Who is Mission Australia?
Mission Australia is a non-denominational Christian community service organisation, with more than 155 years of experience in standing together with Australians in need on their journey to independence.

Our evidence-based, client-centred services are focused on reducing homelessness and strengthening communities across Australia. Our services are tailored to the needs and preferences of the clients and communities we serve. Our programs range from early intervention to intensive wrap-around services. They include services targeting homelessness; providing integrated family support; parenting programs; early childhood education; mental health services; residential drug and alcohol programs; youth programs; access to safe and secure housing; and programs to build capacity, resilience and opportunity for local communities.

We work in partnership with others to achieve our goal. This includes communities, supporters, government, businesses and other organisations. We measure our impact, collecting evidence of what works to inform our service design and delivery, and to advocate for change.

We stand together with Australians in need until they can stand for themselves.

Thank you
This publication would not have been possible without the 25,126 young people who completed Mission Australia’s Youth Survey 2019. We extend special thanks to them, the staff of Mission Australia, and the many schools and other organisations who supported their involvement.

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Youth Survey Report 2019
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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 the future leaders.

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This year we are pleased to celebrate the 18th birthday of our Youth Survey. We had 25,126 young people who participated in the 2019 Youth Survey. I’d like to thank every young person who participated, as well as every school, parent and sector colleague who continues to encourage young people to respond to our survey.

It’s often said that with increased age comes increased responsibility. Our Youth Survey has come of age this year and we take very seriously our responsibility and commitment to elevating the voices of young people who come from all across Australia. So that NGOs, social commentators, decision makers and policy makers have access to current evidence on what young people are thinking, feeling and hoping in 2019. The Youth Survey gives us the vital evidence needed to advocate with young people, and for them, for the services and policy responses that they need.

The results also show that young people are facing a plethora of challenges and barriers. For the third year running, mental health is the top national issue. Young people’s top four personal concerns also relate to mental health, which include coping with stress, school or study problems, mental health and body image.

We also included a new question to learn whether young people feel they have enough of a say on important issues. Disappointingly, less than one in 10 young people feel they have a voice when it comes to public affairs. It’s vital that all young people have opportunities and the forums available to them so they can speak up and shape public matters and policy.

Tellingly, ‘the environment’ soared from eighth place in 2018 to second place in 2019 of the topics that young people say are important issues in Australia – tripling in significance since last year. The growing public dialogue and experience of issues, such as extreme weather events and drought, are clearly affecting young people’s view of the world.

These results taken together clearly indicate that young people in Australia feel disenfranchised and deeply concerned. The apparent inability to have their voices heard through formal channels is perhaps causing them to engage in informal ways to get heard, such as climate strikes.

We know from this year’s survey that the majority of young people are engaged in education, confident in their ability to achieve their study and work goals, are happy with their family relationships and are involved in a range of activities. Many young people are also optimistic about their lives and futures.

For the first time, we asked young people whether they had experienced bullying, finding that more than one in five young people reported being bullied in the past 12 months – mostly at school, TAFE or university, with some facing bullying either online or on social media, or at home.

Our survey confirms a disturbing level of bullying being experienced by young people. It’s unacceptable. It can cause and exacerbate mental distress, with potentially harmful and lasting effects on young people’s lives.

Young people are acutely aware of mental health issues and they recognise it as an important issue across Australia. Appropriate and timely supports and responses are required for young people who are grappling with mental health concerns or who are being bullied. Over the past couple of years, there has been significant government investment into youth mental health. Yet there remains significant gaps in the service system, particularly in rural and regional areas. Whatever a young person’s background, location or experience, access to suitable support at the right time can make a critical difference.

Young people are asking for change. We owe it to young people to not only listen, but to also take action. We must stand alongside them to advocate for the changes they want to see, provide opportunities to have a say and better support them with the services they need as they tread their path to adulthood.

Young people have a vital role in shaping our tomorrow. If we ensure young people have the right supports and opportunities to be heard, the future will be brighter for everyone. Through this survey, once again, they are speaking to us, speaking to people who need to listen to them and respond to their very real concerns and aspirations.

James Toomey
CEO, Mission Australia
Executive summary

Demographic profile of respondents

A total of 25,126 young people between the ages of 15 and 19 responded to Mission Australia’s 2019 Youth Survey. The largest number of responses came from New South Wales (26.2%), Queensland (23.6%) and Victoria (17.7%). Close to six in ten (56.3%) respondents were female, and one in seven (14.3%) respondents were born overseas. Just under one in five (17.8%) young people spoke a language other than English at home. The level of reported disability in 2019 was 6.5%, marginally higher than in 2018 (6.0%). The vast majority of respondents were studying full-time (93.3%), which is consistent with the result of 94.0% in 2018. Over four in ten (43.0%) respondents were working part-time and more than one in three (34.4%) indicated that they were looking for work, which is again consistent with previous years.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

1,579 (6.4%) respondents to Mission Australia’s 2019 Youth Survey identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 1,310 (5.3%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 149 (0.6%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.5% identified as both). Half (49.6%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents identified as female and 42.7% identified as male, and 13.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that they are living with a disability. Nearly one in five (19.2%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported speaking a language other than English at home; the most common were Indigenous languages, Chinese, Spanish, Kriol and Japanese.

The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported that they were studying full-time (83.1%), intended to complete year 12 (89.7%), and indicated that they were either very satisfied or satisfied with their studies (56.5%). Four in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported plans to go to university (40.1%) or to get a job (39.9%) after finishing school. A further breakdown of results can be found in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander summary.

Young people and plans for study and training

Young people were asked about their future plans for education and training following school. Of those who were still at school, 95.8% stated that they intended to complete Year 12. More than double the proportion of males than females indicated that they did not intend to complete Year 12 (6.3% compared with 2.4% respectively).

When asked what they were planning to do after school, go to university was the most frequent option indicated by young people (64.8%). Many respondents planned to get a job (33.6%) or had travel/gap year plans (28.0%) for after school, while 11.7% planned to go to TAFE or college and 11.3% planned to get an apprenticeship. While a greater proportion of females indicated that they planned to go to university after school (72.4% compared with 55.0% of males), more than four times the proportion of males indicated that they were intending to get an apprenticeship (20.3% compared with 4.6% of females).

Confidence in achieving study/work goals after school

Respondents were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. Almost half (47.0%) of respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study/work goals: 10.0% indicated that they were extremely confident and 37.0% indicated they were very confident. Over four in ten (42.2%) reported feeling somewhat confident. However, one in ten (10.8%) young people were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals: 8.2% reported feeling slightly confident and 2.6% were not at all confident in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school. A notably higher proportion of male than female respondents reported feeling extremely or very confident (53.9% compared with 42.5% respectively).

Barriers to achieving goals after finishing school

Young people were asked whether they felt there were any barriers that may impact upon the achievement of their study/work goals after finishing school. Nearly half (48.9%) of respondents indicated that they felt there are barriers to achieving their post-school aspirations, with a much greater proportion of females (54.5%) than males (40.5%) reporting the presence of barriers.

Respondents who stated that they felt there were barriers were then asked to indicate from a number of items the barrier/s that they felt would impact upon the achievement of their study/work goals after school. Nationally, the top three barriers young people considered to be impacting their goals after finishing school were academic ability, mental health and financial difficulty (20.2%, 16.6% and 12.4% respectively). Around one in ten respondents indicated that they saw admission/job requirements and family responsibilities as barriers to achieving their post-school goals (11.2% and 8.4% respectively). Compared with males, a greater proportion of females indicated each of the items were barriers to achieving their aspirations after school.
What young people value

Young people were asked to indicate how important a number of items have been in their lives over the past year. The three most highly valued items nationally were friendships (other than family), family relationships and school or study satisfaction (82.5%, 81.5% and 69.0% respectively). Around seven in ten respondents also placed a high value upon mental health and physical health (66.6% and 65.6% respectively).

Issues of personal concern

Young people were asked to rank how concerned they had been about a number of issues over the past year. The responses for the top three concerns were consistent with 2018: coping with stress (44.7%), school or study problems (34.3%) and mental health (33.2%). Three in ten respondents indicated that they were either extremely or very concerned about body image (31.0%). One in four young people were either extremely or very concerned about physical health (25.1%), while around one in five were highly concerned about family conflict (18.2%) and financial security (17.8%). The proportion of females concerned about these issues (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

Young people’s experiences of bullying

For the first time in 2019, young people were asked whether they had experienced bullying over the past twelve months. Just over one in five (21.0%) young people reported that they had experienced bullying in the past twelve months. A slightly higher proportion of females than males reported that they had experienced bullying over the past year (21.8% compared with 18.8% respectively). Young people who reported that they had experienced bullying over the past year were then asked a number of related questions: where the bullying took place; kind/s of bullying that they had experienced; and what helped them to deal with the experience of bullying.

For the 21.0% of respondents who had experienced bullying in the past year, eight in ten (79.9%) reported that the bullying took place at school/TAFE/university, while close to one in three (34.0%) indicated they had experienced bullying online/social media. While similar proportions of males (82.4%) and females (79.1%) stated they had experienced bullying at school/TAFE/university, a much higher proportion of females reported they had been bullied online/social media (37.3% compared with 27.3% of males).

Out of the 21.0% of respondents who had experienced bullying in the past year, more than seven in ten (71.3%) reported that they experienced verbal bullying (e.g. name calling, teasing). Over six in ten (61.2%) indicated they had experienced social bullying (e.g. rumours, being embarrassed or excluded), while more than one third (36.5%) reported they had experienced cyberbullying (e.g. hurtful messages, pictures or comments). Around one in five (21.6%) had experienced physical bullying (e.g. hitting, punching). There were notable differences in the results by gender: greater proportions of females reported experiencing social bullying (e.g. rumours, being excluded) and cyberbullying (e.g. hurtful messages, pictures or comments), whereas a much higher proportion of males reported that they had experienced physical bullying (e.g. hitting, punching) over the past year.

For the 21.0% of respondents who had been bullied in the past year, the top three methods of dealing with the experience of bullying were ignoring it (46.0%), removing myself from the situation (37.0%) and talking to close friends or family (34.3%). Just under one third (32.6%) indicated they dealt with bullying by distracting myself through other activities. One in five (20.0%) reported confronting the bully/ies was helpful in dealing with their experience of bullying, along with talking to a support person (17.6%). Nearly one in seven (13.4%) respondents stated that nothing helped me to deal with bullying. Compared with males, female respondents were more likely to report talking to close friends or family helped; conversely, compared with females, higher proportion of males reported that confronting the bully/ies assisted them in dealing with bullying.

Young people were also asked for the first time in 2019 whether they had witnessed bullying over the past twelve months. Nearly half (47.7%) of young people reported that they had witnessed bullying in the past year. Of the 47.7% of young people who reported witnessing bullying over the past year, the vast majority (85.2%) reported that they witnessed bullying at school/TAFE/university, while more than four in ten (42.4%) indicated they had seen bullying online/social media. A notably higher proportion of females reported they had seen bullying take place online/on social media (48.2% compared with 34.2% of males).

Where young people go for help with important issues

Young people were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. As in previous years, friend/s (83.0%), parent/s or guardian/s (75.2%) and relative/family friend (57.6%) were the three most frequently cited sources of help for young people. Around half of young people indicated that they would go to their brother/sister (50.8%), the internet (46.1%) or a GP or health professional (45.5%) for support with important issues in their lives. Results were generally similar for females and males across the majority of items, although higher proportions of females would turn to the internet or a GP or health professional for support with important issues in their lives.

Most important issues in Australia today

Young people were asked to list the three issues that they considered were the most important in Australia today. In 2019, the top three issues identified by young people were mental health, the environment and equity and discrimination. Close to four in ten young people indicated that mental health (36.2%) is an important issue in Australia today. Just over one third of respondents reported that the environment (34.2%) is an important national issue, while one quarter cited equity and discrimination (24.8%). Since 2018, the proportion of those reporting the environment as a key national issue has more than tripled from 9.2% to 34.2%. Conversely, concerns about alcohol and drugs and mental health have decreased since 2018.
Compared with males, a greater proportion of female respondents identified mental health (41.0% compared with 30.3% of males) and the environment (38.8% compared with 28.2%) as important issues facing Australia today. Conversely, higher proportions of males regarded politics (14.6% compared with 8.2% of females), alcohol and drugs (23.4% compared with 19.1%) and the economy and financial matters (16.9% compared with 13.1%) as key issues in Australia.

**Young people’s voice**

For the first time in 2019, young people were asked whether they felt they have enough of a say about important issues. Just under half of young people felt they have a say all of the time when with my friends (45.2%) and with my family (44.2%). Nearly one in six (15.0%) young people felt they have a say all of the time when at school/TAFE/university, while less than one in ten (7.2%) felt they have a say all of the time in public affairs. More than half (52.4%) of young people felt they have a say none of the time in public affairs. Around three in ten (28.8%) young people also felt they have a say none of the time while at school/TAFE/university.

Higher proportions of males felt they have a say all of the time while at school/TAFE/university (17.1% compared with 13.4% of females) and in public affairs (9.7% compared with 5.1%). Conversely, a greater proportion of females indicated feeling they have a say none of the time in public affairs (55.4% compared with 48.0% of males).

**Activities young people were involved in**

The top three activities for young people in 2019 were sports (as a participant) (68.0%), sports (as a spectator) (56.3%) and volunteer work (46.7%). Compared with females, males were more likely to report participating in sports (as a participant) and sports (as a spectator) over the past year. Conversely, compared with males, females were more likely to have participated in volunteer work and arts/cultural/music activities in the past year.

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

Respondents were asked to rate their family’s ability to get along with one another. The majority of respondents rated their family’s ability to get along very positively: 22.6% rated it as excellent and 31.7% rated it as very good. More than one in five young people did not report such a positive experience of family relationships, as they rated their family’s ability to get along as either fair (14.1%) or poor (7.7%).

**Happiness and the future**

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole. The majority of young people (60.7%) indicated that they felt very happy/happy with their lives overall. Responses were similar for both males and females, although a greater proportion of males reported feeling very happy/happy with their lives as a whole (66.6% compared with 57.6% of females).
Mission Australia’s Youth Survey

In order to assess young people’s journey into independence and the types of support they may require, the following discussion of the Youth Survey’s findings is structured according to the outcomes Mission Australia services strive to achieve with the individuals, families and communities we work alongside. With the expectation that they can progress towards independence, Mission Australia provides services that aim to achieve the following outcomes for young people:

1. **Developing and achieving** – young people need to be skilled and confident, in education and with access to tertiary education, training or employment. All young people should have the best foundation for learning and development and be able to participate as valued members of society.

2. **Economic wellbeing** – young people should have access to the essentials in life and have good financial management skills. They should have pathways to economic participation, fulfilling employment and independent living.

3. **Healthy** – being healthy is a significant contributor to overall wellbeing and this includes participating in activities such as sport. Health incorporates both physical and mental health and Mission Australia believes that for young people to transition successfully into adulthood all aspects of health are important.

4. **Housed** – a supportive and stable home environment is a particularly important aspect of a young person’s life; it is essential for good physical and mental health and has positive impacts on educational outcomes. Stable housing also provides a platform for other supports in the community, through schools or neighbours.

5. **Inclusive and cohesive** – having a strong sense of being included, having mutual support and feeling you have someone to call on at a time of need are critically important for young people. Having these bonds with the people around them plays an important part in transitioning to adulthood. Diversity needs to be respected and supported, with the benefits of this being seen as both strength building and protective.

6. **Supported and resourced** – young people and those around them such as their peers, family and relatives must have access to services to meet their needs. Mission Australia believes support is essential for young people, whether this be universal or more targeted support. These need to be quality services which are holistic and improve outcomes over time. A holistic approach considers all life domains including: housing, recreation, social participation, employment, finances, legal, education, child and family relationships, physical and mental health, alcohol and other drug use, cultural and personal identity. Services should produce evidence which helps improve service delivery. This includes listening to young people and including their opinions in service development.

7. **Safe** – feeling safe and keeping young people safe is a responsibility of the whole of society. Young people need to feel safe in their families, neighbourhoods and schools. All young people should have a safe, secure and stable home and be protected from bullying and discrimination at school and in their community.

8. **Connected and participating** – it is important that young people have a sense of belonging, feel part of the community and are given opportunities to participate in activities and events that allow them to develop relationships with others. Young people should have their voices heard and be actively involved in decisions affecting their lives.
About the survey

The Mission Australia Youth Survey is the largest annual survey of young Australians of its kind. Now in its 18th year, the Youth Survey aims to identify the values, aspirations and issues of concern to young people. The Youth Survey was developed by Mission Australia to strengthen Mission Australia's capacity to support and advocate for young Australians in need.

Participation

In 2019, 25,126 young Australians aged 15 to 19 years participated in the Youth Survey. Of these, 23,357 participants completed the survey online (93.0%) and 1,769 completed the survey on paper (7.0%).

Areas of focus

As well as collecting valuable socio-demographic data, the 2019 Youth Survey sought to capture the views and perspectives of young people on a broad range of issues. Topics covered by the survey include education and employment, perceived barriers to achieving post-school plans, participation in community activities, general wellbeing, values and concerns, preferred sources of support, as well as feelings about the future. New focus questions were added to explore young people’s voice within their community, their experiences of bullying; perceptions of disability support, as well as their housing circumstances.

Methodology

Young people were engaged via schools, community organisations, through Mission Australia services and at youth events. Following approval from State and Territory Education Departments, as well as Catholic Education Offices, all secondary school principals were approached via email with information about the survey and how to get involved. Information about the Youth Survey was also distributed to Mission Australia services, local government organisations and networks, Commonwealth, State/Territory departments, youth organisations and peak bodies.

As in previous years, participating schools, organisations and local councils were able to receive a tailored Youth Survey report if 100 or more young people from their programs responded to the survey. In order to do this, a pre-arranged code needed to be allocated to the school or organisation, which young people were to enter into the survey prior to completion.

Mission Australia is committed to child and youth safety and has extended this responsibility to the young people who participated in the 2019 Youth Survey. In line with the approvals obtained from State and Territory Education Departments and Catholic Education Offices, Mission Australia reported re-identifiable information to participating schools if a young person’s responses to the Kessler 6 question indicated probable serious mental distress, or if any free-text response/s indicated that a young person was at potential risk of harm, abuse or neglect. To implement this reporting mechanism, date of birth was made a mandatory item in the survey. For any survey respondents whose responses indicated potential risk of harm or psychological distress, the date of birth, gender and postcode (as well as respondent initials in Queensland) (where provided) were reported back to school Principals on a weekly basis as required. Principals were then able to re-identify the young person (where possible) and provide support or services, as necessary. More than 60 cases of potential risk of harm were reported to participating schools and more than 270 psychological distress reports were forwarded to schools in 2019. These two forms of reporting were not required by the Western Australian Department of Education; as such, the collection of date of birth and this reporting method were not implemented for responses from this state.

Every five years, the Research and Evaluation team conducts a comprehensive review of the free-text responses and the coding frame for the question asking respondents to list the three issues they considered were the most important in Australia today. New or existing terms are identified and/or re-classified through the review, which enables responses to be analysed and reported more accurately. This process supports us to best reflect young people’s concerns in our reporting, policy and advocacy.

Survey design and changes in 2019

Mission Australia seeks external advice on the survey design each year. In particular, this year we received feedback from SNAICC, the National Voice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children, which influenced a number of the items in the questionnaire.

A small number of amendments were made to the survey this year:

- The options for gender identity were expanded beyond male/female/other to improve inclusiveness for non-cisgender identifying respondents.

- Young people were asked whether they felt there are any barriers which may impact upon the achievement of their post-school goals. If they responded ‘yes’, respondents were prompted to indicate from a number of items the barrier/s that may impact upon the achievement of their study/work goals after school. The items included: academic ability admission/job requirements, cultural responsibilities, discrimination, family responsibilities, financial difficulty, lack of family support, lack of information, lack of jobs, lack of school support, mental health, physical health, transport and where you live. The item cultural responsibilities was added to this list of options for the first time in 2019.
• In 2019, culture was offered in the list of items for the first time within the question, ‘what do young people value?’

• The list of items for the question around sources of support was amended this year. The list of items now included: brother/sister, community service, friend/s, GP or health professional, internet, parent/s or guardian/s, relative/family friend, school counsellor, social media and teacher.

New focus questions were also added this year:

• A question was included to understand young people’s voice. The question asked the extent to which young people felt they have a say about important issues across four categories: with my family, with my friends, at school/TAFE/university and in public affairs.

• A series of focus questions on bullying were included that asked respondents whether they had experienced and/or witnessed bullying in the past 12 months. If the response was ‘yes’ they had experienced bullying in the past 12 months, respondents were asked to identify: where they were bullied, what kind/s of bullying they experienced, and what helped them most to deal with it. If the response was ‘yes’ they had witnessed bullying in the past 12 months, respondents were asked to identify from a list of location/s where they witnessed bullying taking place.

• A cluster of questions focussed on disability. Two questions were directed to all survey respondents to capture perceptions of community support for people who live with a disability and general perceptions of unfair treatment of people living with disability. An additional question was directed specifically to respondents who identify as having a disability that asked about challenges they may face around access, independence and inclusion.

• Respondents were asked whether they had any caring responsibilities for an immediate family member or close relative.

• Respondents were asked a range of questions to understand their housing circumstances. These included time spent away from home because they felt they could not go back (including age and frequency of experiences), their current residential setting and the adequacy of their housing in relation to access to services, distance to family/friends, comfort and number of bedrooms.

Please note that not all questions that were included in the survey questionnaire are presented in this report. These questions will inform other research publications to be released throughout 2020.
Policy context

Over 25,000 young people across Australia voiced their hopes and concerns in Mission Australia’s 2019 Youth Survey. It is important that we listen to these voices when formulating the policies that impact their lives now and in the future.

While encouragingly the majority of young people felt either very positive or positive about the future and happy or very happy about their life as a whole, their responses also point to challenges facing some young people which highlight the need for further supports as they transition into adulthood.

Mental health continued to be reported as the most important issue facing Australia today by the young people surveyed. Their personal concerns are also closely related to this theme with coping with stress, school or study problems, mental health and body image the top four issues of personal concern this year, as in previous years. Mental health was also cited as one of the top three barriers to young people achieving their post-school goals.

For the first time, this year’s Youth Survey included a focus on bullying and found that one in five (21.0%) young people surveyed had experienced bullying in the last 12 months. This included multiple forms of bullying in various locations as discussed in more detail below and in the report. Bullying has a direct impact on young people’s mental health and needs to be addressed to improve young people’s wellbeing.

In this year’s Youth Survey, young people were asked whether they felt they have enough of a say about important issues: with their families, friends, in education settings and in public affairs. The results show that more than half (52.4%) of young people felt they have a say none of the time in public affairs. Around three in ten (28.8%) young people also felt they have a say none of the time while at school/TAFE/university.

It is important for young people to have a voice in issues impacting their lives, both for their own confidence and for more informed policy-making. In addition, mental health, the environment and equity and discrimination were ranked as the three most important issues in Australia today in 2019. If we are to listen to young people, we must give more attention to all of these issues.

There were differences in Youth Survey results by gender that require further examination, including post-school plans, confidence, personal concerns, experiences of bullying, the most important issues in Australia today and having a say on important issues.

Differences in Youth Survey results were also evident for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. Compared with non-Indigenous respondents, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were more likely to report feeling they had a say all of the time when at school/TAFE/University and in public affairs and were also more likely to be involved in environmental and political groups or activities. However, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people also reported experiencing bullying at higher rates over the past 12 months and were more likely than non-Indigenous young people to report feeling sad or very sad about their life as a whole. These findings underline that more needs to be done to combat bullying and improve the wellbeing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

Recommendations:

• Young people should be supported to remain engaged in education and to transition to further education and employment;

• Investment is required in improved mental health supports for young people with a focus on prevention and early intervention;

• Family supports are required to build cohesion and prevent homelessness;

• Schools need to be resourced to prevent and combat bullying;

• Young people’s voices need to be included when forming evidence-based policies and in the co-design of programs for young people; and

• Policy responses should build on the strengths of and address the challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, including the higher levels of bullying experienced.

Developing and achieving

The majority of respondents (93.3%) were studying full-time. Positively, the majority of respondents reported that they were either very satisfied (12.3%) or satisfied (55.2%) with their studies. Less than one in ten indicated they were either dissatisfied (5.7%) or very dissatisfied (1.8%).

Of those that were still at school, 95.8% stated that they intended to complete Year 12. More than double the proportion of males indicated that they did not plan to complete Year 12 (6.3% compared with 2.4% of females).

A lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were studying full-time (83.1% compared with non-Indigenous young people 94.1%) and the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported that they were either very satisfied (10.8%) or satisfied (45.7%) with their studies. Around one in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated they were either dissatisfied (5.9%) or very dissatisfied (5.4%).

Of those that were still at school, 89.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents stated that they intended to complete Year 12 (compared with 96.4% of non-Indigenous respondents). More than twice the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males indicated that they did not plan to complete Year 12 (14.0% compared with 6.3% of females).

It is important that young people at risk of disengaging with education are able to access holistic supports to prevent early school leaving and where young people do disengage that they are provided with alternative pathways to further education and employment.
Second Step Shepparton (VIC)
Second Step Shepparton is an evidence-based early intervention program proven to increase children’s educational engagement and success, improve peer relationships and decrease problem behaviours through promoting social, emotional competence and self-regulation. Second Step is delivered to children in Years 6 and 7 who are identified by their schools as being vulnerable to not making a successful transition from primary to secondary school and be at increased risk of school disengagement and early school leaving.

Kempsey School Transition Program (NSW)
The Kempsey School Transition program – or as it is known locally, Gurulgural Dhalayi Warra – offers a range of activities aimed at supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and engaging families in their child’s education. Activities include: family fun days, culture camps, information and orientation sessions, health screening, referral to specialist supports, homework support and one-on-one case management.

Economic wellbeing
More than four in ten (43.0%) respondents reported that they were employed part-time. Nearly six in ten (56.2%) respondents indicated that they were not in paid employment: over one in three (34.4%) stated that they were looking for work, while around one in five (21.8%) were neither working nor looking for work.

Work experience is important in equipping young people for future work opportunities. Those not in paid work but looking for work may benefit from the hands-on learning that part-time work offers. Some young people also need the income from employment to support themselves or their family to meet their needs. However, balancing study and work can be challenging for some young people and can add pressure at a stressful time in their lives.

Nearly two thirds (64.8%) of respondents planned to go to university after school. One in three (33.6%) respondents reported plans to get a job after school and just over one in ten young people planned to go to TAFE or college (11.7%) or to get an apprenticeship (11.3%).

Compared with non-Indigenous respondents, a smaller proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported plans to go to university after finishing school (40.1% compared with 66.7% of non-Indigenous respondents). Conversely, higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents planned to get a job (39.9% compared with 33.3% of non-Indigenous respondents), to get an apprenticeship (19.3% compared with 10.6%) and to go to TAFE or college (15.6% compared with 11.5%).

A range of post-school pathways need to be available to all young people to meet their different preferences. Early supports and career guidance need to be put in place so that young people can make informed choices about their future and successfully navigate the post-school transition.

Academic ability, mental health and financial difficulty were the top barriers that young people saw as impacting upon the achievement of their study/work goals after school.

To ensure more equitable outcomes for young people, the barrier of financial difficulty should be addressed by increasing the adequacy of Youth Allowance to allow ongoing study and through the provision of fee-free or scholarship opportunities for university, TAFE and apprenticeships.
In addition to the top three barriers of academic ability, mental health and financial difficulty, one in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported that they saw family responsibilities (10.1%) and where you live (9.7%) as barriers impacting upon the achievement of their study/work goals (compared with 8.3% and 8.1% of non-Indigenous respondents).

Education and employment programs that work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people need to provide flexible supports that take family responsibilities into account, and that are tailored to the diverse locations in which young people live.

Charcoal Lane (VIC)
Charcoal Lane is a social enterprise in Melbourne that combines a restaurant specialising in native flavours with a comprehensive training program for young people who have experienced vocational and non-vocational barriers to employment. Charcoal Lane enables Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other young people to gain both accredited hospitality qualifications and professional experience within a supportive developmental environment. On completing traineeships at the restaurant, young people are well prepared to move into careers in hospitality or other industries.

Healthy
Mental health concerns were raised across a number of areas of the Youth Survey. More than one third (36.2%) of young people indicated that mental health is an important issue in Australia today, making it the top national concern for young people. The top four issues of personal concern for young people are also closely linked with mental health; these were: coping with stress, school or study problems, mental health and body image. Two thirds of young people also valued mental health (66.6%) as extremely important or very important, while mental health was the second-most cited barrier to achieving study/work goals after finishing school.

Mental health is a significant issue for young people, which requires a strong response from the community and policy-makers. Poor mental health has repercussions for other areas of young people’s lives and can negatively affect journeys into adulthood.

It is encouraging that mental health has been increasingly recognised in public and policy debates and some further investments have been made to improve the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people at both a Commonwealth and State and Territory government level.

However, more could be done, including shifting the focus to prevention and early intervention, resourcing schools to support young people’s mental health and wellbeing, providing strategies to support young people to cope with stress, boost self-esteem, improve mental health literacy and reduce stigma.

As young people generally turn to their parents and friends as sources of support, they need to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to recognise mental health issues and to provide assistance or seek help referrals when needed. Young people, especially those in regional areas, also need improved access to health professionals including general practitioners, psychologists and psychiatrists, as well as youth-focussed mental health services such as headspace.

“More accessible resources, counsellors and therapists. The wait lines and need for prioritisation of patients makes it very difficult for me to want to seek help.”

(F, 17, NSW)

“Better access to mental health services for the socioeconomically challenged and better part-time pathways for students who do not have family support.”

(M, 18, SA)

Gender-sensitive mental health services are important in responding to the concerns, challenges and support preferences of young females and males. Compared with males, notably higher proportions of females were extremely or very concerned about coping with stress (58.3% compared with 26.1% of males), body image (42.8% compared with 14.5%), school or study problems (43.3% compared with 21.9%) and mental health (41.9% compared with 20.6%). The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female respondents who were concerned about these issues was also much higher than the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males.

Initiatives to promote mental health and wellbeing therefore need to address social pressures contributing to higher levels of concern for young females across a range of areas.

“Lately I have been very hard on myself, whether it’s my body image (even though I have been trying so hard), or thinking I’m not good enough and I need to work harder.”

(F, 15, QLD)

Family Mental Health Support Service
Family Mental Health Support Service provides early intervention support to assist children and young people (up to the age of 18 years), as well as their families, who are at risk of, or affected by, mental illness. These services support parents to reduce family stress and enable children and young people to reach their potential. This program is funded by the Department of Social Services and is delivered by Mission Australia in several locations nationally.
Family conflict and mental illness are key contributors to youth homelessness. As noted above, mental health concerns were reported by many young people throughout this year’s Youth Survey. Additionally, more than one in five (21.8%) young people indicated their family’s ability to get along was either fair or poor, with a higher proportion of females rating their family’s ability to get along as fair or poor (23.5% compared with 18.5% of males). Almost one in five respondents were either extremely or very concerned about family conflict (18.2%) and indicated they had experienced bullying at home (18.1%) over the past year.

Three in ten (29.8%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated their family’s ability to get along was either fair or poor, while more than twice the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females rated their family’s ability to get along as fair (22.5% compared with 10.8% of males). Around one quarter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were either extremely or very concerned about family conflict (23.3%) and a much higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they experienced bullying at home in the past year (30.1% compared with 16.9% of non-Indigenous respondents).

Early intervention is particularly crucial for young people at risk of homelessness by facilitating family reconciliation through programs such as Reconnect. Where a young person cannot remain with their family, safe, secure and affordable housing is crucial.

**Reconnect**

Reconnect supports young people aged 12–18 years who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The aim is to improve family relationships so the young person may be able to return to the family home. If this is not possible, the young person will be supported to obtain alternative housing. In addition, the young person will be supported to remain engaged at school and to address their other needs, such as mental health, addiction issues and life skills. Mission Australia runs Reconnect services across seven sites in NSW, SA, QLD and WA.

Mission Australia conducted an outcomes evaluation from March to October 2016 across all of its seven Reconnect sites. Overall, improvements were found in clients’ wellbeing, sense of control and support, housing permanency, family cohesion and financial condition of the family. The evaluation also found that Reconnect services fill a significant gap in existing regional service systems, including a central role in supporting schools to connect young people to other services in the community.

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1 Roche, Barker, and Turton 2017; Roche and Barker 2017
2 Cross et al. 2009, xxi; ReachOut Australia 2017, 5; Alannah and Madeline Foundation 2018, 1; Thomas et al. 2017
3 Alannah and Madeline Foundation 2018, 7; Goldblum et al. 2014, 6
4 Relationships Australia 2018
5 Goldblum et al. 2014, 4; Nixon 2014; Hinduja and Patchin 2014, 10
6 Relationships Australia 2018. See also Rigby 2017a

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**Inclusive and cohesive**

Young people highly value their friendships and family, with both friendships (other than family) and family relationships considered extremely or very important by over eight in ten young people. It is important that programs that work with young people also have the flexibility to work with their families and social networks.

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander respondents to this year’s Youth Survey also placed a high value on culture, with 47.4% considering it extremely or very important to them (compared to 26.8% of non-Indigenous respondents). Connection to culture can be a protective factor and promote social and emotional wellbeing for young people and should be fostered within relevant youth programs.

Young people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds were also well represented in the Youth Survey, as well as young people living with a disability. Over 1,600 (6.5%) respondents to this year’s Youth Survey identified as living with a disability, and further analysis of these results is planned for later release in a snapshot report in 2020. One in seven (14.3%) respondents this year were born overseas and close to one in five (17.8%) spoke a language other than English at home. Policies and programs that seek to benefit young people must recognise their diversity and take an inclusive and strengths-based approach.

**Bullying**

For the first time in 2019, young people were asked whether they had experienced or witnessed bullying over the past twelve months. Just over one in five (21.0%) young people reported that they had experienced bullying in the past twelve months, while nearly half (47.7%) reported that they had witnessed bullying in the past twelve months. This aligns with other research that demonstrates the prevalence of bullying and the need for further action.

Bullying involves ongoing, repeated, unwanted, targeted aggressive behaviour(s) over time that causes psychological, physical, social or educational harm, often characterised by an imbalance of power and peer victimization. Such behaviours include ‘overt’ bullying (visible verbal or physical bullying), ‘covert’ bullying (such as spreading rumours), or the more recent form of ‘cyberbullying’. Each of these forms of bullying often overlap. Experiencing bullying at such a formative time as adolescence can have long-term negative impacts upon self-esteem, mental health and wellbeing; for this reason, bullying is increasingly being re-framed as a public health issue.

Young people who reported bullying stated that the bullying most commonly occurred at school/TAFE/university (79.9%). Relationships Australia’s 2018 online survey found that half (50%) of parents and guardians would seek help from the school if they were concerned about their child being bullied. However, more than 50% of respondents were not confident that schools deal effectively with bullying.

All schools need to be adequately resourced and equipped to prevent and combat bullying. This includes commitment at a leadership level, scope for a whole of school response, implementation of evidence based anti-bullying programs, training for teachers and wellbeing staff and an ability to intervene in highly traumatic cases where complex needs may arise.
“Schools, work and families need to pay more attention to young people and do something about the bullying and harassment teenagers experience.”

(F, 17, VIC)

“Bullying in schools and outside of schools. It is making young children take their own lives!”

(M, 16, VIC)

“Bullying caused me to have anxiety when coming to school.”

(M, 15, SA)

“For school to help more and enforce more rules and follow them and to not tolerate bullying. To take action against bullying and actually do stuff about it. Get a guest speaker in to talk about bullying and the effects it has later in life and now.”

(F, 15, TAS)

According to this year’s Youth Survey, online/on social media (34.0%) was the second most reported place in which young people experienced bullying in the last 12 months, after at school/TAFE/university (79.9%).

Of the survey respondents who had been bullied over the past year, more than seven in ten (71.3%) experienced verbal bullying (e.g. name calling, teasing) and over six in ten (61.2%) indicated they had experienced social bullying (e.g. rumours, being embarrassed or excluded). More than one third (36.5%) reported they had experienced cyberbullying (e.g. hurtful messages, pictures or comments), while more than one fifth (21.6%) had experienced physical bullying (e.g. hitting, punching). Respondents could choose multiple forms of bullying in the survey questionnaire, and those experiencing verbal and social forms of bullying may be experiencing these forms and cyberbullying concurrently. Research has shown that cyberbullying usually occurs in conjunction with traditional forms of bullying.8

A notably higher proportion of females reported they had experienced bullying online/on social media (37.3% compared with 27.3% of males). Similarly, when considering the kinds of bullying experienced, more females experienced cyberbullying (e.g. hurtful messages, pictures or comments) (39.6% compared with 29.9% of males). Yet, concerning, double the proportion of males reported that they had experienced physical bullying (e.g. hitting, punching) over the past year (29.7% compared with 14.8% of females).

Cyberbullying has a sense of immediacy as technology can be used to disseminate images or words quickly and widely with the intention of causing harm, and it occurs on a forum where others can easily witness it.9 More than four in ten (42.4%) of the young people who had witnessed bullying reported they saw it take place online/on social media. With the frequent and increasing use of technology by young people, cyberbullying is an important issue which needs to be addressed in a targeted way alongside traditional forms of bullying.

“Bullying in schools and outside of schools. It is making young children take their own lives!”

(STEPS – Steps to examine programs and approaches for schools)

STEPS7 is a decision-making tool from ‘Bullying No Way!’ that helps schools select appropriate and evidence-based anti-bullying programs and approaches. The STEPS tool has a wide range of frameworks, strategies, resources and programs which aim to counter bullying. The STEPS decision-making tool supports school staff to examine these various programs and resources and identify the most appropriate approaches to address bullying.

eSmart

eSmart is a cultural, behaviour-change program.10 It is a roadmap that schools can use to support improvements to student wellbeing and has been designed to create a positive and inclusive culture that reduces bullying and cyber bullying, and increases awareness around cyber safety.

Developed by experts, it encourages positive online behaviours and works to reduce exposure to cyber risks. eSmart provides schools with a framework to assist with the review of policies, practices and whole-school change processes to support a cyber safe or an ‘eSmart’ environment.

7 Bullying No Way! 2019a
8 Queensland Anti-Cyberbullying Taskforce and Queensland Government 2018, 29; Hinduja and Patchin 2014
9 Bullying No Way! 2019b; Hinduja and Patchin 2014, 13
10 Alannah and Madeline Foundation 2019a
Concerningly, three in ten (29.9%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported that they had experienced bullying in the past twelve months (compared with 20.3% of non-Indigenous respondents). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were also more likely to experience bullying at home, in my neighbourhood and at work than their non-Indigenous peers, and they were more likely to experience physical bullying (39.2% compared to 19.7%).

Particular policy attention should be paid to students who are most vulnerable to being bullied, including students who might be at risk of bullying due to discrimination around race, disability, obesity, gender, homophobia and material deprivation.11

Research also shows that adolescents involved in bullying in any way (‘victim’, ‘bully-victim’, or ‘bully’) have worse mental health outcomes than those who were not — including increased risk of depression and suicidal ideation12 — and the group who were often most vulnerable were the ‘bully-victims’: those adolescents who bullied others and were also bullied themselves.13

Young people need to be equipped to respond to or know how to seek support if they are experiencing or witnessing bullying. For the 21.0% of respondents who reported they had been bullied in the past year, the top three methods that helped them deal with bullying were ignoring it (46.0%), removing myself from the situation (37.0%) and talking to close friends or family (34.3%).

A much higher proportion of females indicated that they dealt with bullying by talking to close friends or family (42.3% compared with 24.1% of males) while a higher proportion of males reported that confronting the bully/ies (23.9%) assisted them in dealing with bullying (compared with 17.7% of females).

Stigma around seeking help for bullying can deter young people from reaching out.14 However, speaking to a trusted adult can be a crucial part of getting support. Parents and guardians need support in having crucial conversations with children around bullying, as do friends and young people themselves.15

Disturbingly, nearly one in seven (13.4%) respondents stated that nothing helped me to deal with bullying. There is therefore much more that we can do as a community to support young people experiencing bullying and support their wellbeing.

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**Dolly’s Dream**

At the beginning of 2018, the country was devastated by the untimely death of 14 year old Amy ‘Dolly’ Everett. Dolly was the victim of relentless bullying. Following her death, Dolly’s parents Kate and Tick and her sister Meg established Dolly’s Dream as a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves and to prevent the lives of other children being lost to bullying.

Dolly’s Dream:16

- raises awareness about the serious issue of bullying and its devastating effects
- provides help and supports young people affected by bullying
- educates about bullying issues and advocates for bullying laws and regulations
- delivers information on ways to help prevent bullying and cyber bullying
- works to change cultures and prevent bullying through a variety of educational approaches

Key achievements of Dolly’s Dream to date have included:

- Dolly’s Dream Parent Hub - a website with bullying and cyber bullying resources for parents
- Co-funding the Northern Territory and Queensland Governments’ introduction of eSmart Schools to reduce bullying
- Delivering cyber safety workshops in rural and remote parts of Australia
- Lobbying for introduction of new laws with tougher penalties for cyber bullies in NSW (known as Dolly’s Law) and Tasmania
- Reaching more than 8 million Australians with Dolly’s story
- Inspiring 350+ fundraising activities
- Contributing to policy discussions with all governments

Kate and Tick were awarded the 2019 Australian of the Year “Local Heroes’ award.

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**Safe**

It is essential for young people’s wellbeing that they feel safe in their homes, schools and communities. However, almost one in five (17.8%) respondents to the 2019 Youth Survey were extremely or very concerned about personal safety. This was higher for females than males (20.6% compared with 13.3%) and higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (22.4% compared with 17.5% of non-Indigenous respondents).

Crime, safety and violence also ranked among the top ten most important issues in Australia today, reported by 12.2% of young people. This was higher for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people than non-Indigenous young people (14.4% compared to 12.1% respectively).

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11 Rigby, Ken and Johnson 2016; Gunn and Goldstein 2017
12 Hinduja and Patchin 2014; 10; Goldblum et al. 2014, 7
13 Goldblum et al. 2014, 7–8; Ford et al. 2017; Thomas et al. 2017
14 ReachOut Australia 2017, 4, 7; Rigby 2017b
15 The Royal Children’s Hospital 2018
16 See Dolly’s Dream 2019; Alannah and Madeline Foundation 2019b
More needs to be done to build feelings of safety both at home and in the community for all young people, with particular regard to the higher concerns about safety raised by young females and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

“...when I walk somewhere, even in the middle of the day, I feel as if I am constantly keeping an eye out on everyone around me, worried that something could happen to me because you don't know people. I feel as well in the present time it's something that is quite predominant and girls are always being told you have to watch yourself and be cautious about where you go and when.”

(F, 19, SA)

**Supported and resourced**

Young people need to feel confident in seeking help and know whom they can speak to and trust.

Friend/s (83.0%), parent/s or guardian/s (75.2%), relative/family friend (57.6%) and brother/sister (50.8%) were the four most frequently cited sources of help for young people. We therefore need to equip these informal sources of help that young people most frequently turn to with the knowledge and skills to support young people with important issues in their lives, and refer them to formal supports when necessary.

“I find that I stress over school and personal issues so the main way to deal with it is to have a supportive network of family.”

(F, 15, VIC)

Around half of young people indicated that they would go to the internet (46.1%) or a GP or health professional (45.5%) for support with important issues in their lives. More than one third (36.0%) of young people would turn to a teacher as a source of help with important issues and three in ten (30.4%) would turn to a school counsellor.

Health and education professionals also need to be aware of appropriate services that they can link young people to in times of need and be confident discussing the range of concerns that young people have including concerns around their mental health. The internet is also an important source of support for young people which can be used to provide information and deliver evidence-based programs.

Encouragingly, six in ten (60.7%) young people were very happy or happy with their lives as a whole, and nearly six in ten (58.3%) reported feeling very positive or positive about the future. However, around one in ten (11.1%) young people indicated that they were either sad or very sad with their lives as a whole, and one in eight (12.2%) felt negative or very negative about the future. This could be an indication of a range of personal challenges that young people experience. It is imperative that community services, supports and youth programs are easily accessible and navigable for young people and cater to their specific needs as and when they arise.

**Connected and participating**

The top three activities identified by young people nationally were sports (as a participant) (68.0%), sports (as a spectator) (56.3%) and volunteer work (46.7%). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people had higher involvement in arts/cultural and music activities, youth groups/activities, environmental groups and political groups/organisations than their non-Indigenous peers, demonstrating strong connection and participation in the community. Participating in community activities helps young people to develop social networks and interpersonal skills, and should be encouraged.

For the first time in 2019, young people were asked whether they felt they have enough of a say about important issues, in order to understand young people’s voice.

Just under half of young people felt they have a say all of the time when with my friends (45.2%) and with my family (44.2%). Just under one in six young people felt they have a say all of the time when at school/TAFE/university (15.0%), while less than one in ten felt they have a say all of the time in public affairs (7.2%).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt they have a say all of the time when at school/TAFE/university (18.0%) and in public affairs (12.8%) at higher rates than their non-Indigenous peers (14.6% and 6.7% respectively).

More than half (52.4%) of young people felt they have a say none of the time in public affairs and a higher proportion of females indicated feeling they have a say none of the time in public affairs (55.4% compared with 48.0% of males).
Policy-makers have a responsibility to include the voices of young people, particularly on issues which most effect and concern them. The Australian Survey of Social Attitudes indicated nearly three quarters (72%) of Australian respondents agreed or strongly agreed that 15 to 18 year olds should be given opportunities to influence government decisions.

According to the young people responding to the 2019 Youth Survey, the most important issues facing Australia today are mental health, the environment and equity and discrimination.

While males and females shared the same top two issues, females indicated equity and discrimination was the third most important issue, while males reported alcohol and drugs was the third most important issue facing Australia today.

Young people’s concern for the environment has significantly increased from previous years. This includes concerns around climate change and other environmental issues. This aligns with other research showing growing concern for the environment, particularly among young people.

In 2018-2019, thousands of young people participated in youth-led climate strikes and protests across the country, which linked with efforts in other international locations. As future generations will be increasingly affected by climate change, pollution and other environmental issues, young people have been finding ways to make their views known to decision-makers and to take actions to conserve the environment. This indicates that many young people are looking to have a voice in issues that matter to them, and to influence policy decisions.

**Youth Parliament**

YMCA NSW’s Youth Parliament is an empowerment and advocacy program that provides a platform for young people to have their voices heard through legislative debate and decision-making. Aimed at young people in years 10, 11 and 12 or equivalent age throughout the state, YMCA NSW Youth Parliament highlights the power of young people speaking on issues that are important to them.

Every participant’s potential to lead, learn and connect is nurtured through parliamentary education, community engagement, confidence building and teamwork. They develop their skills in creating social impact and positive change in a safe and supportive environment. Since its beginning in 2002, approximately six pieces of YMCA NSW Youth Parliament youth legislation have been passed into NSW Law, including the recent Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme.

“Politicians need to take action and young people need to be reminded their voice is powerful and therefore needs to be listened to.”

(F, 17, NSW)

“Young people feel that people in power i.e. our schools, teachers, principals, governments are not listening to them. Governments don’t listen to our concern for climate change. Many young people I converse with feel helpless on the issue. That also reduces our mental health because our future seems bleak. To improve this we need people who seem to represent to us to empower to speak on our own behalf and feel listened to.”

(F, 18, VIC)

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17 United Nations OHCHR 2017, Article 12  
18 Blundson et al. 2018; Perales, Ritchie, and Phillips 2017  
19 Lawy Institute 2019; Unicef Australia 2019, 1; ABC RN Breakfast 2019; United Nations 2019  
20 “School Strike 4 Climate Australia” 2019  
21 O’Brien, Selboe, and Hayward 2018  
22 YMCA NSW 2019
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References


Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander summary

Profile of respondents
A total of 1,579 (6.4%) respondents to Mission Australia’s 2019 Youth Survey identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 1,310 (5.3%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 149 (0.6%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.5% identified as both).

Gender breakdown
Nearly half (49.6%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were female and 42.7% were male.

Language background other than English
A total of 173 (11.1%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents stated that they were born overseas and 298 (19.2%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Of the 43 languages other than English spoken at home by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents, the most common were (in order of frequency): Indigenous languages, Chinese, Spanish, Kriol and Japanese.

Disability
A total of 216 (13.8%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents identified as living with a disability. Twice the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males (14.4%) identified they were living with a disability (compared with 7.0% of females). The most frequently cited disabilities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were (in order of frequency): autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), learning disabilities, anxiety disorder and deafness or hearing impairment.

Education
As indicated in Table 2.1, 83.1% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were studying full-time, which is similar to the 83.3% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents studying full-time in 2018. A slightly higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported studying full-time (86.8% compared with 82.3% of males). Conversely, a slightly higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported they were not studying (11.6% compared with 8.1% of females).

Respondents who reported that they were currently studying 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. As in previous years, the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported that they were either very satisfied (10.8%) or satisfied (45.7%) with their studies. Around one in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated they were dissatisfied (5.9%) or very dissatisfied (5.4%). As shown in Table 2.2, a slightly higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported feeling very satisfied (12.7% compared with 8.6% of females), yet a much higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females indicated they felt satisfied (52.2% compared with 41.2% of males).

Of those that were still at school, 89.7% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents stated that they intended to complete Year 12 (compared with 96.4% of non-Indigenous respondents). More than twice the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males indicated that they did not plan to complete Year 12 (14.0% compared with 6.3% of females).
### Table 2.1: Participation in education

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### Table 2.2: Satisfaction with studies

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<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents who were studying at school were asked what they planned to do after leaving school. Figure 2.1 shows that four in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents planned to go to university (40.1%) or to get a job (39.9%) after school. Around one in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated travel/gap year plans (21.5%) or plans to get an apprenticeship (19.3%) after school. Overall, 15.6% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people planned to go to TAFE or college, while 11.7% reported plans to join the defence or police force. A small minority (1.9%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that no choices are available to me after finishing school.

**Gender differences**

The most frequently reported plan among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females was to go to university after finishing school, while for males it was to get a job. A higher proportion of females indicated that they planned to go to university (50.0% compared with 30.8% of males) and to get a job after leaving school (42.6% compared with 38.2%). While nearly twice the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females indicated travel/gap year plans (27.9% compared with 14.6% of males), more than three times the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males indicated they were planning to get an apprenticeship after school (31.4% compared with 8.7% of females).
How confident are young people in achieving their study/work goals?

Respondents were asked how confident they were in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after finishing school. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from extremely confident to not at all confident. As shown in Figure 2.2, over four in ten (43.3%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated high levels of confidence in their ability to achieve their study/work goals: 11.5% reported that they were extremely confident and 31.8% stated that they were very confident. However, close to one in seven (14.6%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were less confident in their ability to achieve their goals: 10.0% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they were slightly confident, while 4.6% were not at all confident.

A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported that they were extremely or very confident in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school (49.5% compared with 37.9% of females).
Barriers to the achievement of young people’s study/work goals

Young people were asked whether they felt there were any barriers that may impact upon the achievement of their study/work goals after finishing school. Over half (53.1%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that they felt there were barriers that would impact upon the achievement of their study/work goals (compared with 48.7% of non-Indigenous respondents), with a notably greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females (58.8%) than males (47.1%) reporting the presence of barriers.

Respondents who stated that they felt there were barriers were asked to indicate from a number of items the barrier/s that may impact upon the achievement of their study/work goals after school. Figure 2.3 shows the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who reported each item was a barrier.

- Academic ability, mental health and financial difficulty were the top three barriers that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people saw as impacting upon the achievement of their study/work goals after school (16.2%, 14.2% and 12.7% respectively).
- One in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported that they saw family responsibilities (10.1%) and where you live (9.7%) as barriers impacting upon the achievement of their study/work goals.

Gender differences

There were some notable differences in the barriers to achieving study/work goals reported by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males. As shown in Figure 2.3, the top three barriers to achieving post-school study/work goals for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were mental health, academic ability and financial difficulty, while for males the top barriers were academic ability, where you live and financial difficulty. Compared with males, a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females indicated that most of the items were barriers to achieving their study/work goals.

- Over twice the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported mental health (19.2% compared with 9.1% of males) and family responsibilities (14.4% compared with 6.3%) were barriers to achieving their post-school goals.
- A total of 18.3% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females saw academic ability as a barrier to achieving their study/work goals after school (compared with 15.3% of males).
Figure 2.3: Barriers to the achievement of study/work goals

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

Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work. Those who indicated that they were engaged in paid employment were asked to specify how many hours they worked per week, on average. Table 2.3 shows participation in paid employment among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous respondents. In line with national results, only a small minority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who reported paid employment were employed full-time (2.3% compared with 0.7% of non-Indigenous respondents). However, this is unsurprising given the proportion of respondents to the Youth Survey who were still at school. Over one in three (35.1%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported that they were employed part-time. Over six in ten (62.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated that they were not in paid employment: more than four in ten (43.0%) stated that they were looking for work, while one in five (19.7%) were neither working nor looking for work. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who indicated that they were looking for work was much higher than for non-Indigenous respondents (43.0% compared with 33.8%).

Gender differences

A slightly higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported full-time employment (2.5% compared with 0.7% of females). A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were employed part-time (38.1% compared with 31.5% of males). Similar proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males reported they were looking for work (43.7% and 43.9%, respectively).

Table 2.3: Participation in paid employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Indigenous respondents</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed full-time</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed part-time</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in paid employment, looking for work</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>43.7</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Part-time is considered to be less than 35 hours per week, while full-time employment is considered to be 35 hours or more.

What do young people value?

Young people were asked how important a number of items had been in their lives over the past year. Responses for these items were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from extremely important to not at all important. In Figure 2.4, the items were ranked in order of importance according to the summed responses for extremely important and very important for each item.

The three most highly valued items for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were family relationships, friendships (other than family) and physical health. The next most highly valued items were mental health and school or study satisfaction.

- Family relationships were rated as extremely or very important by more than three quarters (76.4%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (extremely important: 46.5%; very important: 29.9%).
- Over seven in ten (71.2%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents highly valued friendships (other than family) (extremely important: 33.8%; very important: 37.4%).
- Around six in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people rated physical health (61.2%) and mental health (60.3%) as extremely or very important to them.
Gender differences

*Family relationships* and *friendships (other than family)* were rated as the two most important items by both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males, as shown in Table 2.4. The third top item for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females was *mental health*, while for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males it was *physical health*. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female respondents who placed a high value upon these and the majority of the other items was higher than the proportion of males.

- *Family relationships* were rated as *extremely* or *very important* by 82.5% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females, compared with 74.2% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males.

- Notably greater proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females highly valued *school or study satisfaction* (67.8% compared with 49.5% of males), *mental health* (68.5% compared with 53.9%) and *culture* (53.5% compared with 43.3%).

- Conversely, a marginally higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males rated *getting a job* as *extremely* or *very important* (56.7% compared with 54.9% of females).
Table 2.4: What young people value by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Extremely important %</th>
<th>Very important %</th>
<th>Somewhat important %</th>
<th>Slightly important %</th>
<th>Not at all important %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family relationships</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>31.9</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendships (other than family)</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School or study satisfaction</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a job</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial security</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family relationships</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendships (other than family)</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>38.4</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School or study satisfaction</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting a job</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>32.9</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial security</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>33.1</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for extremely important and very important for each item. Items are listed in order of frequency amongst all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

What issues are of personal concern to young people?

Young people were asked to indicate how concerned they were about a number of issues over the past year, as shown in Figure 2.5. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from extremely concerned to not at all concerned. The items were ranked in order of personal concern according to the summed responses for extremely concerned and very concerned for each item.

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

- Coping with stress was the top issue of concern, with nearly four in ten (38.4%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicating that they were extremely or very concerned about this issue.
- Around three in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were extremely or very concerned about body image (31.7%), mental health (31.5%) and school or study problems (30.5%).
- Around one quarter of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were extremely or very concerned about physical health (25.6%) and family conflict (23.3%).
Figure 2.5: Issues of personal concern to young people

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for extremely concerned and very concerned for each item.
*LGBTIQ* issues.
Gender differences

Coping with stress was the top issue of personal concern for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males, as shown in Table 2.5. The second most concerning personal issue for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females was body image, ahead of mental health. Conversely, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males the second most concerning personal issue was physical health, followed by school or study problems. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female respondents who were concerned about these issues (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- More than half (51.9%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were extremely or very concerned about coping with stress, compared with less than one quarter (23.0%) of males.
- Around twice the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were extremely or very concerned about body image (42.9% compared with 18.7% of males), mental health (42.7% compared with 18.8%), school or study problems (40.0% compared with 19.3%) and family conflict (29.7% compared with 14.8%).
- Conversely, slightly higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males were extremely or very concerned about gambling (7.9% compared with 5.0% of females) and alcohol (12.0% compared with 9.8%).

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females</th>
<th>Extremely concerned %</th>
<th>Very concerned %</th>
<th>Somewhat concerned %</th>
<th>Slightly concerned %</th>
<th>Not at all concerned %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coping with stress</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>26.5</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body image</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School or study problems</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family conflict</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>29.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal safety</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial security</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>30.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>48.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying/emotional abuse</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic/family violence</td>
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<td>9.0</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>52.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
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<td>12.6</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
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<td>6.2</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTIQ* issues</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>64.2</td>
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<td>Alcohol</td>
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<td>6.4</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>59.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling</td>
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<td>2.9</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>79.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2.5: Issues of personal concern to young people by gender (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Extremely concerned %</th>
<th>Very concerned %</th>
<th>Somewhat concerned %</th>
<th>Slightly concerned %</th>
<th>Not at all concerned %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coping with stress</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>35.2</td>
</tr>
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<td>Body image</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>43.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
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<td>8.6</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School or study problems</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>19.9</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical health</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family conflict</td>
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<td>7.4</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>52.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal safety</td>
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<td>7.9</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial security</td>
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<td>9.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>45.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide</td>
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<td>6.3</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying/emotional abuse</td>
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<td>5.5</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>54.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic/family violence</td>
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<td>6.0</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination</td>
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<td>5.4</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>56.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>Social media</td>
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<td>5.4</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>58.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTIQ* issues</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>77.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>77.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Items were ranked according to the summed responses for extremely concerned and very concerned for each item. Items are listed in order of frequency amongst all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer (LGBTIQ) issues.

Have young people experienced bullying?

For the first time in 2019, young people were asked whether they had experienced bullying over the past twelve months. Three in ten (29.9%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported that they had experienced bullying in the past twelve months (compared with 20.3% of non-Indigenous respondents). A much higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported that they had experienced bullying over the past year (33.4% compared with 22.0% of males).

Young people who reported that they had experienced bullying over the past year were then asked to identify from a list of suggested locations where the bullying took place. Table 2.6 shows that, of the 29.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who had experienced bullying in the past year, nearly three quarters (72.5%) reported that the bullying took place at school/TAFE/university. Four in ten (40.9%) indicated they had experienced bullying online/on social media, while three in ten (30.1%) stated they had experienced bullying at home. Around one in six reported that they experienced this in my neighbourhood (16.8%) or at work (15.8%). The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who reported they had experienced bullying across the majority of locations was much higher than the proportion of non-Indigenous respondents.

Gender differences

There were differences in female and male responses to the question regarding where they had been bullied, as shown in Table 2.6. Of the 29.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who had experienced bullying in the past year:

- Around three quarters of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females (74.8%) and males (72.6%) experienced bullying at school/TAFE/university.
- A notably higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported they had been bullied online/on social media (43.0% compared with 33.6% of males).
- Conversely, more than three times the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported that they had experienced bullying in my neighbourhood (23.3% compared with 7.4% of females).
Table 2.6: Locations of bullying in the past twelve months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Non-Indigenous respondents</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At school/TAFE/university</td>
<td>80.8</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>72.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online/on social media</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At home</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my neighbourhood</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At work</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Young people who reported that they had experienced bullying over the past year were also asked to identify the kind/s of bullying that they had experienced from a list of suggested items. Of the 29.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who had experienced bullying in the past year, Table 2.7 shows that nearly three quarters (72.5%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported that they experienced verbal bullying (e.g. name calling, teasing). Close to six in ten (56.9%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they had experienced social bullying (e.g. rumours, being embarrassed or excluded), while 46.3% reported they had experienced cyberbullying (e.g. hurtful messages, pictures or comments). Nearly four in ten (39.2%) had experienced physical bullying (e.g. hitting, punching).

### Gender differences

There were notable differences in the most frequently reported kinds of bullying experienced among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males, as shown in Table 2.7. Of the 29.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who had experienced bullying over the past year:

- Just over three quarters (76.0%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males had experienced verbal bullying (e.g. name calling, teasing) over the past year, compared with 70.2% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females.

- Notably higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported they had experienced social bullying (e.g. rumours, being excluded or embarrassed) (60.9% compared with 49.3% of males) or cyberbullying (e.g. hurtful messages, pictures or comments) (49.6% compared with 35.6%).

- Conversely, more than double the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported that they had experienced physical bullying (e.g. hitting, punching) over the past year (55.5% compared with 26.0% of females).

Table 2.7: Kinds of bullying in the past twelve months

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kind of Bullying</th>
<th>Non-Indigenous respondents</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verbal bullying (e.g. name calling, teasing)</td>
<td>71.5</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>70.2</td>
<td>76.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social bullying (e.g. rumours, being embarrassed or excluded)</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>56.9</td>
<td>60.9</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyberbullying (e.g. hurtful messages, pictures or comments)</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>49.6</td>
<td>35.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical bullying (e.g. hitting, punching)</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of frequency among all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.
Young people who reported that they had experienced bullying over the past year were then asked what helped them to deal with their bullying experience from a list of suggested items, as shown in Figure 2.6. For the 29.9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who had been bullied in the past year, the top three methods that helped them deal with bullying were ignoring it (39.4%), removing myself from the situation (29.9%) and talking to close friends or family (26.9%). Over one in four (26.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they dealt with bullying by distracting myself through other activities, while just under one in five (19.0%) reported that confronting the bully/ies helped them. More than one in six (17.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents stated that nothing helped me to deal with bullying.

**Gender differences**

There were notable differences between what helped Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males to deal with their experience of bullying, as shown in Figure 2.6. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females, the three most frequently reported approaches that helped them deal with their experience of bullying were ignoring it (41.1%), talking to close friends or family (37.6%) and removing myself from the situation (35.3%). Conversely, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported that they dealt with bullying by ignoring it (43.8%), followed by removing myself from the situation (27.4%) and confronting the bully/ies (26.7%).

- Over four in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males (43.8%) and females (41.1%) reported that ignoring it helped them to deal with bullying.
- Twice the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females indicated that they dealt with bullying by talking to close friends or family (37.6% compared with 18.5% of males).
- While greater proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported that removing myself from the situation (35.3% compared with 27.4% of males) and talking to a support person (21.7% compared with 16.4%) helped, a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported that confronting the bully/ies assisted them in dealing with bullying (26.7% compared with 14.7% of females).
Figure 2.6: Strategies that helped young people most to deal with bullying

- Ignoring it: 46.9% (Non-Indigenous), 39.4% (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
- Removing myself from the situation: 38.0% (Non-Indigenous), 29.9% (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
- Talking to close friends or family: 26.9% (Non-Indigenous), 26.7% (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
- Distracting myself through other activities: 26.7% (Non-Indigenous), 26.7% (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
- Confronting the bully/ies: 26.7% (Non-Indigenous), 26.7% (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
- Nothing helped me: 25.6% (Non-Indigenous), 25.6% (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
- Talking to a support person: 21.7% (Non-Indigenous), 21.7% (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)
- Other: 10.9% (Non-Indigenous), 10.9% (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander)

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

Have young people witnessed bullying?

For the first time in 2019, young people were asked whether they had witnessed bullying over the past twelve months. Close to six in ten (55.8%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported that they had witnessed bullying in the past twelve months (compared with 47.2% of non-Indigenous respondents). A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported that they had witnessed bullying over the past year (59.3% compared with 51.4% of males).

Young people who reported that they had witnessed bullying over the past year were then asked to identify from a list of suggested locations where they witnessed the bullying take place. Table 2.8 shows that, of the 55.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who had witnessed bullying in the past year, just over three quarters (76.1%) reported that they witnessed bullying at
school/TAFE/university. More than four in ten (42.3%) indicated they had seen bullying online/on social media, while one in six (16.4%) stated they had witnessed bullying in my neighbourhood. Over one in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who had seen bullying reported that they witnessed this at home (14.6%) or at work (11.4%).

**Gender differences**

There were some notable differences in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female and male responses to the question regarding where they had witnessed bullying take place, as shown in Table 2.8.

- Around eight in ten (80.4%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females witnessed bullying at school/TAFE/university over the past year, compared with 73.9% of males.
- A notably higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported they had seen bullying take place online/on social media (50.8% compared with 31.2% of males).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported that they had witnessed bullying take place in my neighbourhood (19.9% compared with 11.4% of females).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Indigenous respondents %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At school/TAFE/university</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>76.1</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online/on social media</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>31.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In my neighbourhood</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>19.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At home</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At work</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**Where do young people go to for help with important issues?**

Respondents were asked to indicate from a number of sources where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 2.7 shows the percentage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who indicated that they would go to the particular source for support.

Friend/s (74.9%), parent/s or guardian/s (69.5%) and relative/family friend (63.8%) were the three most frequently cited sources of help for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. More than half (53.7%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated that they would go to their brother/sister for support with important issues in their lives. Around four in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people would turn to a GP or health professional (42.0%), the internet (38.6%) or a teacher (37.6%) as a source of help with important issues.

**Gender differences**

As shown in Figure 2.7, the top three sources of help for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males were friend/s, parent/s or guardian/s and relative/family friend.

- Higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females indicated that they would turn to a school counsellor (34.7% compared with 27.5% of males), a GP or health professional (45.8% compared with 38.8%) or a teacher (41.3% compared with 36.0%) for help with important issues.
- A slightly higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males would turn to a community service for support (22.5% compared with 18.8% of females).
Figure 2.7: Where young people go for help with important issues

Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of frequency amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.
What issues do young people think are the most important in Australia today?

Young people were asked to list the three issues they considered were the most important in Australia today. The information provided by respondents was categorised and is listed in order of frequency in Table 2.9. In 2019, the top three issues identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were mental health, alcohol and drugs and equity and discrimination.

- Nearly three in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated that mental health (28.9%) and alcohol and drugs (28.1%) are important issues in Australia today.
- Around one in four Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported that equity and discrimination (24.3%) and the environment (23.7%) are important national issues.
- Since 2018, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reporting the environment as a key national issue has more than tripled from 6.8% to 23.7%. Conversely, concerns about mental health and bullying have decreased since 2018.

Gender differences

As highlighted in Table 2.9, the top three most important issues identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were mental health, equity and discrimination and the environment. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males, alcohol and drugs and mental health were the top two most important issues in Australia, ahead of equity and discrimination and the environment in equal third position.

- Notably higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females identified mental health (35.7% compared with 25.3% of males), equity and discrimination (28.1% compared with 21.5%) and the environment (27.3% compared with 21.5%) as important issues facing Australia today.
- Conversely, higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males regarded alcohol and drugs (31.2% compared with 26.6% of females) and politics (11.9% compared with 7.9%) as key issues in Australia.

Table 2.9: Most important issues in Australia today

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Non-Indigenous respondents %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2019 %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2018 %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2017 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>36.8</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol and drugs</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>26.6</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equity and discrimination</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The environment</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>23.7</td>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime, safety and violence</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The economy and financial matters</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness/housing</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

Do young people feel they have enough of a say on important issues?

For the first time in 2019, young people were asked whether they felt they have enough of a say about important issues. Responses to this question were rated on a 3-point scale that ranged from all of the time to none of the time. Table 2.10 shows that four in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents felt they have a say all of the time when with my family (39.6%) and with my friends (39.5%). Just over one in six (18.0%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt they have a say all of the time when at school/TAFE/university, while one in eight (12.8%) felt they have a say all of the time in public affairs.

The results highlight that in public affairs, more than half (51.2%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt they have a say none of the time. One third (33.7%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people also felt they have a say none of the time while at school/TAFE/university.
Table 2.10: Young people’s voice on important issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents</th>
<th>All of the time %</th>
<th>Some of the time %</th>
<th>None of the time %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With my family</td>
<td>39.6</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With my friends</td>
<td>39.5</td>
<td>49.1</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At school/TAFE/university</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In public affairs</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Indigenous respondents</th>
<th>All of the time %</th>
<th>Some of the time %</th>
<th>None of the time %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With my family</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With my friends</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>47.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At school/TAFE/university</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In public affairs</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>40.7</td>
<td>52.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender differences

There were some differences in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female and male responses about whether they felt they have enough of a say about important issues, as shown in Table 2.11.

- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males felt they have a say all of the time while at school/TAFE/university (20.3% compared with 15.4% of females).
- Twice the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported feeling they have a say all of the time in public affairs (15.9% compared with 7.9% of females).
- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females felt they have a say none of the time in public affairs (55.5% compared with 46.7% of males), whereas a slightly higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported feeling they have a say none of the time when at school/TAFE/university (34.7% compared with 31.0% of females).

Table 2.11: Young people’s voice on important issues by gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females</th>
<th>All of the time %</th>
<th>Some of the time %</th>
<th>None of the time %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With my family</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>50.2</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With my friends</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At school/TAFE/university</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In public affairs</td>
<td>7.9</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males</th>
<th>All of the time %</th>
<th>Some of the time %</th>
<th>None of the time %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With my family</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>44.1</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With my friends</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At school/TAFE/university</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In public affairs</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities that they had been involved in over the past year from the list of options shown in Table 2.12.

The top three activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were sports (as a participant) (64.5%), sports (as a spectator) (53.8%) and arts/cultural/music activities (46.0%). Around four in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported that they had participated in volunteer work (43.0%) and youth groups/activities (38.6%) over the past year. Almost one third (32.5%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people had been involved in student leadership activities.

Gender differences

As highlighted in Table 2.12, sports (as a participant) was the top activity for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males. The second top activity for females was arts/cultural/music activities, ahead of sports (as a spectator). Conversely, the second top activity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males was sports (as a spectator), followed by volunteer work.

- Notably higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female respondents reported taking part in arts/cultural/music activities (55.3% compared with 36.7% of males) and youth groups/activities (45.0% compared with 33.3%) over the past year.
- Conversely, higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males participated in sports (as a spectator) (59.4% compared with 50.0% of females) and sports (as a participant) (68.2% compared with 62.4%) in the past year.

Table 2.12: Activities young people were involved in over the past year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Non-Indigenous respondents %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports (as a participant)</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>64.5</td>
<td>62.4</td>
<td>68.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports (as a spectator)</td>
<td>56.8</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>59.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts/cultural/music activities</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer work</td>
<td>47.2</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth groups/activities</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student leadership activities</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>31.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious groups/activities</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental groups</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political groups/organisations</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.

How well do young people feel their family gets along?

Respondents were asked to rate their family’s ability to get along with one another. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from excellent to poor. Figure 2.8 shows that almost half (45.7%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents rated their family’s ability to get along very positively: 19.6% rated it as excellent and 26.1% rated it as very good. However, three in ten (29.8%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated their family’s ability to get along was either fair (16.5%) or poor (13.3%). A much higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males rated their family’s ability to get along as excellent (24.5% compared with 14.6% of females), whereas around twice the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females rated their family’s ability to get along as fair (22.5% compared with 10.8% of males).
How happy are young people?

Young people were asked to rate how happy they were with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 indicates that they felt very sad and 10 indicates that they felt very happy. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100, in which 100 is the happiest. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes happy/very happy; 40-60 signifies not happy or sad; and 0-30 indicates very sad/sad. As Table 2.13 shows, the majority (51.4%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt happy overall with their lives (compared with 61.4% of non-Indigenous young people). A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported feeling happy/very happy with their lives as a whole (59.2% compared with 47.8% of females).

Table 2.13: How happy young people are

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Indigenous respondents %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happy/Very happy (70-100)</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>47.8</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not happy or sad (40-60)</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>33.4</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very sad/Sad (0-30)</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>12.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do young people feel about the future?

Young people were asked to describe their feelings when they thought about the future. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from very positive to very negative. Table 2.14 shows that the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt either very positive or positive about the future.

- More than half (52.1%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents felt very positive (13.1%) or positive (39.0%) about the future.
- One in six (16.3%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they felt negative (8.5%) or very negative (7.8%) about the future.
- Higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported feeling very positive (15.3% compared with 9.9% of females) or very negative (8.0% compared with 3.4%) about the future.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-Indigenous respondents %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2019 %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2018 %</th>
<th>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2017 %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very positive</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>43.5</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither positive nor negative</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very negative</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

Mission Australia would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of the State/Territory Departments of Education and the Catholic Schools Offices from across the country. This valuable research would not be possible without their support. Mission Australia would also like to thank the very many educational institutions, youth and community organisations, government agencies, corporates, philanthropic organisations and others who helped to engage young people in the 2019 Youth Survey and raise awareness by promoting through their networks and on social media. These include:

- Aboriginal Literacy Foundation
- Access for All Abilities (AAA VIC)
- ACOSS
- Alannah & Madeline Foundation (Keeping Children Safe from Violence)
- batyr
- Boroondara City Council Youth Services (VIC)
- Break O’Day Council (TAS)
- Brisbane City Council (QLD)
- Byron Shire Council (NSW)
- CanTeen Australia
- Cardinia Shire Council (VIC)
- Carers NSW
- Central Australian Aboriginal Congress
- Central Highlands Regional Council (QLD)
- Cessnock City Council (NSW)
- CheckUP (QLD)
- City of Ballarat (VIC)
- City of Belmont (WA)
- City of Darebin (VIC)
- City of Fremantle (WA)
- City of Gosnells (WA)
- City of Greater Dandenong (VIC)
- City of Greater Geelong (VIC)
- City of Joondalup (WA)
- City of Kalgoorlie-Boulder (WA)
- City of Kwinana (WA)
- City of Launceston (TAS)
- City of Newcastle (NSW)
- City of Onkaparinga (SA)
- City of Palmerston (NT)
- City of Playford (SA)
- City of Port Adelaide Enfield (SA)
- City of Port Lincoln (SA)
- City of Prospect (SA)
- City of Rockingham (WA)
- City of Salisbury (SA)
- City of Wanneroo (WA)
- Colac Area Health (VIC)
- Corangamite Shire (VIC)
- Cumberland Council (NSW)
- Disability Sport & Recreation
- District Council of Grant (SA)
- District Council of Mount Remarkable (SA)
- District Council of Tumby Bay (SA)
- Djerriwarrh Community and Education Services (VIC)
- EDfutures – Fogarty Foundation
- EQIP Gladstone (QLD)
- Federation of Parents and Citizens Associations of NSW
- Forbes Shire Council (NSW)
- Fraser Coast Regional Council (QLD)
- Geographical Association of Western Australia
- Gippsland PHN (VIC)
- Gladstone Regional Council (QLD)
- Hawkesbury City Council (NSW)
- headspace
- headspace Hawthorn (VIC)
- Hepburn Shire Council (VIC)
- Hillsong Australia Youth
- History Teacher’s Association of Victoria
- Hume City Council (VIC)
- Jewish Care (VIC)
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council (QLD)
- Mackay Regional Council (QLD)
- Maribyrnong City Council - Phoenix Youth Club (VIC)
- Monash Youth Services (VIC)
- Mount Alexander Shire Council (VIC)
- New South Wales Secondary Principals’ Council
- Ningi Ventures (WA)
- Noosa District Council (QLD)
- Northern Midlands Council (QLD)
- Open Doors Youth Service (QLD)
- Port Stephens Council (NSW)
- QATSIF (QLD Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation)
- Randwick City Council (NSW)
- Sharehouse Youth Programs (QLD)
- Shire of Capel (WA)
- Shire of Dundas (WA)
- Shire of Mundaring (WA)
- Shire of Murray (WA)
- Shire of Waroona (WA)
- SNAICC
- Smart, Skilled and Hired Youth Employment Program (NSW)
- Special Education Principals’ and Leaders’ Association
- The Duke of Edinburgh’s International Awards Australia
- The Family Centre (NSW)
- Town of East Fremantle (WA)
- Town of Gawler (SA)
- Tumby Bay YAC (SA)
- Uniting SA
- Valley Voice (TAS)
- Volunteering Australia
- WACOSS
- Wagga Wagga City Council (NSW)
- Wellington Shire Council (VIC)
- White Ribbon
- Wirrpanda Foundation (WA)
- Wombat Housing and Support Services (VIC)
- Woolahra Municipal Council (NSW)
- Wyndham City Council (VIC)
- Yilli Housing (NT)
- YMCA Tasmania
- Youth Employment Innovation Challenge (NSW)
- YWCA Australia
Who is Mission Australia?

Mission Australia is a non-denominational Christian community service organisation, with more than 155 years of experience in standing together with Australians in need on their journey to independence.

Our evidence-based, client-centred services are focused on reducing homelessness and strengthening communities across Australia. Our services are tailored to the needs and preferences of the clients and communities we serve. Our programs range from early intervention to intensive wrap-around services. They include services targeting homelessness; providing integrated family support, parenting programs, early childhood education, mental health services, residential drug and alcohol programs; youth programs; access to safe and secure housing; and programs to build capacity, resilience and opportunity for local communities.

We work in partnership with others to achieve our goal. This includes communities, supporters, government, businesses and other organisations. We measure our impact, collecting evidence of what works to inform our service design and delivery, and to advocate for change.

We stand together with Australians in need until they can stand for themselves.

Thank you

This publication would not have been possible without the 25,126 young people who completed Mission Australia's Youth Survey 2019. We extend special thanks to them, the staff of Mission Australia, and the many schools and other organisations who supported their involvement.

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