worried about having a safe place to stay in the past year
32% said that they and their families had to be careful with money

Wellbeing

62% of respondents reported feeling happy with their life
61% felt completely or mostly in control of their life
However, **18%** felt lonely all or most of the time in the past four weeks
18% were classified as having high psychological distress

Support and connectedness

67% of young people would go to friends and **62%** to parents/guardians for help with important issues in their lives
However, **28%** found it hard to fit in and socialise with everyone
56% felt proud to be a part of their community
41% felt that young people in their community have a say on issues that matter to them

Unfair treatment and discrimination

26% of respondents reported being treated unfairly or discriminated against in the past year
Physical appearance (**43%**), race/cultural background (**31%**) and personal views (**27%**) were the top reasons for discrimination

Alcohol and drugs

52% of young people believed that alcohol and **61%** believed that drugs are a problem in Australia
16% reported that alcohol was a problem for their family or friends, **12%** for drugs
60% accessed information about the risk of alcohol or drug use from their teachers and schools, **42%** from social media and **41%** via news or advertising

South Australia

KEY FINDINGS



Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today.

The open-ended responses were then thematically analysed and listed in order of frequency.

1

Cost of living, 54%
(31% in 2023, 23% in 2022)

2

Climate change and the environment, 31%
(40% in 2023, 42% in 2022)

3

Discrimination and inequality, 19%
(30% in 2023, 29% in 2022)

4

Housing and homelessness, 19%
(19% in 2023, 16% in 2022)

"I have faced a challenge of being discriminated at school, and this is affecting my home life and academics."

Male, 15, South Australia

"[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was not] having a home and trying to get a job, I'm homeless. I need a stable income and housing."

Non-binary, 17, South Australia



Tasmania

KEY FINDINGS

Young people shared their perspectives and experiences across a range of topics.

41% FEMALE
56% MALE
2.4% GENDER DIVERSE

Biggest personal challenge

- 1 School and study, **38%**
(40% in 2023, 34% in 2022)
- 2 Mental health, **22%**
(24% in 2023, 24% in 2022)
- 3 Personal relationships, **17%**
(18% in 2023, 22% in 2022)

Education and employment

84% of respondents were studying full time
92% planned to complete Year 12
After school, **49%** planned to go to university and **33%** planned to get a job
56% were in paid work

Housing, homelessness and financial situation

93% of young people lived with their parents or guardians
12% worried about having a safe place to stay in the past year
31% said that they and their families had to be careful with money

Wellbeing

56% of respondents reported feeling happy with their life
58% felt completely or mostly in control of their life
However, **25%** felt lonely all or most of the time in the past four weeks
24% were classified as having high psychological distress

Support and connectedness

60% of young people would go to friends and **60%** to parents/guardians for help with important issues in their lives
However, **32%** found it hard to fit in and socialise with everyone
49% felt proud to be a part of their community
34% felt that young people in their community have a say on issues that matter to them

Unfair treatment and discrimination

28% of respondents reported being treated unfairly or discriminated against in the past year
Physical appearance (**44%**), race/mental health (**30%**) and personal views (**29%**) were the top reasons for discrimination

Alcohol and drugs

55% of young people believed that alcohol and **68%** believed that drugs are a problem in Australia
19% reported that alcohol was a problem for their family or friends, **15%** for drugs
63% accessed information about the risk of alcohol or drug use from their teachers and schools, **40%** from social media and **38%** via news or advertising

Tasmania

KEY FINDINGS

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today.



The open-ended responses were then thematically analysed and listed in order of frequency.

1 **Cost of living, 55%**
(30% in 2023, 25% in 2022)

2 **Alcohol and other drugs, 26%**
(12% in 2023, 13% in 2022)

3 **Climate change and the environment, 22%**
(43% in 2023, 45% in 2022)

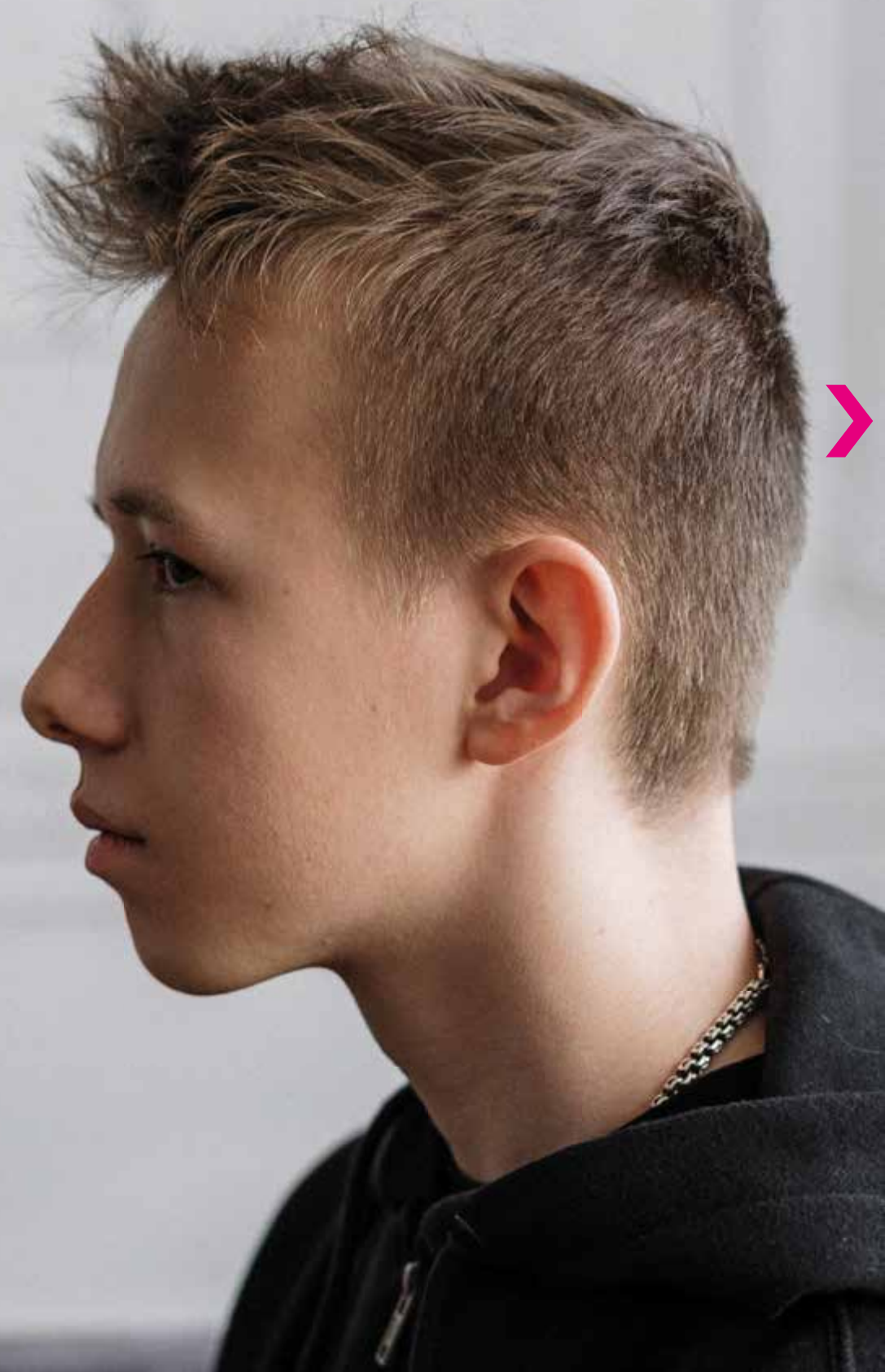
4 **Housing and homelessness, 21%**
(26% in 2023, 20% in 2022)

"Society as a whole should not accept, condone or normalise alcohol and drug use as a coming of age ritual or necessary ingredient in social interactions for anyone (but specifically men or young adults or older people)."

Female, 17, Tasmania

"Climate change is making me concerned about the future. I feel responsible for the irresponsible actions of humanity and want to do as best as I can to help make an impact on the issue of climate change."

Male, 18, Tasmania



Victoria

KEY FINDINGS

Young people shared their perspectives and experiences across a range of topics.

49% FEMALE
46% MALE
3.6% GENDER DIVERSE

Biggest personal challenge

- 1 School and study, **44%**
(46% in 2023, 37% in 2022)
- 2 Mental health, **21%**
(23% in 2023, 23% in 2022)
- 3 Personal relationships, **21%**
(20% in 2023, 17% in 2022)

Education and employment

86% of respondents were studying full time
97% planned to complete Year 12
After school, **70%** planned to go to university and **38%** planned to get a job
52% were in paid work

Housing, homelessness and financial situation

97% of young people lived with their parents or guardians
Of those living elsewhere, **30%** lived at their boarding school and **15%** lived with unrelated people, e.g. in a share house
8.7% worried about having a safe place to stay in the past year
32% said that they and their families had to be careful with money

Wellbeing

58% of respondents reported feeling happy with their life
58% felt completely or mostly in control of their life
However, **19%** felt lonely all or most of the time in the past four weeks
21% were classified as having high psychological distress

Support and connectedness

66% of young people would go to friends and **61%** to parents/guardians for help with important issues in their lives
However, **30%** found it hard to fit in and socialise with everyone
54% felt proud to be a part of their community
40% felt that young people in their community have a say on issues that matter to them

Unfair treatment and discrimination

29% of respondents reported being treated unfairly or discriminated against in the past year
Physical appearance (**35%**), race/cultural background (**33%**) and gender (**27%**) were the top reasons for discrimination

Alcohol and drugs

55% of young people believed that alcohol and **65%** believed that drugs are a problem in Australia
17% reported that alcohol was a problem for their family or friends, **12%** for drugs
62% accessed information about the risk of alcohol or drug use from their teachers and schools, **46%** via news or advertising and **45%** from social media

Victoria

KEY FINDINGS

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today.



The open-ended responses were then thematically analysed and listed in order of frequency.

1 **Cost of living, 56%**
(31% in 2023, 23% in 2022)

2 **Climate change and the environment, 34%**
(47% in 2023, 47% in 2022)

3 **Violence, safety and crime, 27%**
(16% in 2023, 9.7% in 2022)

4 **Discrimination and inequality, 24%**
(31% in 2023, 32% in 2022)

"[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] a lot of financial things, the school is expensive and for further studies on university and everything costs a whole lot more."

Female, 17, Victoria

"[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] religious and racial discrimination, from students and teachers alike. For example, they push their own ideas and opinions and do not give me the option to share my own."

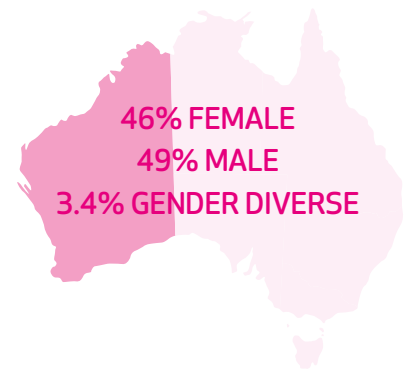
Male, 18, Victoria



Western Australia

KEY FINDINGS

Young people shared their perspectives and experiences across a range of topics.



Biggest personal challenge

- 1 School and study, **37%**
(51% in 2023, 43% in 2022)
- 2 Mental health, **22%**
(23% in 2023, 25% in 2022)
- 3 Personal relationships, **17%**
(19% in 2023, 19% in 2022)

Education and employment

73% of respondents were studying full time
94% planned to complete Year 12
After school, **49%** planned to go to university and **38%** planned to get a job
46% were in paid work

Housing, homelessness and financial situation

89% of young people lived with their parents or guardians
Of those living elsewhere, **22%** lived at their boarding school and **19%** lived alone
21% worried about having a safe place to stay in the past year
41% said that they and their families had to be careful with money

Wellbeing

47% of respondents reported feeling happy with their life
50% felt completely or mostly in control of their life
However, **27%** felt lonely all or most of the time in the past four weeks
28% were classified as having high psychological distress

Support and connectedness

59% of young people would go to friends and **52%** to parents/guardians for help with important issues in their lives
However, **35%** found it hard to fit in and socialise with everyone
41% felt proud to be a part of their community
31% felt that young people in their community have a say on issues that matter to them

Unfair treatment and discrimination

39% of respondents reported being treated unfairly or discriminated against in the past year
Physical appearance (**40%**), race/cultural background (**35%**) and mental health (**29%**) were the top reasons for discrimination

Alcohol and drugs

61% of young people believed that alcohol and **66%** believed that drugs are a problem in Australia
28% reported that alcohol was a problem for their family or friends, **20%** for drugs
52% accessed information about the risk of alcohol or drug use from their teachers and schools, **37%** via news or advertising and **36%** from social media

Western Australia

KEY FINDINGS

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today.



The open-ended responses were then thematically analysed and listed in order of frequency.

1

Cost of living, 57%
(28% in 2023, 23% in 2022)

2

Housing and homelessness, 25%
(20% in 2023, 9.7% in 2022)

3

Discrimination and inequality, 24%
(36% in 2023, 34% in 2022)

4

Climate change and the environment, 23%
(40% in 2023, 52% in 2022)

"[The biggest personal challenge I faced in the past year was] the cost of living being too high making it difficult to afford basic necessities."

Female, 15, Western Australia

"Reach out for support, at first it could be confronting and feel distressing. I have reached out to youth support services, and it has helped me to be able to find temporary accommodation or support finding somewhere to stay."

Transgender, 17, Western Australia



About the survey

Background

The Mission Australia *Youth Survey* is the largest national annual survey of young people in Australia. Now in its 23rd year, the *Youth Survey* aims to identify the values, aspirations and issues of concern to young people aged 15-19. The *Youth Survey* was developed by Mission Australia to advocate for young people in need and provide a platform for their voices and views.

Participation

In 2024, 17,480 young people across Australia completed the *Youth Survey*.

Focus areas

The 2024 *Youth Survey* sought to capture the experiences and perspectives of young people on a broad range of issues as well as collecting valuable socio-demographic data. The survey enquired about issues of national importance, personal challenges and concerns, mental health and wellbeing, and sources of support and community connections. Other topics included school and work, housing and financial, climate issues, discrimination, social media use, and opinions relating to alcohol and drugs.

Research Ethics

The *Youth Survey* has Human Research Ethics Committee approval from the University of Melbourne (Ref: 2024-22721-52643-16)

Methodology

Data Collection

The 2024 *Youth Survey* was open to young people across Australia aged 15 to 19 years. The data collection period was 4 April to 16 August 2024. Survey participation by young people was voluntary and no survey incentives were offered to survey respondents. The survey could be completed online or by paper. Respondents were able to skip survey questions, except for state and date of birth, and could exit the survey at any point.

Young people were engaged via schools, local councils, community and service organisations and through Mission Australia services. The survey was also available on the Mission Australia website and promoted via social media. Following research approval from State and Territory Education Departments and 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 peak bodies, local councils, community managed organisations and Mission Australia services. A link to the online survey was provided to participating schools, organisations and local councils who then distributed the link to young people.

As in previous years, participating schools, organisations and local councils were able to receive a tailored *Youth Survey* report if 100 or more (or a mutually agreed lower number) young people responded to the survey. To facilitate this, a pre-arranged code was allocated to the school or organisation that was linked to these survey responses. In 2024, participating councils were also provided the option to obtain a tailored *Youth Survey* report representing responses from young people within nominated postcodes.

Child & Youth Safe Procedure

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 provided by 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 (K6) questions indicated psychological distress and/or if any free-text response indicated the young person was at potential risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

The re-identifiable information reported back to school principals on a weekly basis consisted of the date of birth, gender and postcode (where provided). At the request of Department of Education in Western Australia, feedback was provided to public schools in this state twice a week. Where possible, principals were encouraged to re-identify the young person and provide appropriate support or services. Young people were made aware of this process prior to completing the survey.

Analysis & Weighting

Only completed surveys were included in the data analysis. An online survey was considered complete if the respondent finishes and submits the survey (regardless of how many questions they responded to). A paper survey was considered complete if the majority of questions were answered.

Quantitative analysis was conducted using *SPSS version 29.0.1.0 (171)*. Only comparisons between cohorts that are statistically significant are featured in the report commentary. A p-value equal or lower than 0.05 was interpreted as statistically significant. Thematic analysis of open-ended responses was conducted using *QDA Miner version 2024*.

Data was weighted to make the sample representative of 15- to 19-year-olds by gender, location (state/territory), and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) developed Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) (ABS, 2023). Gender and location correspond to the ABS's Estimated Residential Population statistics (ERP) (ABS, 2024), as it provides year on year figures. Random iterative method (RIM) weighting is utilised. This balances the marginal distributions of each weighting element one after the other, repeating until all factors are within a reasonable margin of the target.

Data was weighted for 2024, 2023 and 2022 data included in this report. Data in this report is not comparable to previous *Youth Survey* reports that contain unweighted data.

Table 11.1: 2024 unweighted sample and weighted number by state/territory

	Unweighted sample	Unweighted %	Weighted count	Weighted %
NSW	3575	20.5%	5290	30.3%
VIC	4642	26.6%	4398	25.2%
QLD	3782	21.6%	3825	21.9%
SA	2828	16.2%	1243	7.1%
WA	996	5.7%	1864	10.7%
TAS	569	3.3%	361	2.1%
NT	205	1.2%	185	1.1%
ACT	883	5.1%	315	1.8%

This report

This report contains an executive summary, national summary and findings, findings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, and a summary for each State and Territory. More detailed reports for each State and Territory have been produced and can be found here: [Youth survey | Mission Australia](#).

Data tables in the national findings section include total results alongside breakdowns by gender. Data tables in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander section include total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander results, with responses from non-Indigenous people and a breakdown by female and male genders. The data tables exclude responses from gender diverse respondents due to marginal or very low sample sizes.

Chapters addressing the national issues identified by young people contain tables detailing results for genders and previous years. In 2024, some of the issues have been re-named to better reflect contemporary language as follows:

Issue name prior to 2024	Issue name in 2024
Alcohol and drugs	Alcohol and other drugs
The environment	Climate change and the environment
The economy and financial matters	Cost of living
Equity and discrimination	Discrimination and inequality
Homelessness/housing	Housing and homelessness
Crime, safety and violence	Violence, safety and crime

Introduced in 2021, 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 *male*, *female*, *a-gender/non-gendered*, *non-binary gender*, *transgender*, *not listed* and *prefer not to say*. Due to the small sample sizes, *a-gender/non-gendered*, *non-binary gender*, *transgender* and *not listed* are combined under the *gender diverse* reporting category.

Please note that the percentages in all tables, figures and text throughout the body of the report are rounded and, though expected, may not necessarily total 100 percent. Not all respondents answered all survey questions. The data presented for each question is among those who responded to that question.

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Young people – each with their own background, experiences, culture and values – are behind the numbers and words in this report. We acknowledge that the measures in this report capture only a portion of who they are, and do not fully encompass the broader narrative of these young people’s lives.

Acknowledgements

Mission Australia would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of the State and Territory Departments of Education and Catholic Education Offices from across the country. This valuable research would not be possible without their support.

Mission Australia would also like to thank the many educational institutions, councils, youth and community organisations, government agencies, corporates, philanthropic organisations and others who helped engage young people in the *Youth Survey* and raise awareness by promoting through their networks and on social media.

These include:

- Albany Youth Support Association
- Alpine Shire Council
- Australian Christian College
- Ballarat High School
- Burnie Works
- Byford Secondary College
- Cardijn College
- City of Boroondara
- City of Canterbury Bankstown
- Compass Catholic Community
- Connect Northern Rivers Inc.
- Emmanuel Anglican College
- Emmanuel College Inc.
- Firbank Grammar School
- Geraldton Grammar School
- Good News Lutheran College
- Goulburn Valley Grammar School
- Guilford Young College
- Hennessy Catholic College
- Hillcrest Christian College
- Hills International College
- Hillsong Youth Australia
- Hope Christian College
- Hunter Trade College
- Kardinia International College
- Katherine Youth Interagency Network
- Loreto College (Coorparoo)
- Mackay Regional Council
- Marist College Ashgrove
- Marist College Canberra
- Men of Business Academy
- Mentone Grammar School
- Mission Australia (various frontline services)
- MLC School
- Moriah War Memorial College
- Mount St Benedict College
- Northern Bay College
- Orygen
- Our Lady of Mercy College
- Our Lady of the Sacred Heart College
- Pembroke School
- PLC Sydney
- Presbyterian Ladies' College, Melbourne
- Reece High School
- Sacred Heart College (Marcellin Campus)
- Santa Sabina College
- Shire of Serpentine Jarrahdale
- Somerville House
- Southern Cross Catholic College
- St Aiden's Anglican Girls' School
- St Bede's College
- St John's Grammar School
- St Laurence's College
- St Margaret's Berwick Grammar
- St Mary MacKillop College
- St Ursula's College Toowoomba
- Sydney Girls High School
- Tara Anglican School for Girls
- Tatachilla Lutheran College
- The Cathedral School of St Anne & St James
- The Lakes College
- The Y Australia
- Thomas Carr College
- Toowoomba Grammar School
- Westminster School
- Whitehorse City Council



Thank you

This publication would not have been possible without the 17,480 young people who completed the Youth Survey in 2024. We extend our deepest gratitude to them, as well as to the staff of Mission Australia and the many schools and organisations that supported their involvement.

For further information about this report please contact

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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 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, reflecting our values of respect, compassion, integrity, perseverance and celebration.

We collaborate with people experiencing homelessness or disadvantage to tackle the root causes of their challenges through providing access to safe, affordable homes and innovative, evidence-based support services.

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.

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, until they can stand for themselves.

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](https://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

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