


**MISSION
AUSTRALIA**

A photograph of three young people standing on a grassy hill at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow. The person on the left is a young woman with long dark hair, wearing a light blue denim jacket over a white shirt and dark pants. The person in the middle is a young man with short dark hair, wearing a dark grey sweater over a white shirt and grey shorts. The person on the right is a young man with short dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and dark shorts. They are all looking out over a vast valley with rolling hills in the distance. The text 'YOUTH SURVEY 2022' is overlaid in large white letters on the right side of the image. A small pink chevron icon is located to the right of the text.

YOUTH SURVEY 2022

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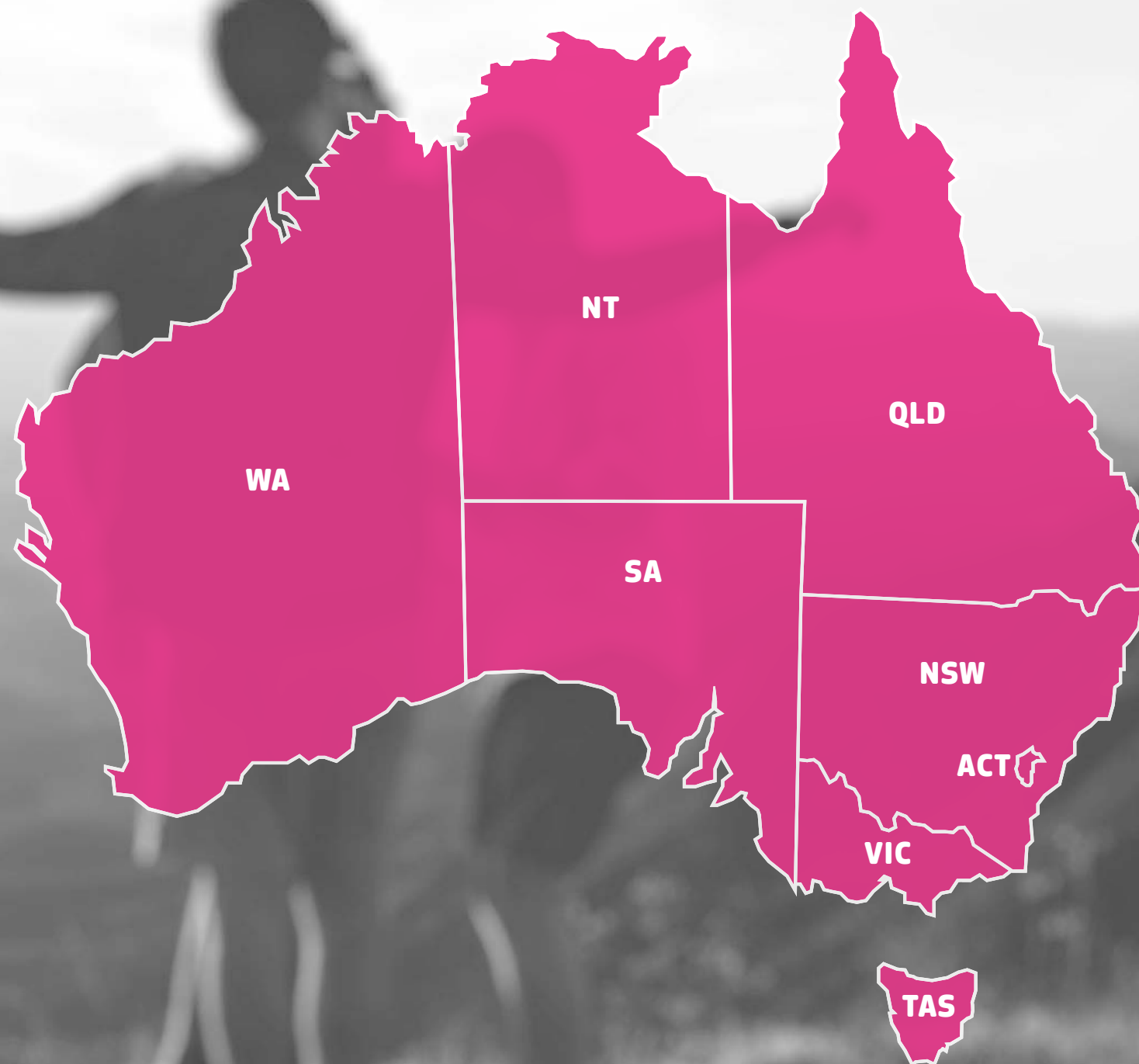
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We acknowledge the traditional custodians of lands throughout Australia, and we pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the culture and dreams of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We recognise 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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CEO's message

This year we're celebrating 21 years of Mission Australia's landmark Youth Survey. We'd like to thank the 18,800 young people aged 15 to 19 across Australia who shared their thoughts, concerns and solutions this year. Our deepest gratitude also goes to the schools, groups and individuals who supported Australia's young people to get involved. It is my hope that the young voices contained in this report are amplified far and wide, listened to and acted upon.

As a mother and having worked in the education and community sectors before starting as CEO of Mission Australia this year, I know how valuable our Youth Survey findings are for parents, family and kin, teachers and school administrators, our sector colleagues and support service workers, businesses and policy makers.

Transitioning to adulthood naturally comes with its own challenges and these are even more pronounced for more vulnerable young people like those who are homeless or financially stressed. We also know from this research that young people faced a range of challenges and concerns in 2022. As we consider this year's report, we must bear in mind the very real impacts that the pandemic and recent natural disasters have on young people's lives and perspectives.

Starting with the positive news, this year's survey showed most young people are involved in study or work, they have good support networks, most were satisfied with their studies, are proud to be in their community, and felt in control of their lives. Concerningly but well-known to those who work closely with young people and their families, financial concerns and housing instability affected far too many young people. One in 10 worried about having a safe place to stay, and one in 20 young people or their families were unable to afford bills or car expenses. A similar proportion said they or their family sought financial help from family, friends or charity.

Every year, young people also demonstrate they're aware of and care about societal issues, with *the environment, equity and discrimination* and *mental health* topping the issues they want Australia to address in 2022. These responses were given against the backdrop of Australia's catastrophic floods and storms and ongoing public discussion about climate change, mental health and racism.

Discrimination and mental health were concerns at both a national and personal level for many young people. Almost three in 10 young people indicated high psychological distress, almost one-quarter felt lonely most of the time, and just over one-quarter of those surveyed stated they were unfairly treated in the past year.

We also know from our survey that young people continue to experience a range of personal challenges and concerns. Young people revealed their top personal challenges in 2022 revolved around school, mental health, relationships and COVID-19. While half are positive about their futures, the proportion of young people with this positive outlook has decreased gradually each year since 2020. This is a worrying trend.

For the first time in our annual *Youth Survey report*, we also took a deep dive into young people's suggested solutions to the issues they face. The result is an enlightening and instructive collection of voices and perspectives directly from young people. Young people voiced the importance of asking friends, family and health professionals for support, the need for learning strategies to reduce stress and more emphasis on mental health and wellbeing at school.

Young people have the answers. They've voiced their concerns and solutions loud and clear. I encourage everyone reading this report to genuinely listen, ensure young people are included in decision-making processes, and take the actions available to them to ensure young people can access the opportunities and supports they need to thrive.

Young people hold strength and power to create a bright future for Australia, and we must do all we can to support them so they can follow their dreams and create a better way forward for everyone.

Sharon Callister
CEO, Mission Australia



About the survey

Background

The Mission Australia *Youth Survey* is the largest annual survey of young people in Australia. Now in its 21st 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 amplify the voices and experiences of young people so that young people have a say in decisions that will affect their future.

Participation

In 2022, 18,800 young people across Australia, aged 15 to 19 years participated in the *Youth Survey*.

Focus areas

The 2022 *Youth Survey* sought to capture the experiences and perspectives of young people on a broad range of issues as well as collecting valuable socio-demographic data. Topics covered by the survey include education and employment, barriers to achieving study and work goals, personal and national concerns, impact of COVID-19, general wellbeing, sources of support and barriers to receiving support, community connection and housing and homelessness.

Research Ethics

The 2022 *Youth Survey* has obtained Human Research Ethics Committee approval from the University of Melbourne.

Methodology

Data Collection

The 2022 *Youth Survey* was open to young people across Australia aged 15 to 19 years. The data collection period was between 6 April and 31 August 2022. Survey participation by young people was voluntary and no survey incentives were offered to survey respondents. The survey could be completed online or by paper. Respondents were able to skip survey questions and could exit the survey at any point.

Young people were engaged via schools, local governments, community and service organisations and through Mission Australia services. The survey was also promoted via social media. Following research approval from State and Territory Education Departments and Catholic Education Offices, secondary school principals were approached via email with information about the survey and how to get involved. Information about the *Youth Survey* was also distributed to peak bodies, local governments, community managed organisations and Mission Australia services. A link to the online survey was provided to participating schools, organisations and local councils who then distributed the link to young people.

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

Approval for public schools in New South Wales (NSW) and Western Australia (WA) to participate in the survey was provided after the initial closing date of the survey. Approval to conduct the survey was given to a select number of NSW public schools who had participated in the survey in previous years or expressed unsolicited interest to participate this year. To provide an opportunity for these schools to participate, the data collection period was extended for two weeks. However, the short-notice and quick turnaround impacted the capacity of many NSW and WA public schools to take part in the 2022 *Youth Survey*.

Child & Youth Safe Procedure

Mission Australia is committed to child and youth safety and extends this responsibility to the young people who participate in the *Youth Survey*. In line with the research approvals 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 (K6) questions indicated psychological distress, responses to the Personal Wellbeing Index-School Children (PWI-SC) indicated low wellbeing or if any free-text response indicated the young person was at potential risk of harm, abuse or neglect. To implement this reporting mechanism, date of birth is a mandatory item in the survey. For any survey respondents whose responses indicated potential risk of harm or psychological distress, the date of birth, gender and postcode (where provided) were reported back to school principals on a weekly basis. Where possible, principals were encouraged to re-identify the young person and provide appropriate support or services.

This procedure was not required by the Western Australian Department of Education. As such, the collection of date of birth and the reporting methods were not implemented for responses from Western Australian public schools.

Analysis

Only responses from completed surveys were analysed. An online survey was considered complete if the respondent finishes and submits the survey. A paper survey is considered completed if a majority of questions are answered.

Quantitative data was analysed using summary statistics and logistic regression models. Univariate and multinomial logistic regression models were used to identify statistically significant differences between cohorts. A p-value of 0.05 was the

threshold to determine statistical significance. Only comparisons between cohorts that were statistically significant are featured in the report commentary. Content and thematic analysis was used to analyse open-ended responses.

Survey design and changes in 2022

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

New questions:

- The Personal Wellbeing Index-School Children (PWI-SC) was introduced in the 2022 *Youth Survey* to allow for greater insights into wellbeing across a number of life domains. The PWI-SC is a validated measure of subjective wellbeing which asks young people to rate their happiness with life as a whole and across seven life domains on a scale of 0 to 10.
- A cluster of questions on accessing mental health support was added to understand young people's help seeking behaviours and how they would prefer to access support.
- A set of Likert scale questions was added to understand young people's feelings about the community and their community connections.
- Additional questions related to housing situation were included to gain insight into the currency of young people's experience of homelessness.
- A cluster of questions was added to better understand young people's financial situation.
- Do you identify as a person with a mental health condition?* was added.

Amendments:

- For the question which asked the number of hours worked, the following options were given: *1 to 5 hours, 6 to 10 hours, 11 to 20 hours, 21 to 34 hours and 35 or more hours*. In previous years, this was an open response.
- In the list of items for the question regarding personal concerns, *alcohol and other drugs* were combined into a single item and *gambling* was removed.
- The open text question about the biggest personal issue young people have been dealing with was restructured into a three part question: a) *In the past year, what has been the biggest personal challenge you have faced or experienced?* b) *What did you find helpful in dealing with your personal challenge?* c) *What more could be done to help you address your personal challenge?*

- For the open text question about the impact of COVID-19, the phrase "*in the last year*" was added to the end of the question so that respondents would reflect on their experiences from the most recent year as opposed to their experiences over the three years of the pandemic.
- The question asking if respondents had a disability was rephrased as: *Do you identify as a person with disability?* The option *Prefer not to say* was included.

This report

This report contains an executive summary, a national summary, a summary of findings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people and a snapshot of key findings for each State and Territory. More detailed individual summaries for each State and Territory have been produced and can be found [here](#).

Each State and Territory summary compares the state-level findings against the national data, contains a breakdown of key data by gender and, where appropriate, compares 2022 findings with results from previous years. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander chapter compares the responses of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with responses from non-Indigenous people.

Care needs to be taken when interpreting and generalising the results for certain States and/or Territories due to the small sample size and the imbalance between the number of females and males who participated in the survey.

Introduced in 2021 and continued in 2022, responses from young people who identified as genders other than female and male are included in the national summary. In the survey, gender options included are *female, male, a-gender/non-gendered, non-binary gender, transgender, not listed and prefer not to say*. Due to the small sample sizes, *a-gender/non-gendered, non-binary gender, transgender* and *not listed*, are combined under the *gender diverse* reporting category.

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

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

2022 Youth Survey Overview

The *Mission Australia Youth Survey* has been capturing the aspirations, experiences and concerns of young people annually for the last 21 years. As the largest survey of its kind in Australia, it provides an opportunity for young people to share what matters to them and give their perspectives on a range of issues. In 2022, the Youth Survey was completed by 18,800 young people aged 15 to 19 across the country.

The *Youth Survey 2022* revealed many things to celebrate but also revealed the wide range of challenges and concerns young people have experienced. Most young people were actively engaged in study and/or work, have support networks to turn to and are proud to be part of their community. However, poor mental health and low wellbeing continue to be a concern and many young people experienced financial and housing instability.

We asked young people a series of open questions that provided them with an opportunity to say in their own words *what their greatest personal challenges were in the last year, what has helped them address these challenges and what more could be done to help them address their personal challenges*. The responses to these questions are a valuable source for understanding the issues and solutions that are top of mind for young people.

From their own words, the top personal challenges experienced by young people in the past year centre on the themes of school, mental health, relationships and COVID-19. Four in 10 (41.5%) noted challenges relating to school which included academic pressure, high workload, challenges with teachers or learning difficulties. These challenges exist in the context of years of COVID-19 disruption, with almost three quarters (73.2%) of young people saying the pandemic has negatively impacted their education, up from 62.3% in 2021.

Close to three in 10 (27.7%) of young people spoke about mental health challenges which included stress, anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. These mental health concerns were also reflected in responses to other questions around happiness, loneliness and general wellbeing. In these self-assessments, males scored higher than females across most wellbeing questions. Gender diverse young people had the lowest self-assessments of their wellbeing.

When young people reflected on what helped them address their personal challenge, they identified that the things that worked for them were their personal networks of family and friends, taking time to relax, having support available at school and accessing professional support. Many of their ideas about what more could be done focused on better supports available at their school and being more open with their friends and family.

Some young people said nothing more could help, or they were unsure what more could help with their challenges. Also, many did not seek mental health support even though they felt that they needed it. These two findings point to an opportunity to improve awareness of the support available to young people and reduce the barriers to them accessing it, such as stigma, shame and the fear that confidentiality will not be respected.

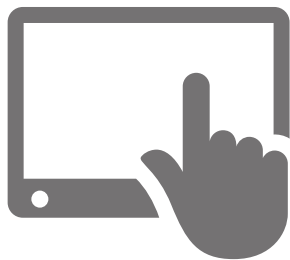
As in prior years, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported deeper challenges than their non-Indigenous peers. The majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were engaged in education and felt they could turn to their family or friends for help with important issues and have spiritual and/or cultural beliefs. However, they were also more likely to have spent time away from home because they felt they couldn't go back, experienced financial concerns and faced discrimination. They were also more likely to believe that their community does not have the things that they need to have a positive and thriving future.

Beyond their own personal concerns, young people continue to demonstrate awareness and engagement with broader societal issues. When considering the most important issues in Australia today, half (51.0%) nominated the environment, and over a third noted equity and discrimination (35.9%) and mental health (33.9%).

These *Youth Survey* findings shed light on the experiences and concerns of young people that often go unheard. The voices of young people are important in the development of policies and programs that affect them. Young people are the future generation, and their current and future concerns should be taken seriously.

The Youth Survey 2022 revealed many things to celebrate but also revealed the wide range of challenges and concerns young people have experienced. Most young people were actively engaged in study and/or work, have support networks to turn to and are proud to be part of their community.

DEMOGRAPHICS, EMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING



18,800
RESPONSES



Employment



53.3%

Employed
Almost all employed part-time

25.9%

Not employed but
looking for work

94.0%

At least one parent or
guardian/s was employed
(as of last week)



Housing and financial situation



86.8%

living in **privately owned or rented house/flat**

4.6%

living in **public/social housing**

In the last year:

10.4% Worried about having a safe place to stay

8.4% Spent time away from home because they felt they couldn't go back

2.1% Had **no fixed address** or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation

6.4% Said they or their **family sought financial help** from family, friends or charity

5.9% Said they or their **family could not pay bills or car expenses**

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA TODAY



The environment

51.0% identified it as one of the most important issues in Australia compared with 38.0% in 2021 and 29.8% in 2020.

25.5% of young people were personally extremely or very concerned about climate change.

If the government/s (Australian but also internationally) and corporations took stronger action against climate change, I think I'd be less worried.

Female, 15, NSW



Equity and discrimination

35.9% identified it as one of the most important issues in Australia compared with 35.4% in 2021 and 40.2% in 2020. 27.1% of young people were treated unfairly or discriminated against in the last year, most commonly due to: **Gender | Race/cultural background | Mental health**

The biggest challenge I have faced is racism and discrimination, as well as struggling with the perception of self and confidence. These have been problems all of my life and they have not changed at all. I don't feel they will ever change.

Male, 16, QLD



Mental health

33.9% identified it as one of the most important issues in Australia compared with 34.6% in 2021 and 30.6% in 2020.

38.5% of young people were personally extremely or very concerned about mental health.

I've struggled a lot with my mental health in the past year. Going to school, let alone getting out of bed was very difficult for me and I had a lot of trouble asking for help.

Female, 15, VIC



CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

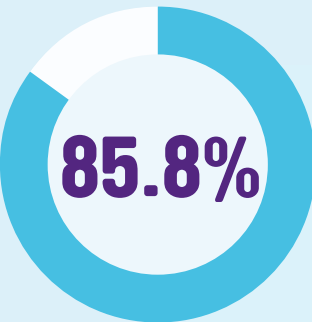
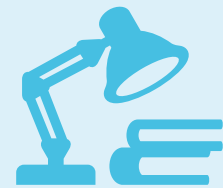
In young people's own words

Young people told us in their own words and unprompted, what their **biggest personal challenge** has been in the past year, what they found helpful in dealing with that challenge and what more could be done to help them address their challenge. The key themes of young people's responses are shown below.



Close to 3 in 10
young people said nothing more could help, or they were unsure what could help with their challenges, indicating there is an opportunity to improve awareness of supports available

SCHOOL



studying full-time

62.6% of students were **satisfied** or **very satisfied** with their studies

41.8% of students said there are **barriers to achieving study or work goals**

3 TOP BARRIERS:



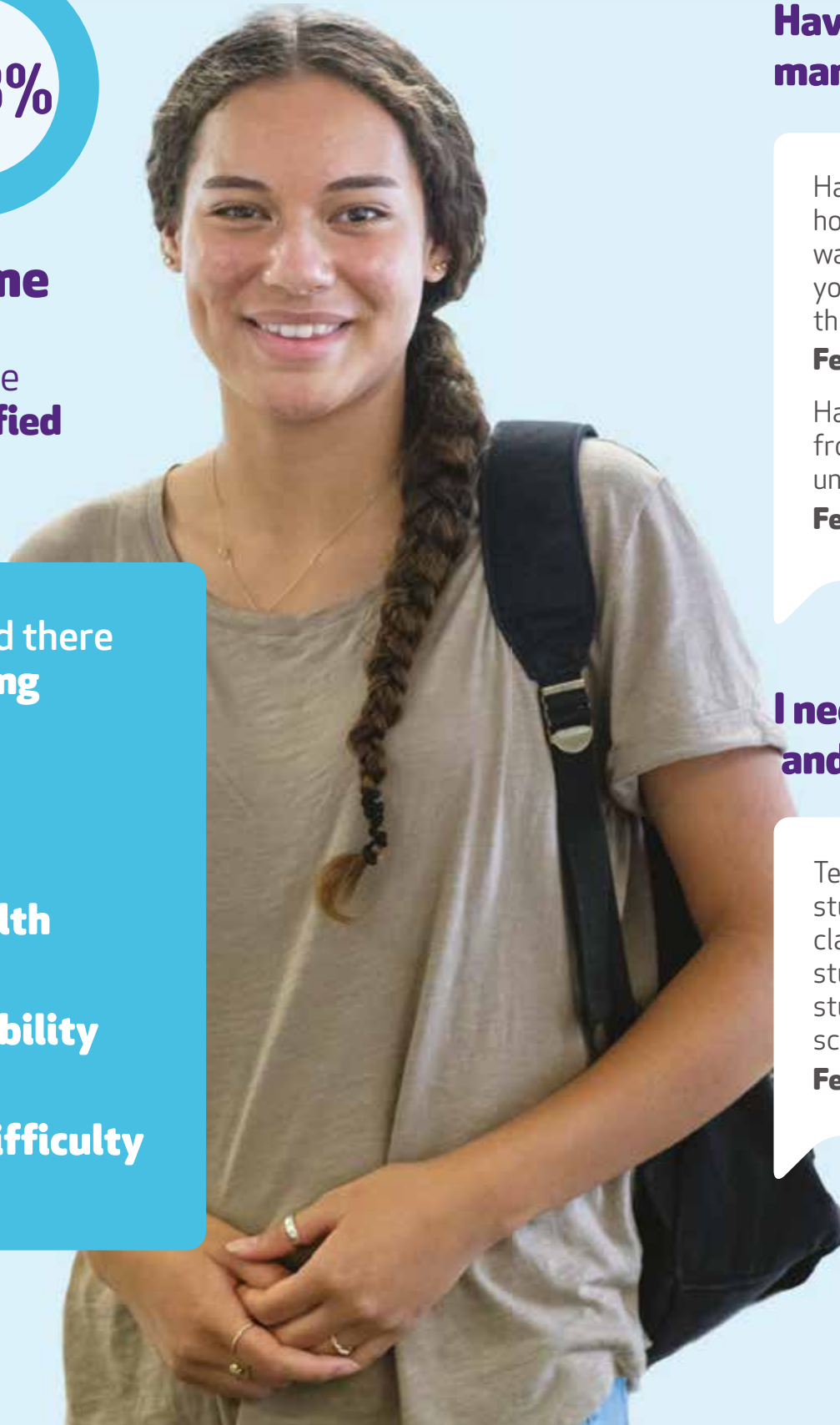
Mental health



Academic ability



Financial difficulty



What more would help young people address school related challenges?

Having more balanced and manageable workloads at school

Having more information about how to deal with school in a balanced way and how to study effectively so you still have time to yourself to do things that make you happy.

Female, 18, VIC

Having more support coming from teachers in the sense of understanding workloads.

Female, 16, VIC

Helping my parents understand my deadlines and stress at school

Inform parents about the stress around grades, teachers always say that marks don't matter but they do to our parents.

Female, 17, VIC

More understanding from teachers about stress levels

Less stress enforced by teachers when it comes to assessments and tests.

Non-binary, 15, QLD

I need help getting organised and managing my time

Teachers helping students to create a study timetable or implement study in class so we don't spend so much time studying at home when we could do study/homework during the school day.

Female, 16, NSW

I need to study more

Study more and harder.

Male, 17, NSW

MENTAL HEALTH



28.8% had **high psychological distress***

23.5% felt **lonely** all or most of the time

44.0% were extremely or very concerned about **cop**ing with stress



49.9%
2022

Felt **positive** or **very positive** about the future. Down from previous years.

51.6% 2021 & **55.5%** 2020



*A score between 13 to 24 on the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6)

Gender differences

Across most wellbeing questions, males had the highest self-reported wellbeing, followed by females, with gender diverse young people having the lowest.



MALES
42.1%



FEMALES
22.8%



GENDER DIVERSE
12.5%

Mental health and wellbeing rated **excellent** or **very good**

MENTAL HEALTH



53.4%

have needed support with mental health in their lives

58.1%

Sought mental health support

41.9%

Did not seek mental health support

Top sources of mental health support:

Health professionals (e.g. doctor)
Family | Friends

Top barriers to accessing professional mental health support:

1. Feeling stigma or shame
2. Concerns about confidentiality
3. Don't know where to go for help



What more would help young people address mental health challenges?

Talking to my family or friends about how I'm feeling

I could talk to my parents about it but I am afraid of how they will react.
Female, 15, VIC

Asking healthcare professionals for help

I have never been to therapy so I think if I have the courage to go, that would maybe help.
Gender not specified, 16, QLD

Learning strategies to reduce stress

Manage my time better but also learn that it's ok to take a break and not be studying all the time...Learn some coping techniques and strategies.
Female, 16, NT

Having more emphasis on mental health and wellbeing in school

Having more discussions around mental health maybe more of a focus on it at schools. More teenagers go through mental health issues than you think and no one discusses it everyone hides their issues.
Female, 16, QLD

Feeling more comfortable talking to school counsellors/teachers about my issues

More support and pathways for help. Confidentiality so parents and carers don't find out. More understanding of how students are feeling.
Gender not specified, 15, VIC

RELATIONSHIPS AND COMMUNITY

What more would help young people address relationship challenges?



Family's ability to get along:



Community:

53.4% agree or strongly agree that **I am proud to be part of my community**

51.2% agree or strongly agree that **my community has the things I need to have a positive and thriving future**



Top sources of support for young people:

Friends | Parent/s or guardians
Relative/family friend | Brother/sister

However, **31.2%** find it hard to **turn to friends and family if I need help**

Talking through my concerns with family and friends

Try and work things out with my family and friends by having a long conversation with them about how I feel.
Female, 15, QLD

Creating deeper relationships

Give more emphasis on creating meaningful relationships in youth through sport, church, school, art, work etc.
Female, 17, NSW

Being comfortable asking for support

I think being confident enough to reach out to people about how I was feeling instead of keeping it to myself which would cause me to lose control of my emotions.
Female, 16, NSW

Having a more diverse support network

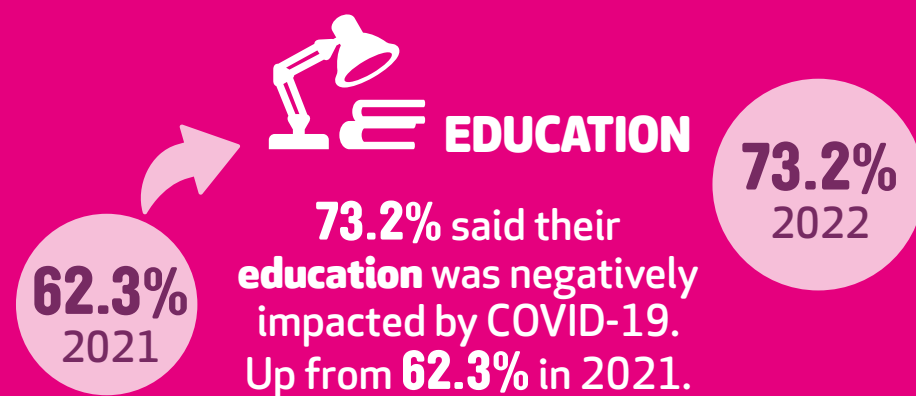
More external support such as groups outside of school.
Gender diverse, 16, QLD

More understanding from family

Family understanding my work pressure.
Female, 16, QLD

COVID-19

TOP 3 AREAS NEGATIVELY IMPACTED BY COVID-19



What more would help young people address COVID-19 challenges?

Additional help to recover from the impacts of lockdowns and remote learning

More support and recognition towards those who went through lockdown during their early high schooling years. There hasn't been much mental health support towards those who struggled through the lockdown.

Male, 15, VIC

Better online school system if we ever go into any future lockdowns

Honestly, I believe that the root of the problem was the COVID lockdowns which is a one off and will probably not happen to that extent again. I guess the biggest things for me would be to have less demanding online school with modified programs as it should be unreasonable to complete school fully online. However, there were some benefits to online school if done differently which would be useful if not done every day long term.

Male, 17, NSW

Mental health impacts to be considered for future pandemic restrictions

More reasonable COVID restrictions for young people who are suffering with significant mental health concerns.

Female, 17, NSW

Putting in ways and learning new actions to prepare for future lockdowns that might come about to ensure that teens and children are allowed to have some freedom and be able to socialise.

Female, 16, NSW

Help me transition back to face-to-face learning

More help and resources for people still struggling after COVID with things like coming to school.

Female, 16, VIC

No more lockdowns

Don't go back into lockdown.

Female, 15, VIC



National

- ▶ Profile of respondents
- ▶ Challenges and concerns
- ▶ National concerns
- ▶ Education and employment
- ▶ Housing and financial situation
- ▶ COVID-19
- ▶ Wellbeing
- ▶ Support
- ▶ Connectedness
- ▶ Unfair treatment and discrimination



National summary

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

State and territory distribution

A total of 18,800 young people aged between 15 and 19 years responded to Mission Australia's 2022 Youth Survey. Respondents came from across Australia. Figure 1.1 indicates the number and proportion of responses from each Australian state and territory.

Locality

Over six in 10 (63.2%) of the 18,800 lived in a major city as defined by the Australian Statistical Geography Standard (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Over a quarter (27.6%) of the young people were residing in regional areas and the remaining 9.2% lived in a postcode classified as both a major city and a regional area.

Gender

Six in 10 (60.8%) respondents were female, 33.3% were male, 4.3% were gender diverse and 1.6% preferred not to say.

Identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

A total of 851 (4.7%) respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 644 (3.5%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 111 (0.6%) identified as Torres Strait Islander, and the remaining 0.5% identified as both.

Cultural and ethnic identity

A total of 3,242 (17.9%) respondents identified strongly with a cultural or ethnic group with the most common (in order of frequency) being: Chinese, Indian and Italian. One in five (19.2%) spoke a language other than English at home with most common (in order of frequency) being: Chinese/Mandarin, Greek and Vietnamese.

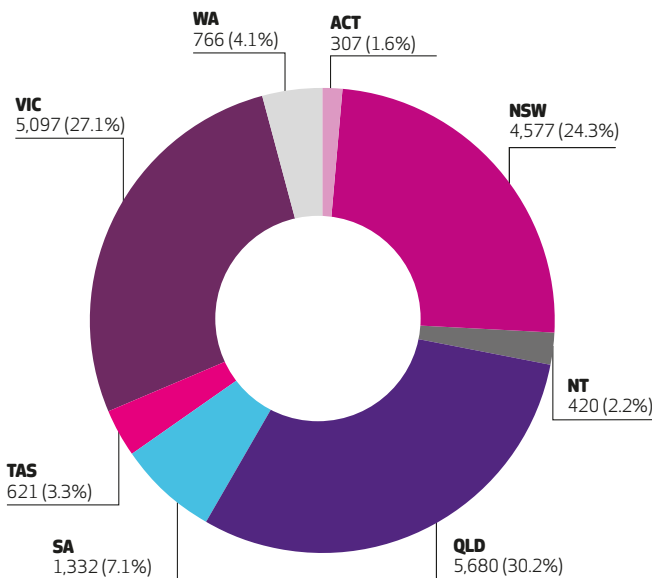
Disability

A total of 1,026 (5.7%) respondents identified as a person with a disability and 766 (4.3%) preferred not say. A greater proportion of gender diverse young people identified as living with disability (24.4% compared with 5.2% of males and 4.5% of females). The most frequently cited disabilities (in order of frequency) were: autism spectrum disorder (ASD), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and dyslexia.

Mental health

A total of 3,278 (18.3%) respondents identified as a person with a mental health condition and 2,389 (13.4%) preferred not say. Half (49.9%) of gender diverse young people identified as living with a mental health condition. Over one in five (21.4%) females stated they have a mental health condition compared to 8.5% of males. The most frequently cited mental health conditions (in order of frequency) were: anxiety, depression and neurodevelopmental disorders which include ASD and ADHD.

Figure 1.1: Proportion of respondents by state/territory



CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

What was the biggest personal challenge experienced by young people?

Respondents were asked the following open-ended question to answer in their own words: *In the past year, what has been the biggest personal challenge you have faced or experienced?*

As shown in Table 2.1, the four most common personal challenges cited by young people were in the areas of school (41.5%), mental health (27.7%), interpersonal relationships (19.7%) and COVID-19 (14.7%).

Gender differences

- The most common challenges for both females and males were related to school (44.2% for females and 38.8% for males). Among gender diverse young people, mental health was the most frequently stated challenge (45.0%).
- A higher proportion of males than females said they were unsure or did not have any challenges (7.0% of males compared with 2.7% of females).

What did young people find helpful in dealing with their personal challenge?

Following asking about their challenges over the past year, respondents were then asked to respond in their own words: *What did you find helpful in dealing with your personal challenge?*

Consistent for a range of personal challenges experienced, young people said they turned to various types of people for support, guidance and/or professional help such as family, friends, teachers and health and mental health professionals. They also turned to hobbies and recreational activities to deal with their personal challenges. However, there were some respondents who faced a personal challenge but stated that they *'did not find anything helpful'* or *'pushed through'*.

Gender differences

- Both females and males had benefited from using informal support networks, however, more females accessed support from school while more males engaged in recreational activities to cope.
- Gender diverse young people utilised informal networks but also engaged with professional support to help them deal with their personal challenge.

What more could have been done to help them face their personal challenge?

After respondents were asked what they found helpful in dealing with their personal challenge, they were asked to answer in their own words: *What more could be done to help you address your personal challenge?*

Despite engaging in various activities to manage their personal challenge, young people still felt there was more that could have been done to help them. They suggested extra support from schools and the people around them, as well as better access to mental health supports. There were some who preferred to do things themselves and a few were unsure on how best to tackle their challenge.

Gender differences

- Even with their current high use of school-based supports to face their personal challenges, females would have liked more school-based solutions. Males, on the other hand, were more inclined to say they preferred to do things themselves or were unsure how to tackle their challenge.
- Gender diverse young people wanted more professional help and extra support in general to help them face their personal challenge.

My biggest challenge was related to school

Of the challenges young people said they faced that related to school, one in five young people reported feeling pressure to achieve good grades (20.7%) and struggling to balance school and non-school commitments (20.2%). A small proportion (2.7%) of the respondents identified having challenging relationships with school staff and wanting better support from the school. Learning difficulties (2.4%) were also mentioned as making school challenging and included references to conditions such as ADHD, autism and dyslexia. General school challenges (57.6%) included combined sub-themes with low frequency such as dropping out of school, going back to school after lockdowns and non-specific mentions of ‘school’.

“I am put under a lot of pressure by my family to do well at school. I know they just want me to have the best choices in life, but sometimes it gets too much. Sometimes it seems like my grades is all we talk about.” Female, 16, WA, non-Indigenous

How I helped myself...

Young people who reported their school had helped them with their personal challenge said their school played a positive role and that they felt cared for and guided by their teachers and counsellors. Many young people felt that their teachers cared for their wellbeing and believed in their potential. They also helped the young people by providing additional assistance and making adjustments to school work.

“I was grateful that there was a certain teacher who reached out to me and helped me with my school issues which gave me more time to focus on my mental health issues as well as family issues.” Female, 16, VIC, non-Indigenous

What more could have helped me...

While school teachers were mentioned heavily as being largely helpful for respondents’ personal challenges, many felt that adjustments to the school system were still needed. They wanted teachers and their parents to be more understanding of their academic stress and their competing priorities from outside of school. Young people wanted additional help from parents and teachers to best juggle these demands. Many felt that if teachers were able to make adjustments to school work, such as coordinating workload across subjects, that it would help them more easily manage their life. Meanwhile, other young people noted that putting more time and effort into their school work would help.

Having more balanced and manageable workloads at school

“Having more information about how to deal with school in a balanced way and how to study effectively so you still have time to yourself to do things that make you happy.” Female, 18, VIC, non-Indigenous

Helping my parents understand my deadlines and stress at school

“Inform parents about the stress around grades, teachers always say that marks don’t matter but they do to our parents.” Female, 17, VIC, non-Indigenous

More understanding from teachers about stress levels

“Less stress enforced by teachers when it comes to assessments and tests.” Non-binary, 15, QLD, non-Indigenous



My biggest challenge was related to mental health

Among the challenges relating to mental health, close to a quarter (24.4%) of responses were related to stress, which included academic stress, burnout and feeling overwhelmed. Close to one in five (19.3%) mentioned anxiety or panic attacks, while one in eight (12.5%) mentioned struggles with depression. One in 10 (10.2%) mentioned self-esteem issues such as self-image, low confidence, body image and issues of self-worth. A small, yet worrying, proportion of young people reported suicide and/or self-harm (2.7%) as a challenge they faced in the last year. General mental health challenges (43.0%) included combined sub-themes with low frequency such as poor mental health, impact of COVID-19/other factors on mental health and non-specific mentions of ‘mental health’.

“Mental Health. It is easy to feel lonely and low. Every day you feel down or upset and you don’t know why. You feel alone and as if you will never find true happiness again. The added pressure of school plays a huge impact on this.” Female, 16, QLD, non-Indigenous

How I helped myself...

Many young people said they accessed professional supports like psychologists, counsellors and therapists to help them with their mental health challenges. They also stated that they found their close friends and family to be helpful sources of support when they were struggling with mental health issues.

“I found talking to my friends helpful as they were experiencing the same thing and we could share our feelings and get through it together.” Female, 16, QLD, non-Indigenous

What more could have helped me...

Young people felt that schools have an increased role to play to support student wellbeing. While some respondents were receiving external psychological support or had supportive teachers, other respondents did not have this experience and stated that they would like their school to provide more resources and confidential support to help with mental health challenges. For those respondents who had not yet opened up to their family about their mental health concerns, starting the conversation about how they are feeling was often noted as being a potentially helpful step forward.

Having more emphasis on mental health and wellbeing in school

“Having more discussions around mental health... maybe more of a focus on it at schools. More teenagers go through mental health issues than you think and no one discusses it... everyone hides their issues.”
Female, 16, QLD, non-Indigenous

Talking to my family or friends about how I’m feeling

“I could talk to my parents about it but I am afraid of how they will react.” Female, 15, VIC, non-Indigenous

Asking healthcare professionals for help

“I have never been to therapy so I think if I have the courage to go, that would maybe help.”
Gender not specified, 16, QLD, non-Indigenous

Learning strategies to reduce stress

“Manage my time better but also learn that it’s ok to take a break and not be studying all the time... Learn some coping techniques and strategies.” Female, 16, NT, non-Indigenous

Feeling more comfortable talking to school counsellors/teachers about my issues

“More support and pathways for help. Confidentiality so parents and carers don’t find out. More understanding of how students are feeling.” Gender not specified, 15, VIC, non-Indigenous

My biggest challenge was related to interpersonal relationships

Close to two thirds (64.8%) of interpersonal relationship challenges involved the respondent’s family, while over a third (35.8%) were having challenges involving their friends. Family challenges included issues like family conflict, domestic violence, abuse from a family member, parental divorce or separation and death of a family member. While issues about friends included difficulty making friends or maintaining friendships, deaths of friends and harassment by friends. A small portion (3.0%) reported their challenge had to do with their significant other which included abuse from the respondent’s dating partner, conflict and relationships ending. General interpersonal relationship challenges (6.1%) include sub-themes with low frequency such as undefined assault/abuse, maintaining/struggling with relationships/people and non-specific mentions of ‘personal relationships’.

“My parents’ lack of support for me and not being financially stable compared to everyone around me. My parents make me pay board and I have to save up for my own car with no financial support which is difficult when all of my friends are getting everything brought for them. I’ve also been experiencing lots of panic attacks in the last year whenever I’m in a difficult situation and I haven’t been able to go to a doctor because my parents wouldn’t believe me.” Female, 16, NSW, non-Indigenous

How I helped myself...

When young people were facing relationship challenges, they relied on various strategies to help them cope like talking to someone or finding temporary distraction in recreational activities.

“Going on bike rides and talking to my real close friends.” Male, 15, NSW, non-Indigenous

What more could have helped me...

Young people who experienced challenges with their interpersonal relationships recognised the value of proactively seeking support. They understood that it would have helped them more if they spoke to their family or friends about their relationship challenges. While many young people identified their family as a positive source of support, other young people found it difficult to share their personal issues with their family, feeling that their parents were judgemental of them. Others felt it would be helpful to widen their support network.

Talking through my concerns with family and friends

“Try and work things out with my family and friends by having a long conversation with them about how I feel.” Female, 15, QLD, non-Indigenous

More understanding from family

“Family understanding my work pressure.” Female, 16, QLD, non-Indigenous

Creating deeper relationships

“Give more emphasis on creating meaningful relationships in youth through sport, church, school, art, work etc.” Female, 17, NSW, non-Indigenous

Being comfortable asking for support

“I think being confident enough to reach out to people about how I was feeling instead of keeping it to myself which would cause me to lose control of my emotions.” Female, 16, NSW, non-Indigenous

Having a more diverse support network

“More external support such as groups outside of school.” Gender diverse, 16, QLD, non-Indigenous

My biggest challenge was related to COVID-19

COVID-19 challenges were mentioned by 14.7% of respondents. Close to one in five of these people (18.1%) mentioned the effect of lockdowns and close to one in 10 (8.1%) mentioned difficulties with online schooling. Contracting COVID-19 was mentioned by 2.2% of respondents and nearly three quarters (72.6%) reported general COVID-19 challenges such as the impact of the pandemic on their wellbeing/life, worry for their family safety and non-specific mentions of ‘COVID-19’.

“Due to COVID-19 my academic capabilities decreased which impacts my final years of high school/college. It also impacts my goals for going to university which has an effect on my mental, physical and social health and well-being.” Female, 16, VIC, non-Indigenous

How I helped myself...

Lockdowns and social restrictions were one of the biggest challenges faced from COVID-19. Young people who reported COVID-19 as their main personal challenge last year mentioned their friends and family had helped them cope through it. Social media and online communication platforms were also helpful for young people to feel connected to their friends and to extended family.

“Although I had less contact with friends, I was able to spend more time with my family. They were really great support during the lockdowns. Again, I was grateful to be able to still communicate with friends over social media as well as more time to focus on my hobbies.” Female, 16, NSW, non-Indigenous

What more could have helped me...

The pandemic had an overarching impact across the other challenges for many young people, causing them to struggle with school, mental health and relationships. Young people who faced this challenge stated they needed additional support from schools and the mental health system to help them overcome these issues.

Help me transition back to face-to-face learning

“More help and resources for people still struggling after COVID with things like coming to school.” Female, 16, VIC, non-Indigenous

Additional help to recover from the impacts of lockdowns and remote learning

“More support and recognition towards those who went through lockdown during their early high schooling years. There hasn’t been much mental health support towards those who struggled through the lockdown.” Male, 15, VIC, non-Indigenous

Mental health impacts to be considered for future pandemic restrictions

“More reasonable COVID restrictions for young people who are suffering with significant mental health concerns.” Female, 17, NSW, non-Indigenous

Better online school system if we ever go into any future lockdowns

“Honestly, I believe that the root of the problem was the COVID lockdowns which is a one off and will probably not happen to that extent again. I guess the biggest things for me would be to have less demanding online school with modified programs as it should be unreasonable to complete school fully online. However, there were some benefits to online school if done differently which would be useful if not done every day long term.” Male, 17, NSW, non-Indigenous

No more lockdowns

“Don’t go back into lockdown.” Female, 15, VIC, non-Indigenous

Table 2.1: Biggest personal challenge experienced by young people

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
School related Challenges	41.5	44.2	38.3	28.4
Grades	20.7	20.7	20.5	20.1
Workload Issues	20.2	21.5	19.3	7.7
School staff	2.7	2.8	2.2	5.2
Learning difficulties	2.4	2.1	1.5	13.9
School (general)	57.6	57.1	59.0	57.2
Mental Health Challenges	27.7	33.7	14.5	45.0
Stress	24.4	24.8	27.7	13.3
Anxiety	19.3	20.8	13.1	18.2
Depression	12.5	11.6	12.8	20.1
Self-esteem	10.2	10.6	9.4	8.4
Suicide and self-harm	2.7	2.1	2.5	8.8
Eating Disorder	2.0	2.3	0.1	3.9
Addiction (not including alcohol and other drugs)	0.9	0.5	2.3	2.3
Alcohol and other drugs	0.5	0.4	1.1	0.6
Mental health (general)	43.0	43.1	41.2	48.1
Interpersonal Relationship Challenges	19.7	23.0	13.4	21.1
Family	64.8	65.7	61.8	68.1
Friends	35.8	36.8	33.5	34.0
Significant other	3.0	2.9	3.7	3.5
Pet	1.8	1.4	2.4	4.2
Interpersonal relationship (general)	6.1	5.8	6.3	6.3

“Mental health has definitely been the biggest personal challenge for me. A few things have popped up in the past year, including health issues concerning my family members, fall-outs with many friends, and the pressure to exceed expectations in school and in my extra-curricular activities. I have not been able to have enough time to process all of these emotions and thoughts on top of keeping up with school work, and I have experienced a lot of burn out.”

Female, 16, NSW, non-Indigenous

Table 2.1: Biggest personal challenge experienced by young people (continued)

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
COVID-19 Challenges	14.7	15.7	13.8	8.3*
Lockdowns	18.1	18.3	17.6	-
Online Schooling	8.1	8.9	6.8	-
Getting COVID-19	2.2	2.6	1.5	-
COVID-19 (general)	72.6	71.1	75.2	-
Financial and Housing Challenges	3.3	3.2	3.4	3.9*
Employment	69.6	66.7	76.7	-
Finances	25.0	28.8	20.0	-
Housing	5.9	5.6	3.3	-
Other Challenges	13.9	14.9	11.5	19.6
Motivation	47.6	50.8	46.4	22.4
General Health	14.1	10.7	22.8	9.0
Self- identity	5.9	3.0	3.7	47.0
Moving to a new environment	5.5	3.0	2.5	45.5
Bullying	5.1	5.4	4.0	3.7
Discrimination	1.5	0.8	1.5	6.7
Other (includes various low frequency challenges not listed above)	26.8	29.5	22.6	18.7
Not sure/no challenges identified	4.2	2.7	7.0	3.9

Note: Items based on content analysis of 81% of responses to this question. Items ranked high to low according to the national responses for top-level theme. The percentage figure for the top-level themes represents its proportion amongst the total responses for this question. Each of the top-level themes is made of the sub-themes listed below it. The percentage for the sub-themes represents its proportion amongst corresponding top-level theme. The percentages may not total 100% as responses may fall into multiple themes.

*Number of gender diverse people that cited COVID-19 and Financial and Housing Challenges was too small to be meaningfully broken down into sub-themes.



“[My biggest personal challenge was] dealing with Covid as I felt disconnected from friends and lost a lot of motivation and went into a slump of sorts with my school work finding it hard to complete the work. This has also made it hard to connect with friends again as I grew used to being isolated. Another personal challenge was my mental health.”

Female, 16, NSW, non-Indigenous

In the past year, what issues were of personal concern to young people?

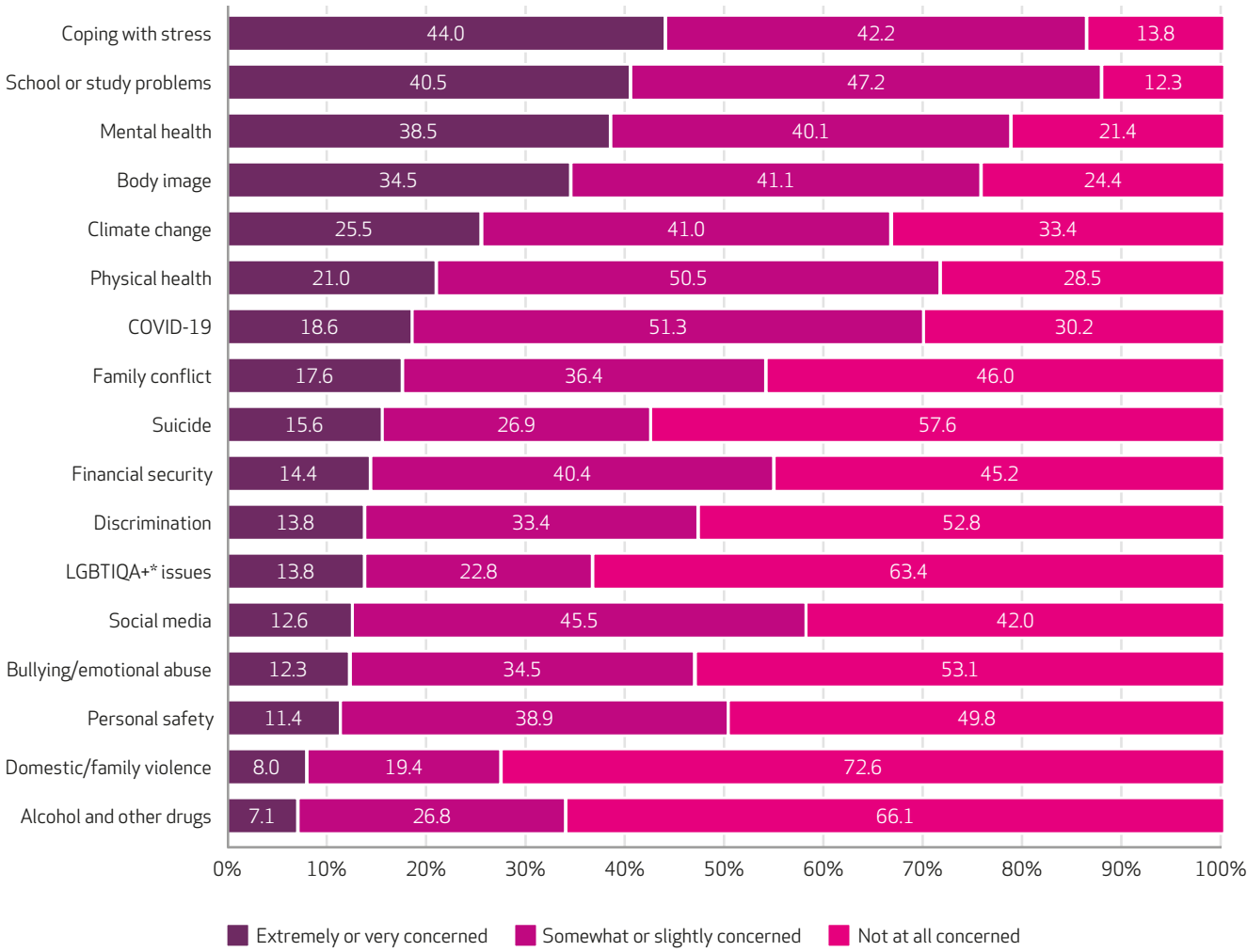
Young people were asked to indicate how concerned they were about a number of issues over the past year from a list, as shown in Figure 2.1. Responses were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*.

The top four issues of personal concern for young people were *coping with stress*, *school or study problems*, *mental health* and *body image*.

- *Coping with stress* was the top issue of concern, with 44.0% of respondents indicating they were *extremely* or *very concerned* about this issue.
- Around two in five respondents were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *school and study problems* (40.5%) and *mental health* (38.5%)
- Over one in three (34.5%) respondents were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *body image*.

Coping with stress was also the top issue of personal concern last year in the 2021 Youth Survey (Tiller et al., 2021). The top four issues of personal concern in 2022 remain consistent with 2021, though appear in a different order. In 2021, the top concerns were *coping with stress*, *mental health*, *school or study problems* and *body image*.

Figure 2.1: Issues of personal concern to young people



Note: Items ranked high to low according to the responses for *extremely* or *very concerned* for each item. *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Gender differences

Males and females share the same top three personal concerns with *coping with stress*, *school or study problems* and *mental health* topping the list for both genders, as shown in Tables 2.2a and Table 2.2b. For females, fourth most concerning personal issue was *body image*. For males, the fourth most concerning personal issue was *physical health*. The proportion of female respondents who were concerned about these issues (and many of the other issues) was much higher than the proportion of males.

- Double the proportion of females were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *coping with stress* (53.8% compared with 23.9% of males).
- Following *coping with stress*, the issues with the greatest differences between females and males in the proportions *extremely* or *very concerned* were *body image* (44.0% compared with 14.9%), *mental health* (45.8% compared with 21.5%) and *school or study problems* (48.2% compared with 25.1%).

As shown in Table 2.2c, almost two thirds of gender diverse young people were *extremely* or *very concerned* about *mental health* (65.9%) and *LGBTIQA issues* (65.4%). These top two issues of concern for gender diverse respondents were followed by *coping with stress* (60.8%) and *body image* (50.6%). The proportion of gender diverse young people who were *extremely* or *very concerned* about each of the issues was greater than females or males.

Table 2.2a: Issues of personal concern to females

Females	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	53.8	39.5	6.7
School or study problems	48.2	44.4	7.4
Mental health	45.8	40.8	13.4
Body image	44.0	41.6	14.4
Climate change	29.2	44.0	26.9
Physical health	23.0	54.0	23.0
COVID-19	22.5	55.4	22.1
Family conflict	20.8	39.4	39.8
Suicide	16.9	29.1	54.0
Financial security	16.0	41.1	43.0
Social media	15.6	50.7	33.7
Discrimination	14.6	36.6	48.8
Bullying/emotional abuse	13.7	37.2	49.0
LGBTIQA+* issues	13.5	27.4	59.1
Personal safety	12.5	41.4	46.1
Domestic/family violence	9.2	20.2	70.6
Alcohol and other drugs	7.5	28.8	63.7

Note: Items ranked high to low according to the female responses for *extremely* or *very concerned* for each item. *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Table 2.2b: Issues of personal concern to males

Males	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
School or study problems	25.1	53.8	21.1
Coping with stress	23.9	49.0	27.1
Mental health	21.5	41.0	37.6
Physical health	15.9	44.0	40.1
Climate change	15.7	36.7	47.6
Body image	14.9	41.2	43.9
COVID-19	10.4	44.0	45.6
Financial security	10.2	38.2	51.7
Suicide	9.7	21.9	68.5
Family conflict	9.6	30.5	59.9
Discrimination	8.2	26.7	65.1
Bullying/emotional abuse	7.3	28.8	63.9
Personal safety	7.3	33.0	59.6
Social media	6.9	35.4	57.7
LGBTIQA+* issues	6.5	15.1	78.4
Alcohol and other drugs	5.5	21.5	73.0
Domestic/family violence	4.8	16.1	79.1

Note: Items ranked high to low according to the male responses for extremely or very concerned for each item. *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Table 2.2c: Issues of personal concern to gender diverse people

Gender diverse	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Mental health	65.9	22.7	11.4
LGBTIQA+* issues	65.4	16.6	18.0
Coping with stress	60.8	27.9	11.4
Body image	50.6	31.8	17.7
School or study problems	48.6	38.2	13.2
Climate change	46.6	33.5	19.9
Discrimination	40.9	37.0	22.1
Suicide	40.2	31.8	28.0
Family conflict	33.0	37.8	29.2
Physical health	31.4	49.1	19.5
Bullying/emotional abuse	27.6	40.2	32.2
Financial security	26.0	41.6	32.5
COVID-19	24.4	50.1	25.6
Personal safety	23.2	45.2	31.6
Domestic/family violence	15.3	30.3	54.4
Social media	13.7	46.7	39.6
Alcohol and other drugs	12.8	34.9	52.3

Note: Items ranked high to low according to the gender diverse responses for extremely or very concerned for each item. *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

“[I’m] becoming increasingly more busy over time, having to manage things such as school, work, driving and outside life. Trying to manage all of these things can be stressful, and is still new to me.”

Male, 17, VIC, non-Indigenous



“In the past year, my biggest challenge has been coming to terms with my identity, especially in regard to my sexuality and gender, and trying not to let this issue take over my life and distract me from my school and friends. Managing this issue essentially by myself has been very difficult.”

Non-binary, 16, NSW, non-Indigenous

NATIONAL CONCERNS

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

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The open-ended responses were thematically analysed and listed in order of frequency in Table 3.1.

The top three issues identified by young people in 2022 were *the environment* (51.0%), *equity and discrimination* (35.9%) and *mental health* (33.9%).

- Over half (51.0%) identified *the environment* as the most important national issue. This is an increase from 38.0% in 2021 where *the environment* was listed as the second most important national issue (Tiller et al., 2021).
- In 2021, 45.7% of respondents identified *COVID-19* as the most important national issue (Tiller et al., 2021). This year, COVID-19 was identified as the fourth most important issue with 23.6% of respondents identifying it as an important national issue.

Gender differences

In line with national results, *the environment* and *equity and discrimination* were the top two most important issues for females, males and gender diverse. *Mental health* was the third most reported issue for females and gender diverse people while *the economy and financial matters* was the third top issue for males.

- A higher proportion of females than males identified *the environment* (55.5% compared with 42.7%), *equity and discrimination* (39.7% compared with 27.6%) and *mental health* (37.9% compared with 26.9%) as important issues facing Australia today.
- Conversely, higher proportions of males than females regarded *the economy and financial matters* (27.0% compared with 19.6%) and *politics* (12.8% compared with 8.0%) as key issues in Australia.
- A greater proportion of gender diverse people than female and males reported *equity and discrimination* (44.8% compared to 39.7% of females and 27.6% of males) and *societal issues and industrial relations* (19.4% compared to 15.9% of females and 14.8% of males) as important issues facing Australia today.

Table 3.1: Most important issues in Australia today

	National 2022 %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %	National 2021 %*	National 2020 %**
The environment	51.0	55.5	42.7	51.5	38.0	29.8
Equity and discrimination	35.9	39.7	27.6	44.8	35.4	40.2
Mental health	33.9	37.9	26.9	30.9	34.6	30.6
COVID-19	23.6	25.7	21.8	10.1	45.7	38.8
The economy and financial matters	22.0	19.6	27.0	19.1	10.9	15.3
Societal issues and industrial relations	15.7	15.9	14.8	19.4	-	-
Homelessness/housing	12.4	12.6	12.3	12.6	7.0	8.3
Crime, safety and violence	10.4	11.2	9.3	7.2	10.9	9.3
Politics	9.9	8.0	12.8	11.1	6.5	7.5
Education	7.9	8.2	7.1	8.8	6.7	7.0

Note: Items are listed in order of national frequency for 2022. Analysis of this question was conducted using a different methodology this year compared to 2021 and 2020 Youth Survey reports which may impact comparisons with the prior years. What was previously *Population issues* and *Societal values* has now been combined to create a new category – *Societal issues and industrial relations* which includes healthcare, migration, protests and strikes.

*Tiller et al., 2021.

**Tiller et al., 2020.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Are young people studying?

As indicated in Table 4.1, 85.8% of respondents were studying full-time, compared to 84.5% of respondents in the 2021 Youth Survey (Tiller et al., 2021).

- A higher proportion of females reported studying full-time (89.4% compared with 82.8% of gender diverse young people and 80.3% of males).
- Conversely, a higher proportion of males reported studying part-time (10.9% compared with 7.8% of gender diverse young people and 5.3% of females), while a higher proportion of gender diverse young people were not studying (9.5% compared with 8.8% of males and 5.2% of females).

Table 4.1: Participation in education

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Studying full-time	85.8	89.4	80.3	82.8
Studying part-time	7.4	5.3	10.9	7.8
Not studying	6.7	5.2	8.8	9.5

How satisfied are young people with their studies?

Respondents who reported 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 respondents reported they were either *very satisfied* or *satisfied* (62.6%) with their studies. One in 10 indicated they were *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* (10.0%).

As shown in Table 4.2, a higher proportion of females reported feeling *very satisfied* or *satisfied* (65.0% compared with 60.9% of males and 49.7% of gender diverse young people), while a higher proportion of gender diverse respondents indicated they felt *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* (16.8% compared with 10.7% of males and 9.0% of females).

Table 4.2: Satisfaction with studies

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Very satisfied or satisfied	62.6	65.0	60.9	49.7
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	27.4	26.0	28.4	33.5
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	10.0	9.0	10.7	16.8

Do young people plan on finishing school?

Of those still at school, the majority (97.3%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. Almost three times as many males indicated that they did not plan to complete Year 12 compared to females (4.5% of males compared with 1.6% of females). Over twice as many gender diverse people indicated that they did not plan to complete Year 12 compared to females (3.8% of gender diverse people compared with 1.6% of females).

What are the plans of young people after school?

Figure 4.1 shows that over seven in 10 (71.9%) respondents planned to go to university after school. Close to half (46.3%) respondents reported plans to get a job and almost a third (31.4%) indicated travel/gap year plans.


Gender differences

The top three plans were the same for females, males and gender diverse people.

The most frequently reported plan among respondents was to go to university. A higher proportion of females indicated they planned to do so (78.7% compared with 63.3% of gender diverse young people and 60.9% of males).

A greater proportion of female and gender diverse respondents also reported they intend to get a job (48.8% of females and 47.7% of gender diverse young people compared to 41.6% of males) or have travel/gap year plans after leaving school (35.5% of females and 32.9% of gender diverse young people compared with 23.6% of males).

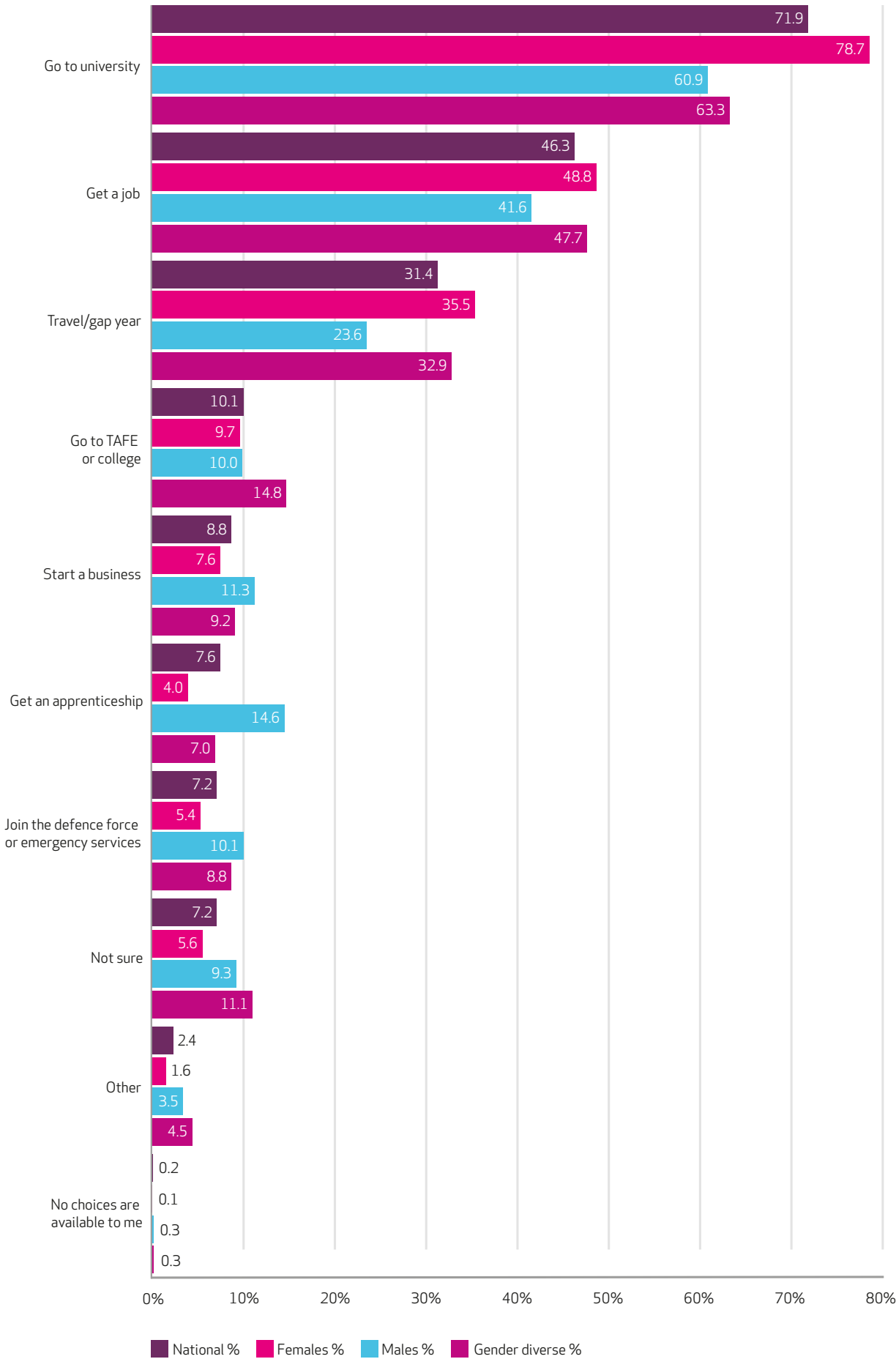
Conversely, close to four times the proportion of males than females indicated they were planning to get an apprenticeship after school (14.6% compared with 4.0% of females) and close to double the proportion of males than females were planning to join the defence force or emergency services (10.1% compared to 5.4% of females).



"In the past year the biggest personal challenge I have faced or experienced is probably school and figuring out what I want to do when I leave school."

Female, 17, NSW, non-Indigenous

Figure 4.1: Plans after leaving school



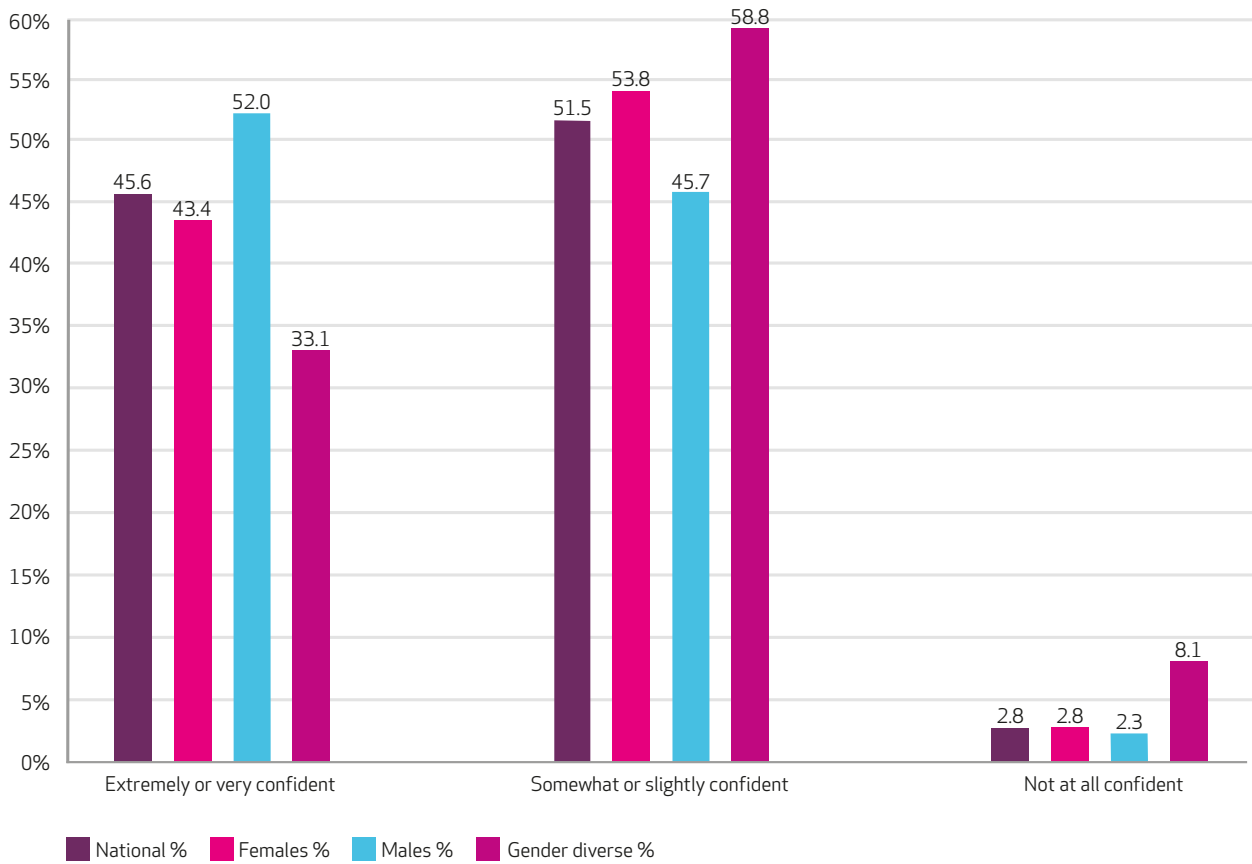
Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. This is different to the 2021 Youth Survey where respondents were only able to choose one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

How confident are young people in achieving their study or 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 4.2, nearly half (45.6%) of respondents indicated they were *extremely* or *very confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals.
- A notably higher proportion of male respondents reported they were *extremely* or *very confident* in their ability to achieve their study/work goals after school (52.0% compared with 43.4% of females and 33.1% of gender diverse young people).

Figure 4.2: Confidence in achieving study or work goals



“Due to Covid-19 my academic capabilities decreased which impacts my final years of high school/college. It also impacts my goals for going to university which has an effect on my mental, physical and social health and well-being.”

Female, 16, VIC, non-Indigenous



What are the barriers to achieving study or work goals?

Respondents were asked if they felt there were any barriers that impact on the achievement of their study/work goals after school. Around four in 10 (41.8%) young people felt there were barriers that would impact on the achievement of their study/work goals (see Table 4.3). As shown in Figure 4.3, the top three barriers impacting on the achievement of study/work goals were consistent for females, males and gender diverse young people.

Of the respondents that felt that there were barriers, over half reported *mental health* (55.1%) was a barrier impacting their achievement of study/work goals. *Academic ability* (37.4%) and *financial difficulty* (24.8%) were the second and third top barriers selected.

“As a student, I can feel that I can never achieve what my aspirations and goals require me to do and it has affected my mental health heavily..”

Transgender, 17, NT, non-Indigenous

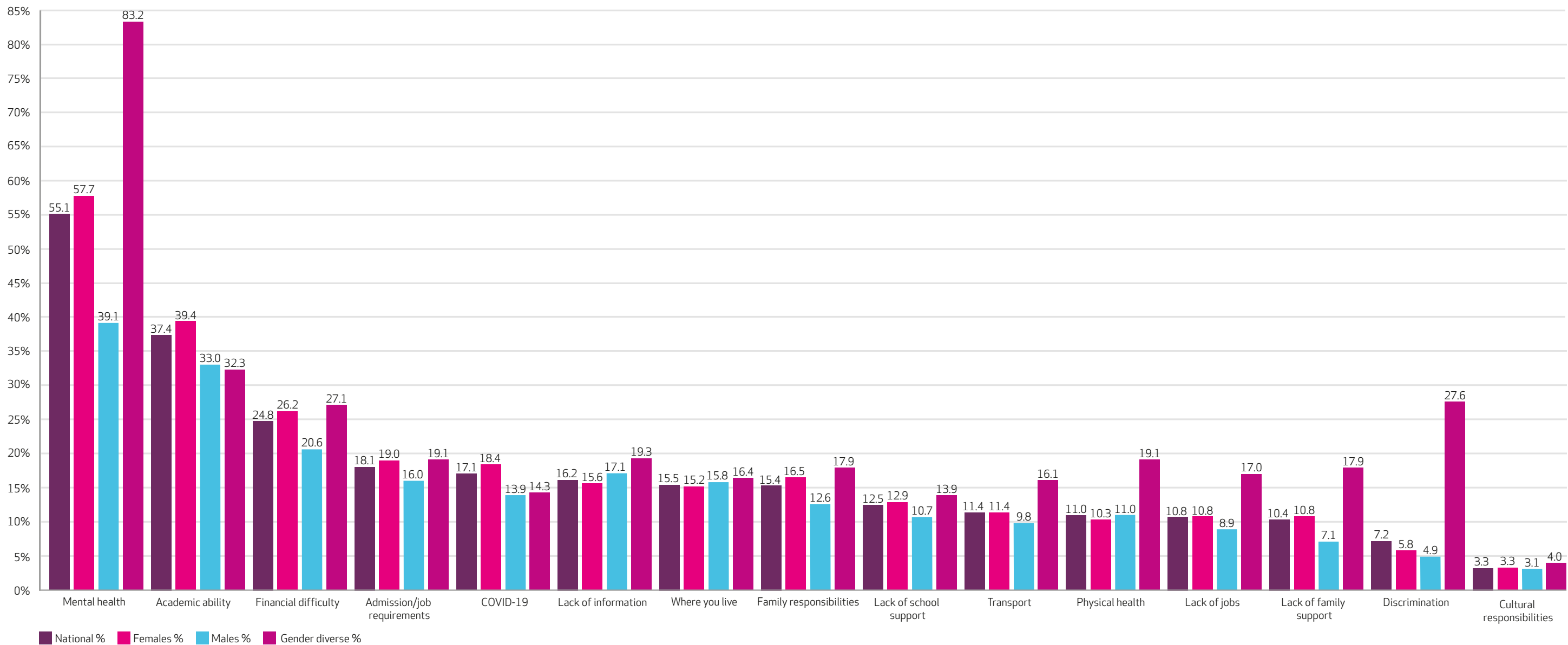
Gender differences

- A higher proportion of gender diverse young people felt that there were barriers (69.5% compared with 44.5% for females and 32.4% for males).
- Over four in five (83.2%) gender diverse young people saw *mental health* as a barrier impacting on their achievement of work/study goals. This compares to almost three in five (57.7%) females and two in five (39.1%) males.
- Notably higher proportions of females reported *academic ability* as a barrier (39.4% compared with 33.0% of males and 32.3% of gender diverse young people).

Table 4.3: If young people felt there were barriers to achieving their study/work goals

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Yes	41.8	44.5	32.4	69.5
No	58.2	55.5	67.6	30.5

Figure 4.3: Barriers to people achieving study or work goals



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

Are young people working?

Respondents were asked whether they currently have paid work and if so, how many hours they work in an average week. Table 4.4 shows participation in paid employment among respondents. Over half (52.6%) of respondents reported they were employed part-time, which is an increase from 45.5% in 2021 (Tiller et al., 2021) and 40.5% in 2022 (Tiller et al., 2020).

- A small proportion of young people were employed full-time (0.7%).
- Close to half (46.7%) of respondents indicated they were not in paid employment. Of this group, 25.9% stated they were looking for work while 20.8% were not looking for work. The proportion of those who were looking for work has decreased from 31.8% in 2021 (Tiller et al., 2021).

Table: 4.4: Participation in paid employment

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Employed full-time	0.7	0.4	1.0	2.4
Employed part-time	52.6	55.3	49.3	43.8
Not in paid employment, looking for work	25.9	23.5	29.2	33.1
Not in paid employment, NOT looking for work	20.8	20.8	20.6	20.8

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

HOUSING AND FINANCIAL SITUATION

What is the employment status of young peoples’ parent(s) or guardian(s)?

Over nine in 10 (94.0%) young people reported that at least one of their parents was currently employed as seen in Table 5.1. A small proportion (3.7%) said both their parent(s) were currently unemployed.

Table 5.1: Parent/guardian’s employment status – as of last week

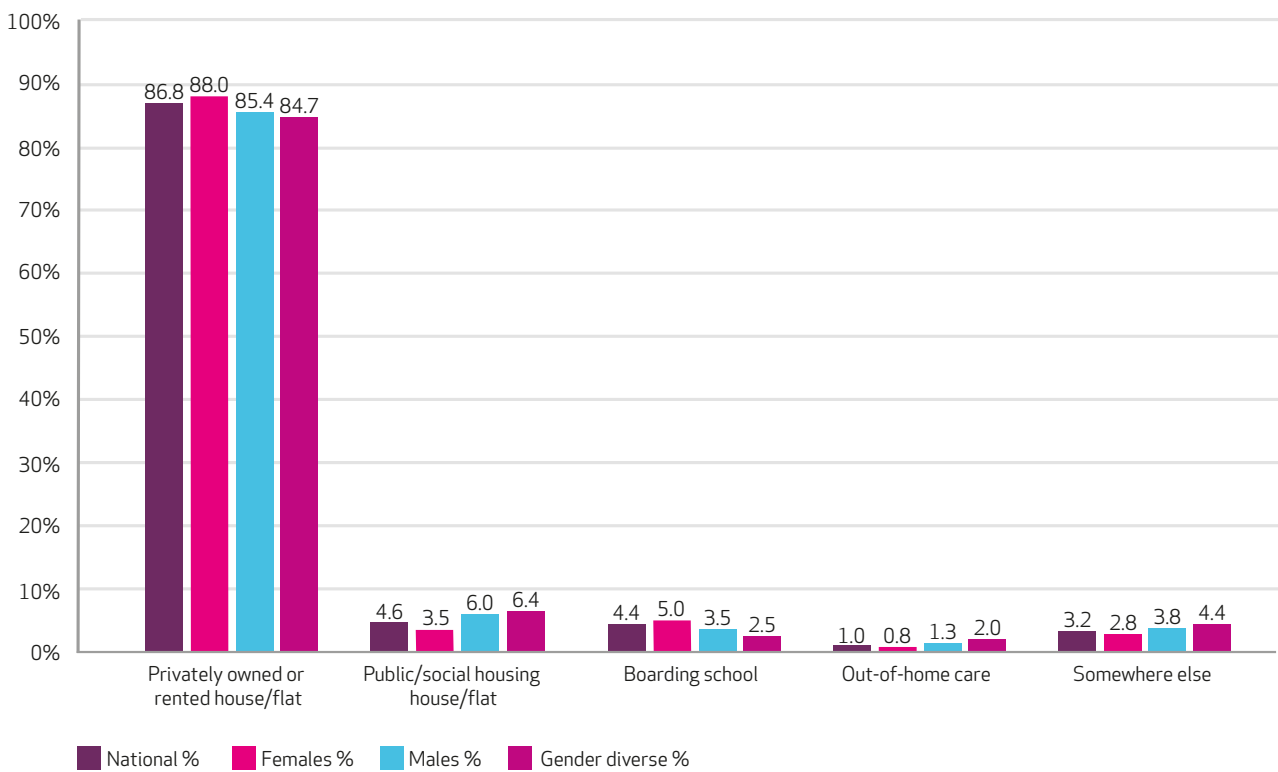
	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
At least one parent or guardian was employed (full-time or part-time)	94.0	95.2	92.9	87.9
All parent(s) or guardian(s) were unemployed*	3.7	3.1	4.2	6.5
Not sure/not applicable	2.3	1.7	2.9	5.6

*Includes both parents unemployed as well as combinations of one parent being unemployed and the other parent’s employment status listed as *not sure* or *not applicable*.

Where were young people living in the past 3 months?

Close to nine in 10 (86.8%) respondents reported living in a *privately owned or rented house/flat* in the past three months as seen in Figure 5.1. Almost one in twenty (4.6%) were living in *public/social housing*, 4.4% were in *boarding school* and 1.0% were in *out-of-home care*. Compared to females, a higher proportion of gender diverse young people and males were living in *public/social housing* (6.4% of gender diverse respondents and 6.0% of males compared to 3.5% of females).

Figure 5.1: Residential setting in the past three months



Note: Asked of all respondents. Respondents were able to choose only one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.



“The biggest challenge has probably been keeping up with work, school, tafe, family and social time.”

Female, 17, NSW, Indigenous

What was young peoples’ living situation in the past three months?

The young people were asked if they had been living with their parents or somewhere else in the past three months. Almost all (97.2%) respondents reported they had been living with their parents.

Among the 2.8% of young people who had been living elsewhere in the past three months, Figure 5.3 shows the top places that they had been living were with *relatives/siblings* (23.0%), *friend(s)* (19.5%) and *partner or significant other* (19.5%). These top three living situations were consistent across females and males, though 15.4% of males also reported that they *lived alone* (compared with 9.5% of females).

Figure 5.2: Living with parents or somewhere else in the past three months

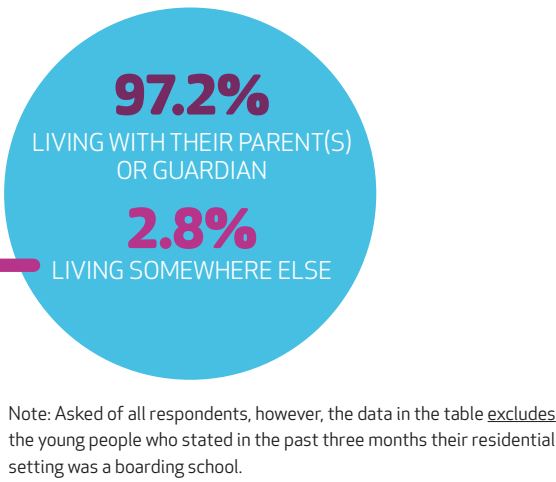
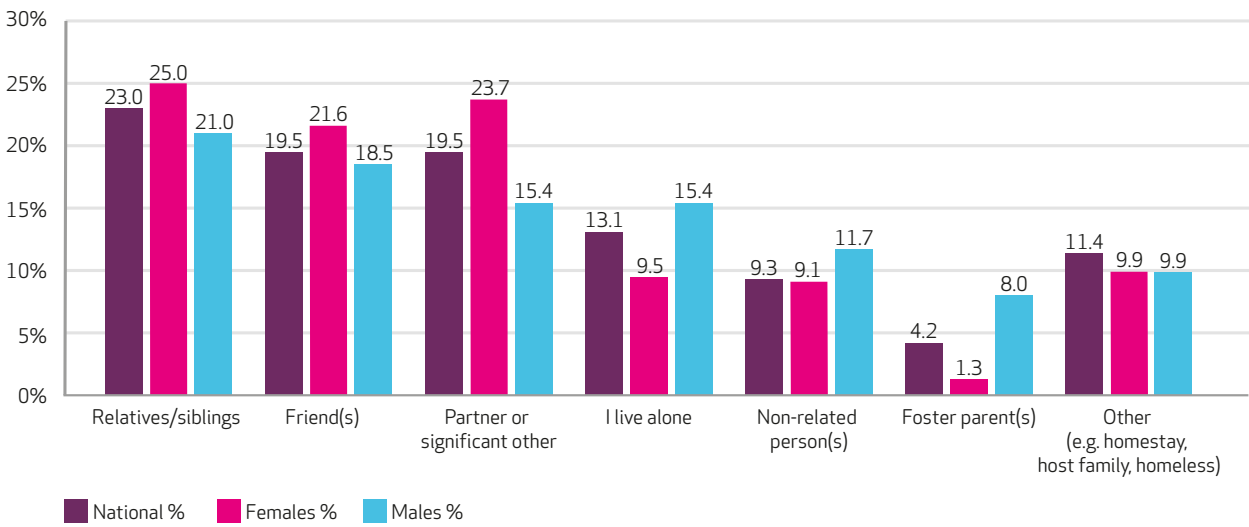


Figure 5.3: Living somewhere else in the past three months



Note: Data in the table excludes the young people who stated in the past three months their residential setting was a boarding school. Respondents were able to choose only one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency. Gender diverse data not included as sample size is under 100. Base is respondents living some-where else (not with parent(s) or guardian) in last three months.

Have young people experienced homelessness?

To understand if young people had ever experienced homelessness, they were asked if they had ever had no fixed address or had lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation. As shown in Table 5.2, over nine in ten respondents (94.4%) had not had one of these experiences. There were 2.1% of young people who had *no fixed address* or *lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation* in the last year and another 3.5% had experienced this, but not within the last year.

A higher proportion of gender diverse young people had no fixed address in the last year (6.2% compared to 2.3% of males and 1.8% of females) and in prior years (8.3% compared to 3.5% of males and 3.1% of females).

Young people who had experienced having no fixed address at some point in their life were asked if a parent was present for some or all of these experiences. Table 5.3 shows close to two thirds (64.5%) reported their parent(s) were with them during all these experiences. One in five (20.8%) stated their parent(s) were present for some experiences and 14.7% said their parent(s) were not present. A larger proportion of gender diverse young people did not have a parent present when they had no fixed address (22.7% compared to 14.0% of males and 13.2% of females).

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

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Yes, in the last year	2.1	1.8	2.3	6.2
Yes, but not in the last year	3.5	3.1	3.5	8.3
No	94.4	95.2	94.2	85.4

Table 5.3: If a parent was present when they had no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Yes, during all experiences	64.5	65.8	66.7	50.9
Yes, for some experiences	20.8	21.1	19.3	26.4
No	14.7	13.2	14.0	22.7

Note: Asked of those who ever experienced having no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation.



“[My biggest challenge was] probably getting kicked out of home and being homeless at the age of 17, trying to find support and figuring out how to get my life back on track with no job and only a bag of clothes.”

Female, 18, WA, non-Indigenous

Have young people felt they couldn't go home or worried about having a safe place to stay?

Over one in ten (12.2%) respondents said they had spent time away from home because they felt they couldn't go back, with 8.4% reporting this had occurred in the last year. Figure 5.4 shows a higher proportion of females than males felt they couldn't go home in the last year (9.0% compared to 6.1% of males). The proportion of gender diverse young people was higher still at double that of females (18.2% compared to 9.0%).

One in ten (10.4%) young people had also worried about having a safe place to stay within the last year as shown in Figure 5.5. Similarly to the gender differences seen in *spending time away from home because they couldn't go back*, the proportion *worried about having a safe place to stay* was highest for gender diverse young people (29.1%), followed by females (9.9%) and males (8.7%).

Figure 5.4: Spent time away from home because the young person felt they couldn't go back

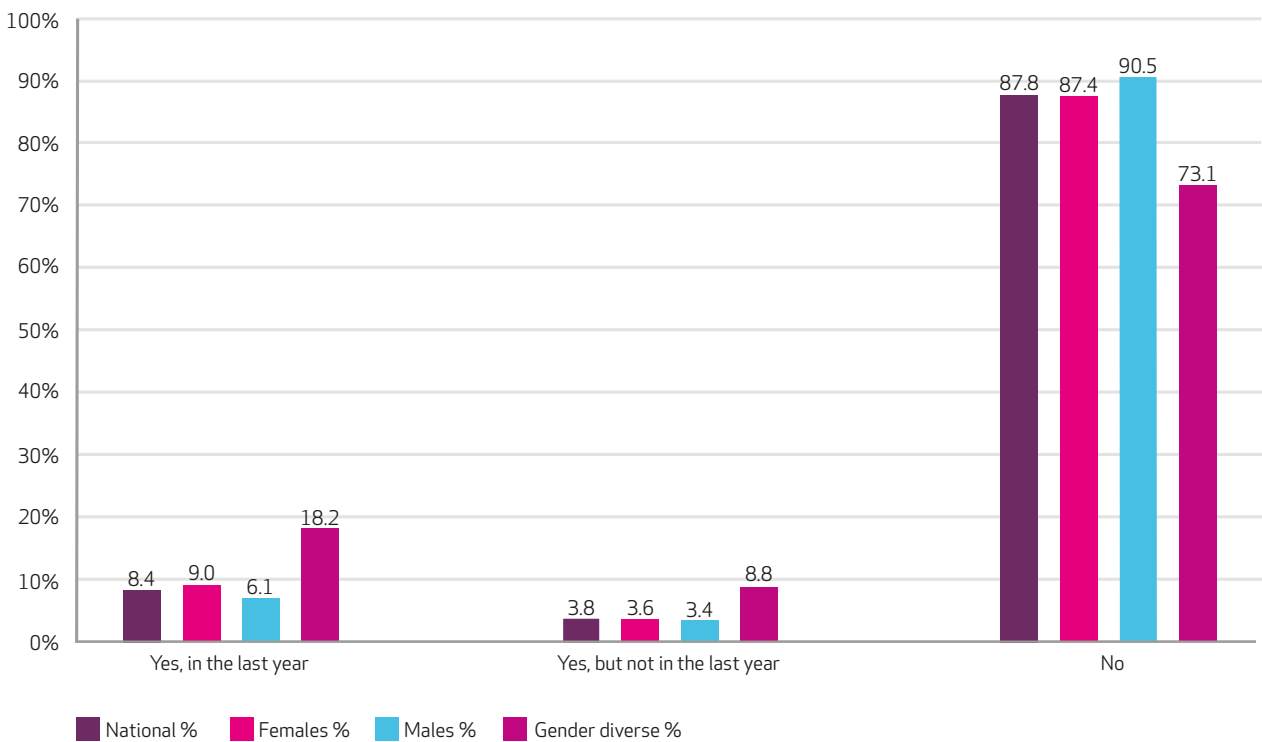
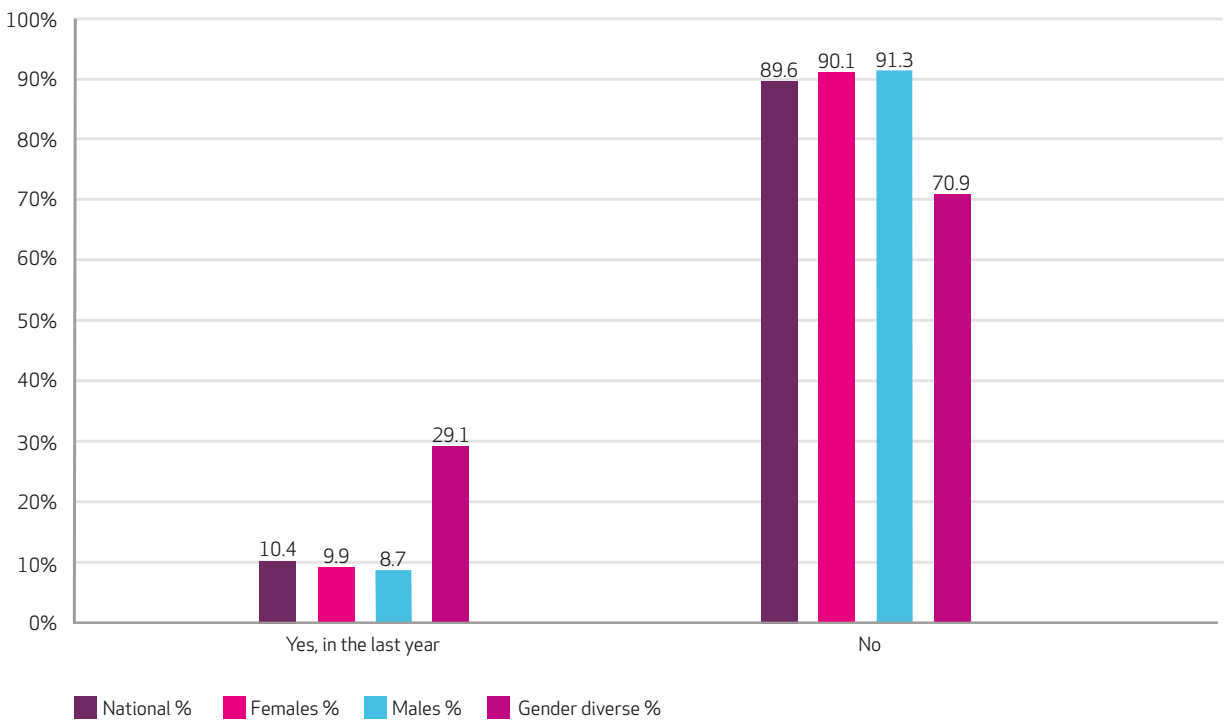


Figure 5.5: Worried about having a safe place to stay

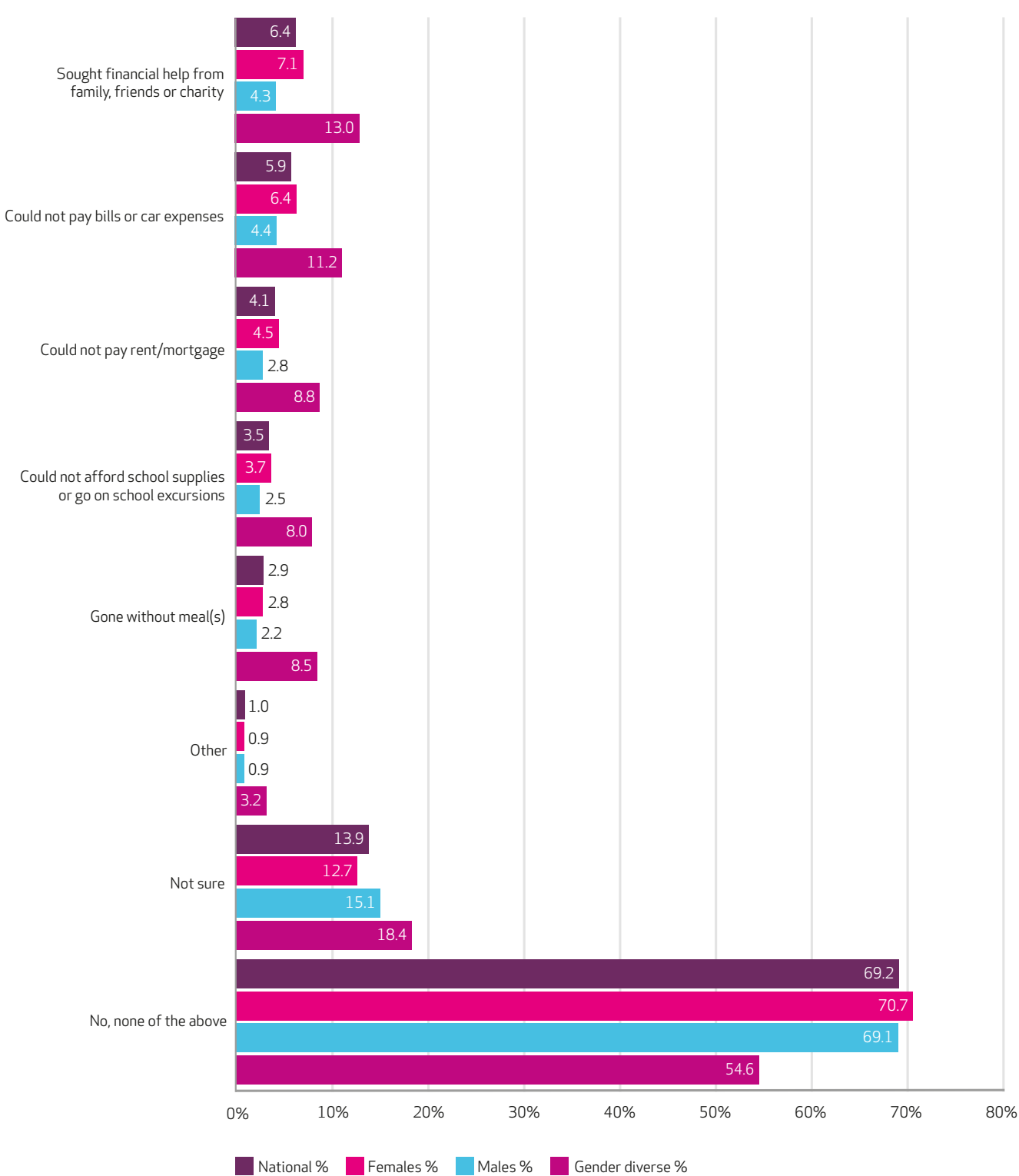


Have young people experienced money concerns in the past year?

Young people were asked if they or their family had experienced a range of money concerns in the past year as shown in Figure 5.6. Over one in 20 (6.4%) respondents reported that they or their family *sought financial help from family, friends or charity* or that they *could not pay bills or car expenses* (5.9%). The third and fourth most common money concerns were that they or their family *could not pay rent/mortgage* (4.1%) or *could not afford school supplies or go on school excursions* (3.5%).

A higher proportion of females than males *sought financial help from family, friends or charity* (7.1% compared to 4.3%), *could not pay bills or car expenses* (6.4% compared to 4.4% of males) or *could not pay rent/mortgage* (4.5% compared with 2.8% males). Gender diverse young people reported these top three money concerns at close to double the rate of females (13.0%, 11.2% and 8.8% respectively).

Figure 5.6: Money concerns experienced in the past year by the young person and/or their family



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

Have young people or their family sought support from a charity or foundation?

Nearly seven out of ten (69.0%) of respondents said they and/or their family *did not need support or assistance from a charity or foundation* in the past year, with a over a quarter (25.8%) of the young people *unsure* about this (see Table 5.4). One in 40 (2.6%) young people said they or their family received support from a charity or foundation, while 2.7% said they did not receive assistance, but they needed support.

The proportions of females and males who had received support from a charity or foundation was similar (2.3% and 2.5% respectively), while the proportion of gender diverse young people who received support was notably higher at 5.5%. The proportion of gender diverse young people who did not seek support from a charity despite needing the support was also higher (6.3% compared with 2.5% of females and 2.4% of males).

Table 5.4: Support or assistance received from a charity/foundation in the past year for the young person and/or their family

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Yes, Mission Australia and/or a different charity or foundation (e.g. The Salvation Army, the Smith Family, Beyond Blue etc)	2.6	2.3	2.5	5.5
No, but I needed support or assistance	2.7	2.5	2.4	6.3
No, I did not need support or assistance from a charity or foundation	69.0	71.7	66.3	59.2
Not sure	25.8	23.6	28.8	29.0



“I was dealing with bouts of homelessness, toxic households, and lack of access to resources to complete the work given.”

Gender diverse, 18, TAS, Aboriginal

COVID-19

What aspects of life have been negatively impacted by COVID-19?

Young people were asked to identify from a list of suggested items, the ways COVID-19 has negatively impacted them. The top three areas impacted by COVID-19 were *education*, *participation in activities* and *mental health* as shown in Table 6.1.

Compared to the 2021 Youth Survey, the proportion of young people saying COVID-19 negatively impacted their *education* has increased to 73.2% in 2022 from 62.3% in 2021. *Education* is now the most commonly impacted aspect of life, up from second in 2021.

The impact of COVID-19 on *participation in activities* remains at similar levels to 2021, with 68.7% of respondents saying their activities have been negatively impacted. A higher proportion of females identified their *education* was negatively impacted by COVID-19 (77.1% compared with 65.8% of males and 71.7% of gender diverse young people). A greater proportion of females than males noted COVID-19 negatively impacted most of the listed aspects of life.

Two thirds (66.4%) of gender diverse young people and 62.7% of females reported their *mental health* was negatively impacted by COVID-19. This is close to double the proportion of males at 35.3%.

Table 6.1: Aspects of a young person’s life impacted negatively due to COVID-19

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %	National 2021 %
Education	73.2	77.1	65.8	71.7	62.3
Participation in activities	68.7	71.1	65.1	64.0	68.3
Mental health	53.7	62.7	35.3	66.4	50.3
Physical health	46.8	51.0	38.5	50.3	46.1
Family	39.7	42.6	32.8	47.5	37.9
Friendships	37.3	41.2	28.6	45.0	33.8
Employment	24.1	24.7	22.4	26.4	30.1
Financial security	20.2	21.6	16.8	25.7	24.3
Housing	9.6	9.4	9.4	13.9	6.9

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

“I am an extremely social person so being able to not see my friends at all during the 2021 lockdown made me probably the most depressed I have ever been in my life. I’m not that close with my family and they do not get along healthily with each other and when it is a volatile situation at home and you can’t leave, it’s incredibly tormenting.”

Female, 17, NSW, non-Indigenous



IMPACT OF COVID-19

"I struggled a fair amount academically, and my depression was triggered a lot. However, the way it has mostly affected me is I can't see my friends and family. I have felt very isolated and alone over the past year."

Gender diverse, 16, NSW, non-Indigenous

"Not being able to keep up as well with work and feeling burnt out after school days, it has greatly affected my mental health and outlook on life. I feel as though I'm hopeless and don't really know what to do. I feel unseen."

Gender not specified, 15, VIC, non-Indigenous

"My biggest personal challenge was having to deal with the pandemic and my mental health and wellbeing, as well as physical health and wellbeing and trying to stay healthy."

Female, 16, VIC, non-Indigenous

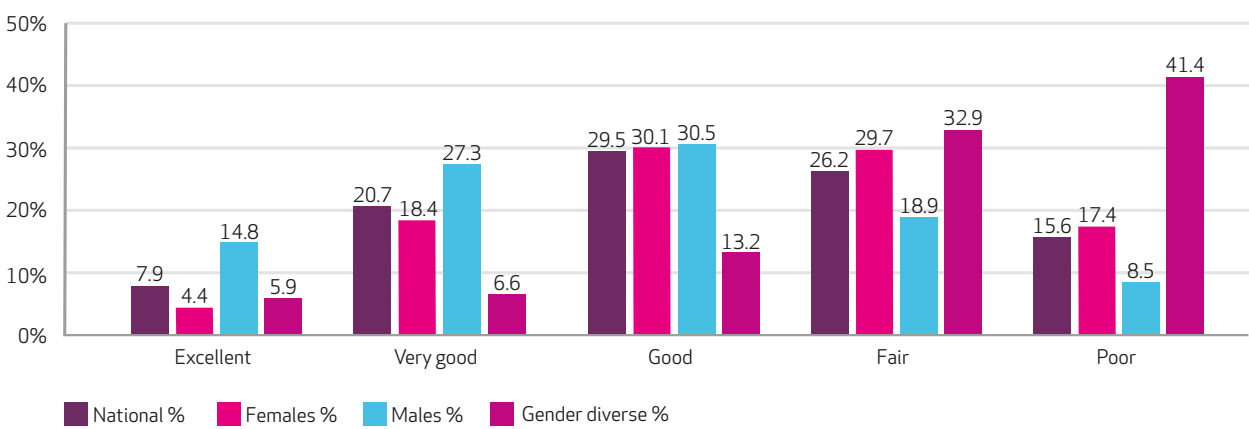
WELLBEING

How do young people rate their overall mental health and wellbeing?

Young people were asked to rate their general mental health and wellbeing on a 5-point scale ranging from *excellent* to *poor*. Figure 7.1 shows that almost three in 10 (28.6%) respondents rated their mental health and wellbeing as *excellent* (7.9%) or *very good* (20.7%). More than two in five (41.8%) respondents rated their mental health and wellbeing as either *fair* (26.2%) or *poor* (15.6%).

A greater proportion of males rated their mental health and wellbeing as *excellent* (14.8% compared to 4.4% of females and 5.9% of gender diverse young people). Over two in five gender diverse young people rated their mental health and wellbeing as *poor* (41.4%), over double that of females (17.4%) and almost five times as high as males (8.5%).

Figure 7.1: Young people's overall mental health and wellbeing



How do young people rate their subjective wellbeing?

The Personal Wellbeing Index – School Children (PWI-SC) (Cummins & Lau, 2005) is validated measure of a young person’s subjective wellbeing (Tomyn & Cummins, 2011). Young people are asked to rate their happiness with their *life as a whole* and across the seven life domains on a scale of 0 to 10. Scores for the life domains are converted into a score out of 100 to represent a person’s overall subjective wellbeing.

The PWI score has been interpreted using the following guidelines as suggested by Weinburg & Tomyn (2015):

- 70 or above points = person is likely to be experiencing a normal level of wellbeing
- 51 to 69 points = personal wellbeing is likely to be challenged/compromised
- 50 or below points = very low personal wellbeing/strong likelihood of depression.

Table 7.1 includes the mean PWI scores for the 2022 Youth Survey respondents. The national mean scores for Australian adults have been included for reference.

- For happiness with *life as a whole*, the mean score for young people was 63.1, which is notably below the adult Australian normative range of 75.5 – 79.3.
- The mean PWI score for respondents was 70.7, falling within the range of normal wellbeing. This was below the adult Australian normative range of 74.2 – 76.8.
- The life domains that had the highest levels of happiness among respondents were happiness *with how safe they feel* (77.5), happiness *with the things they have e.g. money* (74.7) and happiness *with doing things away from home* (73.1).
- The life domains that the joint lowest level of happiness were happiness *with your health* (62.0) and happiness *with the things you want to be good at* (62.0).

Gender differences

- Males rated their happiness higher than females and gender diverse young people across all life domains.
- Gender diverse young people had a lower PWI score compared to males and females (59.9 compared with 74.5 for males and 69.5 for females).

Table 7.1: Mean PWI-scores of respondents compared with Australian adults

	National	Females	Males	Gender diverse	Australian adults*	Normative range for Australian adults (±2SD)*
How happy are young people with their life as a whole	63.1	61.9	68.1	46.6	77.4	75.5 – 79.3
Personal Wellbeing Index	70.7	69.5	74.5	59.9	75.5	74.2 – 76.8
How happy are young people...						
about the things they have e.g. money	74.7	75.1	76.0	63.6	78.2	75.8 – 80.6
with their health	62.0	60.0	68.4	44.9	74.2	72.5 – 76.0
with things they want to be good at	62.0	59.7	67.8	52.1	72.1	69.9 – 74.5
with getting on with the people they know	72.0	71.1	75.6	60.3	78.2	75.7 – 80.9
about how safe they feel	77.5	77.3	81.0	59.3	79.2	75.4 – 83.1
doing things away from home	73.1	72.4	76.2	62.6	70.1	68.2 – 72.1
about what may happen to them later in their life	62.7	62.0	66.5	47.9	68.7	65.5 – 72.0
with their connection to culture**	67.5	67.3	69.7	53.9	NA	NA

*National average index is based on aggregated survey mean scores from 2002 to 2021 of adults 18 years and over where mean age = 50.55 and SD= 17.47 (Khor et al., 2021).

** This question is not officially part of the PWI but a supplementary question to *spiritual and/or cultural beliefs*. Respondents who answered *yes* to having *cultural beliefs* were only able to respond to this question.

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

Young people were asked to rate how much control they felt they have over their life on 5-point scale ranging from *no control* to *complete control*. Table 7.2 shows that over half (52.4%) of respondents felt they had control over their life: 7.5% reported they had *complete control* and 44.9% reported they were *mostly in control*. More than one in 10 (11.3%) respondents reported they had *almost no control* (9.0%) or *no control* (2.3%) over their life.

A higher proportion of males said they had *complete control* over their lives (13.1% compared with 5.0% of gender diverse young people and 4.7% of females), while more gender diverse young people said felt they had *no control* (8.7% compared with 2.2% of females and 1.5% of males).

Table 7.2: Young people's level of control over their life

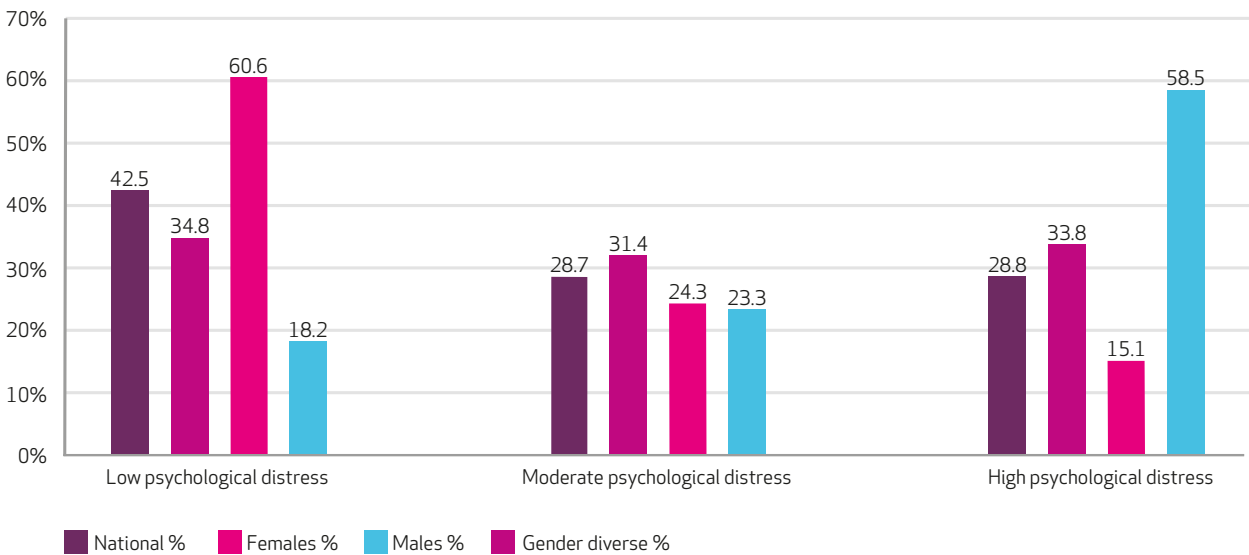
	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Complete control	7.5	4.7	13.1	5.0
Mostly in control	44.9	44.1	49.9	24.7
Some control	36.3	39.2	29.8	41.0
Almost no control	9.0	9.8	5.7	20.6
No control	2.3	2.2	1.5	8.7

What is the level of psychological distress in young people?

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

- As shown in Figure 7.2, over two in five (42.5%) respondents fit into the low psychological distress category based on their K6 responses. K6 scores for close to three in 10 (28.7%) indicated moderate psychological distress and for another three in 10 (28.8%) indicated high psychological distress.
- Six in 10 (60.6%) males had low psychological distress (compared with 34.8% of females and 18.2% of gender diverse young people).
- Almost six in 10 (58.5%) gender diverse young people had high psychological distress, as did a third of females (33.8%).

Figure 7.2: Level of psychological distress in young people



Note: Cut-off scores for categories of psychological distress are as follows: low = 0 to 7, moderate = 8 to 12 and high = 13 to 24 (Hilton et al., 2008). These cut-off scores are used by the Australian Institute of Family Studies (Rioseco, Warren & Daraganova, 2020).

How lonely are young people?

Young people were asked to indicate how much of the time in the past four weeks they have felt lonely and their responses were rated on a 5-point scale ranging from *all of the time* to *none of the time*. Table 7.3 shows that almost one quarter (23.5%) of respondents felt lonely *most of the time* (18.6%) or *all of the time* (4.9%).

Table 7.3: Young people's level of loneliness

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
None of the time	14.8	10.9	23.1	8.0
A little of the time	29.9	28.8	33.7	17.7
Some of the time	31.8	34.4	27.5	30.1
Most of the time	18.6	21.1	12.0	30.1
All of the time	4.9	4.8	3.7	14.0

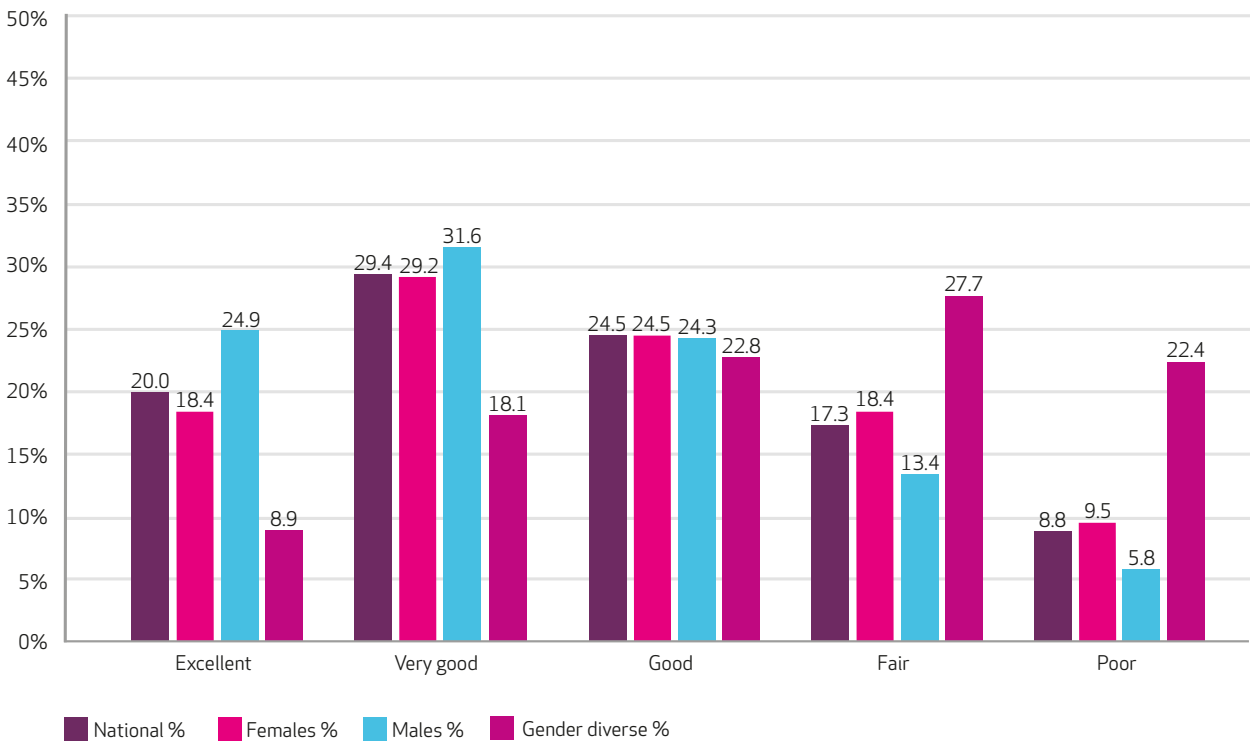
How do young people rate their family's ability to get along?

Respondents were asked to rate their family's ability to get along with one another. Responses to this question were rated on a 5-point scale that ranged from *excellent* to *poor* as shown in Figure 7.3.

Half (49.4%) of respondents rated their family's ability to get along as *excellent* (20.0%) or *very good* (29.4%). However, over a quarter (26.1%) of young people indicated their family's ability to get along was either *fair* (17.3%) or *poor* (8.8%).

A higher proportion of male respondents rated their family's ability to get along as *excellent* or *very good* (56.5% compared with 47.6% of females and 27.0% of gender diverse young people). While a higher proportion of females than males rated their family's ability to get along as *fair* or *poor* (27.9% compared with 19.2% of males). Half (50.1%) of gender diverse young people rated their family's ability to get along as *fair* or *poor*.

Figure 7.3: Family's ability to get along with one another



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 7.4 shows that half (49.9%) of young people felt either *very positive* or *positive* about the future.
- One in six (17.3%) young people felt *negative* or *very negative* about the future.
- A higher proportion of males reported feeling *very positive* or *positive* about the future (54.3% compared with 49.3% of females and 29.7% of gender diverse young people).

This year, positivity about the future is lower than in 2021 (Tiller et al., 2021) and 2020 (Tiller et al., 2020) when 51.6% and 55.5% of respondents felt *very positive* or *positive* about the future.

Table 7.4: Feelings about the future

	National 2022 %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %	National 2021 %	National 2020 %
Very positive or positive	49.9	49.3	54.3	29.7	51.6	55.5
Neither positive nor negative	32.8	33.4	31.7	31.8	32.5	30.5
Negative or very negative	17.3	17.3	13.9	38.5	16.0	13.9

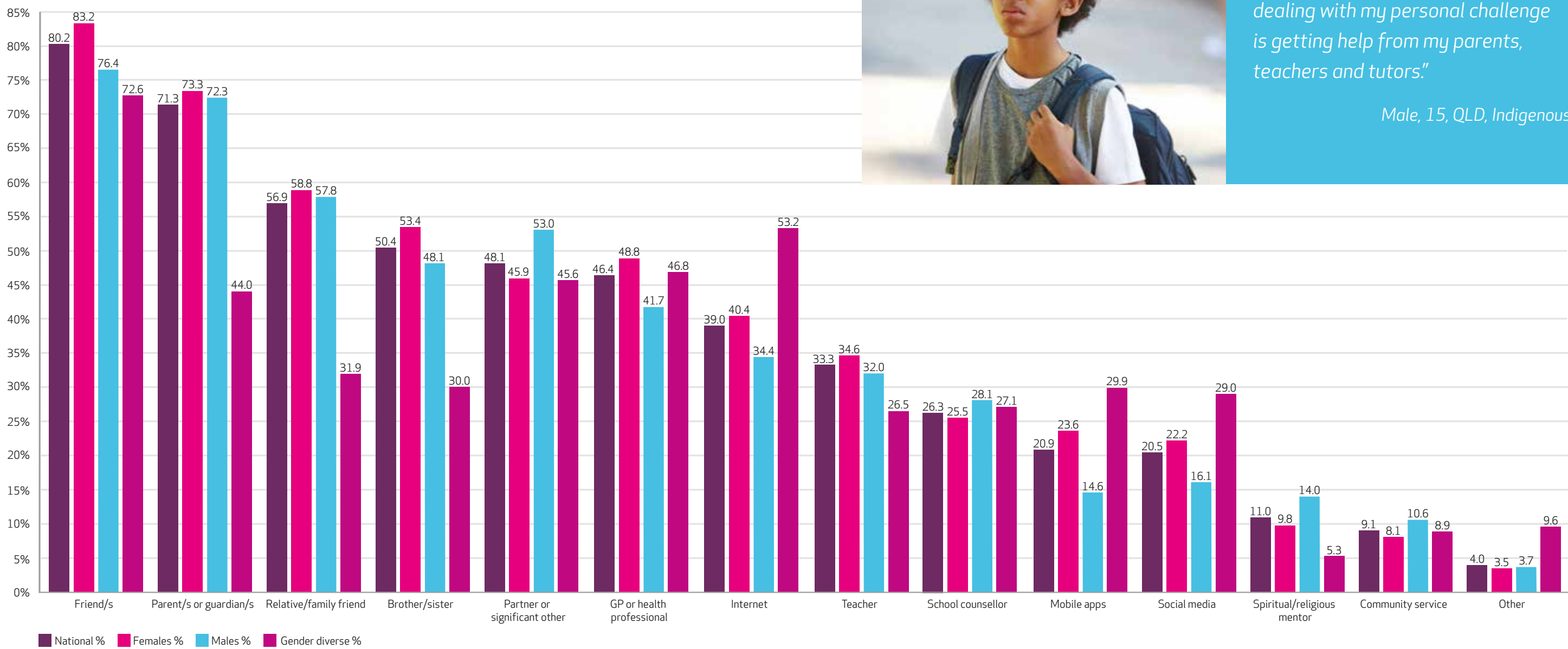
SUPPORT

Where do young people go for help with important issues?

Respondents were asked to indicate where they would go for help with important issues in their lives. Figure 8.1 shows the percentage of respondents who indicated they would go to each particular source for support.

- Friend(s) (80.2%) and parent(s) or guardians(s)(71.3%) were the most frequently cited sources of help for young people, consistent with 2021 (Tiller et al, 2021).
- This year around half of young people said they would go to a relative/family friend (56.9%) or brother/sister (50.4%), which were the third and fourth highest response.
- In 2021, internet was the third most commonly selected response, though this has dropped to seventh this year, with all the higher responses relating to personal relationships.

Figure 8.1: Where young people go for help with important issue



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

Gender differences

As shown in Figure 8.1, friend(s) was the top source of help for all genders.

- A higher proportion of females than males indicated they would turn to their friends for help with important issues (83.2% compared with 76.4%), whereas a higher proportion of males than females stated they would go to their partner or significant other (53.0% compared with 45.9%).
- A greater proportion of gender diverse young people would turn to the internet for support with important issues in their lives (53.2% compared with 40.4% of females and 34.4% of males). They also said they would seek support from their parent(s) or guardian(s) or relative/family friend in lower proportions than females and males.



“What I found the most helpful dealing with my personal challenge is getting help from my parents, teachers and tutors.”

Male, 15, QLD, Indigenous

How do young people go about getting support for their mental health?

Young people were asked a series of questions about getting support for their own mental health.

- Over half (53.4%) of young people reported they had needed support with their mental health at some point in their lives. As seen in Figure 8.2, this was notably higher for gender diverse young people and females than males (77.2% and 61.7% respectively compared with 34.8% of males).
- For those that felt they ever needed mental health support, close to six in 10 (58.1%) reported they had sought out support. Figure 8.4 shows the sources of mental health support most commonly used were a *health professional e.g. doctor* (68.1%), *family* (55.4%) and *friends* (46.7%). The top three sources of mental health support, while appearing in different orders, were consistent across all genders.

Figure 8.2: Ever needed support with mental health

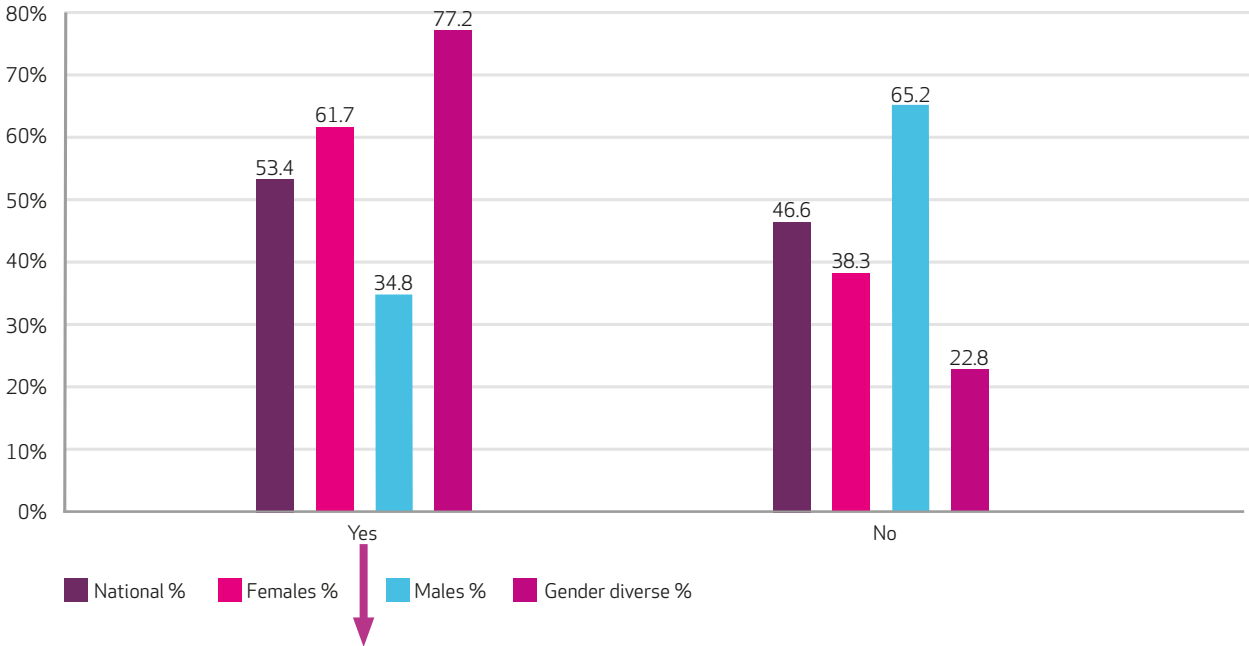
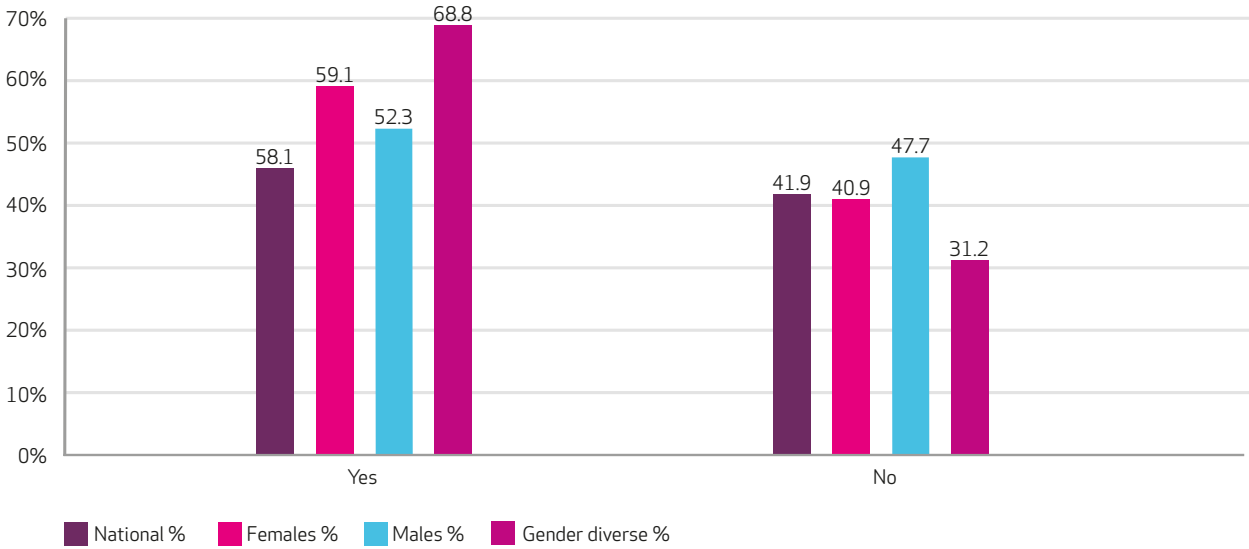
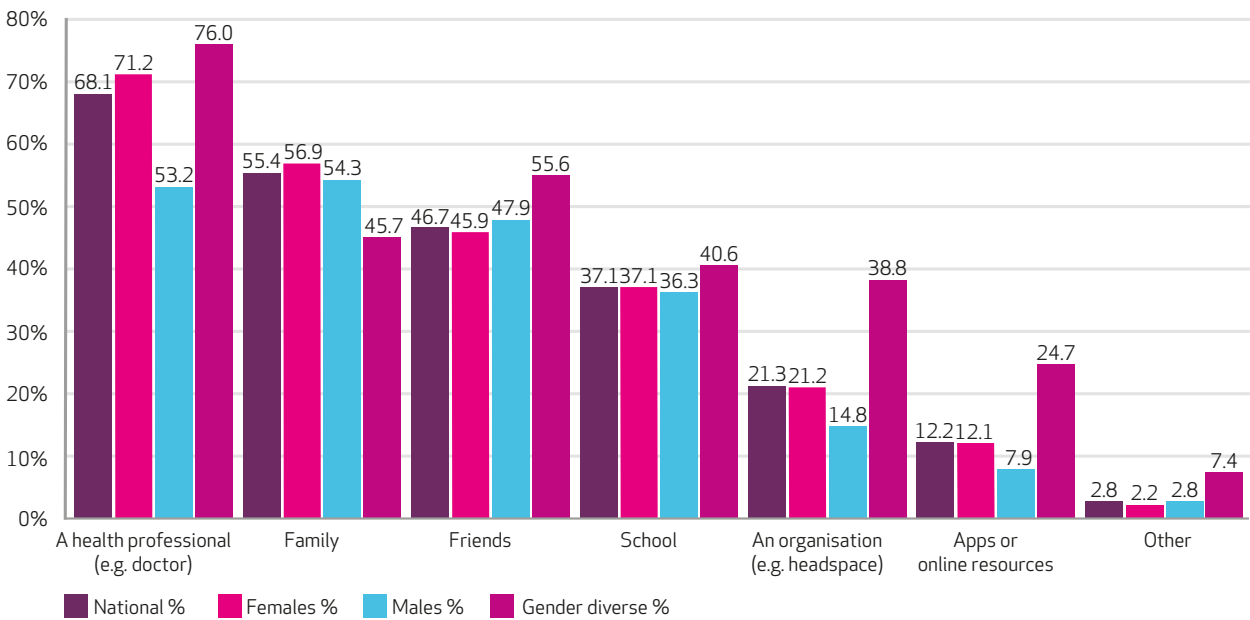


Figure 8.3: If support was sought for those that needed mental health support



Base: Those that felt they ever needed support with mental health.

Figure 8.4: Where young people got support for their mental health



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency. Base: Those that felt they ever needed support with mental health and sought support.

What are the barriers to accessing professional mental health support?

The young people who had not sought help with their mental health when they felt they needed it were asked if one or more of a list of barriers in Table 8.1 stopped or delayed them from accessing professional support.

- The barriers selected by the greatest proportion of this group were *stigma or shame associated with mental illness* (43.5%), *concerns about confidentiality* (43.4%) and *don't know where to go for help* (34.0%).
- One quarter (24.5%) of respondents reported *cost* was a barrier. A higher proportion of gender diverse young people said this barrier applied to them (41.6%).
- A larger proportion of males reported that *there were no barriers or delays to get the help I needed* (20.5% compared with 16.3% of females and 13.5% of gender diverse young people).

Table 8.1: Barriers that stopped or delayed young people accessing professional mental health support

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Stigma or shame associated with mental illness	43.5	43.0	44.4	46.6
Concerns about confidentiality	43.4	45.5	35.8	49.4
Don't know where to go for help	34.0	36.0	27.3	38.2
Cost	24.5	25.9	16.9	41.6
Distance/location	9.8	9.3	8.6	19.7
Operating hours	5.7	5.5	5.3	10.1
Other (Key themes appearing in the other category included waitlists, accessibility issues, parental concerns, being anxious or embarrassed, COVID-19 and being lazy or mental health support being a low priority)	15.6	16.2	11.7	28.7
There were no barriers or delays to get the help I needed	17.1	16.3	20.5	13.5

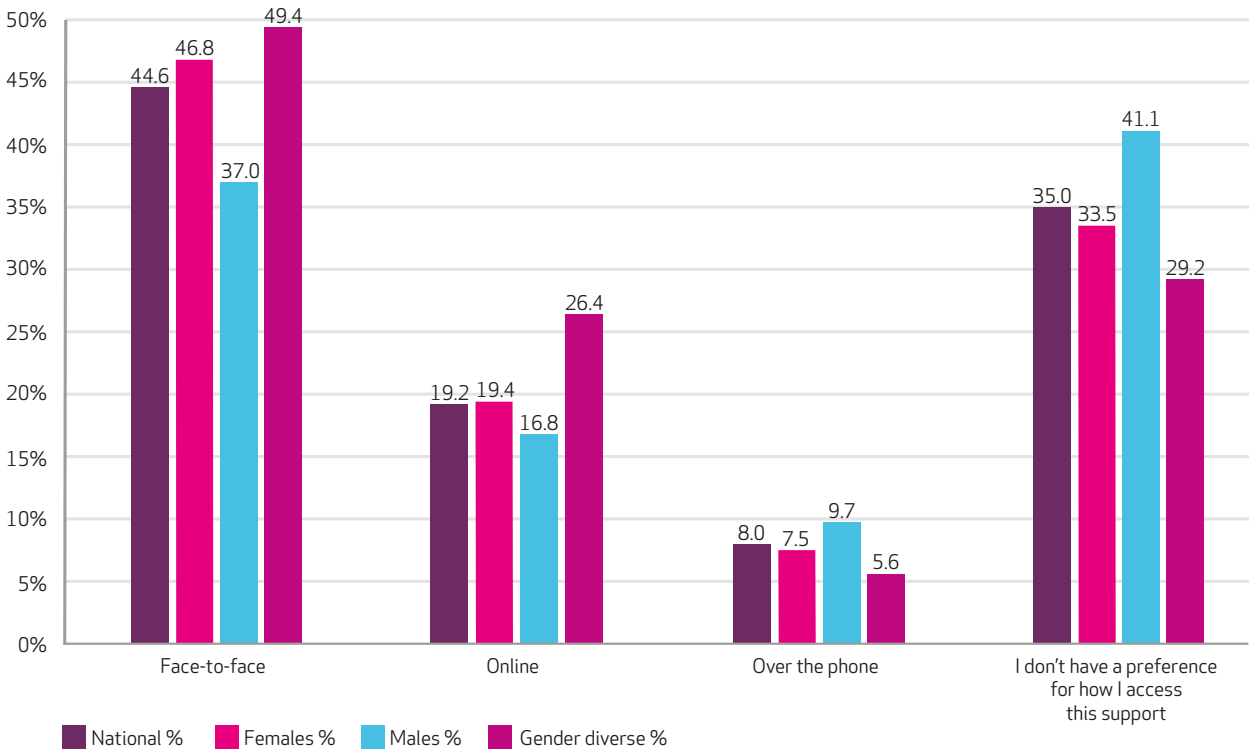
Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency. Examples included for other are based on responses to the free text box to specify other. Base: Those that felt they ever needed support with mental health and did not seek support.

How would young people prefer to access mental health support?

Those young people who had not sought out mental health support when they needed it were also asked about their preferred way to access professional support as shown in Figure 8.5.

- Over two in five (44.6%) stated they prefer *face-to-face* support, while close to one in five (19.2%) prefer *online*. Less than one in 10 (8.0%) said their preference was *over the phone*. The communication methods were preferred in the same order across the genders.
- Over one third (35.0%) said *I don't have a preference for how I access support*. A larger proportion of males did not have a preferred method of access (41.1% compared with 33.5% of females and 29.2% of gender diverse young people).

Figure 8.5: Preferred method of accessing professional mental health professional



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency. Base: Those that felt they ever needed support with mental health and did not seek support.



“Reaching out for help in regards to my mental health has been a big challenge that I’ve faced recently. Having to talk to people like parents, family, teachers, friends about what I’m struggling with has been hard for me to do and it has also been hard to find the right support for me.”

Gender diverse, 17, VIC, non-Indigenous

What activities do young people find it hard to do?

The young people were presented with a range of activities shown in Table 8.2 and asked if they find them hard to do.

- Over three in 10 young people said they find it hard to *fit in and socialise with everyone else* and *turn to friends and family if you need help* (32.2% and 31.2% respectively).
- Close to three in 10 (27.7%) felt it is hard to *turn to services/organisations if you need help* and almost one quarter (23.7%) said they find it hard to *make choices and feel independent*.
- A greater proportion of females than males to say they find each of the activities hard to do. However, a larger proportion of gender diverse young people reported they find each listed activities hard to do, particularly *fitting in and socialising with everyone else* (59.2% compared with 35.2% for females and 22.9% for males).

Table 8.2: Activities young people find hard to do

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Fit in and socialise with everyone else (at school, work or socially)	32.2	35.2	22.9	59.2
Turn to friends and family if you need help	31.2	34.5	22.5	53.3
Turn to services/organisations if you need help	27.7	30.6	20.2	45.4
Make choices and feel independent	23.7	26.8	15.8	39.5
Do everyday activities as young people your age usually do	21.7	23.5	14.7	47.0
Do things in public places with friends (e.g. go to shopping centres)	18.3	19.5	12.9	40.9
Travel around the community (e.g. using footpaths)	11.2	12.4	6.7	26.0
None of the above	32.7	28.9	42.7	13.1

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

“The biggest personal challenge I have faced in the past year would probably be the maintaining of friendships, as I feel sometimes I try too hard to fit in and do things I thought others would find funny, laugh at the wrong things etc, constantly losing friendships because I am trying too hard to be somebody I am not.”

Male, 15, QLD, non-Indigenous

CONNECTEDNESS

What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities they had been involved in over the past year from the list of options shown in Table 9.1.

- The top three activities for young people were *sports (as a participant)* (72.0%), *sports (as a spectator)* (65.6%) and *volunteer work* (45.3%).
- More than two in five (43.1%) respondents reported they had participated in *arts/cultural/music groups/activities* in the past year.
- Two in five (39.7%) young people indicated they had taken part in *student leadership groups/activities*.

Gender differences

In line with national results, *sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *volunteer work* were the top three activities for both females and males. While the top activity for gender diverse young people was *arts/cultural/music groups/activities* (60.0%).

- Higher proportions of males than females reported taking part in *sports (as a spectator)* (73.2% compared with 63.6%) and *sports (as a participant)* (75.7% compared with 71.8%) in the past year.
- Conversely, higher proportions of females than males participated in *volunteer work* (47.7% compared with 42.3%), *arts/cultural/music groups/activities* (46.8% compared with 34.0%) and *student leadership groups/activities* (44.9% compared with 31.4%) in the past year.

Table 9.1: Activities young people were involved in in the past year

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Sports (as a participant)	72.0	71.8	75.7	51.9
Sports (as a spectator)	65.6	63.6	73.2	43.1
Volunteer work	45.3	47.7	42.3	38.6
Arts/cultural/music groups/activities	43.1	46.8	34.0	60.0
Student leadership groups/activities	39.7	44.9	31.4	34.8
Youth groups/activities	27.4	26.2	28.4	35.3
Religious groups/activities	24.1	24.2	24.8	19.0
Environmental groups/activities	16.6	16.3	15.8	24.1
Political groups/activities	8.4	8.0	7.5	19.2

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



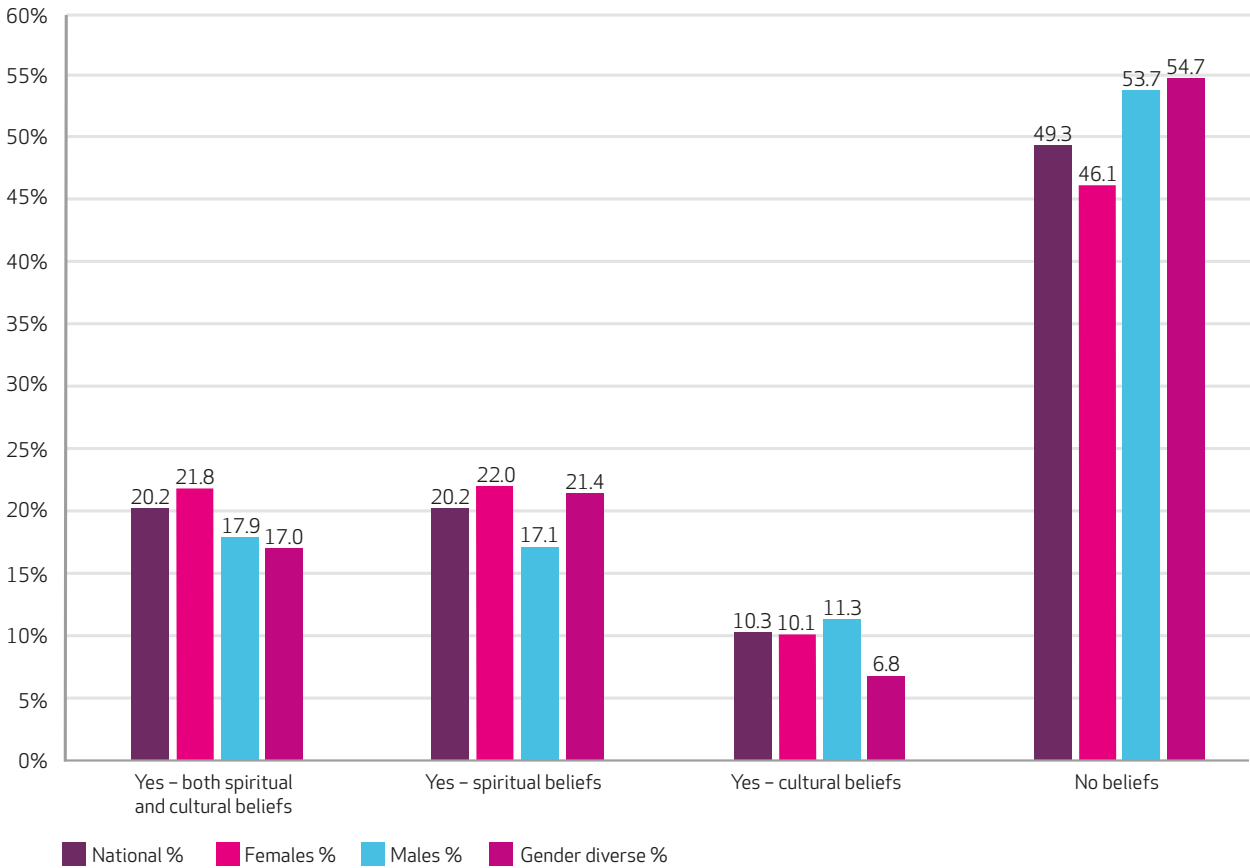
“[What helped with my personal challenge was that] I became more social and went to sport and co-curricular groups where I could engage myself in team spirit and show my talents.”

Female, 16, NSW, non-Indigenous

Do young people have cultural and spiritual beliefs?

One in five (20.2%) young people said they have both *cultural and spiritual beliefs*, with another one in five (20.2%) reporting just *spiritual beliefs* and one in 10 (10.3%) just *cultural beliefs*. The remainder (49.3%) said they had *no beliefs* as shown in Figure 9.1. A higher proportion of females said they had *both spiritual and cultural beliefs* (21.8% compared with 17.9% for males and 17.0% for gender diverse young people).

Figure 9.1: Young people and whether they have cultural and/or spiritual beliefs



“[What helped with my personal challenge was] my church’s youth group community and my faith in God.”

Male, 16, NSW, non-Indigenous

How do you people feel about their community?

Young people were asked the extent to which they agree with three statements about their community as shown in Figure 9.2.

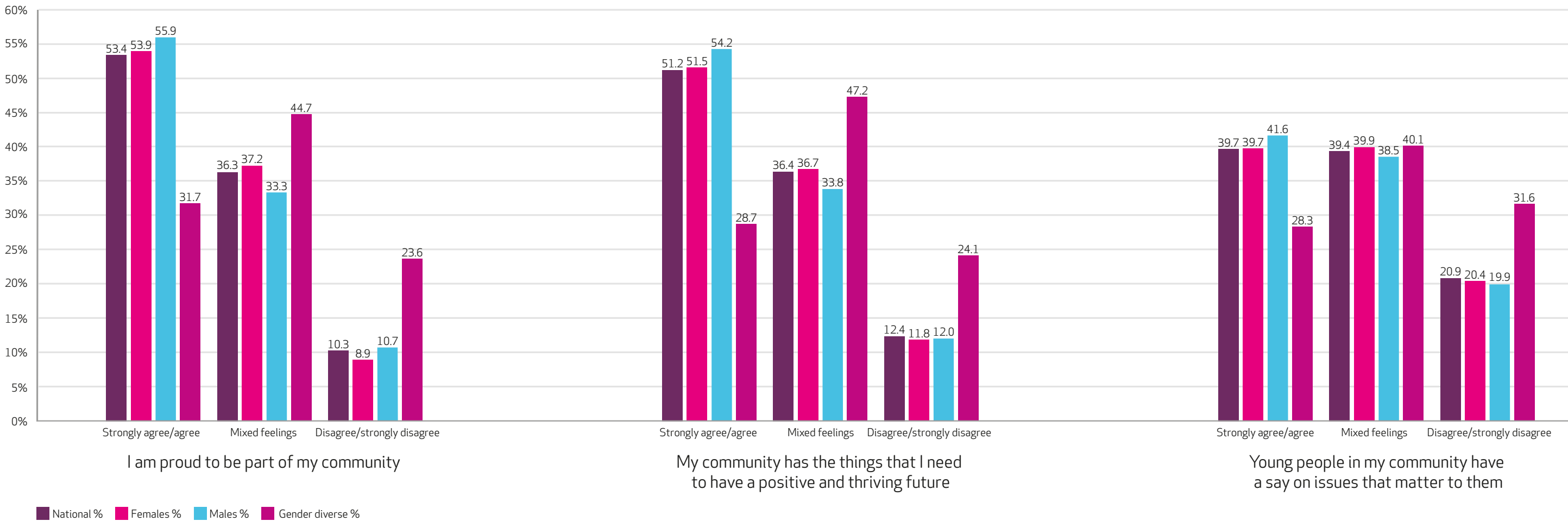
- Over half (53.4%) of the young people *strongly agreed or agreed* with the statement *I am proud to be part of my community*. Over half (51.2%) also agreed that *my community has the things that I need to have a positive and thriving future*.
- The statement *young people in my community have a say on issues that matter to them* had lower levels of agreement than the prior statements, with 39.7% of respondents selecting *agree or strongly agree*. One in five (20.9%) young people *disagreed or strongly disagreed* with this statement.
- A greater proportion of males *agreed or strongly agreed* with all three community statements compared with females and gender diverse young people.
- Higher proportions of gender diverse young people *disagreed or strongly disagreed* with the community statements compared with females and males.



“My area doesn’t have many options for young people and we have a drastic lack of transport to my community.”

Female, 17, WA, non-Indigenous

Figure 9.2: Young people and the feelings they have about their community



UNFAIR TREATMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Have young people been treated unfairly?

As shown in Figure 10.1, over a quarter (27.1%) of young people said that they had experienced unfair treatment or discrimination in the last year.

Young people who reported being treated unfairly or discriminated against in the past year were then asked to identify reasons for being treated unfairly from a list of suggested items as shown in Figure 10.2. Among these respondents, the top three reasons given for the unfair treatment were their gender (38.6%), race/cultural background (31.3%) and mental health (28.9%).

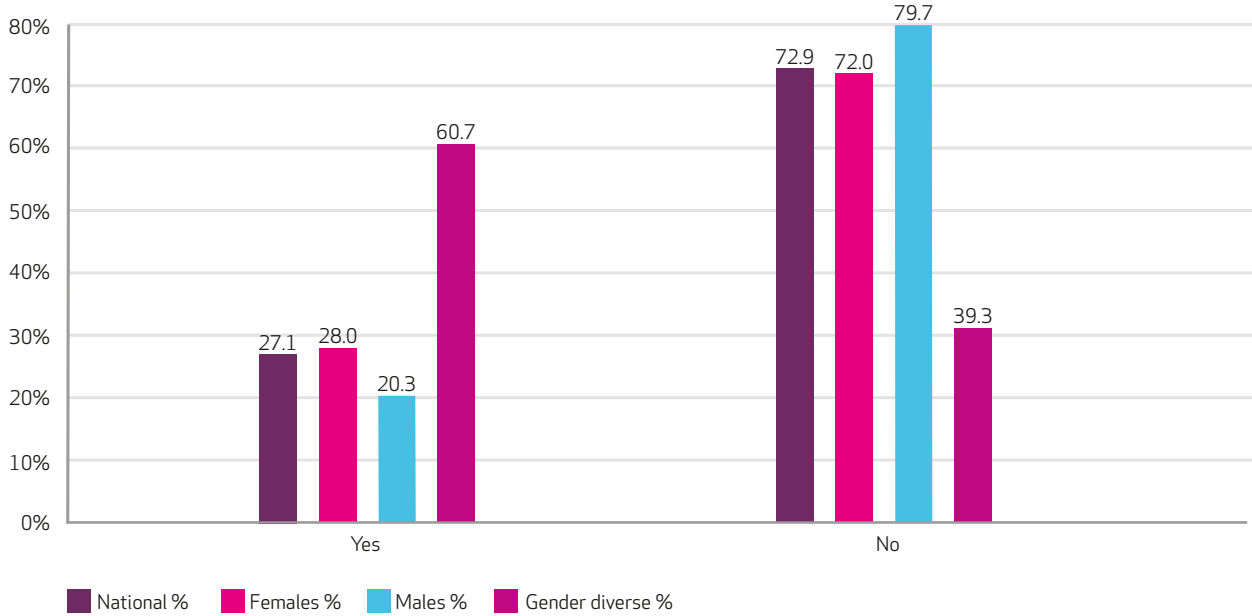
Gender differences

Experiences of unfair treatment or discrimination were reported by three in five (60.7%) gender diverse young people. Females were more likely than males to have felt they were treated unfairly in the last year (28.0% compared with 20.3%).

Among the young people who had been treated unfairly in the past year:

- Close to three times the proportion of females than males had been treated unfairly due to their gender (42.0% compared with 15.1% of males).
- A higher proportion of males than females reported they had been treated unfairly due to their race/cultural background (36.5% compared with 31.1%).
- Three quarters of gender diverse young people felt they had been treated unfairly due to their gender (75.3%) or their sexuality (75.1%).

Figure 10.1: Unfair treatment or discrimination in the last year

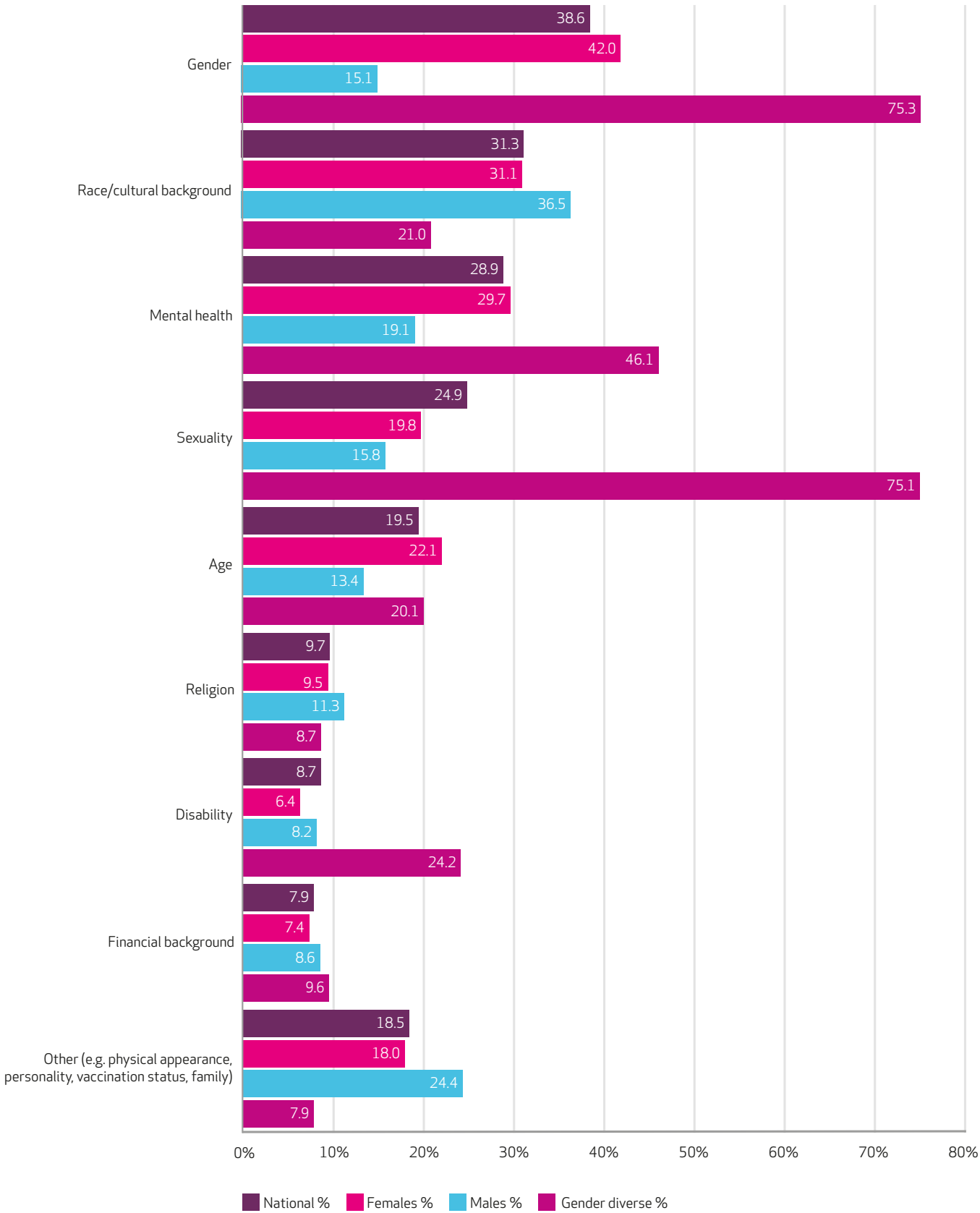


“Discrimination about what makes me different from others, the way I act and how I chose to live my own life. My mental health had been significantly brought down and made worse over the year as I’ve felt like I’ve needed to change to not be like this.”

Male, 17, TAS, non-Indigenous



Figure 10.2: Reason(s) for being treated unfairly in the last year



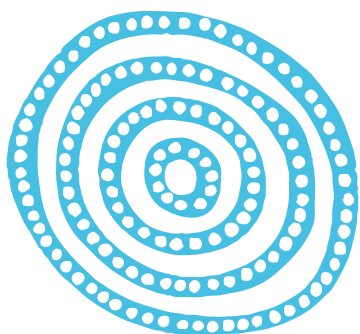
Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency. Examples included for other are based on responses to the free text box to specify other. Base: Respondents who reported they had been treated unfairly or faced discrimination.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

- ▶ Profile of respondents
- ▶ Challenges and concerns
- ▶ National concerns
- ▶ Education and employment
- ▶ Housing and financial situation
- ▶ COVID-19
- ▶ Wellbeing
- ▶ Support
- ▶ Connectedness
- ▶ Unfair treatment and discrimination



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander summary



PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

A total of 851 (4.7%) respondents identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Of this total, 644 (3.5%) respondents identified as Aboriginal, while 111 (0.6%) identified as Torres Strait Islander (the remaining 0.5% identified as both).

State and territory distribution

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents came from across Australia, with two in five (40.0%) residing in QLD and one in five in NSW (22.0%). Figure 11.1 indicates the number and proportion of responses from each Australian state and territory.

Locality

Close to one in five (16.8%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were living in regional areas, as defined by the Australia Bureau of Statistic localities (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Meanwhile, close to a third (32.7%) of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were residing in a major city and the remaining 10.5% lived in postcodes which had suburbs that were classified as both a major city and a regional area.

Gender breakdown

Over half (54.0%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were female, 36.7% were male, 7.9% identified as gender diverse and 1.5% preferred not to say their gender.

Cultural background

Close to one in five (16.8%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported speaking a language other than English at home. Creole was the most commonly cited other language spoken.

One in five (20.8%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported a particular cultural or ethnic group with which they identified strongly. The most common cultural or ethnic groups identified were Australian Aboriginal.

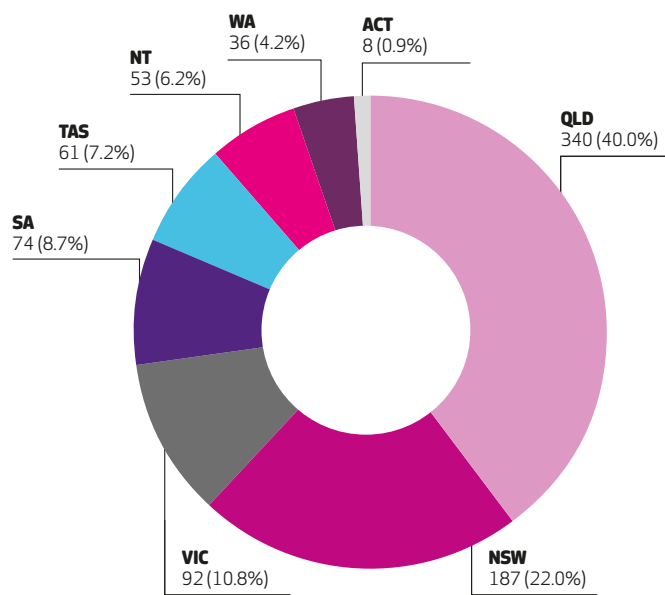
Disability

One in 10 (9.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents identified as living with disability. A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than females reported living with disability (10.5% compared with 4.8%). The most frequently cited disabilities were autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Mental Health Condition

Two in five (20.9%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents identified as having a mental health condition. A higher proportion of female than male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported living with a mental health condition (23.3% compared with 10.7%). The most frequently cited mental health conditions were anxiety and depressive disorders.

Figure 11.1: Proportion of respondents by state/territory



CHALLENGES AND CONCERNS

Challenges

Respondents were asked three questions to answer in their own words about the biggest personal challenge they faced over the past year, what they did to deal with that challenge and what more could have been done to help them.

As shown in Table 11.1, the three most common personal challenges cited by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents related to school (34.2%), mental health (21.3%) and interpersonal relationships (20.2%).

Among school challenges, pressure to achieve good grades or workload issues accounted for over a quarter (28.2%) of responses from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. This group sought out guidance and advice from friends and family to help them tackle their school challenges, but felt they could have received more support from their school.

"More support in schools for young people with mental health issues, it isn't spoken about enough. That mental health is taken very seriously and not something that's minimal because it's a major issue that nearly all teens face. If someone is physically sick then people take it seriously but if someone is mentally ill they don't really care." Female, 16, NSW, Aboriginal

Of the challenges related to mental health, stress (17.4%), depression (16.1%) and anxiety (15.5%) were the most mentioned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. General mental health and wellbeing concerns (48.4%) accounted for almost half of the responses from this group.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people tackled mental health challenges by seeking out professional support such as counsellors and also leaning in on informal support networks like friends and family. But for some, this was either not an option or enough, which is why they reported a need for extra support. Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were also unsure of what else could have helped them manage the issue.

"I'm not quite sure. I just think that I should talk to someone, but I haven't found anyone who I can truly trust yet." Female, 15, QLD, Aboriginal

Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who had noted challenges with interpersonal relationships, almost three quarters (72.8%) mentioned family challenges, while over a quarter of this group cited challenges with their friends (27.2%).

These young people either reached out to family and friends or distracted themselves through recreational activities as ways to manage these challenges. When asked what more could have helped them, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people stated they wanted to talk to someone about their interpersonal relationship issues.

"I honestly think that counselling session would help but I am not keen on many people where I live and my family is unaware of most of this and I don't feel comfortable with them knowing or talking to them about it so I really am still struggling with some things from 2021 as I am unable to find a professional to talk to. Also I don't want to put any financial stress on my mum (because my parents earn a certain amount we can't get many things free and with medical bills I feel bad because I know we are tight sometimes). But I do think professional help would benefit me." Female, 17, NSW, Aboriginal

Gender differences

A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than males mentioned challenges across the top three categories of school, mental health and interpersonal relationships. Meanwhile, a higher proportion of males than females said they were unsure or did not have any challenges (9.4% of males compared with 3.7% of females).

Consistently across all types of challenges, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported using informal support networks and professional supports to help them, while males engaged in recreational activities or were unsure on what could have helped them.

When asked what else could have helped them, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females stated more support from family, friends and school would have helped them address their challenges, while males were once again unsure on what kind of help they could have sought out.

Table 11.1: Biggest personal challenge experienced by young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
School related Challenges	34.2	39.0	33.2	42.0
Grades	16.5	16.8	17.3	20.9
Workload Issues	11.7	12.1	12.3	20.6
School staff	3.6	2.7	3.7	2.7
Learning difficulties	0.8	1.3	-	2.5
School (general)	68.5	68.5	67.9	57.1
Mental Health Challenges	21.3	27.5	12.3	28.3
Stress	17.4	17.1	23.3	24.8
Depression	16.1	18.1	16.7	12.4
Anxiety	15.5	18.1	13.3	19.6
Self-esteem	9.7	12.4	3.3	10.3
Alcohol and other drugs	3.2	1.9	6.7	0.4
Suicide and self-harm	1.9	1.9	3.3	2.7
Addiction (not including alcohol and other drugs)	1.9	1.0	3.3	0.9
Eating Disorder	0.6	-	-	2.1
Mental health (general)	48.4	47.6	43.3	42.7
Interpersonal Relationship Challenges	20.2	25.7	13.5	19.8
Family	72.8	74.5	69.7	64.5
Friends	27.2	28.6	27.3	36.1
Significant other	2.0	1.0	3.0	3.1
Pet	1.4	1.0	-	1.8
Interpersonal relationship (general)	6.1	5.1	9.1	6.2

Table 11.1: Biggest personal challenge experienced by young people (continued)

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
COVID-19 Challenges*	8.5	9.2	8.2	15.0
Financial and Housing Challenges*	3.9	4.9	2.9	3.3
Other Challenges	12.7	14.9	9.0	14.0
Motivation	26.1	33.3	13.6	48.7
General Health	16.3	8.8	36.4	13.9
Self-identity	9.8	1.8	18.2	5.8
Bullying	7.6	10.5	-	4.9
Moving to a new environment	7.6	3.5	9.1	5.4
Discrimination	2.2	-	4.5	1.5
Other (includes various low frequency challenges not listed above)	39.1	43.9	31.8	26.2
Not sure/no challenges identified	6.1	3.7	9.4	3.9

Note: Items ranked high to low according to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander responses for top-level theme. The percentage figure for the top-level themes represents its proportion amongst the total responses for this question. Each of the top-level themes is made of the sub-themes listed below it. The percentage for the sub-themes represents its proportion amongst corresponding top-level theme. Missing figures for males and females in the sub-themes mean that there were no responses for that sub-theme. Figures for gender diverse people has not been displayed due to the low number of gender diverse Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The percentages may not total 100% as responses may fall into multiple themes.

*Interpret with caution. Number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that cited COVID-19 and Financial and Housing Challenges was under 100 and too small to be meaningfully broken down into sub-themes.



“In the past year, the biggest challenge I have faced or experienced would have to be the completion of year 12 and all that comes with it, things like keeping a good balance of the things happening in my life... netball, swimming, sport, school, studying, friendships, relationships, family, school, events, turning 18.”

Female, 18, NSW, Aboriginal

Concerns

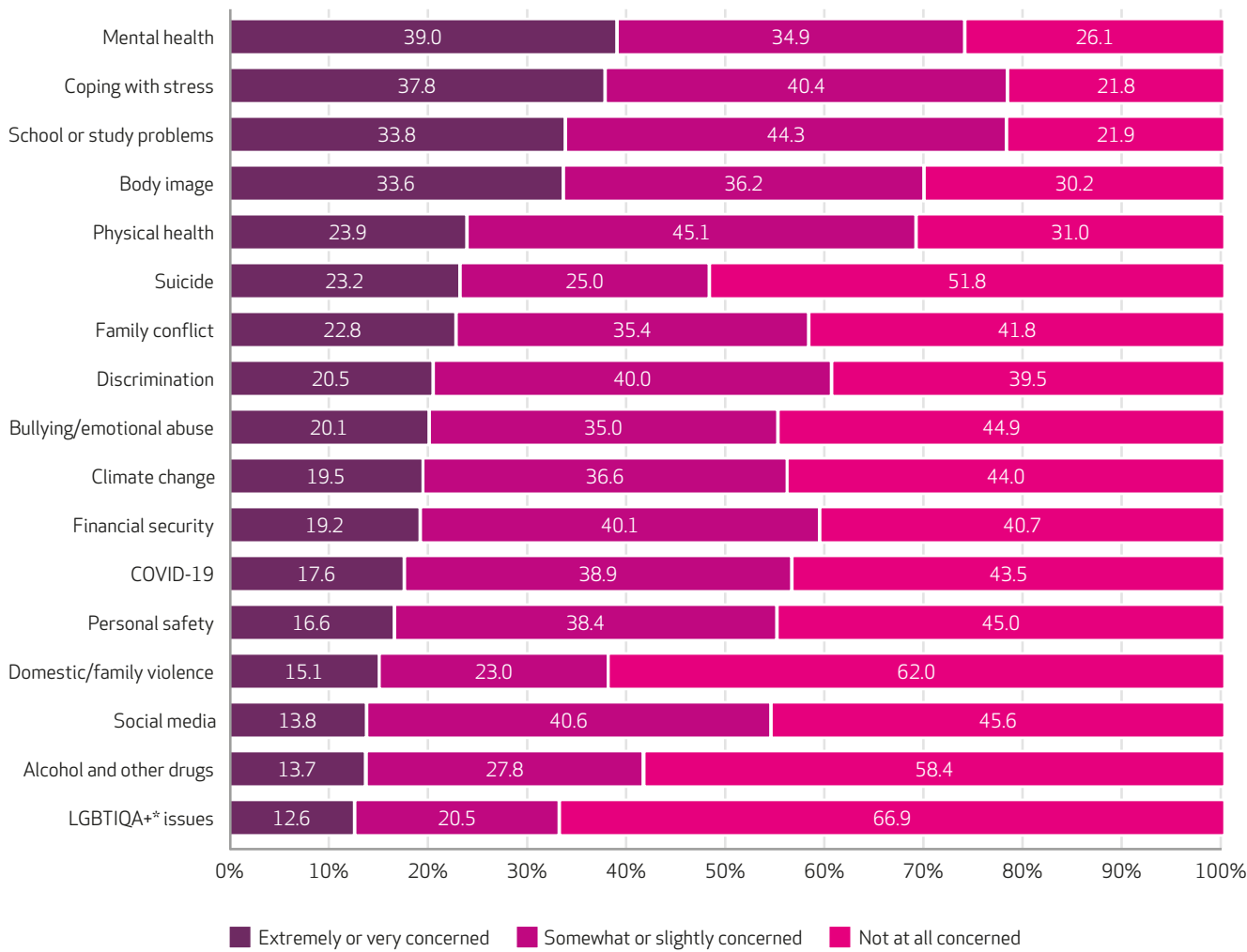
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were asked to indicate how concerned they were about a number of issues over the past year from a list (see Figure 11.2). The top personal concerns were *mental health* (39.0%), *coping with stress* (37.8%) and *school or study problems* (33.8%).

Gender differences

The top six concerns for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were: coping with stress (48.9%), mental health (46.3%), school or study problems (41.1%), body image (41.0%), family conflict (27.2%) and suicide (25.2%).

The top six concerns for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males were: mental health (24.9%), school or study problems (22.4%), coping with stress (19.0%), physical health (18.9%), body image (17.8%) and discrimination (16.7%).

Figure 11.2: Issues of personal concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people



Note: Items ranked high to low according to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander responses for *extremely or very concerned* for each item. *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Table 11.2a: Issues of personal concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Females	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Coping with stress	48.9	38.2	12.9
Mental health	46.3	35.9	17.8
School or study problems	41.1	46.1	12.8
Body image	41.0	37.1	21.9
Family conflict	27.2	37.8	34.9
Suicide	25.2	26.2	48.6
Physical health	23.9	50.6	25.5
Financial security	23.0	40.9	36.1
Bullying/emotional abuse	22.8	39.2	38.0
Climate change	22.6	39.6	37.7
Discrimination	20.2	44.8	34.9
COVID-19	18.7	44.1	37.2
Domestic/family violence	16.7	23.7	59.7
Personal safety	16.2	40.8	43.0
Social media	14.4	48.1	37.5
Alcohol and other drugs	12.1	30.9	57.0
LGBTIQA+* issues	11.3	21.1	67.6

Note: Items ranked high to low according to the female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander responses for *extremely or very concerned* for each item. *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

“Mental health has been the most significant personal challenge for me personally, I feel like I can’t talk to anyone and no [one] really understands...”

Female, 15, NSW, Aboriginal

Table 11.2b: Issues of personal concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Males	Extremely or very concerned %	Somewhat or slightly concerned %	Not at all concerned %
Mental health	24.9	37.4	37.7
School or study problems	22.4	45.8	31.8
Coping with stress	19.0	48.5	32.5
Physical health	18.9	42.2	38.9
Body image	17.8	38.8	43.5
Discrimination	16.7	35.6	47.6
COVID-19	15.2	33.9	50.9
Suicide	15.2	25.4	59.4
Personal safety	14.3	37.0	48.7
Financial security	13.0	39.9	47.1
Bullying/emotional abuse	12.9	29.8	57.4
Family conflict	12.7	35.9	51.4
Climate change	12.5	36.3	51.2
Domestic/family violence	11.6	20.7	67.8
Alcohol and other drugs	11.0	23.8	65.2
Social media	10.9	30.9	58.2
LGBTIQA+* issues	8.1	19.4	72.5

Note: Items ranked high to low according to the male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander responses for *extremely or very concerned* for each item. *Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.



“Mental health from stress, anxiety etc caused by school, house, past job, family.”

Male, 16, VIC, Aboriginal

NATIONAL CONCERNS

In 2022, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported that the top three issues in Australia were *the environment* (33.6%), *mental health* (30.1%) and *equity and discrimination* (27.5%), as shown in Table 11.3.

- *Equity and discrimination* and *mental health* have been in the top three issues of national concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents for the past three years, while *the environment* has been reported as the top national concern for all young people surveyed in 2022 including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents.
- Higher proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females identified *mental health* (35.3% compared with 23.7% of males) and *equity and discrimination* (33.8% compared with 20.5% of males) as important issues facing Australia today.
- A quarter (25.2%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported *COVID-19* as an important national issue, which has dropped into fourth place (was number one in 2021).

Table 11.3: Most important issues in Australia today

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2022 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females 2022 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males 2022 %	Non-Indigenous respondents 2022 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2021 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2020 %
The environment	33.6	37.3	32.1	52.0	23.4	18.5
Mental health	30.1	35.3	23.7	34.1	29.0	23.6
Equity and discrimination	27.5	33.8	20.5	36.4	32.5	37.9
COVID-19	25.2	29.7	24.9	23.5	42.5	37.6
The economy and financial matters	17.4	14.7	22.1	22.2	8.1	12.3
Societal issues and industrial relations	13.9	11.4	18.9	15.8	-	-
Alcohol and drugs	13.0	11.4	15.3	7.1	13.0	12.9
Homelessness/housing	12.6	15.2	8.8	12.4	8.5	6.5
Crime, safety and violence	12.4	13.2	11.6	10.3	10.4	11.1
Politics	8.6	6.6	11.2	9.9	6.4	7.9

Note: Items ranked high to low according to the 2022 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander responses. Analysis of this question was conducted using a different methodology this year compared to 2021/2020 which may impact comparisons with the prior years. Please note what was previously *Population issues* and *Societal values* has now been combined to create a new category – *Societal issues and industrial relations*.

EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Education

Over eight in 10 (83.1%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were studying, as shown in Table 11.4. Among these young people, over half (56.2%) were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their studies and 13.9% were *dissatisfied* or *very dissatisfied* (see Table 11.5). Of those who were studying at school, the majority (90.6%) stated they intended to complete Year 12. Almost three times as many males indicated that they did not plan to complete Year 12 compared to females (14.2% of males compared with 5.2% of females).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students’ top plans for after school were to *go to university* (49.4%), *get a job* (47.4%) and *travel/gap year* (23.4%) (see Figure 11.3). Two in five (41.4%) were *extremely* or *very confident* in achieving their work/study goals. However, close to half (46.7%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students felt there were barriers to achieving their work/study goals, with the top barriers being *mental health* (54.6%), *academic ability* (30.4%) and *financial difficulty* (29.4%) (see Figure 11.5).

Gender differences

- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported studying full-time (71.9% compared with 63.6% of males), while a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported not studying (21.5% compared with 14.0% of females).
- Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, a greater proportion of females were *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their studies (62.4 % compared with 51.7% of males).
- While Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females shared the same top two plans after school (*go to university* and *get a job*), males’ third most common plan was to *get an apprenticeship* (28.8%), while females’ third highest plan was *travel/gap year* (26.9%).
- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than female reported to be *very* or *extremely confident* in achieving their work/study goals (46.4% compared with 38.4% females).

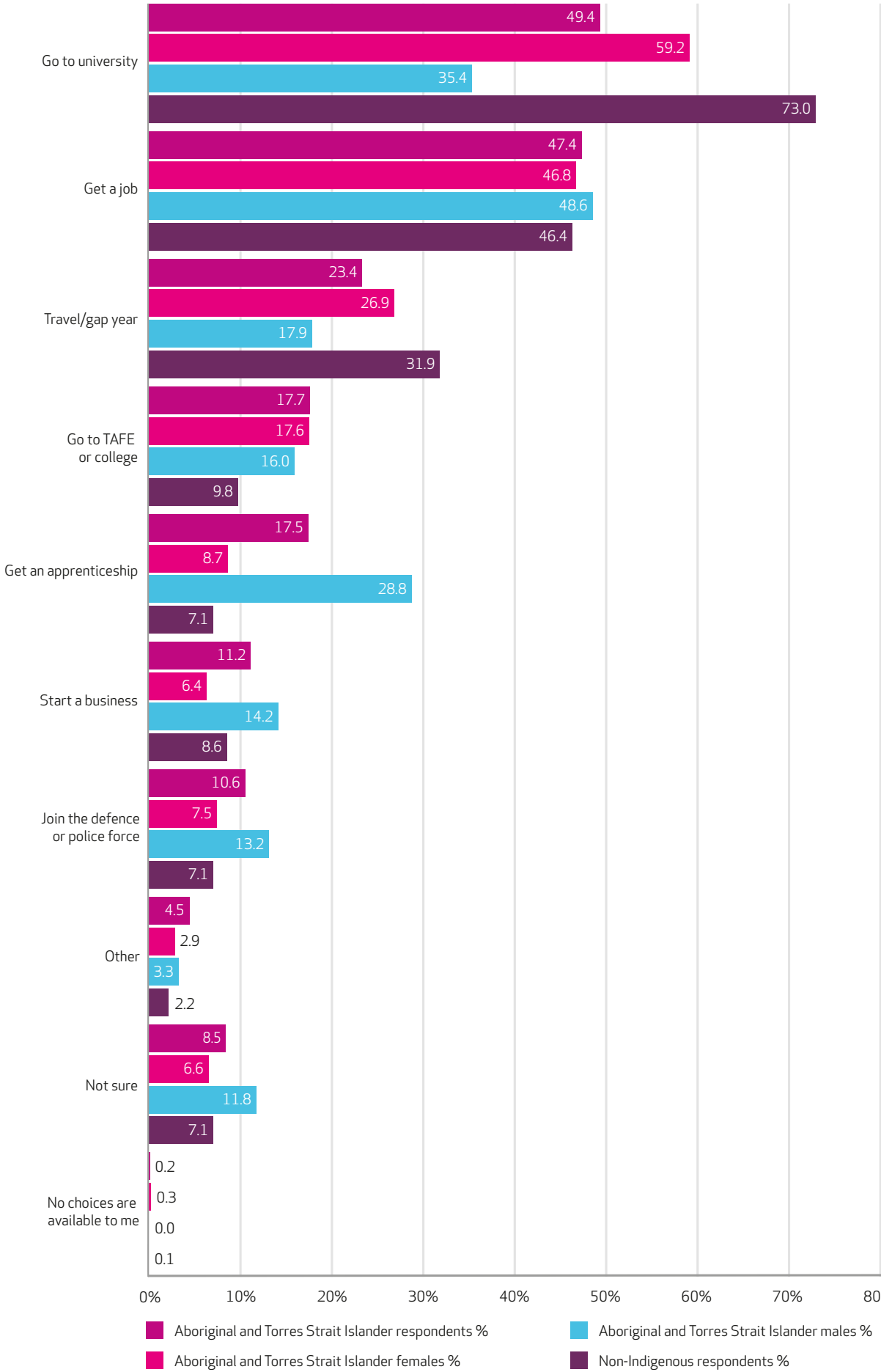
Table 11.4: Participation in education

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Studying full-time	68.5	71.9	63.6	86.8
Studying part-time	14.6	14.2	14.8	7.0
Not studying	16.9	14.0	21.5	6.1

Table 11.5: Satisfaction with studies

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Very satisfied or satisfied	56.2	62.4	51.7	63.1
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	29.9	27.5	33.5	27.2
Dissatisfied or very dissatisfied	13.9	10.1	14.8	9.7

Figure 11.3: Plans after leaving school



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander frequency. Base: Respondents who are studying at school or equivalent.

Figure 11.4: Confidence in achieving study or work goals

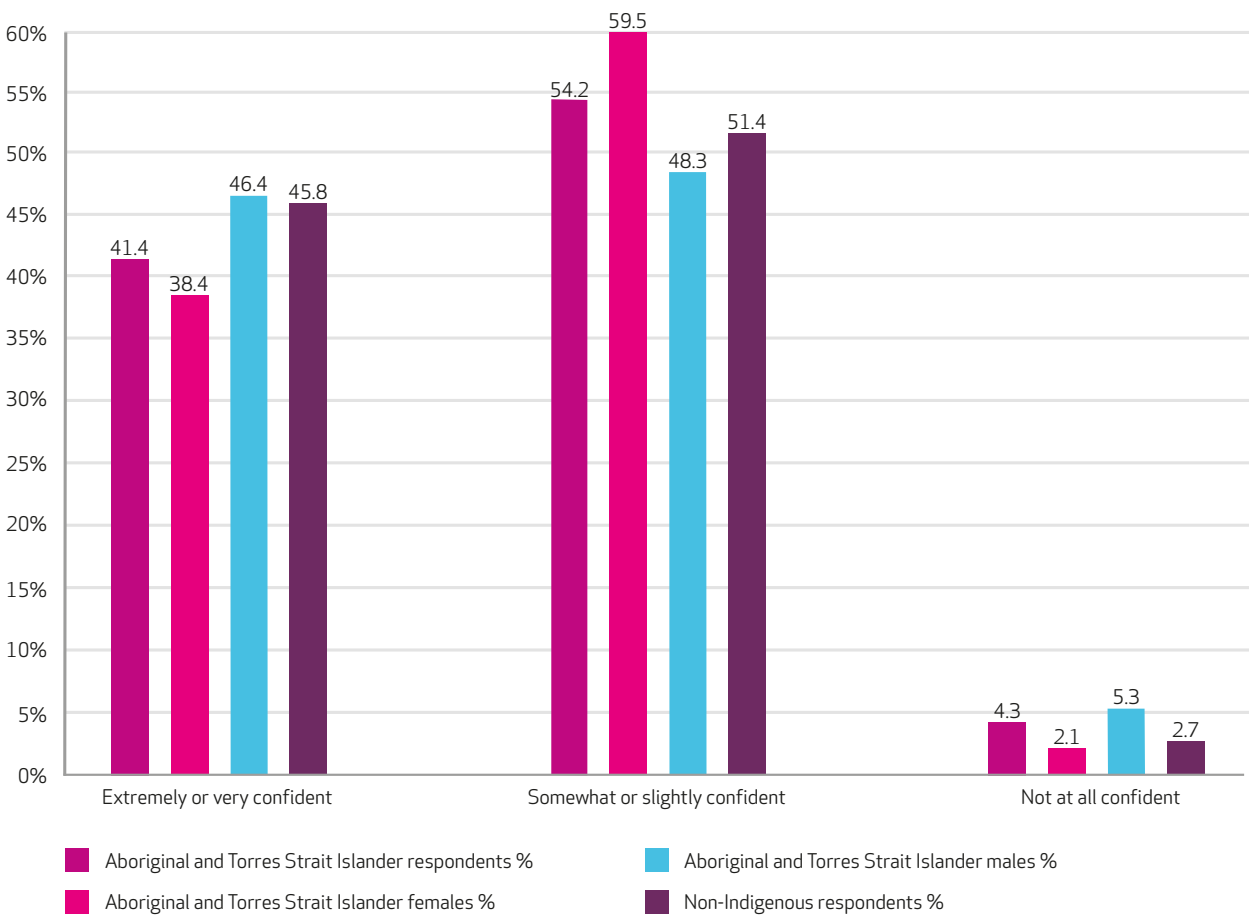



Table 11.6: Are there any barriers to young people achieving their study or work goals

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	
Yes	46.7
No	53.3

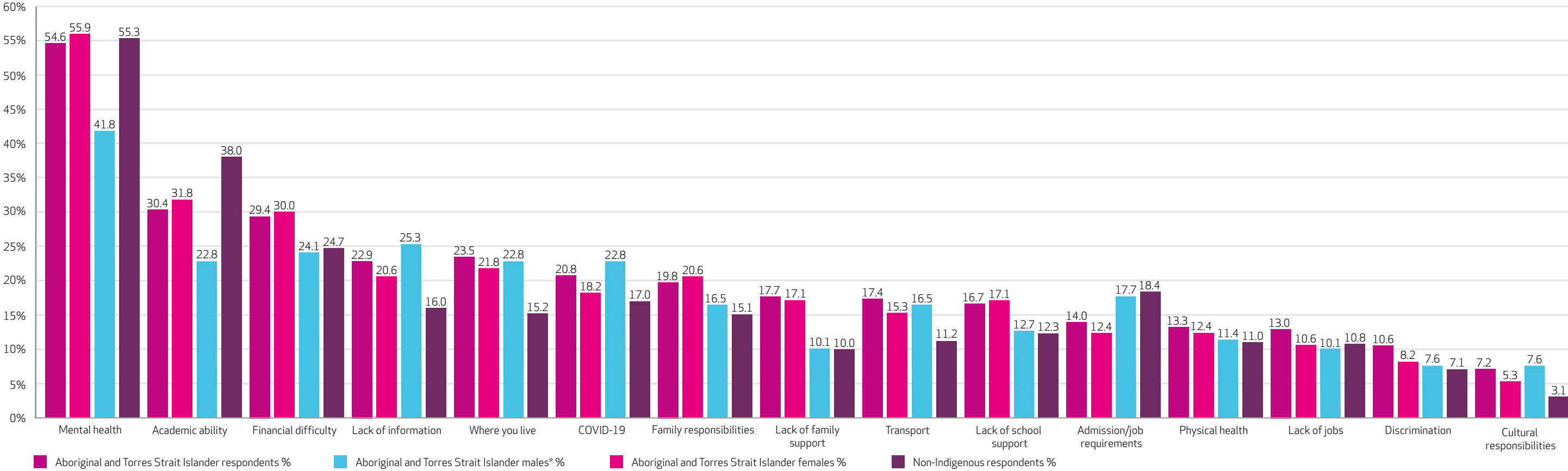
Base: Respondents who are studying at school or equivalent and have choices available to them for plans after school.



“...I have no idea what I want to do in the future, what pathway I want to take, whether I should go to uni or not, where I want to do uni, etc. It really stresses me out...”

Female, 16, NT, Torres Strait Islander

Figure 11.5: Barriers to achieving study or work goals



Employment

Over half (54.6%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they were not in paid employment: 39.8% reported they were looking for work, while 14.8% were neither working nor looking for work. Over four in 10 (42.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported they were employed part-time (see Table 11.7).

Eight in 10 (81.5%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported that at least one of their parent(s) or guardian(s) was employed as of last week as shown in Table 11.8.

Gender differences

- A larger proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported they were employed part-time (46.0% compared with 39.3%), while a higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males said they were not in paid employment, but were looking for work (43.1% compared with 39.3% of females).
- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females stated at least one of their parent(s) or guardian(s) was employed (85.9% compared with 78.5% of males).

Table 11.7: Participation in paid employment

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Employed full-time	2.8	1.2	3.1	0.6
Employed part-time	42.7	46.0	39.3	53.0
Not in paid employment, looking for work	39.8	39.3	43.1	25.3
Not in paid employment, not looking for work	14.8	13.6	14.5	21.1

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

Table 11.8: Parent/guardian's employment status – as of last week

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
At least one parent or guardian was employed (full-time or part-time)	81.5	85.9	78.5	94.6
All parent(s) or guardian(s) were unemployed*	11.1	9.2	12.4	3.3
Not sure/not applicable	7.4	4.9	9.1	2.1

*Includes both parents unemployed as well as combinations of one parent being unemployed and the other parent's employment status listed as *not sure* or *not applicable*.

HOUSING AND FINANCIAL SITUATION

Housing

Six in 10 (60.9%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were living in *privately owned or rented house/flat*, with 13.8% at *boarding school* and 11.5% residing in *public/social housing house/flat* (see Figure 11.6). Almost nine in 10 (88.0%) of these young people who were not in *boarding school* were *living with their parents* (see Figure 11.7).

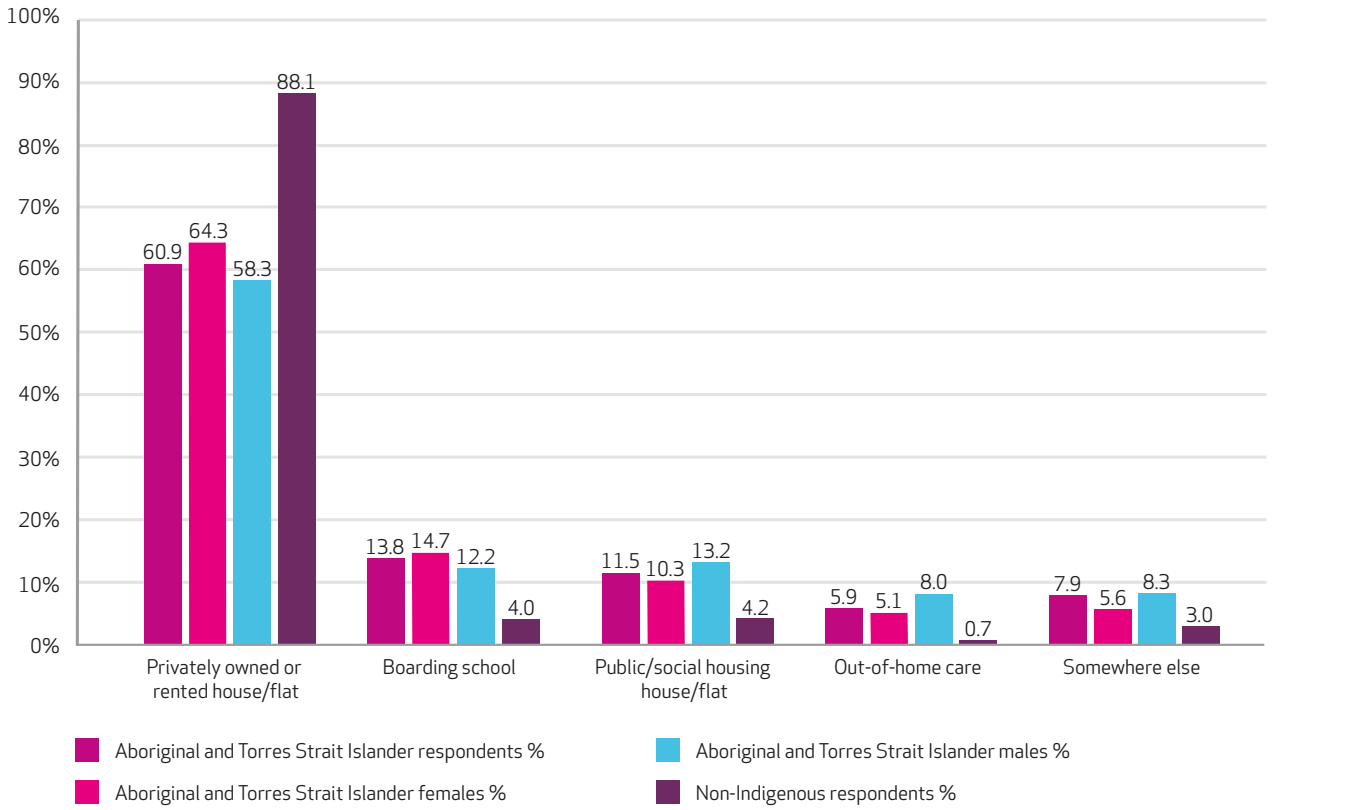
One in 10 (10.0%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people surveyed had *no fixed address or lived in transitional accommodation or a refuge in the last year*. One in 10 (9.8%) experienced this in prior years, but not in the last year (see Table 11.9). Close to half (46.6%) said their parents were present for all of these experiences of having no fixed address, while a quarter (25.8%) reported that their parents were not with them during any of these experiences (see Table 11.10).

In the last year, over one in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people had *spent time away from home because they felt they couldn't go back* (21.9%) or were *worried about having a safe place to stay* (22.7%) (see Figures 11.9 and 11.10).

Gender differences

- Almost double the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males had *no fixed address or lived in transitional accommodation or a refuge* in the last year (11.8% compared with 6.1% of females).
- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females had *spent time away from home because they felt they couldn't go back* within the last year (23% compared with 15.9% of males).
- Similar proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males reported that they had *worried about having a safe place to stay* in the last year (21.0% of females and 21.8% of males).

Figure 11.6: Residential setting in the past three months



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

Figure 11.7: Living with parents or somewhere else in the past three months

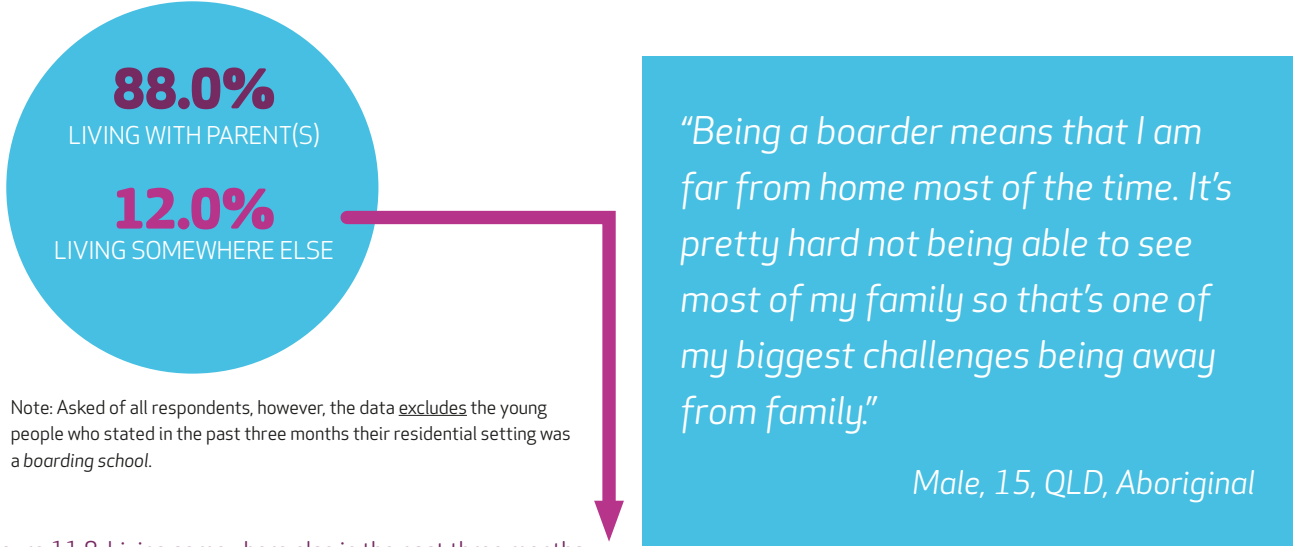
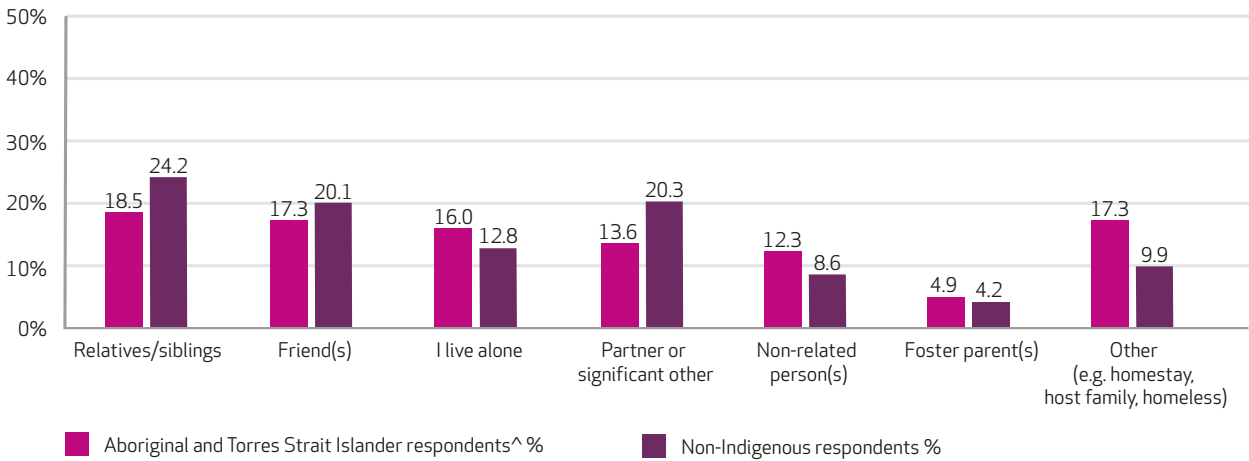


Figure 11.8: Living somewhere else in the past three months



Note: Data in the chart excludes the young people who stated in the past three months their residential setting was a boarding school. Respondents were able to choose only one option. The examples included for other are frequent responses from the free text option to specify other. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander frequency. Base is respondents living some-where else (not with parent(s) guardian) in last three months. ^ Use caution in interpretation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander results due to sample size (n=81)

Table 11.9: Had no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation

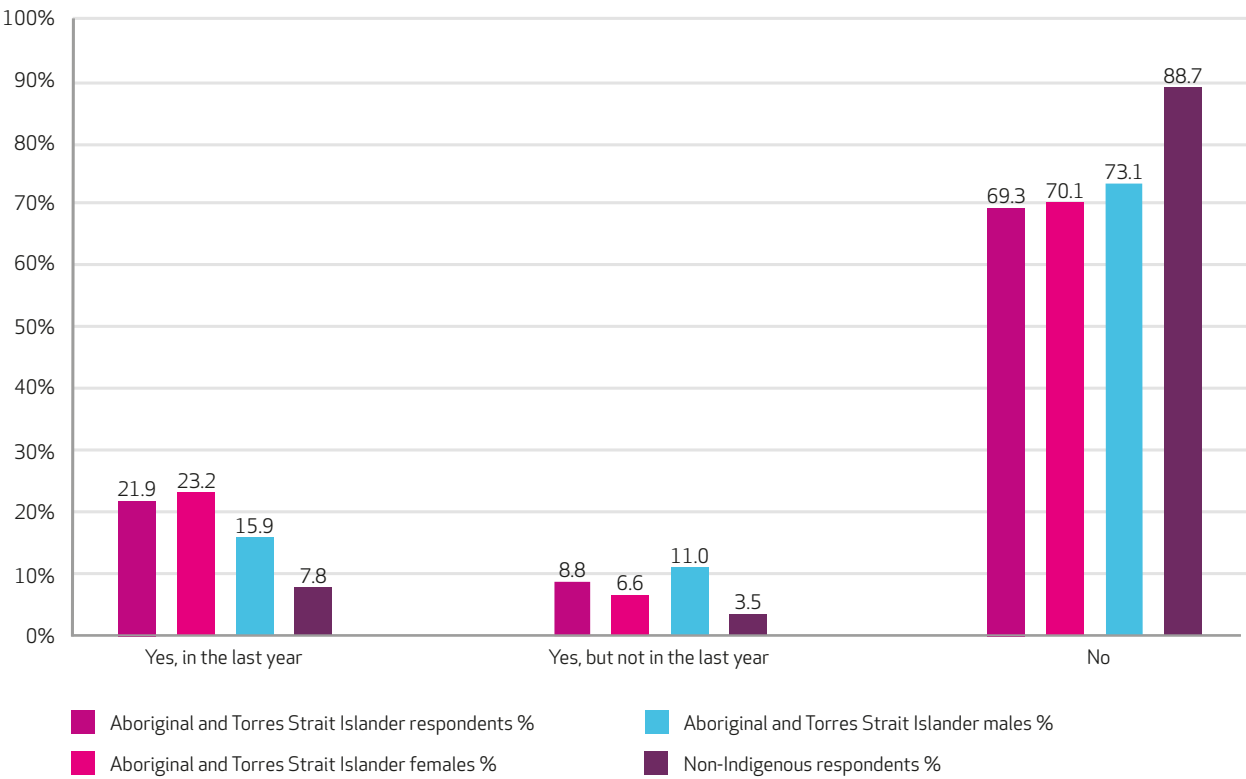
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Yes, in the last year	10.0	6.1	11.8	1.8
Yes, but not in the last year	9.8	9.1	10.4	3.2
No	80.1	84.8	77.8	95.1

Table 11.10: If a parent was present when the young person had no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Yes, during all experiences	46.6	68.0
Yes, for some experiences	27.6	19.4
No	25.8	12.6

Note: Asked of those who ever experienced having no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation. Male and female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander data not included due to small sample sizes.

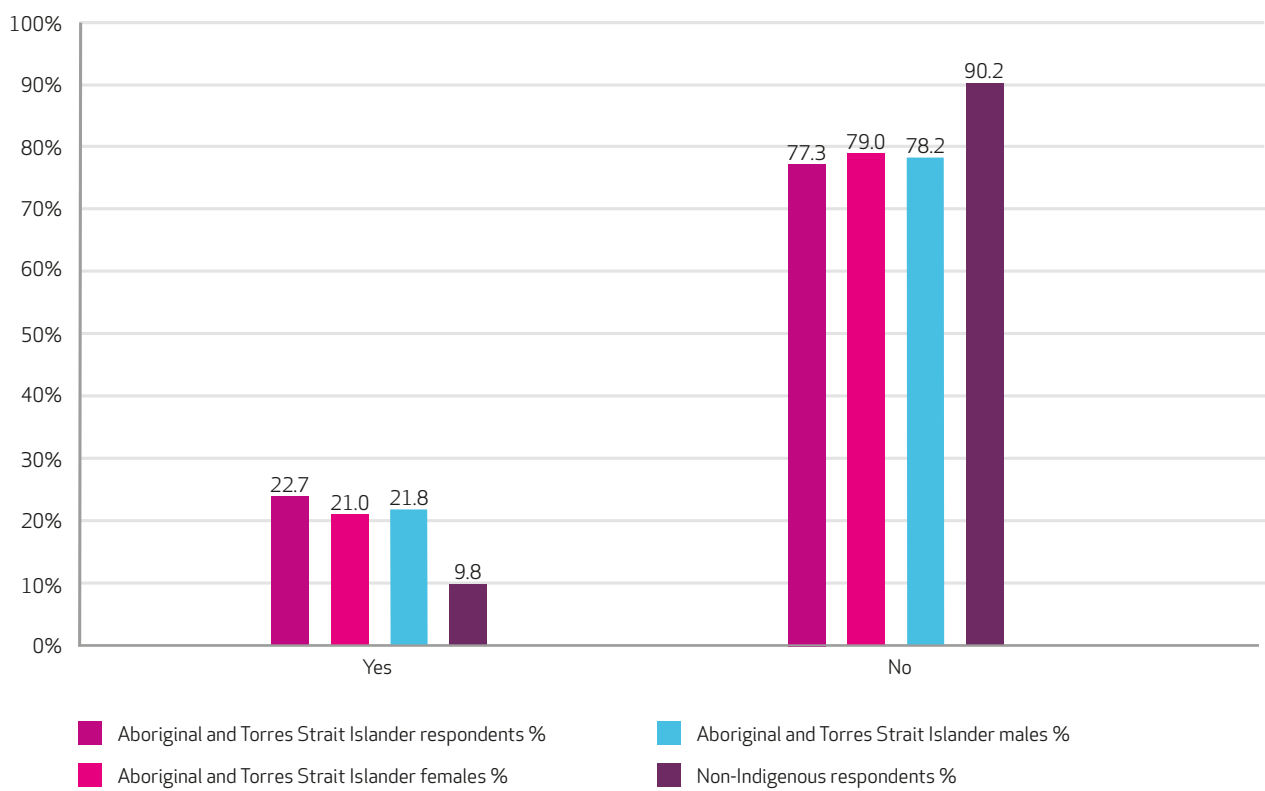
Figure 11.9: Spent time away from home because the young person felt they couldn't go back



"I was dealing with bouts of homelessness, toxic households, and lack of access to resources to complete the work given."

Gender Diverse, 18, TAS, Aboriginal

Figure 11.10: Worried about having a safe place to stay



Financial Situation

As shown in Figure 11.11, 13.5% reported they or their family had *sought financial help from family, friends or charity* in the last year, 13.3% *could not pay bills or car expenses* and 11.2% had *gone without meal(s)*.

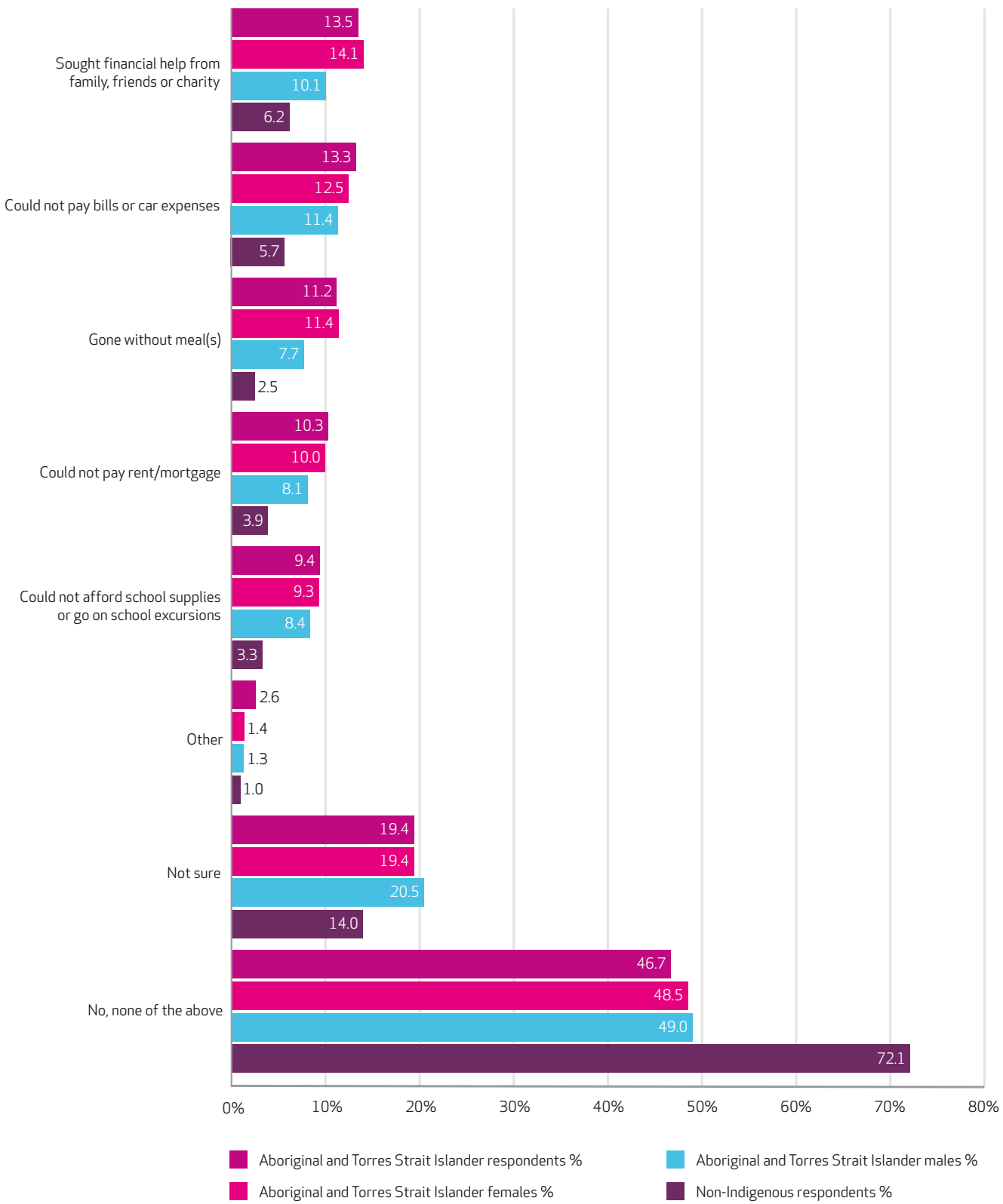
Over one in 10 (11.4%) of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people surveyed stated they and/or their families had received support from a charity or foundation in the last year. Another 6.5% said they had not sought support from a charity or foundation, but did need assistance (see Table 11.11).



Gender differences

- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females cited all of the money concerns listed in the survey.
- A larger proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males reported they and/or their families had received support from a charity or foundation in the last year (13.6% compared with 9.0% of females).

Figure 11.11: Financial concerns experienced in the past year by the young person and/or their family



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

Table 11.11: Support or assistance received from a charity/foundation in the past year for the young person and/or their family

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Yes, Mission Australia and/or a different charity or foundation (e.g. The Salvation Army, the Smith Family, Beyond Blue etc)	11.4	9.0	13.6	2.1
No, but I needed support or assistance	6.5	6.1	6.1	2.5
No, I did not need support or assistance from a charity or foundation	42.1	44.9	40.5	70.3
Not sure	40.0	40.0	39.8	25.0



COVID-19

The top areas negatively impacted by COVID-19 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were *education* (66.6%), *participation in activities* (61.9%) and *mental health* (47.8%) as shown in Table 11.12.

Gender differences

- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females than males noted that COVID-19 negatively impacted most of the listed aspects of life, particularly *mental health* (54.7% compared with 35.2% of males).

Table 11.12: Areas of life impacted negatively due to COVID-19

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Education	66.6	70.5	61.9	73.7
Participation in activities	61.9	65.1	57.4	69.2
Mental health	47.8	54.7	35.2	54.0
Family	46.3	48.7	40.9	39.4
Physical health	45.0	47.8	39.7	46.9
Friendships	38.4	39.9	34.3	37.2
Employment	32.4	31.3	29.1	23.6
Financial security	29.3	30.1	24.6	19.7
Housing	19.2	16.9	20.2	9.1

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

"I've lost opportunities to have fun and enjoy my last year of high school. The underlying stress of getting COVID is also high."

Male, 17, QLD, Aboriginal

IMPACT OF COVID-19

"I gave up on schooling for a while because online learning was a terrible experience for me."

Female, 16, QLD, Aboriginal

"COVID-19 had affected me by impacting my studies and grade, my motivation to complete school work and other activities, and my mental health."

Female, 16, VIC, Aboriginal

"COVID-19 has made me feel the most isolated I have ever felt before, I have found my mental and physical health deteriorating and I have become more anxious in small of large social outings."

Female, 18, VIC, Aboriginal

WELLBEING

Over one quarter (27.8%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people rated their mental health as *excellent* or *very good*, while 43.2% rated it as *fair* or *poor* (see Figure 11.12).

Close to one in six (16.0%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt they had *almost no control* or *no control* over their lives, while close to half (49.6%) felt they were *completely* or *mostly in control* of their life (see Table 11.14). The responses of over one third (34.3%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they may be experiencing high psychological distress (see Figure 11.13) and over three in 10 (31.7%) felt lonely *all* or *most of the time* (see Table 11.15).

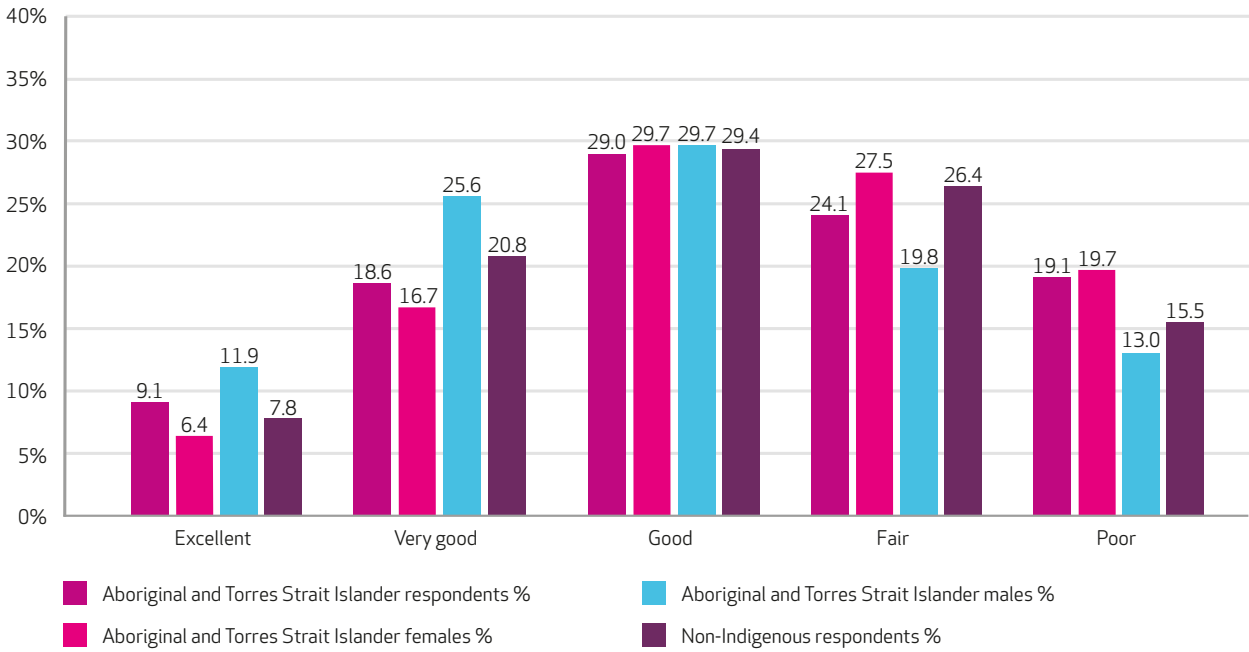
As shown in Figure 11.14, over two in five (42.5%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents rated their family’s ability to get along with each other as *excellent* or *very good*, while over three in 10 (31.6%) rated it as *poor* or *fair*.

When thinking about the future, 45.9% were *positive* or *very positive*. As shown in Table 11.16, this is lower than in 2021 and 2020 when 51.8% and 48.8% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were *positive* or *very positive* about their future.

Gender differences

- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males rated their mental health and wellbeing as *excellent* or *very good* (37.5% compared with 23.1% of females). This aligns with Aboriginal and Torres Strait males rating themselves more highly than females on all wellbeing questions within the survey.

Figure 11.12: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people’s overall mental health and wellbeing



“The biggest personal challenge I am currently experiencing and have been experiencing for a while now is my mental health and finding the motivation to get up and do things. I used to be a bright and happy person now I’m always agitated and very dull, I get annoyed very easily and struggle to find motivation to complete daily task. I just miss the old me.”

Female, 16, QLD, Aboriginal

Table 11.13: Personal Wellbeing Index scores for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mean	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Females Mean	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Males Mean	Non-Indigenous Mean	Adult National normative range*	Adult National Mean*
With their life as a whole	59.7	59.6	64.6	63.3	75.5 – 79.3	77.4
Personal Wellbeing Index	69.7	67.4	74.2	70.4	74.2 – 76.8	75.5
How happy are young people...						
About the things they have e.g. money	67.8	69.1	70.2	75.1	75.8 – 80.6	78.2
With their health	58.6	57.2	65.1	62.2	72.5 – 76.0	74.2
With things they want to be good at	61.4	60.5	66.5	62.0	69.9 – 74.5	72.1
With getting on with the people they know	68.7	69.4	72.2	72.1	75.7 – 80.9	78.2
About how safe they feel	70.1	71.3	73.4	77.9	75.4 – 83.1	79.2
Doing things away from home	68.1	68.6	72.1	73.3	68.2 – 72.1	70.1
About what may happen to them later in their life	60.9	60.9	64.6	62.8	65.5 – 72.0	68.7
With their connection to culture**	67.2	68.8	67.4	67.5	NA	NA

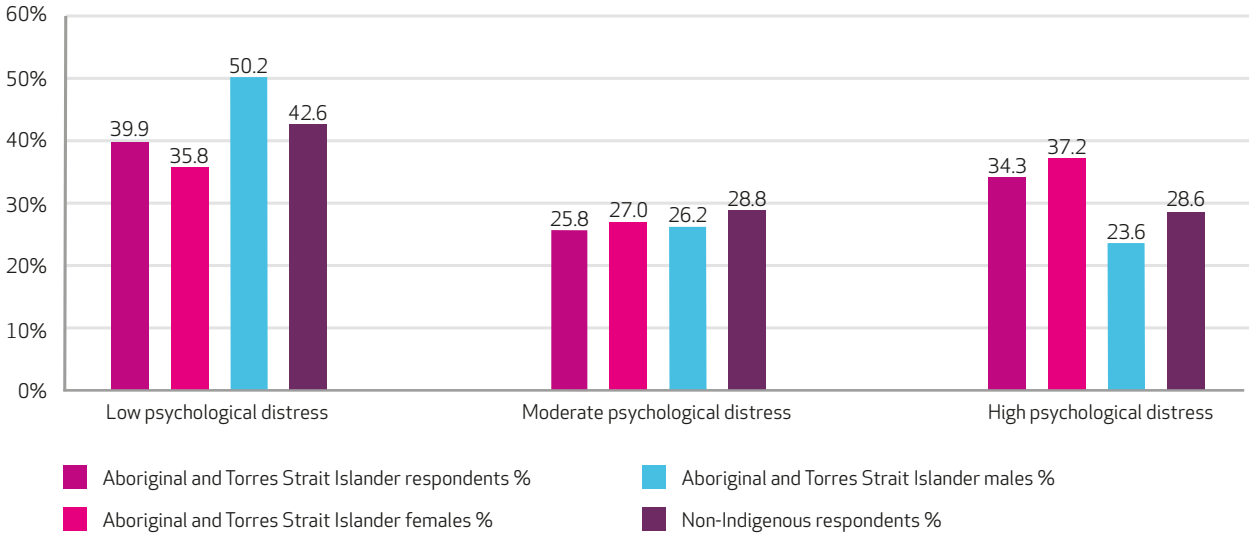
* National average index is based on aggregated survey mean scores from 2002 to 2021 of adults 18 years and over where mean age = 50.55 and SD= 17.47 (Khor et al., 2021).

** This question is not officially part of the PWI but a supplementary question to spiritual and/or cultural beliefs. Respondents who answered yes to having spiritual and/or cultural beliefs were only able to respond to this question.

Table 11.14: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people’s level of control over their life

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Complete control	10.5	8.5	13.7	7.3
Mostly in control	39.1	36.5	47.6	45.3
Some control	34.4	39.0	27.4	36.4
Almost no control	10.4	12.9	6.5	8.9
No control	5.6	3.0	4.8	2.0

Figure 11.13: Level of psychological distress in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people



Note: Psychological distress measured using the Kessler 6. Cut-off scores used for categories of psychological distress are as follows: low = 0 to 7, moderate = 8 to 12 and high = 13 to 24 (Hilton et al, 2008). These cut-off scores are used by the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Table 11.15: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people's level of loneliness

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
None of the time	17.1	14.6	22.3	14.5
A little of the time	23.7	22.2	28.5	30.3
Some of the time	27.5	29.2	26.1	32.1
Most of the time	20.3	24.8	13.7	18.6
All of the time	11.4	9.3	9.3	4.5

Figure 11.14: Family's ability to get along with one another

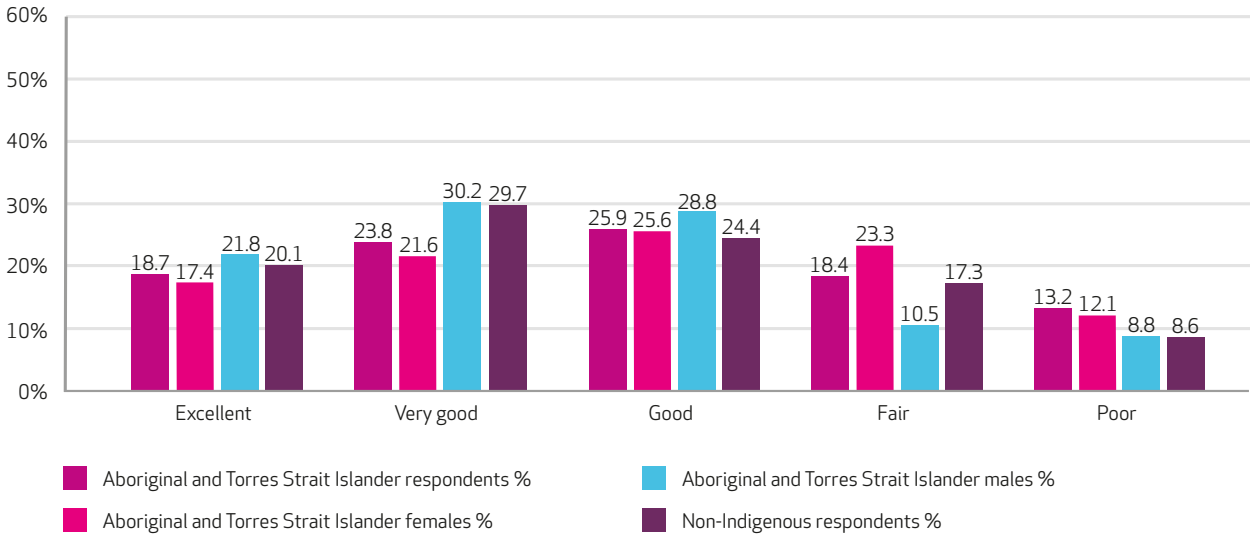


Table 11.16: Feelings about the future

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2022 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females 2022 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males 2022 %	Non-Indigenous respondents 2022 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2021 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2020 %
Very positive or positive	45.9	47.3	50.0	50.1	51.8	48.8
Neither positive nor negative	36.3	37.1	34.6	32.7	32.4	31.3
Negative or very negative	17.8	15.6	15.4	17.2	15.9	19.8

"I'm fine, lonely maybe a bit."

Male, 16, NSW, Aboriginal



"Mental health, just really stressed all the time and depressed over the future and school and relationships with people."

Female, 16, NT, Aboriginal



SUPPORT

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people's top three sources of support for important issues were *friend(s)* (70.9%), *parent(s) or guardian(s)* (63.4%) and *relative/family friend* (57.9%) as shown in Figure 11.15.

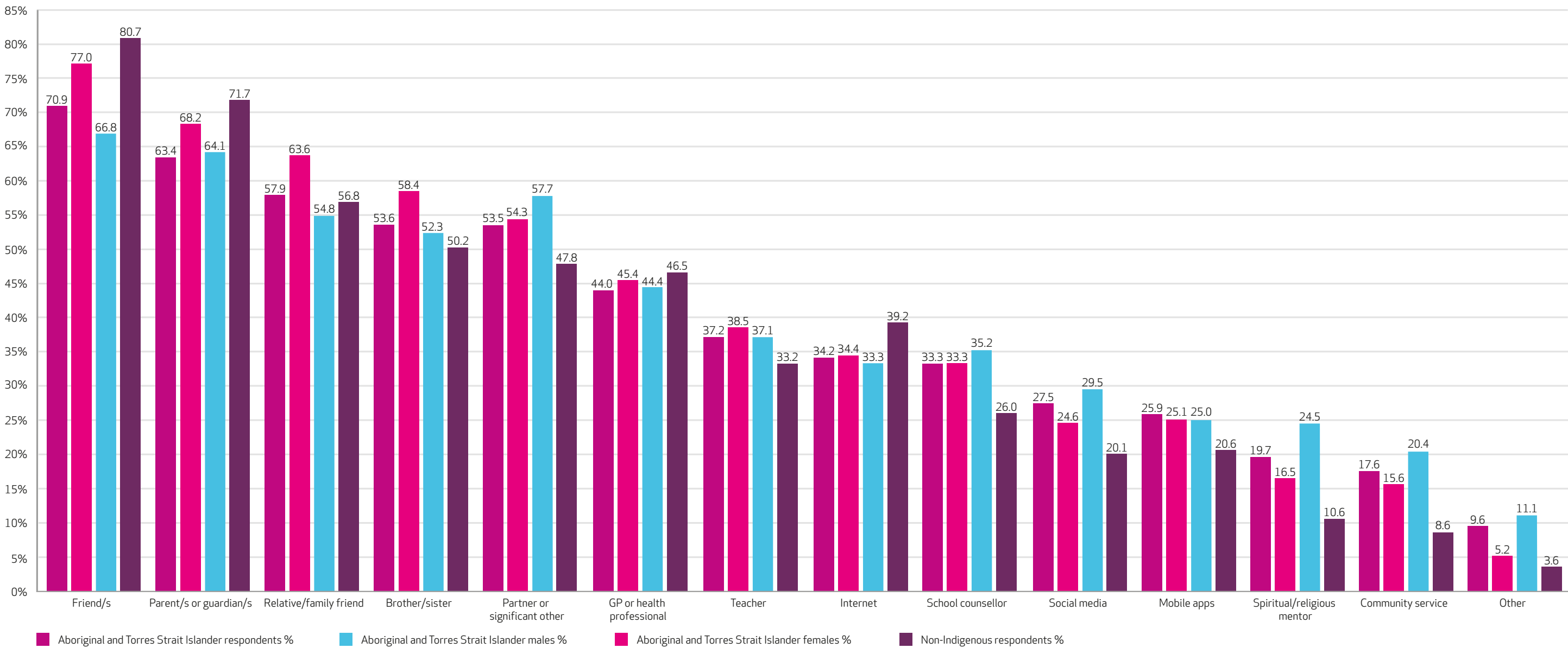
Around half (51.5%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported they had needed support with their mental health in their lives. Among this group, 57.7% said they sought help, most commonly from a *health professional* (62.1%), *family* (49.4%) or *friends* (46.0%) (see Figures 11.17 and 11.18).

Those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who did not seek the support they needed felt the top barriers to accessing support were *stigma or shame associated with mental illness* (45.9%), *don't know where to go for help* (39.5%) and *concerns about confidentiality* (35.5%) (see Figure 11.17). *Face-to-face* was the preferred method of accessing professional mental health support for 45.9% of this group of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people as shown in Figure 11.19.

Gender differences

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported turning to their family and friends for help with important issues in higher proportions than males.
- A larger proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported needing mental health support at some point in their lives (62.7% compared with 35.0% of males).

Figure 11.15: Where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people go for support with important issues



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



“Family support and some of the school’s support. They help me cope, and guide me.”

Female, 17, WA, Aboriginal

Figure 11.16: Ever needed support with mental health

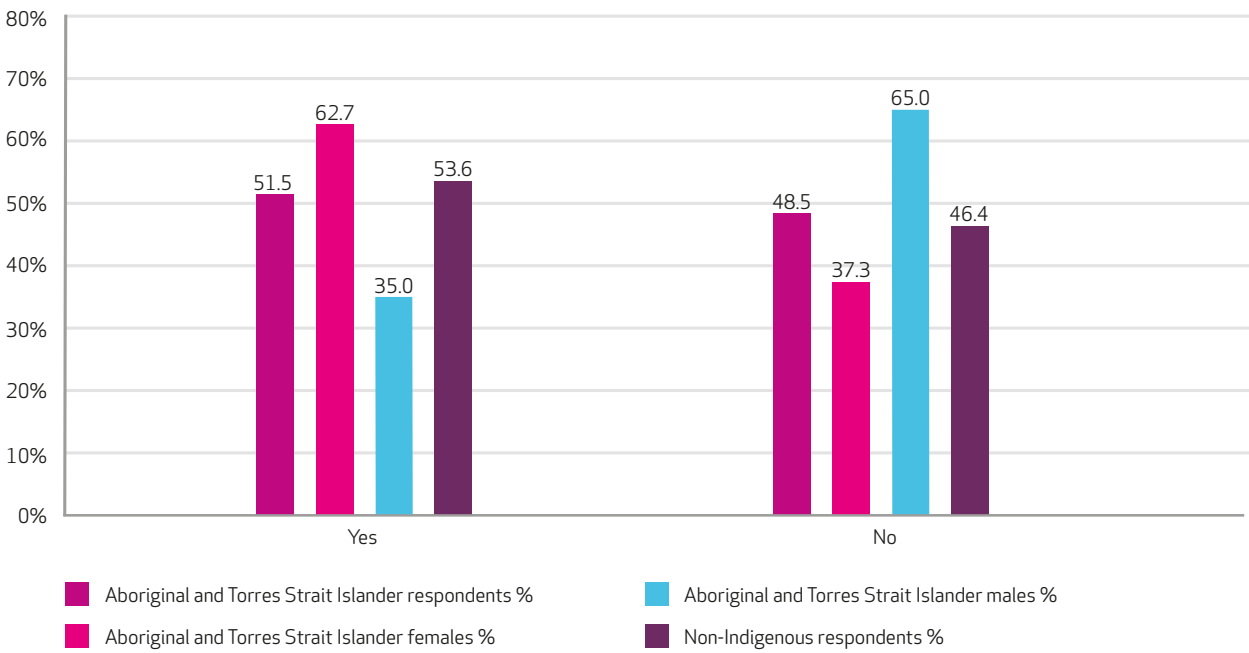
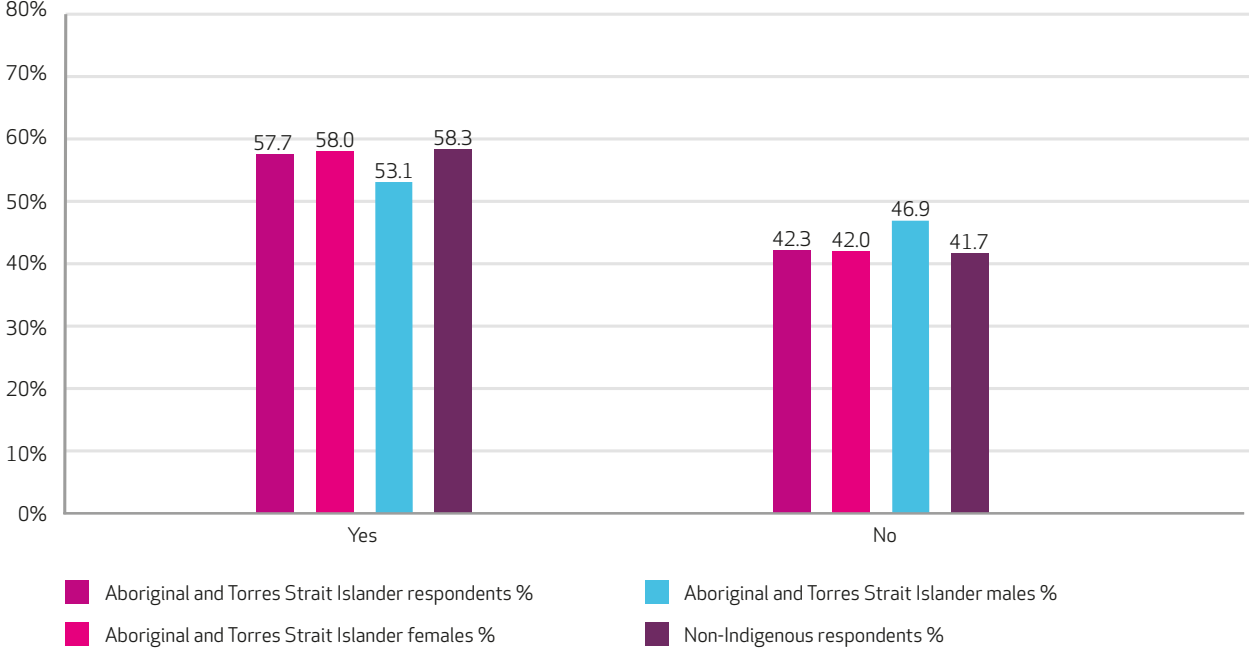
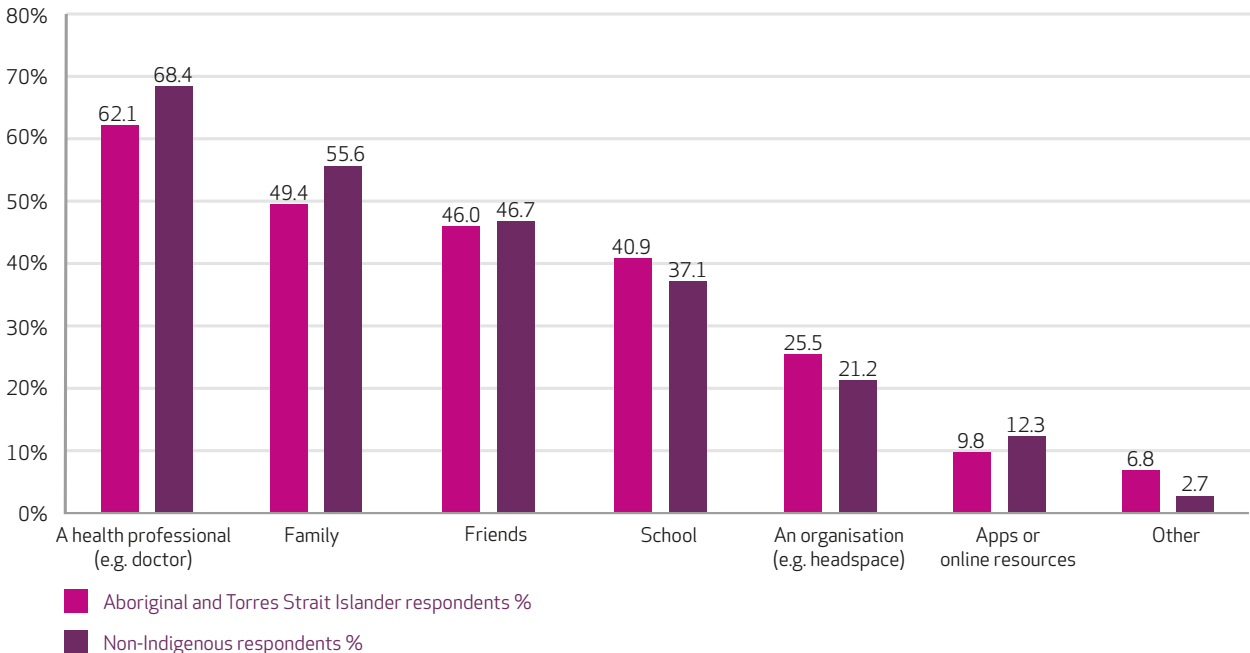


Figure 11.17: For those that needed support, whether support was sought



Base: Those that felt they ever needed support with mental health. *Use caution in interpretation of male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander results due to sample size (n=96).

Figure 11.18: Where young people received support for their mental health



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander frequency. Base: Those that felt they ever needed support with mental health and sought support.

Table 11.17: Factors that might have stopped/delayed a young person accessing professional mental health support

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Stigma or shame associated with mental illness	45.9	43.7
Don't know where to go for help	39.5	33.9
Concerns about confidentiality	35.5	44.0
Cost	27.9	24.4
Distance/location	15.7	9.5
Operating hours	11.6	5.4
Other (e.g. waitlists; accessibility issues; parental/family concerns – don't want to worry them/let them know/they don't take their MH seriously; scared/embarrassed/anxious; COVID-19; can't be bothered/lazy/busy/low priority)	14.0	15.7
There were no barriers or delays to get the help I needed	17.4	17.2

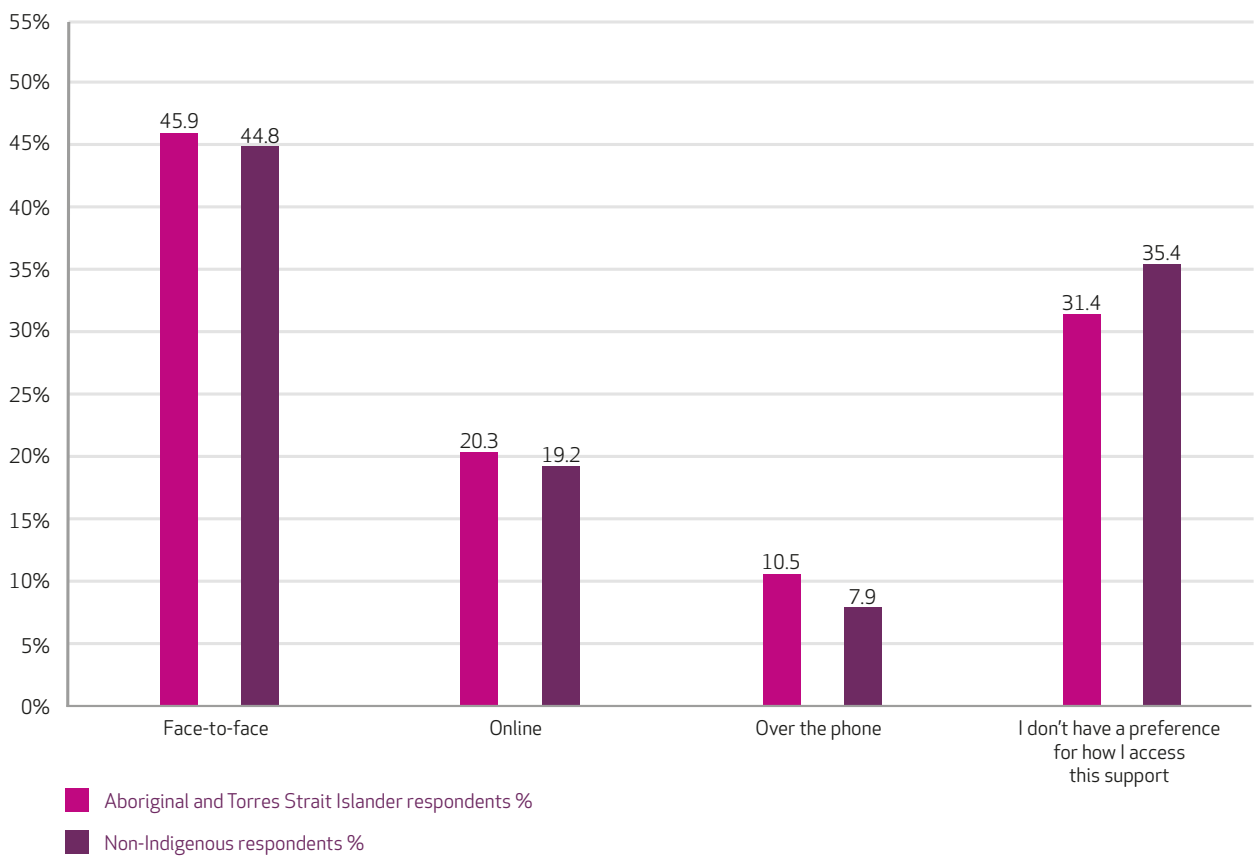
Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander frequency. Base: Those that felt they ever needed support with mental health and did not seek support.



“Experiencing depressive episodes and not knowing how to get help or if I deserve it.”

Female, 16, TAS, Aboriginal

Figure 11.19: Preferred method of accessing support from a mental health professional and/or organisation



Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander frequency. Base: Those that felt they ever needed support with mental health and did not seek support.

Table 11.18: Activities young people found hard to do

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Fit in and socialise with everyone else (at school, work or socially)	36.1	42.4	25.2	32.8
Turn to friends and family if you need help	34.8	40.5	24.2	31.8
Turn to services/ organisations if you need help	28.1	30.3	22.5	28.3
Do everyday activities as young people your age usually do	27.7	28.7	22.8	21.9
Make choices and feel independent	26.0	28.9	20.1	24.1
Do things in public places with friends (e.g. go to shopping centres)	23.9	25.1	19.1	18.4
Travel around the community (e.g. using footpaths)	17.3	18.7	13.4	11.2
None of the above	30.7	27.1	38.3	33.4

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



"In the past year, I have found that friendships have been quite a big challenge. Trying to find a group of girls that will accept me in there group without removing me out of the group because they don't want me to sit with them..."

Female, 15, QLD, Aboriginal

CONNECTEDNESS

The top activities that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were involved in during the last year were *sport (as a participant)* (70.7%), *sport (as a spectator)* (65.6%) and *arts/cultural/music groups/activities* (49.3%) (see Table 11.19). Over six in 10 (63.7%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people indicated they have *spiritual and/or cultural beliefs* (see Figure 11.20).

As shown in Figure 11.21, over two in five (43.5%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people *agreed or strongly agreed* with the statement *I am proud to be part of my community*. This was at higher levels than agreement with the statements *my community has the things that I need to have a positive future and thrive* (36.6%) and *young people in my community have a say on issues that matter to them* (34.9%).

Gender differences

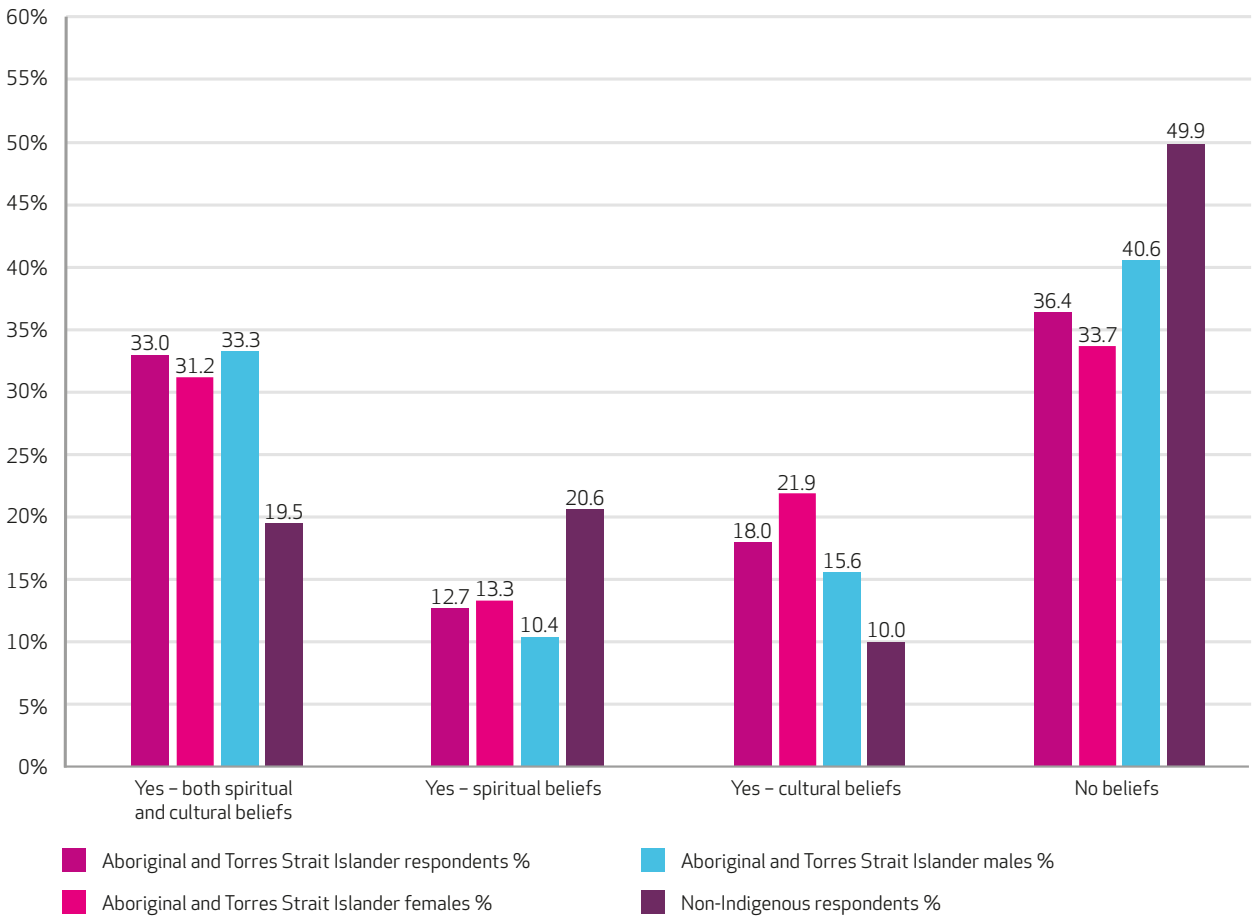
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females reported higher levels of involvement than males in all activities listed with the exceptions of *sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *political groups/activities*.
- A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males stated they have *no (spiritual or cultural) beliefs* (40.6% compared with 33.7% of females).
- Larger proportions of males also *disagreed or strongly disagreed* with each of the community statements.

Table 11.19: Activities Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were involved in during the past year

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Sports (as a participant)	70.7	68.7	74.4	72.1
Sports (as a spectator)	65.6	62.7	69.9	65.6
Arts/cultural/music groups/activities	49.3	51.1	47.0	42.9
Volunteer work	45.9	47.3	45.6	45.4
Youth groups/activities	40.3	40.2	38.9	26.7
Student leadership groups/activities	38.7	43.1	32.5	39.9
Religious groups/activities	28.4	29.9	25.7	23.9
Environmental groups/activities	24.9	22.3	26.1	16.2
Political groups/activities	15.4	13.3	14.6	8.0

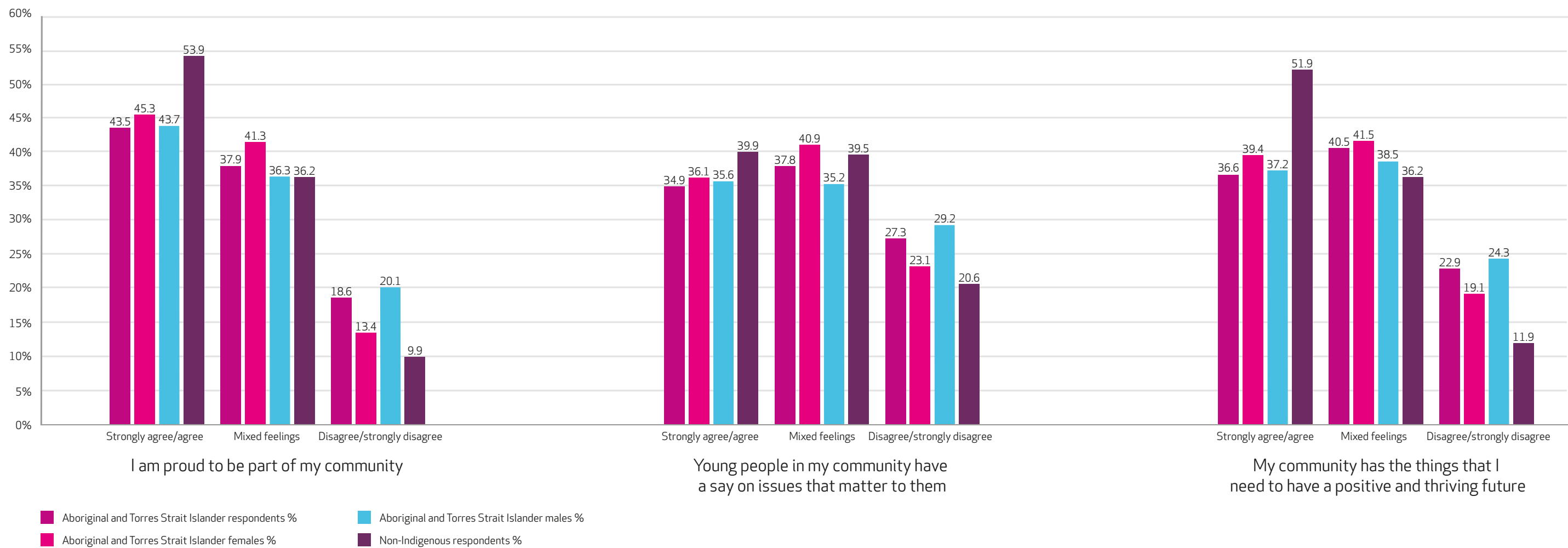
Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander frequency.

Figure 11.20: Whether Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have cultural and/or spiritual beliefs



“Playing basketball and getting involved with the sporting community [helped with my personal challenge].”
Male, 15, VIC, Aboriginal

Figure 11.21: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people's feelings about their community



UNFAIR TREATMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Two in five (40.2%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported they had been unfairly treated or discriminated against in the last year. As shown in Figure 11.23, half (48.5%) of these respondents said *race/cultural background* was the reason for their unfair treatment. The next most common reasons were *mental health* (39.2%) and *gender* (33.2%).

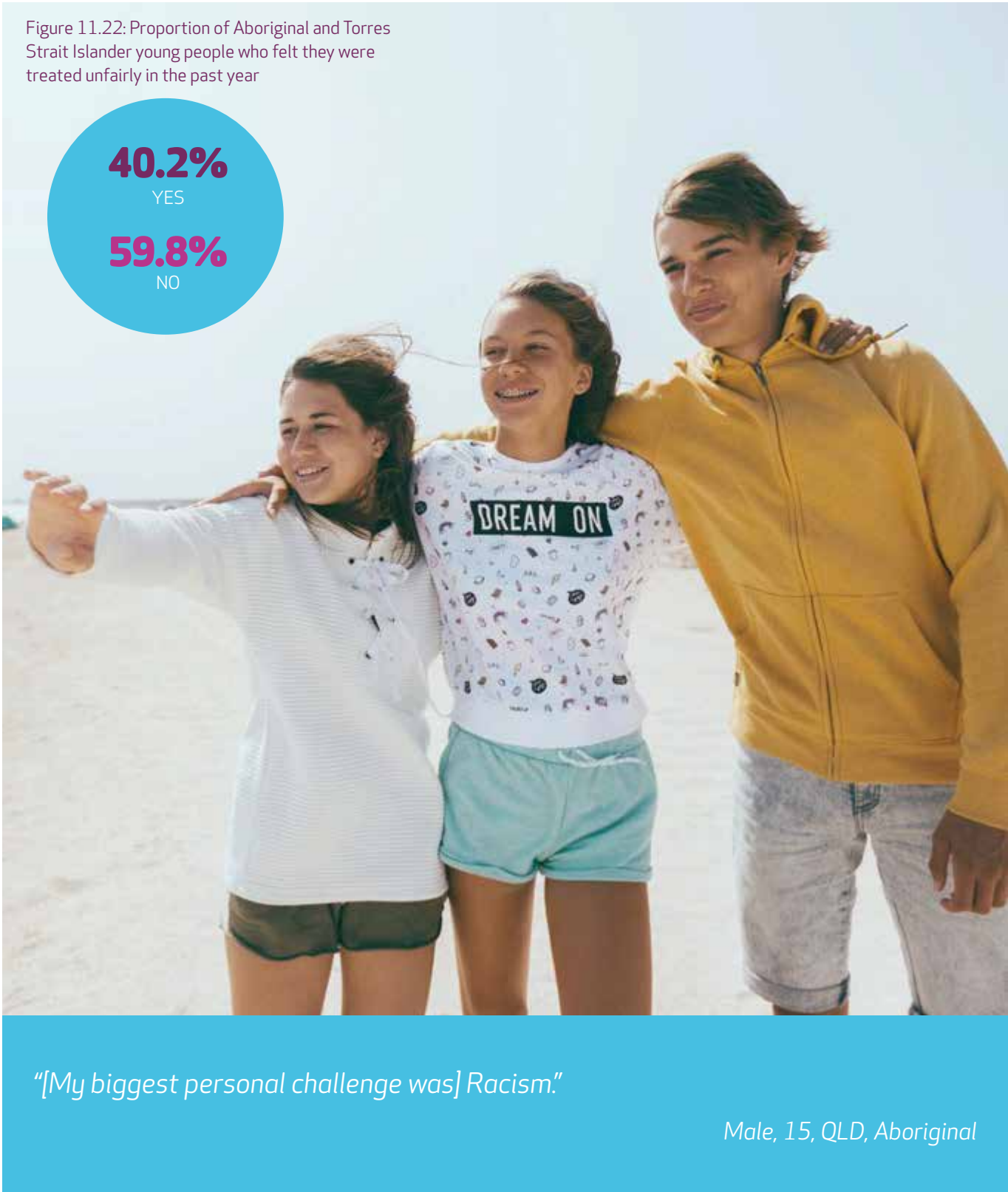
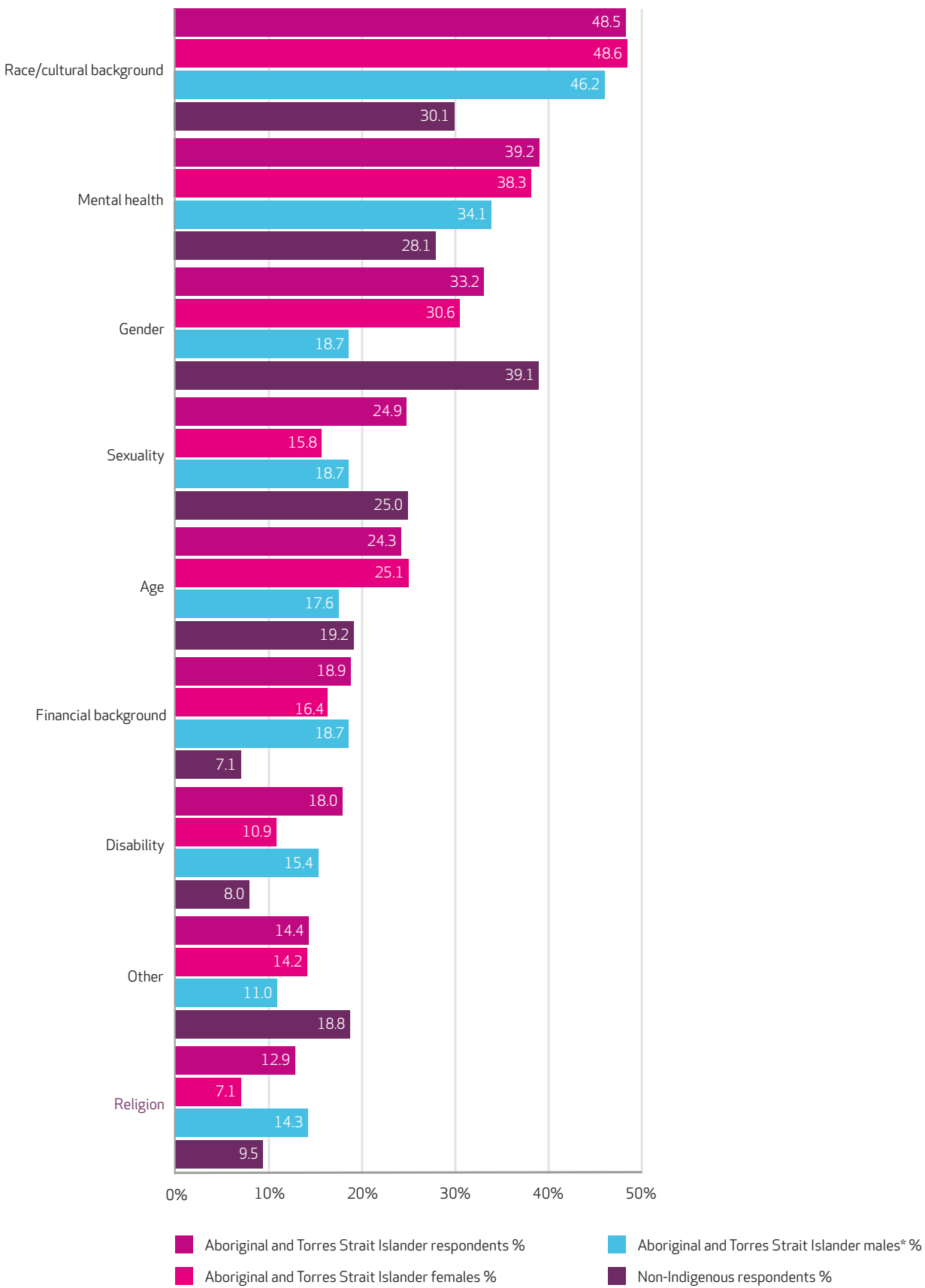


Figure 11.23: Reason for being treated unfairly

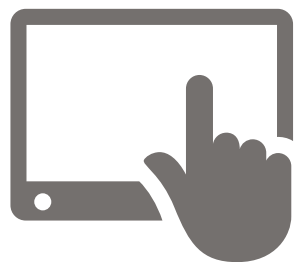


Note: Respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander frequency. *Use caution in interpretation of male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander results due to sample size (n=91).

State and Territory Overview

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








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RESPONSES

ACT OVERVIEW

Full state sub-reports can be found [here](#).



Most important issues in Australia today

-  **60.6%**
The environment
-  **38.6%**
Equity and discrimination
-  **28.8%**
COVID-19

Covid and working at home...has put limitations on my learning and has made it harder to stay focused on the work my school was giving me.

Male, 15, ACT

Study and work



89.2%
were studying full-time

56.7%
were employed

28.4%
were not employed and looking for work

Housing and financial situation (in the past year)



9.9%
were worried about having a safe place to stay

1.4%
had no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation

3.3%
said they or their family sought financial help from family, friends or charity

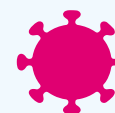
3.3%
said they or their family could not pay bills or car expenses

Mental health



49.1%
stated that they felt they needed support with their mental health at some point in their life

COVID-19



19.4%
were extremely or very personally concerned about COVID-19

Community connections



49.8%
agreed that their community had the things they need to have a positive and thriving future

ACT CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

In young people's own words

Young people told us in their own words and unprompted, what their biggest personal challenge has been in the past year, what they found helpful in dealing with that challenge and what more could be done to help them address their challenge. The key themes of young people's responses are shown below.

41.4% SCHOOL CHALLENGES

Academic pressure, high workload, challenges with teachers, learning difficulties, general school challenges

57.0% of students were satisfied or very satisfied with their studies

35.5% of students said there are barriers to achieving study or work goals

TOP 3 BARRIERS WERE:

-  Mental health
-  Academic ability
-  Financial difficulty

THE BIGGEST PERSONAL CHALLENGES

26.2% MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Low mental health, stress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or self-harm

23.6% had high psychological distress*

22.5% felt lonely all or most of the time

42.1% were extremely or very concerned about coping with stress

*score between 13 to 24 on the Kessler 6

16.3% COVID-19 CHALLENGES

Lockdowns, home schooling, getting COVID-19

Top areas negatively impacted by COVID-19:

73.0% said education

70.8% said their participation in activities

11.0% RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES

Death, abuse, challenging relationships with family, friends or significant others

25.7% said their family's ability to get along was fair or poor

TOP SOURCE OF SUPPORT:
76.8% said friends

Close to 2 in 5

young people said nothing more could help, or they were unsure what could help with their challenges, indicating there is an opportunity to improve awareness of supports available

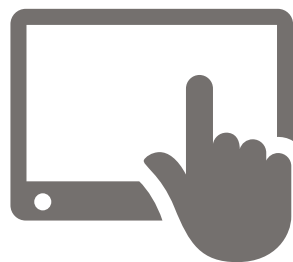
WHAT MORE WOULD HELP ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?

- Having more and/or different supports available at my school to help me manage
- Asking family and friends for additional support and understanding regarding my school stress

- Talking to family, friends or health professionals about how I'm feeling
- Having more emphasis on mental health and wellbeing in my school

- Be more willing to talk to someone so they can help me to cope with the challenges that came from COVID-19
- Better pandemic related academic and mental health support from schools

- Talking through my concerns with family and friends
- Having a more diverse support network e.g. school






4,577
RESPONSES

NSW OVERVIEW

Full state sub-reports can be found [here](#).



Most important issues in Australia today

- **51.7%**
The environment
- **36.6%**
Equity and discrimination
- **36.0%**
Mental health

The largest personal challenge I've experienced over the past year is probably dealing with anxiety around climate change. I've found that general responses to anxiety... aren't helpful for large, borderline world-ending events, and that instead I need to find my own ways of dealing with climate anxiety.

Female, 15, NSW

Study and work



87.9%
were studying full-time

49.8%
were employed

25.0%
were not employed and looking for work

Housing and financial situation (in the past year)



9.0%
were worried about having a safe place to stay

2.3%
had no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation

5.9%
said they or their family sought financial help from family, friends or charity

5.0%
said they or their family could not pay bills or car expenses

Mental health



55.5%
stated that they felt they needed support with their mental health at some point in their life

COVID-19



20.7%
were extremely or very personally concerned about COVID-19

Community connections



51.7%
agreed that their community had the things they need to have a positive and thriving future

NSW CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

In young people's own words

Young people told us in their own words and unprompted, what their biggest personal challenge has been in the past year, what they found helpful in dealing with that challenge and what more could be done to help them address their challenge. The key themes of young people's responses are shown below.

43.3% SCHOOL CHALLENGES

Academic pressure, high workload, challenges with teachers, learning difficulties, general school challenges

63.2% of students were satisfied or very satisfied with their studies

41.2% of students said there are barriers to achieving study or work goals

TOP 3 BARRIERS WERE:

-  Mental health
-  Academic ability
-  Financial difficulty

THE BIGGEST PERSONAL CHALLENGES

29.4% MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Low mental health, stress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or self-harm

28.8% had high psychological distress*

23.4% felt lonely all or most of the time

47.1% were extremely or very concerned about coping with stress

*score between 13 to 24 on the Kessler 6

20.7% RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES

Death, abuse, challenging relationships with family, friends or significant others

14.4% said their family's ability to get along was fair or poor

TOP SOURCE OF SUPPORT:
81.3% said friends

18.4% COVID-19 CHALLENGES

Lockdowns, home schooling, getting COVID-19

Top areas negatively impacted by COVID-19:
77.1% said education
74.0% said their participation in activities

Close to 3 in 10

young people said nothing more could help, or they were unsure what could help with their challenges, indicating there is an opportunity to improve awareness of supports available

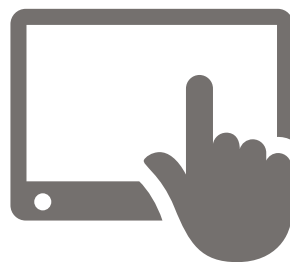
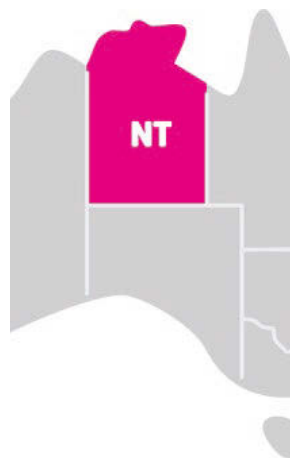
WHAT MORE WOULD HELP ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?

- Having more and/or different supports available at my school to help me manage
- Asking family and friends for additional support and understanding regarding my school stress

- Talking to family, friends or health professionals about how I'm feeling
- Having more emphasis on mental health and wellbeing in my school

- Talking through my concerns with family and friends
- Having a more diverse support network e.g. school

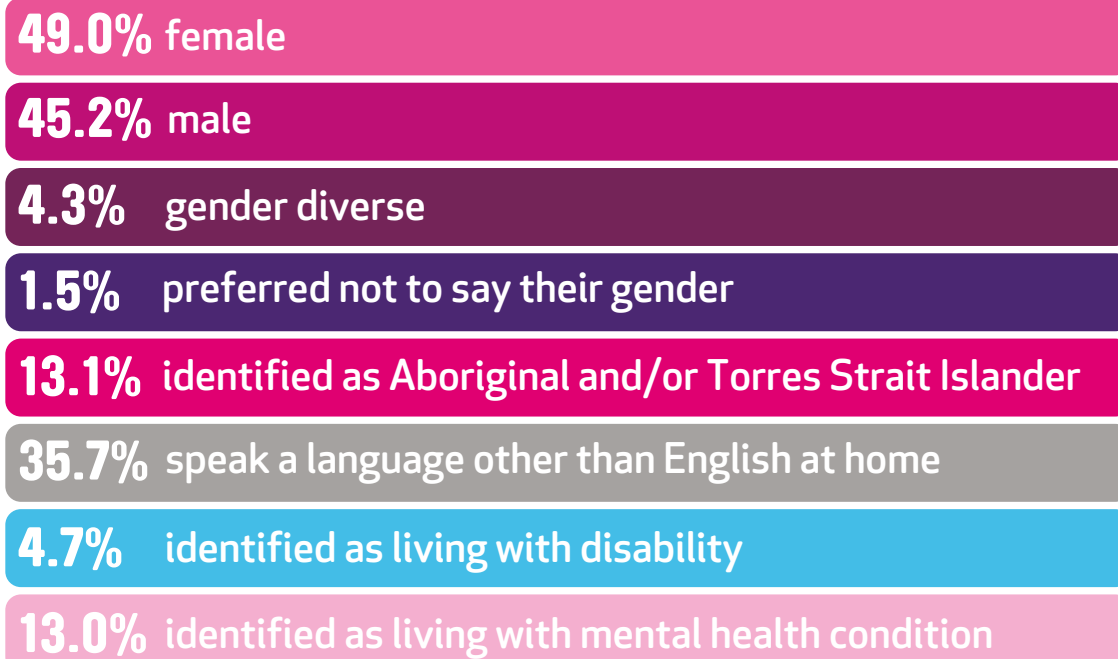
- Be more willing to talk to someone so they can help me to cope with the challenges that came from COVID-19
- Better pandemic related academic and mental health support from schools






420
RESPONSES

NT OVERVIEW

Full state sub-reports can be found [here](#).



Most important issues in Australia today

-  **45.7%**
The environment
-  **34.1%**
Equity and discrimination
-  **30.2%**
Mental health

[My biggest personal challenge was] having too much pressure on myself and trying to figure out what I want to do for my future. I left school because I didn't like it and then got a full time job and then I came back because I didn't like the job and I missed school, so I felt a bit lost for the past couple of months.

Male, 16, NT

Study and work



81.4%
were studying full-time

56.7%
were employed

27.4%
were not employed and looking for work

Housing and financial situation (in the past year)



14.2%
were worried about having a safe place to stay

4.2%
had no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation

6.2%
said they or their family sought financial help from family, friends or charity

7.6%
said they or their family could not pay bills or car expenses

Mental health



55.1%
stated that they felt they needed support with their mental health at some point in their life

COVID-19



14.8%
were extremely or very personally concerned about COVID-19

Community connections



36.4%
agreed that their community had the things they need to have a positive and thriving future

NT CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

In young people's own words

Young people told us in their own words and unprompted, what their biggest personal challenge has been in the past year, what they found helpful in dealing with that challenge and what more could be done to help them address their challenge. The key themes of young people's responses are shown below.



**41.2%
SCHOOL
CHALLENGES**

Academic pressure, high workload, challenges with teachers, learning difficulties, general school challenges

57.5% of students were satisfied or very satisfied with their studies

51.3% of students said there are barriers to achieving study or work goals

TOP 3 BARRIERS WERE:



Mental health



Academic ability



Financial difficulty

THE BIGGEST PERSONAL CHALLENGES



**24.9%
MENTAL HEALTH
CHALLENGES**

Low mental health, stress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or self-harm

34.8% had high psychological distress*

25.1% felt lonely all or most of the time

40.1% were extremely or very concerned about coping with stress

*score between 13 to 24 on the Kessler 6



**23.3%
RELATIONSHIP
CHALLENGES**

Death, abuse, challenging relationships with family, friends or significant others

30.7% said their family's ability to get along was fair or poor

TOP SOURCE OF SUPPORT:
76.6% said friends



**4.1%
COVID-19
CHALLENGES**

Lockdowns, home schooling, getting COVID-19

55.4% said that their education was negatively impacted by COVID-19

1 in 3

young people said nothing more could help, or they were unsure what could help with their challenges, indicating there is an opportunity to improve awareness of supports available

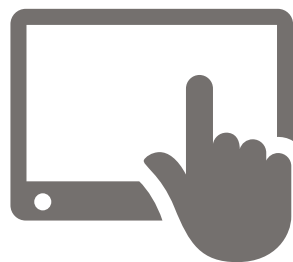
WHAT MORE WOULD HELP ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?

- Having more and/or different supports available at my school to help me manage
- Asking family and friends for additional support and understanding regarding my school stress

- Talking to family, friends or health professionals about how I'm feeling
- Having more emphasis on mental health and wellbeing in my school

- Talking through my concerns with family and friends
- Having a more diverse support network e.g. school

- Be more willing to talk to someone so they can help me to cope with the challenges that came from COVID-19






5,680
RESPONSES

QLD OVERVIEW

Full state sub-reports can be found [here](#).



Most important issues in Australia today

-  **47.0%**
The environment
-  **35.9%**
Equity and discrimination
-  **33.2%**
Mental health

The biggest challenge I have had to face in the last year was the floods. I was lucky enough to not be directly affected, but two of my closest friends were. I ended up taking them in and they lived at my house for about 2 weeks. It was during exam time so it was a stressful time however we managed to persevere.

Female, 17, QLD

Study and work



84.0%
were studying full-time

56.5%
were employed

26.6%
were not employed and looking for work

Housing and financial situation (in the past year)



11.0%
were worried about having a safe place to stay

2.1%
had no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation

6.8%
said they or their family sought financial help from family, friends or charity

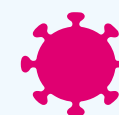
6.2%
said they or their family could not pay bills or car expenses

Mental health



49.4%
stated that they felt they needed support with their mental health at some point in their life

COVID-19



13.5%
were extremely or very personally concerned about COVID-19

Community connections



52.1%
agreed that their community had the things they need to have a positive and thriving future

QLD CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

In young people's own words

Young people told us in their own words and unprompted, what their biggest personal challenge has been in the past year, what they found helpful in dealing with that challenge and what more could be done to help them address their challenge. The key themes of young people's responses are shown below.



**43.1%
SCHOOL
CHALLENGES**

Academic pressure, high workload, challenges with teachers, learning difficulties, general school challenges

63.4% of students were satisfied or very satisfied with their studies

41.4% of students said there are barriers to achieving study or work goals

TOP 3 BARRIERS WERE:



Mental health



Academic ability



Financial difficulty

THE BIGGEST PERSONAL CHALLENGES



**26.5%
MENTAL HEALTH
CHALLENGES**

Low mental health, stress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or self-harm

26.6% had high psychological distress*

22.7% felt lonely all or most of the time

40.7% were extremely or very concerned about coping with stress

*score between 13 to 24 on the Kessler 6



**21.0%
RELATIONSHIP
CHALLENGES**

Death, abuse, challenging relationships with family, friends or significant others

27.0% said their family's ability to get along was fair or poor

TOP SOURCE OF SUPPORT:
80.0% said friends



**5.7%
COVID-19
CHALLENGES**

Lockdowns, home schooling, getting COVID-19

67.9% said that their education was negatively impacted by COVID-19

Close to 3 in 10

young people said nothing more could help, or they were unsure what could help with their challenges, indicating there is an opportunity to improve awareness of supports available

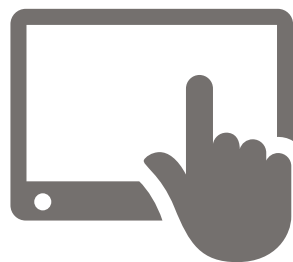
WHAT MORE WOULD HELP ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?

- Having more and/or different supports available at my school to help me manage
- Asking family and friends for additional support and understanding regarding my school stress

- Talking to family, friends or health professionals about how I'm feeling
- Having more emphasis on mental health and wellbeing in my school

- Talking through my concerns with family and friends
- Having a more diverse support network e.g. school

- Better pandemic related support from schools – both academically and mentally
- Be more willing to talk to someone to cope with the challenges that came from COVID-19






1,332
RESPONSES

SA OVERVIEW

Full state sub-reports can be found [here](#).



Most important issues in Australia today

-  **50.0%**
The environment
-  **33.1%**
COVID-19
-  **32.2%**
Equity and discrimination

COVID-19 interrupted lots of school and the amount of resources I was able to access through these unprecedented times.

Female, 15, SA

Study and work



82.4%
were studying full-time

45.4%
were employed

32.3%
were not employed and looking for work

Housing and financial situation (in the past year)



13.3%
were worried about having a safe place to stay

2.9%
had no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation

8.9%
said they or their family sought financial help from family, friends or charity

9.4%
said they or their family could not pay bills or car expenses

Mental health



56.1%
stated that they felt they needed support with their mental health at some point in their life

COVID-19



25.5%
were extremely or very personally concerned about COVID-19

Community connections



48.5%
agreed that their community had the things they need to have a positive and thriving future

SA CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

In young people's own words

Young people told us in their own words and unprompted, what their biggest personal challenge has been in the past year, what they found helpful in dealing with that challenge and what more could be done to help them address their challenge. The key themes of young people's responses are shown below.

Close to 1 in 3
young people said nothing more could help, or they were unsure what could help with their challenges, indicating there is an opportunity to improve awareness of supports available

THE BIGGEST PERSONAL CHALLENGES

39.8% SCHOOL CHALLENGES

Academic pressure, high workload, challenges with teachers, learning difficulties, general school challenges

62.4% of students were satisfied or very satisfied with their studies

50.7% of students said there are barriers to achieving study or work goals

TOP 3 BARRIERS WERE:

-  Mental health
-  Academic ability
-  Financial difficulty

30.6% MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Low mental health, stress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or self-harm

33.8% had high psychological distress*

27.1% felt lonely all or most of the time

47.0% were extremely or very concerned about coping with stress

*score between 13 to 24 on the Kessler 6

19.3% RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES

Death, abuse, challenging relationships with family, friends or significant others

27.4% said their family's ability to get along was fair or poor

TOP SOURCE OF SUPPORT:
79.1% said friends

12.0% COVID-19 CHALLENGES

Lockdowns, home schooling, getting COVID-19

Top areas negatively impacted by COVID-19:
70.0% said education
62.1% said their participation in activities

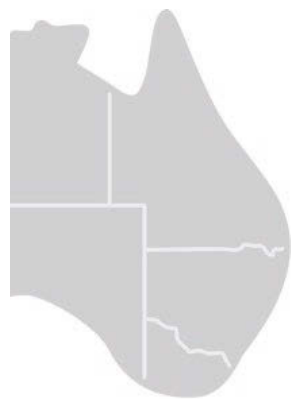
WHAT MORE WOULD HELP ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?

- Having more and/or different supports available at my school to help me manage
- Asking family and friends for additional support and understanding regarding my school stress

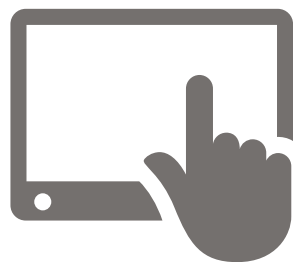
- Talking to family, friends or health professionals about how I'm feeling
- Having more emphasis on mental health and wellbeing in my school

- Talking through my concerns with family and friends
- Having a more diverse support network e.g. school

- Be more willing to talk to someone so they can help me to cope with the challenges that came from COVID-19
- Better pandemic related academic and mental health support from schools



TAS



621
RESPONSES

TAS OVERVIEW

Full state sub-reports can be found [here](#).

48.1% female

41.8% male

7.9% gender diverse

2.2% preferred not to say their gender

10.1% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

8.6% speak a language other than English at home

7.3% identified as living with disability

22.7% identified as living with mental health condition

Most important issues in Australia today

1  51.0%
The environment

2  33.5%
Mental health

3  31.0%
Equity and discrimination

I just finished school last year and finding something to do with a lot of your spare time is hard. I do work but the transition from full time compulsory school to work was hard.

Female, 19, TAS

Study and work



82.1%
were studying full-time

53.0%
were employed

30.0%
were not employed and looking for work

Housing and financial situation (in the past year)



14.1%
were worried about having a safe place to stay

2.6%
had no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation

9.7%
said they or their family sought financial help from family, friends or charity

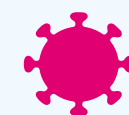
8.9%
said they or their family could not pay bills or car expenses

Mental health



56.8%
stated that they felt they needed support with their mental health at some point in their life

COVID-19



16.0%
were extremely or very personally concerned about COVID-19

Community connections



35.4%
agreed that their community had the things they need to have a positive and thriving future

TAS CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

In young people's own words

Young people told us in their own words and unprompted, what their biggest personal challenge has been in the past year, what they found helpful in dealing with that challenge and what more could be done to help them address their challenge. The key themes of young people's responses are shown below.

THE BIGGEST PERSONAL CHALLENGES



35.3%
SCHOOL CHALLENGES

Academic pressure, high workload, challenges with teachers, learning difficulties, general school challenges

63.3% of students were satisfied or very satisfied with their studies

45.2% of students said there are barriers to achieving study or work goals

TOP 3 BARRIERS WERE:



Mental health



Financial difficulty



Academic ability



27.1%
MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Low mental health, stress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or self-harm

33.6% had high psychological distress*

28.7% felt lonely all or most of the time

42.5% were extremely or very concerned about coping with stress

*score between 13 to 24 on the Kessler 6



21.2%
RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES

Death, abuse, challenging relationships with family, friends or significant others

31.7% said their family's ability to get along was fair or poor

TOP SOURCE OF SUPPORT:
74.3% said friends



5.3%
COVID-19 CHALLENGES

Lockdowns, home schooling, getting COVID-19

62.7% said that their education was negatively impacted by COVID-19

Close to 2 in 5

young people said nothing more could help, or they were unsure what could help with their challenges, indicating there is an opportunity to improve awareness of supports available

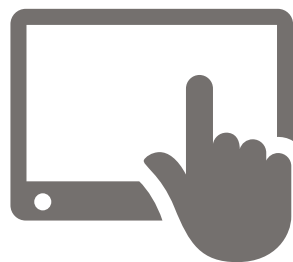
WHAT MORE WOULD HELP ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?

- Having more and/or different supports available at my school to help me manage
- Asking family and friends for additional support and understanding regarding my school stress

- Talking to family, friends or health professionals about how I'm feeling
- Having more emphasis on mental health and wellbeing in my school

- Talking through my concerns with family and friends
- Having a more diverse support network e.g. school

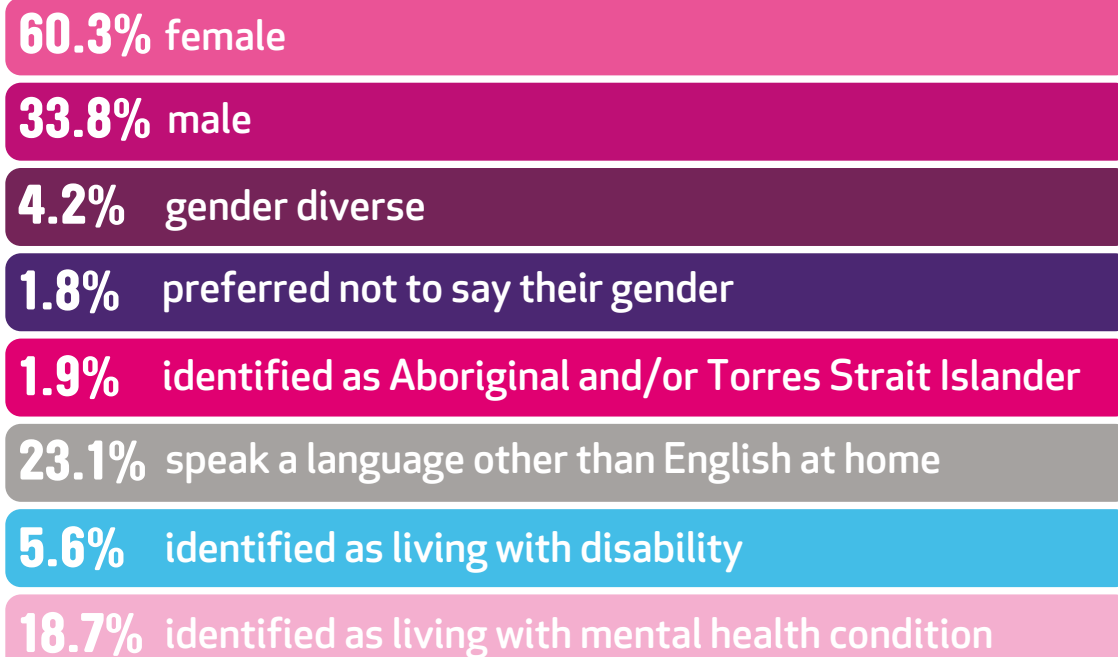
- Better pandemic related support from schools – both academically and mentally
- Be more willing to talk to someone to cope with the challenges that came from COVID-19






5,097
RESPONSES

VIC OVERVIEW

Full state sub-reports can be found [here](#).



Most important issues in Australia today

-  **54.0%**
The environment
-  **36.3%**
Equity and discrimination
-  **34.4%**
Mental health

I've had a major struggle with my mental health. I feel like I can't live with my family or partner and I hate my body image. I have also been suffering with major climate anxiety.

Female, 19, VIC

Study and work



87.6%
were studying full-time

55.2%
were employed

23.4%
were not employed and looking for work

Housing and financial situation (in the past year)



9.2%
were worried about having a safe place to stay

1.4%
had no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation

5.5%
said they or their family sought financial help from family, friends or charity

5.0%
said they or their family could not pay bills or car expenses

Mental health



54.3%
stated that they felt they needed support with their mental health at some point in their life

COVID-19



21.5%
were extremely or very personally concerned about COVID-19

Community connections



53.7%
agreed that their community had the things they need to have a positive and thriving future

VIC CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

In young people's own words

Young people told us in their own words and unprompted, what their biggest personal challenge has been in the past year, what they found helpful in dealing with that challenge and what more could be done to help them address their challenge. The key themes of young people's responses are shown below.



**38.7%
SCHOOL
CHALLENGES**

Academic pressure, high workload, challenges with teachers, learning difficulties, general school challenges

61.9% of students were satisfied or very satisfied with their studies

39.5% of students said there are barriers to achieving study or work goals

TOP 3 BARRIERS WERE:



Mental health



Academic ability



Financial difficulty

THE BIGGEST PERSONAL CHALLENGES



**27.0%
MENTAL HEALTH
CHALLENGES**

Low mental health, stress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or self-harm

29.1% had high psychological distress*

22.1% felt lonely all or most of the time

44.6% were extremely or very concerned about coping with stress

*score between 13 to 24 on the Kessler 6



**25.4%
COVID-19
CHALLENGES**

Lockdowns, home schooling, getting COVID-19

Top areas negatively impacted by COVID-19:

79.5% said education

73.8% said their participation in activities

67.8% said mental health



**17.1%
RELATIONSHIP
CHALLENGES**

Death, abuse, challenging relationships with family, friends or significant others

24.7% said their family's ability to get along was fair or poor

TOP SOURCE OF SUPPORT:

81.0% said friends

Close to 3 in 10

young people said nothing more could help, or they were unsure what could help with their challenges, indicating there is an opportunity to improve awareness of supports available

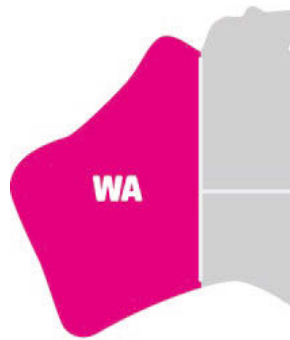
WHAT MORE WOULD HELP ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?

- Having more and/or different supports available at my school to help me manage
- Asking family and friends for additional support and understanding regarding my school stress

- Talking to family, friends or health professionals about how I'm feeling
- Having more emphasis on mental health and wellbeing in my school

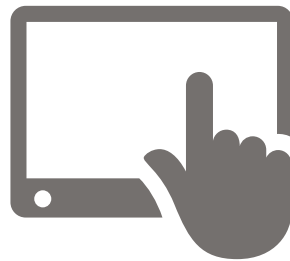
- Be more willing to talk to someone so they can help me to cope with the challenges that came from COVID-19
- Better pandemic related academic and mental health support from schools

- Talking through my concerns with family and friends
- Having a more diverse support network e.g. school

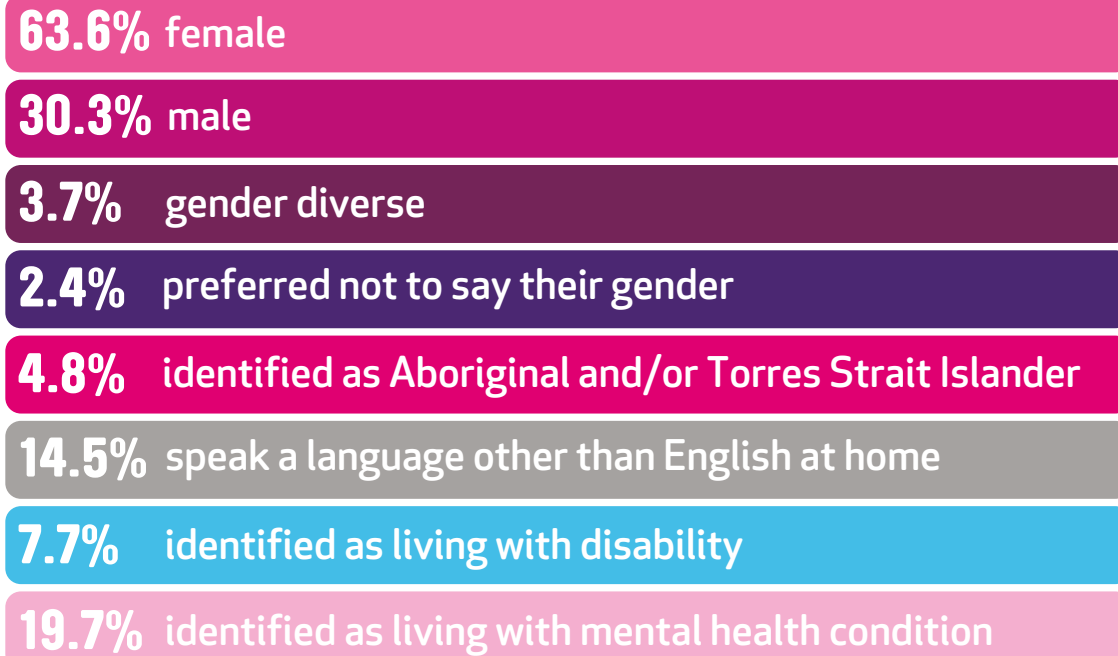


WA OVERVIEW




Full state sub-reports can be found [here](#).



766
RESPONSES



Most important issues in Australia today

-  **57.7%**
The environment
-  **37.8%**
Equity and discrimination
-  **33.4%**
Mental health

...the dramatic increase in school work has left me completely overwhelmed, creating depression and anxiety diagnoses. This caused my mental health to decline significantly...

Gender not given, 16, WA

Study and work



84.4%
were studying full-time

48.3%
were employed

26.7%
were not employed and looking for work

Housing and financial situation (in the past year)



12.6%
were worried about having a safe place to stay

3.4%
had no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation

7.7%
said they or their family sought financial help from family, friends or charity

8.0%
said they or their family could not pay bills or car expenses

Mental health



57.9%
stated that they felt they needed support with their mental health at some point in their life

COVID-19



16.3%
were extremely or very personally concerned about COVID-19

Community connections



49.6%
agreed that their community had the things they need to have a positive and thriving future

WA CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

In young people's own words

Young people told us in their own words and unprompted, what their biggest personal challenge has been in the past year, what they found helpful in dealing with that challenge and what more could be done to help them address their challenge. The key themes of young people's responses are shown below.



45.2% SCHOOL CHALLENGES

Academic pressure, high workload, challenges with teachers, learning difficulties, general school challenges

63.1% of students were satisfied or very satisfied with their studies

43.5% of students said there are barriers to achieving study or work goals

TOP 3 BARRIERS WERE:



Mental health



Academic ability



Financial difficulty

THE BIGGEST PERSONAL CHALLENGES



30.3% MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Low mental health, stress, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem or self-harm

29.3% had high psychological distress*

26.4% felt lonely all or most of the time

44.3% were extremely or very concerned about coping with stress

*score between 13 to 24 on the Kessler 6



21.6% RELATIONSHIP CHALLENGES

Death, abuse, challenging relationships with family, friends or significant others

29.1% said their family's ability to get along was fair or poor

TOP SOURCE OF SUPPORT:
79.5% said friends



7.4% COVID-19 CHALLENGES

Lockdowns, home schooling, getting COVID-19

70.2% said that their education was negatively impacted by COVID-19

Close to 3 in 10

young people said nothing more could help, or they were unsure what could help with their challenges, indicating there is an opportunity to improve awareness of supports available

WHAT MORE WOULD HELP ADDRESS THESE CHALLENGES?

- Having more and/or different supports available at my school to help me manage
- Asking family and friends for additional support and understanding regarding my school stress

- Talking to family, friends or health professionals about how I'm feeling
- Having more emphasis on mental health and wellbeing in my school

- Talking through my concerns with family and friends
- Having a more diverse support network e.g. school

- Be more willing to talk to someone so they can help me to cope with the challenges that came from COVID-19
- Better pandemic related academic and mental health support from schools

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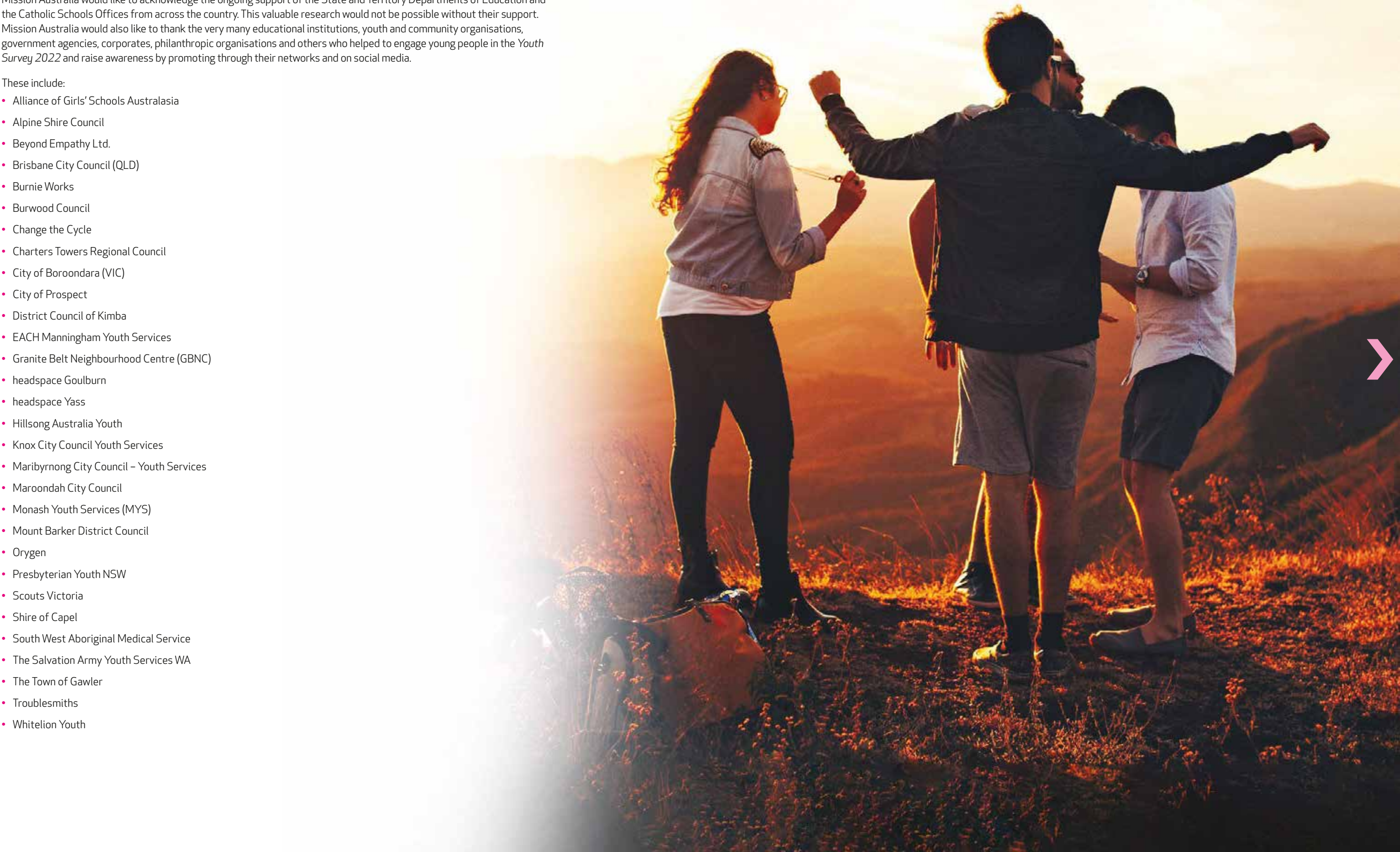


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Mission Australia would like to acknowledge the ongoing support of the State and Territory Departments of Education and the Catholic Schools Offices from across the country. This valuable research would not be possible without their support. Mission Australia would also like to thank the very many educational institutions, youth and community organisations, government agencies, corporates, philanthropic organisations and others who helped to engage young people in the *Youth Survey 2022* and raise awareness by promoting through their networks and on social media.

These include:

- Alliance of Girls' Schools Australasia
- Alpine Shire Council
- Beyond Empathy Ltd.
- Brisbane City Council (QLD)
- Burnie Works
- Burwood Council
- Change the Cycle
- Charters Towers Regional Council
- City of Boroondara (VIC)
- City of Prospect
- District Council of Kimba
- EACH Manningham Youth Services
- Granite Belt Neighbourhood Centre (GBNC)
- headspace Goulburn
- headspace Yass
- Hillsong Australia Youth
- Knox City Council Youth Services
- Maribyrnong City Council – Youth Services
- Maroondah City Council
- Monash Youth Services (MYS)
- Mount Barker District Council
- Orygen
- Presbyterian Youth NSW
- Scouts Victoria
- Shire of Capel
- South West Aboriginal Medical Service
- The Salvation Army Youth Services WA
- The Town of Gawler
- Troublesmiths
- Whitelion Youth



Who is Mission Australia?

Mission Australia is a national Christian charity motivated by a shared vision of an Australia where everyone has a safe home and can thrive.

Since 1859, we've been standing alongside people and communities in need across Australia, offering real hope that has lasting impact. Backed by our supporters, churches, partners and funders, we work together for the long-term wellbeing of anyone who needs us by collaborating with them to tackle the root causes of their challenges.

Every day we deliver homelessness crisis and prevention services, provide social and affordable housing, assist struggling families and children, address mental health issues, fight substance dependencies, support people with disability and much more.

We measure our impact, collecting evidence of what works to inform our service design and delivery, and to advocate for change.

Mission Australia believes a person's circumstances shouldn't define their future and that given the right support, everyone can reach their full potential.

That's why we stand together with Australians in need, for as long as they need us.

Thank you

This publication would not have been possible without the 18,800 young people who completed Mission Australia's *Youth Survey 2022*. We extend special thanks to them, the staff of Mission Australia, and the many schools and organisations who supported their involvement.

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

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