

YOUTH SURVEY 2025

MISSION
AUSTRALIA

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Acknowledgment

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of lands throughout Australia, and we pay our respects to the Elders past, present and future for they hold the memories, the culture and dreams of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and continual relationship with the land and we recognise the importance of the young people who are our future leaders.

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Mission Australia

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

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

MISSION AUSTRALIA

As we mark the 24th year of Mission Australia's Youth Survey, I extend my sincere thanks to the more than 17,000 young people aged 14 to 19 who took part in 2025. Your voices matter deeply and we are listening. The insights you've shared help shine a light on the real and complex experiences of young people across Australia and guide us and others in building a better future alongside you.

The Mission Australia Youth Survey remains an important way for young people across Australia to share their views, experiences and hopes. In 2025, young people gave us a clear snapshot of the challenges they face and the future they want. They shared openly about key parts of their lives including their social connections, education, work, housing, finances and mental health.

This year, for the first time, based on feedback from young people and schools, the survey included 14-year-olds, so younger high school students had the opportunity to share their views. Including this age group ensures we're hearing from a broader range of young people about the issues and experiences that matter to them.

In 2025, young people identified the top four issues facing Australia as *cost of living*, *mental health*, *climate change* and *the environment* and *housing and homelessness*.

Cost of living was the most mentioned national issue for the second year running, reaching a record high since we began asking this question in 2010. It's a record we never wanted to see broken. Many young people spoke about the strain of rising prices and the stress of not having enough for everyday essentials. Some described watching their families struggle to pay bills or afford stable housing. These economic pressures are shaping how young people feel about their lives now and what they see as possible in the future.

Housing and homelessness also featured strongly as critical issues young people want to see tackled. Concern about these key

issues has doubled since 2022 and is now at the highest level in the history of our survey. Young people see that too many people across Australia lack a safe and stable place to live, forcing many into homelessness. This points to the urgent need for more investment in social and affordable housing, youth housing and targeted supports that can make a real difference.

Mental health is both a major national issue and a personal concern for many young people. They shared how stress and anxiety affect their education, work and daily lives. Nearly one in five reported experiencing high levels of psychological distress in the weeks before the survey. Mental health difficulties also contributed to school absences and were among the most common barriers to achieving study or work goals. These findings show the need for early access to wellbeing support and resources so young people can get help before issues escalate.

Encouragingly, many young people still feel able to manage life's ups and downs and remain hopeful about their futures.

Young people's hopes for the future are wide-ranging. Many want meaningful employment, strong relationships, financial security and opportunities for education and learning. Their aspirations show their strength, ambition and desire to build fulfilling lives.

These hopes are not just personal goals; they're also clear signals for policymakers. Supporting young people to live meaningful, fulfilling lives where they can fully participate in education, work and community life is essential. It's not only the right thing to do,

it also aligns with the Federal Government's productivity agenda, which should recognise that investing in young people's wellbeing, skills and potential strengthen Australia's future workforce, economy and society.

Social connections and community support remain important for young people across the country. Most have someone to turn to for advice and support, but loneliness remains an issue for some young people. Discrimination and inequality are also impacting too many young people, with higher rates felt by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young peoples and those who are gender diverse. These findings point to the ongoing need for greater inclusivity, respect and support.

To the thousands of young people who took part in this survey, thank you. We are listening and committed to working with governments, schools, communities and families to respond to your concerns. Together, we can build a future where every young person feels heard, supported, included and empowered to reach their potential and achieve their hopes and dreams.

Sharon Callister
CEO, Mission Australia



2025 OVERVIEW

To the young people who participated in the *Youth Survey in 2025*: we sincerely appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts and experiences. We are committed to ensuring your voices are heard and make a meaningful impact.

The Mission Australia Youth Survey continues to be an important platform for young people across Australia to share their views, experiences and aspirations. In 2025, over 17,000 young people aged 14-19 participated, offering a powerful snapshot of their experiences, challenges and hopes for the future. They shared valuable information about many key aspects of their lives including their social supports and community, education, employment, housing, financial situation and mental health.

This year, **cost of living** continued to be the most pressing national issue according to young people, with 64% identifying it as a top concern, up from 56% in 2024 and 31% in 2023. Since we began asking young people about the most important issues in Australia in 2010, the *cost of living* in 2025 stands out as the most widely mentioned issue ever recorded. Many spoke about the cost of living crisis, inflation, money stress and the broader economic climate.

Mental health (29%) remained a critically important issue for young people across Australia today, alongside **climate change and the environment** (27%) and **housing and homelessness** (25%). Notably, the proportion of young people nominating *housing and homelessness* as an issue of national concern has doubled since 2022 and is now the highest it has been since our data collection began in 2010.

Despite these societal concerns, young people remain hopeful. In response to an open-ended question about their **hopes for the future**, almost all young people shared multiple aspirations in their own words. Their responses show that young people have strong ambitions for many aspects of their lives. *Employment and career goals* were the most common (59%), followed by hopes for *family, relationships and connections* (46%), financial stability and home ownership (45%) and *education and learning* (28%). Many also expressed dreams of living a happy life, making a difference and maintaining good health.

Young people shared what life looks like for them now. Almost all were studying and nearly half (48%) were working, primarily to save money, buy their own things or gain experience. Despite this engagement, 15% reported that they or their family had experienced at least one form of **financial hardship** and 19% agreed that their family is often *stressed*

about money. Housing instability was also present, with 4% feeling stressed in the past year about *having somewhere to live*.

Many young people expressed positive **views about themselves and their lives**. Three quarters (76%) agreed they *get along well with others*, 72% felt capable of handling life's challenges and 66% believed they could achieve difficult goals. More than three in five (64%) felt *happy or very happy* with their life and 58% expressed optimism about the future.

However, **mental health** remains a significant concern. Two in five young people (39%) reported stress related to their *mental health and wellbeing*. Additionally, one in five (19%) scored in the high psychological distress range – a measure of how frequently they encountered symptoms of anxiety and depression over the past four weeks.* Mental health also contributed to school absences, with 18% stating they have missed school due to *anxiety, depression or mental health issues*. When comparing to 2023 and 2024, several wellbeing indicators have shown improvement, including reductions in loneliness and psychological distress, and increases in young people's sense of control over their lives and positivity about the future.

School was a mixed experience for many young people. Pleasingly, most said they like their school (62%), feel safe there (79%) and have a teacher or adult they can turn to for support (70%). Nevertheless, *school or study problems* were the most commonly reported source of stress in the past year - mentioned by almost three in five young people (58%). One quarter (26%) reported facing barriers to achieving their work or study goals, including low motivation, limited time or space, lack of self-confidence and mental health difficulties.

Social connections and support play an important role in young people's lives, though experiences vary. Three quarters (75%) said they had someone to turn to when unsure about important decisions, with *friends* (77%) and *parent(s) or guardian(s)* (76%) the most common sources of support. Most young people (83%) participated in sports, activities or groups outside of school hours in the past year, with one third (33%) involved in *volunteer work* and one in five (21%) engaged in *church or other faith-based groups*. While many felt happy (74%)

and safe (73%) in their neighbourhood, only 35% agreed they felt connected to others in their community and 17% reported feeling lonely *all or most of the time* in the past four weeks.

Discrimination and inequality continues to affect many young people. Three in ten (30%) reported experiencing *unfair treatment or discrimination* in the past year. Rates were significantly higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young peoples (46%) and gender diverse respondents (66%), highlighting the need for more inclusive environments and targeted support.

The 2025 Youth Survey highlights the complex realities facing young people across Australia. From economic pressures to mental health challenges and experiences of discrimination, young people are navigating a range of personal and societal issues. Their responses reveal not only the difficulties they encounter, but also their aspirations, values and desire to shape a positive future.

To the thousands of young people who took part in this survey, **thank you**. We are listening. We urge governments, schools, communities and families to reflect on these findings and to work in genuine partnership with young people. By listening deeply and acting with purpose, we can build a future where every young person feels supported, included and empowered to reach their potential.

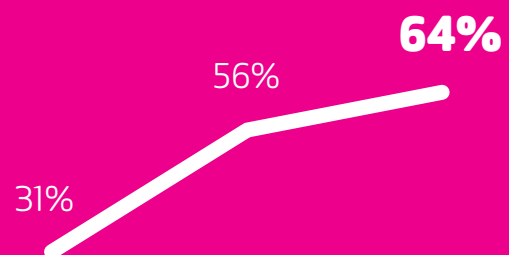
KEY FINDINGS

Over 17,000 young people aged 14-19 participated in the Mission Australia 2025 Youth Survey

Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today and the most frequently cited issues are listed below. The charts show the proportion who mentioned each issue in 2023, 2024 and 2025.



1. Cost of living



Lots of young people identified *cost of living* or *cost of living crisis* as a major national issue. They also mentioned *inflation*, the *economy*, *money* and *prices*.



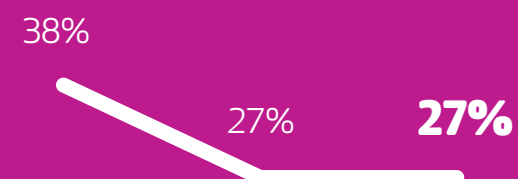
2. Mental health



Alongside general mentions of *mental health*, young people highlighted *wellbeing*, *youth mental health*, *suicide*, *stress* and *depression* as important national issues.



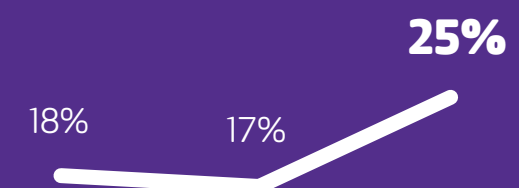
3. Climate change and the environment



Climate change and *global warming* were commonly cited within this theme. Some also raised issues around *environment*, *pollution* and environmental impacts such as *algae blooms*.



4. Housing and homelessness



This theme included many mentions of *housing* and *homelessness*. Young people also pointed to the *housing crisis*, *affordability challenges* and *house prices* as major national concerns.

KEY FINDINGS

While 58% of young people said they feel positive about the future, 97% articulated at least one of their biggest hopes - many shared three or more

Young people shared their biggest hopes for the future and these were the themes that emerged.



Purpose, values and big dreams

26%

"To feel like I'm making a positive difference to the world"

Gender diverse, 17, VIC



Employment and career goals

59%

"Job that I enjoy with a good income"

Male, 15, NSW



Family, relationships and connection

46%

"Have a happy family with kids and a husband"

Female, 16, VIC



Lifestyle and experiences

26%

"Have the ability to travel the world and have fun"

Female, 14, QLD



Physical and mental health

14%

"Maintaining long-term physical and mental health"

Female, 15, NSW



Education and learning

28%

"Graduating and getting into a good university"

Female, 15, NSW



Money, wealth and owning a home

45%

"For me and my family to be financially stable and never experience stress about money"

Male, 15, WA

KEY FINDINGS

Young people shared what's currently going well and where more support is needed across the biggest hope themes

Money, wealth and owning a home

One in five (19%) agreed *my family are often stressed about money*

15% reported experiencing at least one form of financial hardship, most commonly:

- 8% couldn't participate in activities, hobbies or groups
- 5% couldn't pay for school uniform, supplies, excursions or fees
- 5% couldn't pay for rent / mortgage

One in 25 (4%) felt stressed in the past year about *having somewhere to live*



Employment and career

Almost half (48%) were currently working

Top reasons for working:

- To save up money
- To pay for my own things
- To build my skills / experience



Family, relationships and connections

Friends (77%) and parents or guardians (76%) were the most helpful sources of support

Three in four (76%) agreed *I think I get along well with others*

While three in four (74%) said they are happy to live in their neighbourhood, only 35% feel connected to others there

31% have felt stressed in past year about *problems with friends* and 28% about *problems with family*

17% felt lonely *all or most of the time*



KEY FINDINGS

Young people also gave us a snapshot of their lives across the other hope themes

Education and learning

70% agreed *I have a teacher or adult at school I can reach out to for support when I need it*

62% agreed *I like my school*

26% faced barriers to achieving study or work goals—most commonly:

- low motivation
- lack of time or space to focus
- low self-confidence
- mental health issues

School / study problems was the top stressor in the past year



Lifestyle and experiences

Four in five (83%) participated in sports, activities or groups outside of school hours in the past year

30% experienced unfair treatment or discrimination in the past year

Participation in the past year:

- 54% *team sport*
- 37% *individual sport*



Purpose, values and big dreams

66% agreed *I can achieve my goals even if they are hard*

58% agreed *I feel good about myself*

Participation in the past year:

- 33% *volunteer work*
- 21% *church or other faith groups*



Physical and mental health

Young people felt stress in the past year about:

- *Mental health and wellbeing* 39%
- *Body image* 33%
- *Physical health* 21%

19% classified as having high psychological distress – expressing feelings of anxiety, depression or being overwhelmed





National results

- ▶ Profile of respondents
- ▶ National issues and personal stress
- ▶ Education and employment
- ▶ Financial situation
- ▶ Wellbeing
- ▶ Support and connectedness
- ▶ Unfair treatment and discrimination

National results

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

The *Mission Australia 2025 Youth Survey* was completed by **17,155 young people aged 14–19 years** across the country.

All data included in this report, including demographic information, has been weighted by state, gender and socio-economic advantage / disadvantage by area. Any historical data presented (data from 2024 and 2023) has also been weighted and may differ from previously reported unweighted data (applicable for 2023 data). See 'About the survey' section (page 69) for more information regarding our weighting method and base sizes by state.

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

The weighted **gender** breakdown among respondents was 50% male, 47% female, 2.2% gender diverse and 1.6% preferring not to say.

Around one in 18 (5.6%) respondents identified as **Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander**. Among this group, 87% identified as Aboriginal, 5.5% as Torres Strait Islander and 7.5% as identified as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Disability was reported by 10% of respondents, while 3.8% preferred not to say (refer Figure 1.2). The proportions varied by gender, with 49% of gender diverse young people identifying as having disability, compared to 10% of males and 8.6% of females. Among those with disability, the most common types were *psychosocial* (66%), *physical* (26%) and *intellectual* (26%) as shown in Figure 1.3.

Regarding **mental health**, 15% of respondents identified as living with a mental health condition, while 11% preferred not to say. Over half (56%) of gender diverse respondents reported a mental health condition, compared to 19% of females and 9.8% of males. The most frequently cited mental health conditions were anxiety disorders, depressive disorders and neurodevelopmental disorders which include ASD and ADHD.

In terms of **cultural heritage / ethnic background**, the majority of respondents (68%) identified with *European / Australian / New Zealander / British / Irish / North American / Russian* backgrounds as seen in Figure 1.4. Among the broader list of cultural groups, the most commonly selected included *South Asian* (10%), *East Asian* (9.8%), *Indigenous / Aboriginal Persons* (including First Nations and Māori) (6.7%), *Southeast Asian* (6.2%) and *African* (6.0%).

Over one quarter (26%) of respondents indicated they spoke a **language other than English at home**. The most common languages spoken were Chinese, Hindi, Arabic and Vietnamese.



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

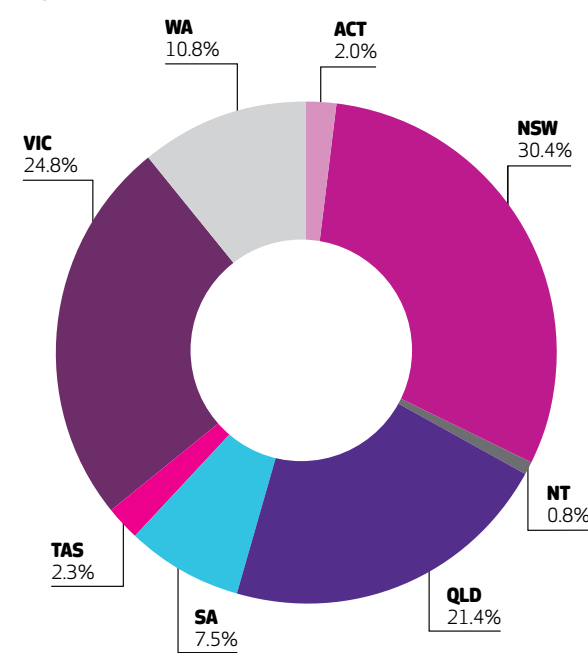
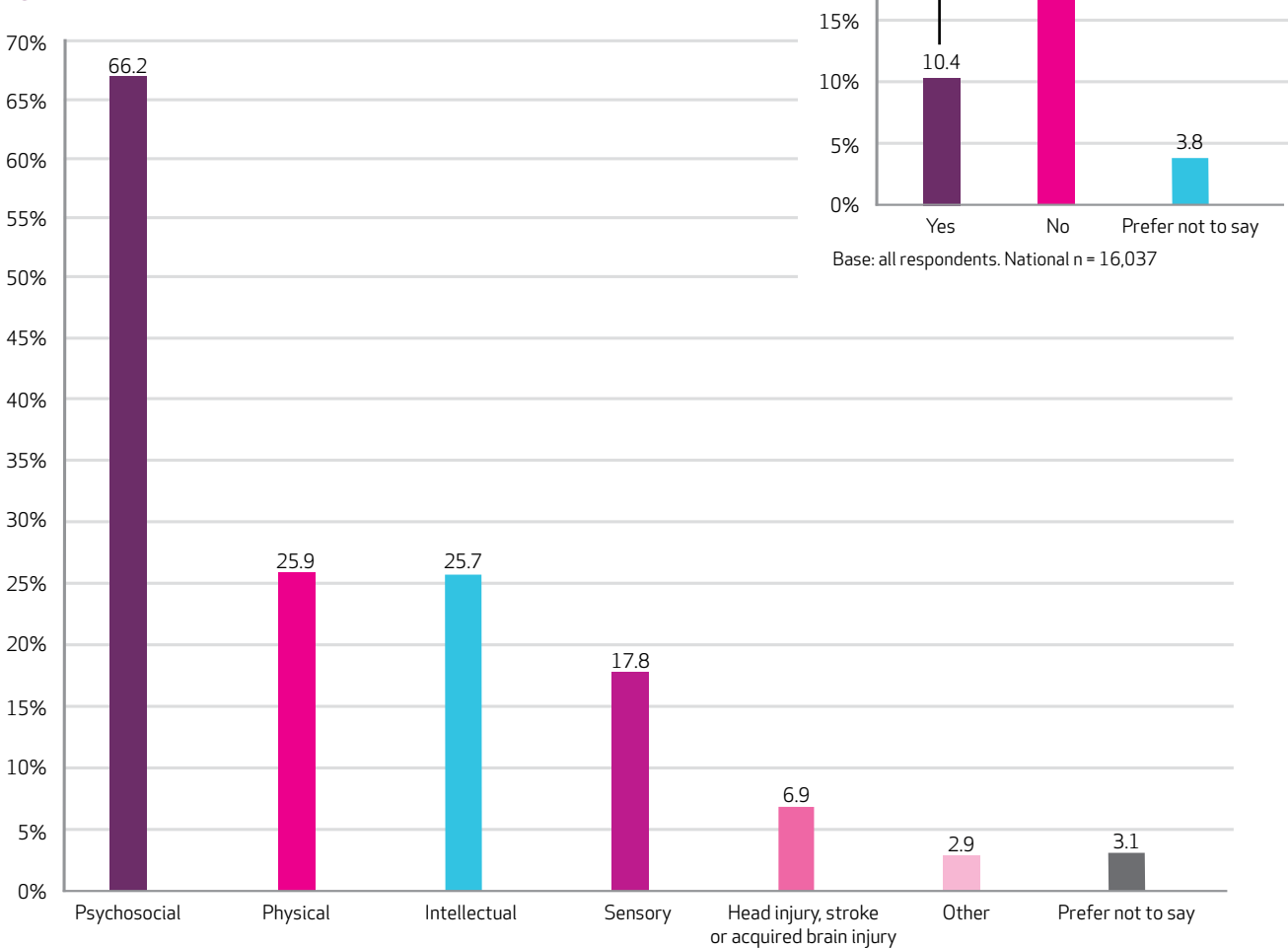


Figure 1.3: Proportion of respondents by disability type



Base: respondents who said they had a disability. National n = 1,660. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of frequency.

Figure 1.2: Proportion of respondents with disability

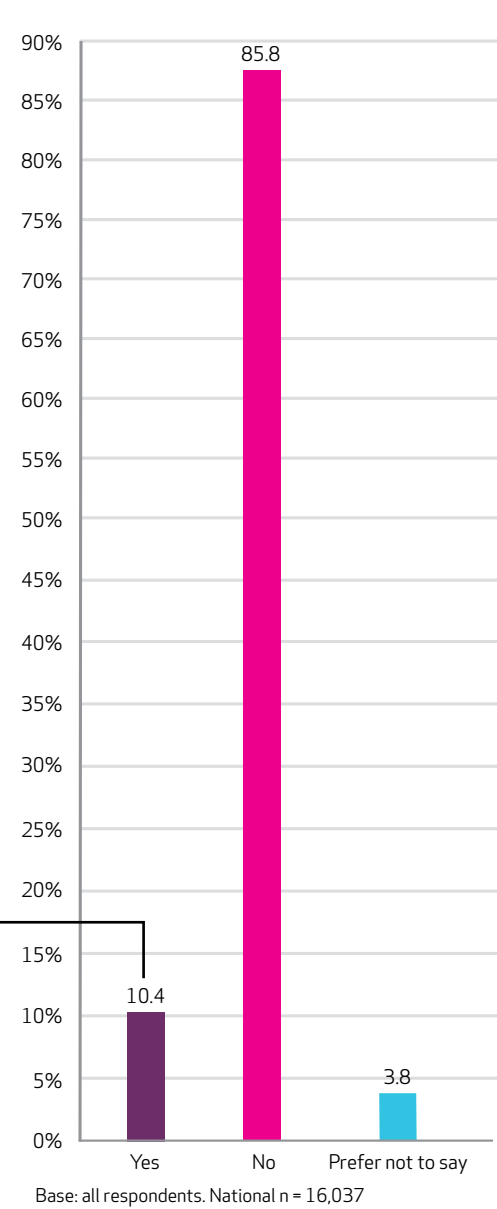
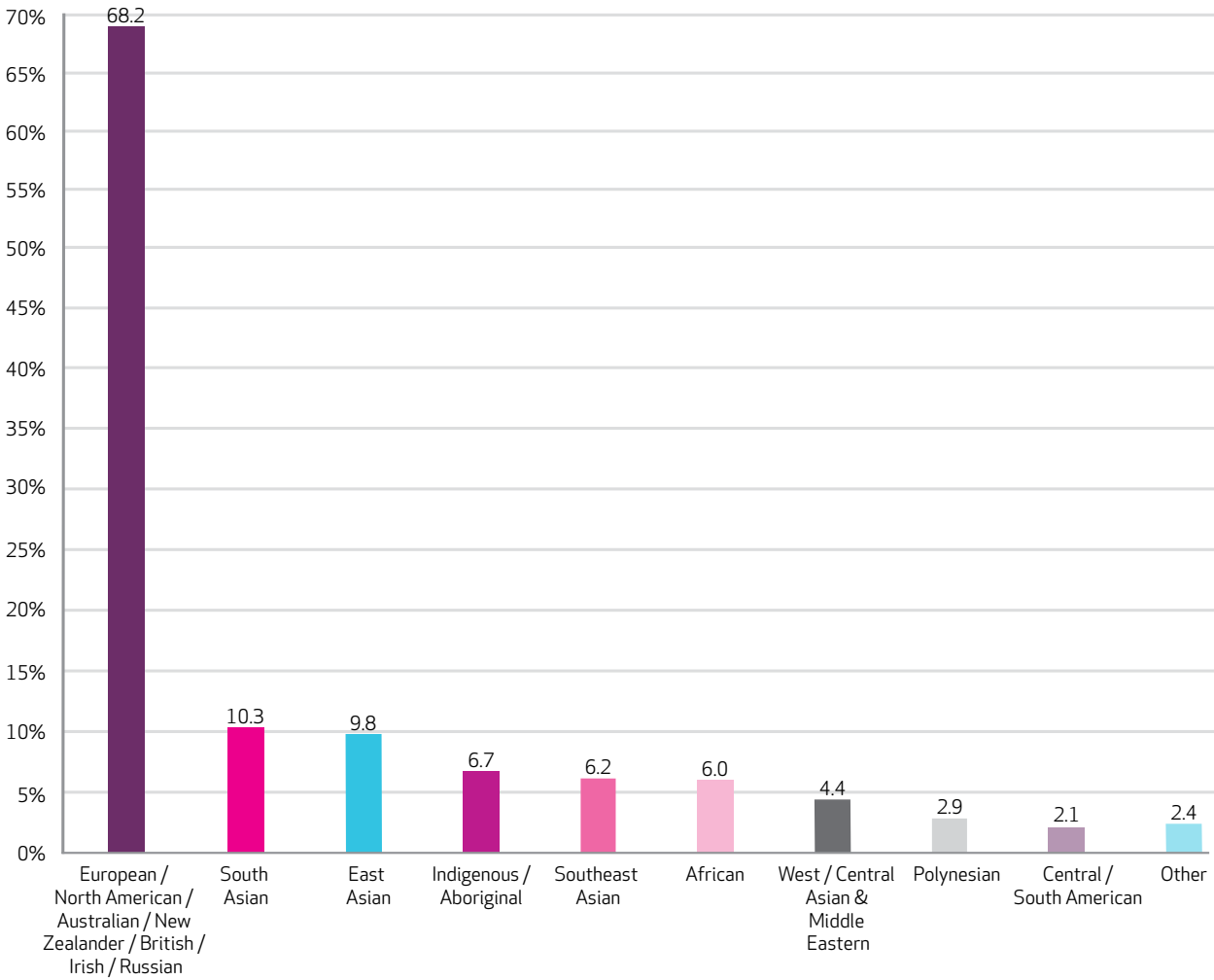


Figure 1.4: Proportion of respondents by cultural heritage / ethnic background



Base: all respondents. National n = 15,302. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. *Indigenous / Aboriginal* includes Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, First Nation and Māori peoples. Items are listed in order of frequency.



NATIONAL ISSUES AND PERSONAL STRESS

Young people were asked to list the three **most important issues in Australia today**. The open-ended responses were thematically analysed and listed in order of national frequency in Table 2.1. In 2025, cost of living remained the most important issue for young people in Australia, with 64% of respondents identifying it as a concern. This has increased from 56% in 2024 and 31% in 2023. Cost of living was the highest ranked issue across all gender groups: 66% of females, 63% of males and 61% of gender diverse respondents.

Mental health was the second most cited issue nationally (29%), with a notably higher proportion among females (36%) compared to gender diverse respondents (24%) and males (23%). Climate change and environment was third (27%), with a notably higher proportion among females (33%) and gender diverse respondents (31%) compared to males (22%).

Another prominent issue was housing and homelessness (25%), which increased from 17% in 2024. One in five (20%) mentioned violence, safety and crime as a national issue, and 13% of respondents wrote about the issue of discrimination and inequality.

Figure 2.1 looks at **sources of personal stress** over the past year. *School or study problems* was selected most often, affecting 58% of respondents. This was especially pronounced amongst females (70%) and gender diverse young people (61%) compared to males (46%). *Managing my time* was the second most common stressor (53%), again with higher rates amongst females (61%) and gender diverse respondents (56%) than males (45%).

Mental health and wellbeing was listed as a stressor by 39% of young people, with 74% of gender diverse respondents reporting it as a source of stress, the largest source of stress for the cohort. This was nearly triple the rate of males (26%) and higher than females (51%).

Interestingly, while cost of living was the top national issue at 64%, only 20% of respondents cited it as a personal stressor. This suggests that while many young people are aware of its societal impact, for some it may not have been one of their most immediate personal concerns in the past year.

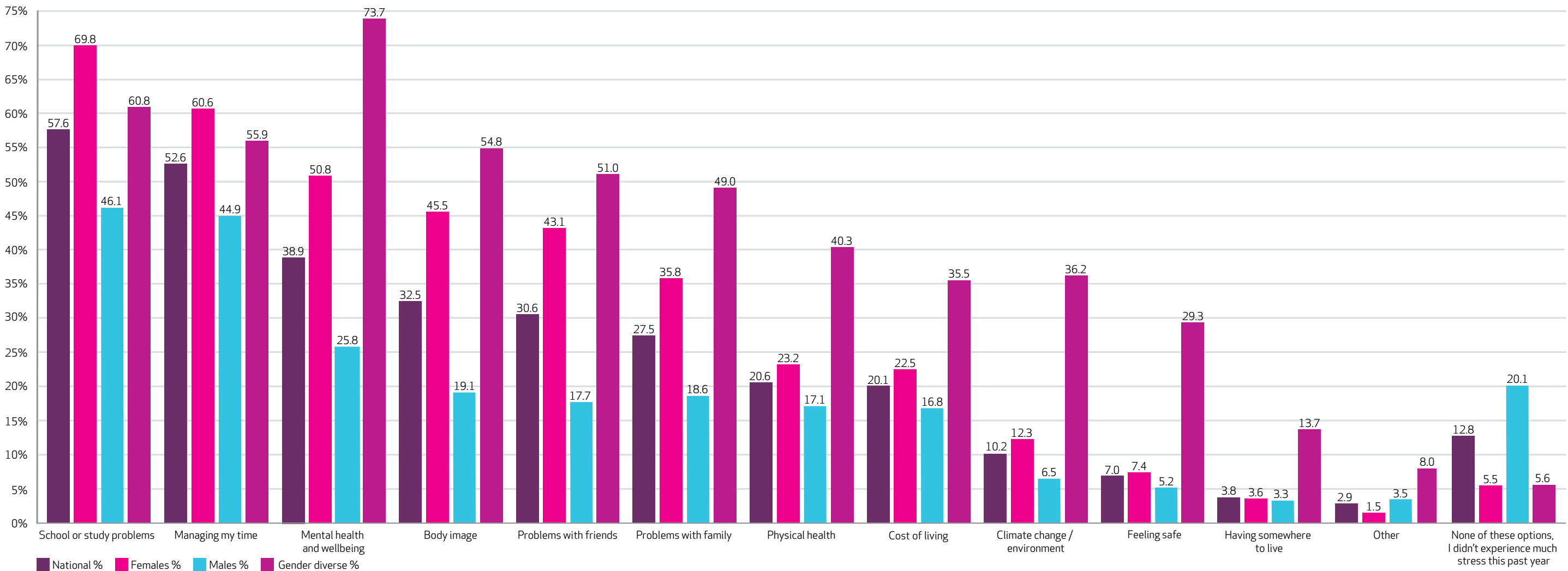
Table 2.1: Top 10 most important issues in Australia today

	National 2025 %	Females 2025 %	Males 2025 %	Gender diverse 2025 %	National 2024 %	National 2023 %
Cost of living	64.0	65.5	62.9	61.2	56.2	31.3
Mental health	28.7	35.5	22.8	24.2	23.3	29.4
Climate change and environment	27.3	33.4	21.6	31.4	26.6	38.0
Housing and homelessness	24.7	22.5	26.8	25.6	17.0	18.1
Violence, safety and crime	19.7	22.4	17.9	12.7	25.3	18.2
Discrimination and inequality	13.1	15.1	10.6	23.2	21.7	28.9
Education	9.6	11.2	8.3	8.5	7.5	8.0
Societal matters	7.8	7.6	8.2	7.8	4.7	3.5
Global affairs	7.6	3.8	11.0	7.7	7.1	2.7
Bullying	7.2	9.1	5.5	4.3	5.2	5.9

Base: all respondents. National n = 15,034, females n = 7,064, males n = 7,359, gender diverse n = 344. Note: respondents were able to write up to three issues which have been categorised into key themes. Items are listed in order of 2025 national frequency. National 2024 n = 15,044 and National 2023 n = 15,266. Labels describing some issues were updated in 2024 to better reflect contemporary language so care needs to be taken when comparing with 2023 results.

“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is to) have enough money to afford the things I enjoy.”
Female, 14, Queensland

Figure 2.1: Issues that made young people feel stressed in the past year



Base: all respondents. National n = 16,820, females n = 7,908, males n = 8,252, gender diverse n = 369. Note: respondents were able to choose as many issues that applied. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

"(One of my biggest hopes for my future is to) achieve outstanding scores in senior studies."
Female, 15, Australian Capital Territory



EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

In the survey, young people were asked about their education status, school experiences, employment and any barriers they faced in pursuing study or work goals.

Almost all respondents (99%) reported being **students** as shown in Table 3.1. Among those still at school, 95% intended to **complete Year 12**. However, 7.6% of gender diverse respondents and 6.4% of males said they did not plan to finish, compared to 2.2% of females.

Many young people reported positive experiences when asked about their **feelings about their school** (see Table 3.2):

- 84% felt safe travelling to and from school
- Almost eight in ten (79%) young people felt safe at school
- Seven in ten (70%) respondents said there was a teacher or another adult they could reach out to for support when needed
- Around six in ten (62%) young people said they liked their school
- Almost six in ten (59%) young people agreed that teachers and students treat each other with respect

As shown in Figure 3.1, the three most common **reasons for missing days at school** were being sick (80%), appointments (56%) and family holidays or fun activities (31%). Mental health was a notable factor, with 18% citing anxiety, depression or mental health issues. This was especially high among gender diverse respondents (52%) and females (25%), compared to males (9.4%).

When asked about **paid work** (see Table 3.3), nearly half (48%) of respondents reported being employed, with 0.8% *employed full-time* and 47% *employed part-time*. A further 32% were *looking for work* and 21% were *not looking for work*.

As shown in Figure 3.2, the top four **reasons for working** were: to *save up money* (89%), to pay for personal items (74%), to *build skills and experience* (51%) and to *do fun activities* (47%).

When asked whether there was anything stopping them from achieving study or work goals (see Table 3.4), 64% of respondents said *no*, while 9.8% reported not having any study or work goals. More gender diverse (17%) and male (10%) respondents said they had no goals compared to females (8.5%). One quarter (26%) of respondents reported facing **barriers to achieving their study or work goals**. This was higher among gender diverse respondents (49%) and females (30%), compared to males (20%). The most common barriers were: lack of motivation (66%), lack of time or space (41%), lack of confidence (39%) and mental health issues (34%). Mental health was a particularly strong barrier for gender diverse respondents (76% compared to 39% of females and 23% of males). Refer to Figure 3.3.

Table 3.1: Participation in education

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Yes, I'm a student	98.7	99.1	98.5	95.2
No, I'm not a student	1.3	0.9	1.5	4.8

Base: all respondents. National n = 16,954, females n = 7,900, males n = 8,390, gender diverse n = 368.

Table 3.2: Feelings young people have about their school

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
I feel safe travelling to and from school				
Strongly agree / agree	84.4	83.8	86.9	62.9
Mixed feelings	11.5	12.3	9.8	22.5
Disagree / strongly disagree	4.1	3.9	3.4	14.5
I feel safe at school				
Strongly agree / agree	79.4	79.4	81.6	50.8
Mixed feelings	15.1	15.7	13.4	28.2
Disagree / strongly disagree	5.6	4.9	5.0	21.0
There is a teacher or another adult at my school who I can reach out to for support when I need it				
Strongly agree / agree	70.1	70.9	70.7	59.2
Mixed feelings	19.6	19.9	18.8	19.6
Disagree / strongly disagree	10.3	9.2	10.5	21.2
I like my school				
Strongly agree / agree	61.6	59.2	65.2	48.7
Mixed feelings	26.5	29.1	23.9	25.0
Disagree / strongly disagree	11.9	11.6	10.9	26.3
Teachers and students treat each other with respect at my school				
Strongly agree / agree	58.9	56.9	62.3	38.4
Mixed feelings	29.8	32.4	26.8	35.6
Disagree / strongly disagree	11.4	10.7	10.9	26.0

Base: respondents studying at school or equivalent. Items are listed in order of national respondents' 'Strongly agree / agree' frequency. Note: sample sizes vary per statement.

“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is) seeing students going to school and feeling safe and respected.”
Female, 14, Western Australia

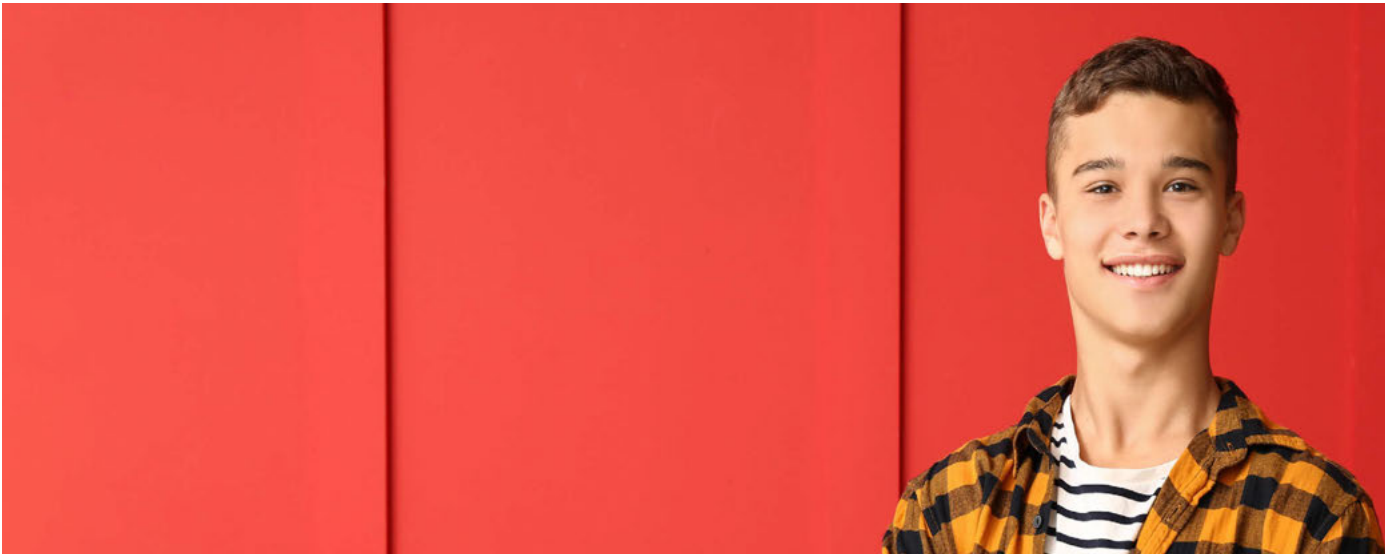
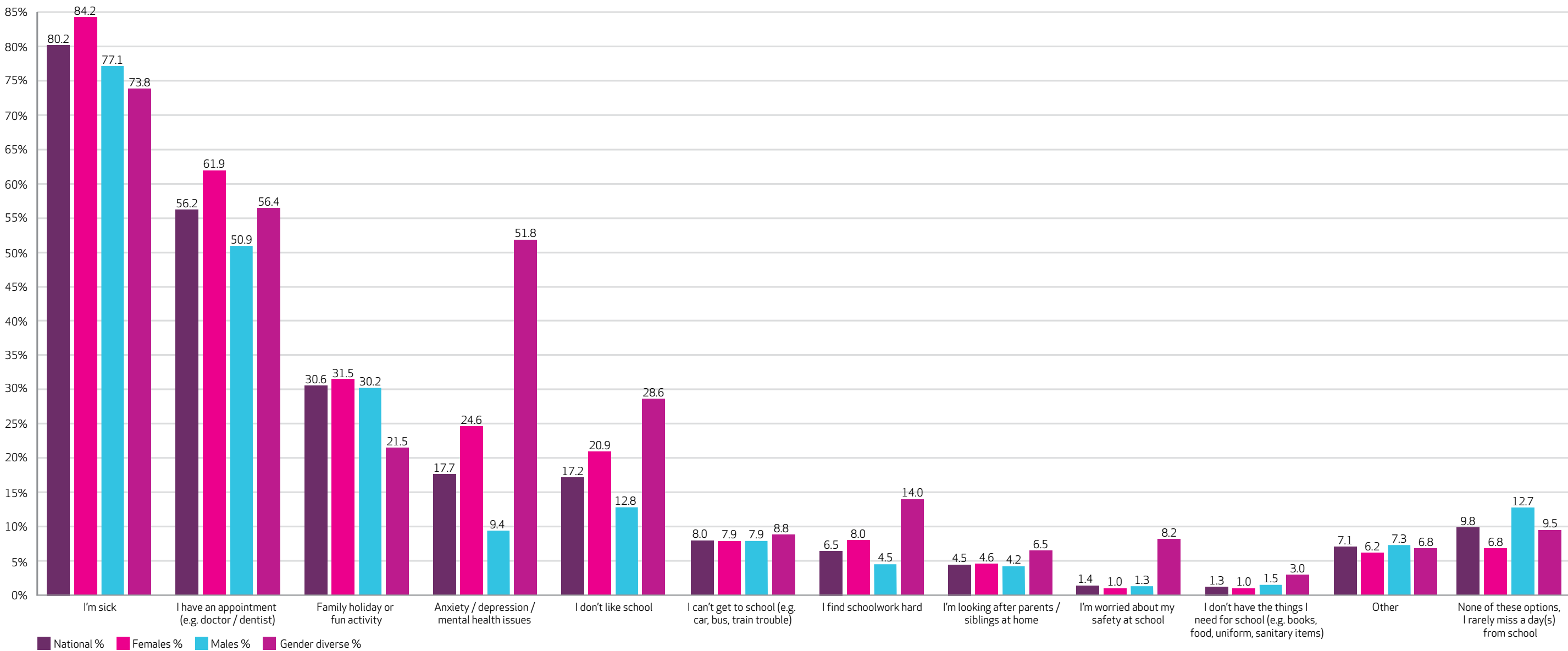


Figure 3.1: Reasons young people miss days at school



Base: respondents studying at school or equivalent. National n = 15,742, females n = 7,489, males n = 7,662, gender diverse n = 324. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

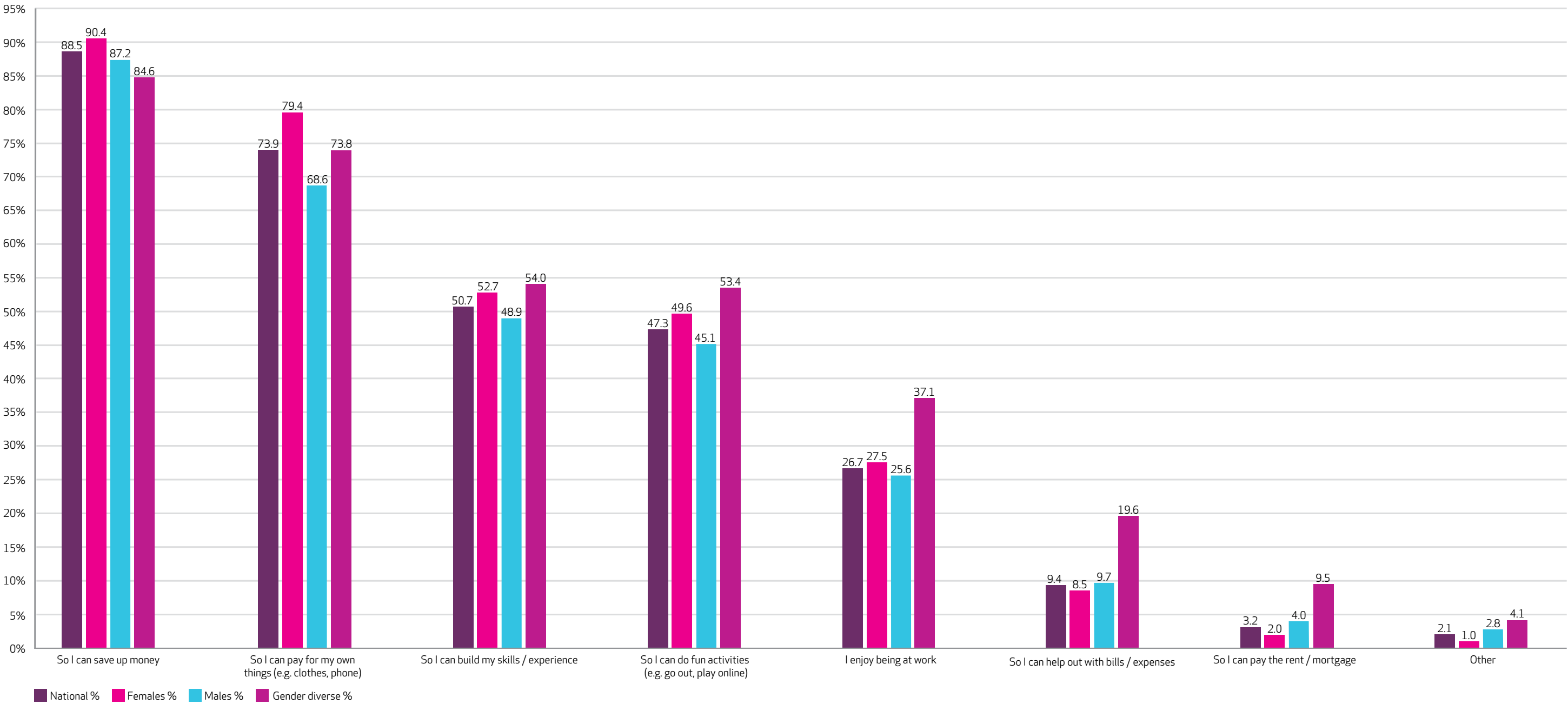


Table 3.3: Participation in paid work

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Looking for work	31.8	30.0	33.5	34.8
Not looking for work	20.5	20.5	19.8	32.5
Employed part-time	46.8	49.3	45.5	30.1
Employed full-time	0.8	0.2	1.3	2.7

Base: all respondents. National n = 16,616, females n = 7,777, males n = 8,184, gender diverse n = 364.

Figure 3.2: Reasons for working



Base: respondents in paid employment. National n = 8,045, females n = 3,915, males n = 3,881, gender diverse n = 122. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.



“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is) save enough money to do something big (holiday / weekend get away etc.).”

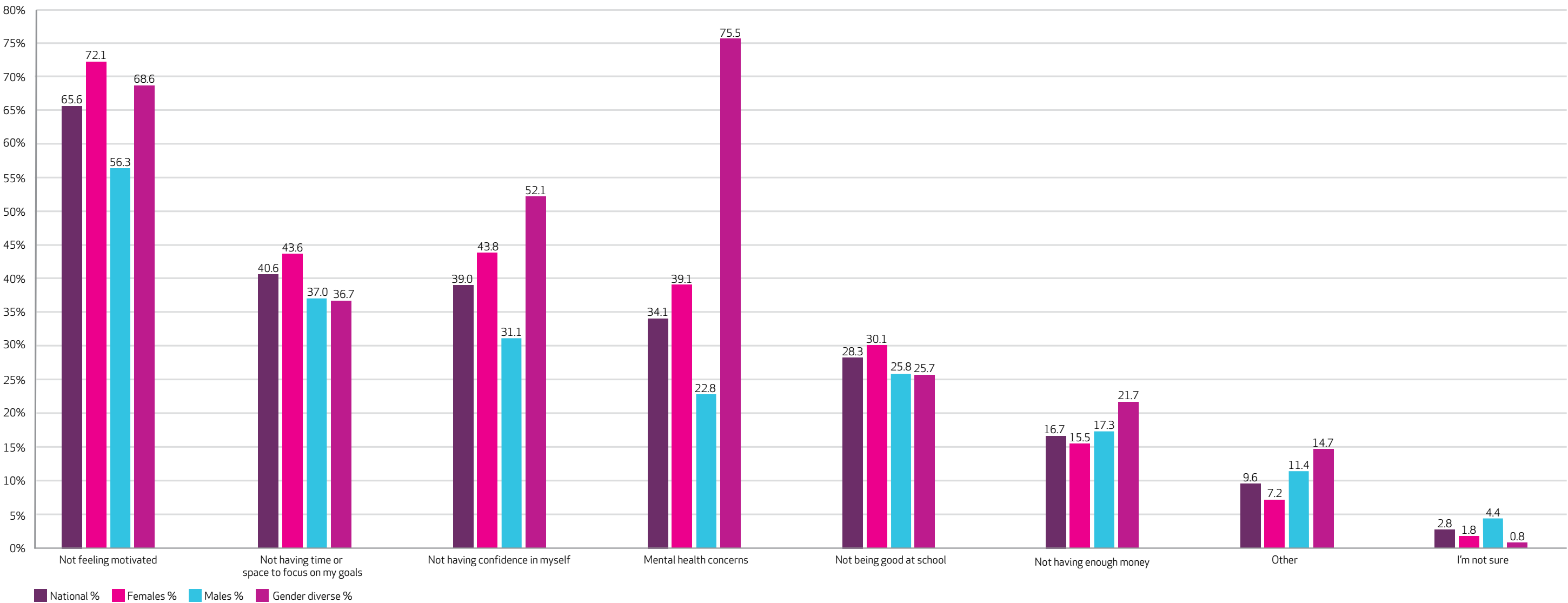
Female, 16, Tasmania

Table 3.4. Are there any barriers to young people achieving their goals

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Yes	25.8	30.4	20.0	48.8
No	64.4	61.2	69.7	33.9
I don't have any study / work goals	9.8	8.5	10.3	17.3

Base: all respondents. National n = 16,904, females n = 7,899, males n = 8,344, gender diverse n = 368.

Figure 3.3: Barriers to achieving goals



Base: respondents who said there were barriers to achieving goals. National n = 4,320, females n = 2,386, males n = 1,650, gender diverse n = 179. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is) to get motivation to study.”
Gender diverse, 17, Victoria



FINANCIAL SITUATION

This section examines young peoples' experiences of financial hardship, their perceptions of money-related stress, and the extent to which they or their families received financial support.

More than one in seven young people (15%) reported experiencing at least one form of **financial hardship**. As shown in Table 4.1, the most common financial hardships were being unable to: participate in activities, hobbies or groups (7.9%), pay for school uniform, supplies, excursions or fees (5.2%) and pay rent / mortgage (4.5%).

Gender diverse young people were more likely than both females and males to experience every listed form of financial hardship. The top statements selected by gender diverse young people were *couldn't participate in activities, hobbies or groups* (18%), *couldn't access mental health supports* (17%) and *missed at least one meal in the day* (15%).

Regarding **feelings about money**, almost one in five (19%) respondents agreed that their family is often stressed about money, while close to one in 10 (9.0%) agreed that they miss out on doing things with their friends due to affordability (see Figure 4.1). Over one quarter (27%) of young people agreed that their parents or caregivers share money concerns with them.

Around one in seven young people (14%) said that they and / or their family had **received financial support** in the past year from government allowance, family and friends and / or charities or foundations. More than one quarter (27%) of gender diverse young people had received financial support from one of these sources compared to 15% of females and 12% of males. As shown in Table 4.2, over half (53%) of young people indicated they did not require financial support, while another 2.5% required support but did not receive it. Three in 10 (30%) young people were unsure if they and / or their family received financial support. This proportion was higher among males (34%) compared to gender diverse young people (29%) and females (27%).

Table 4.1: Experiences of financial hardship

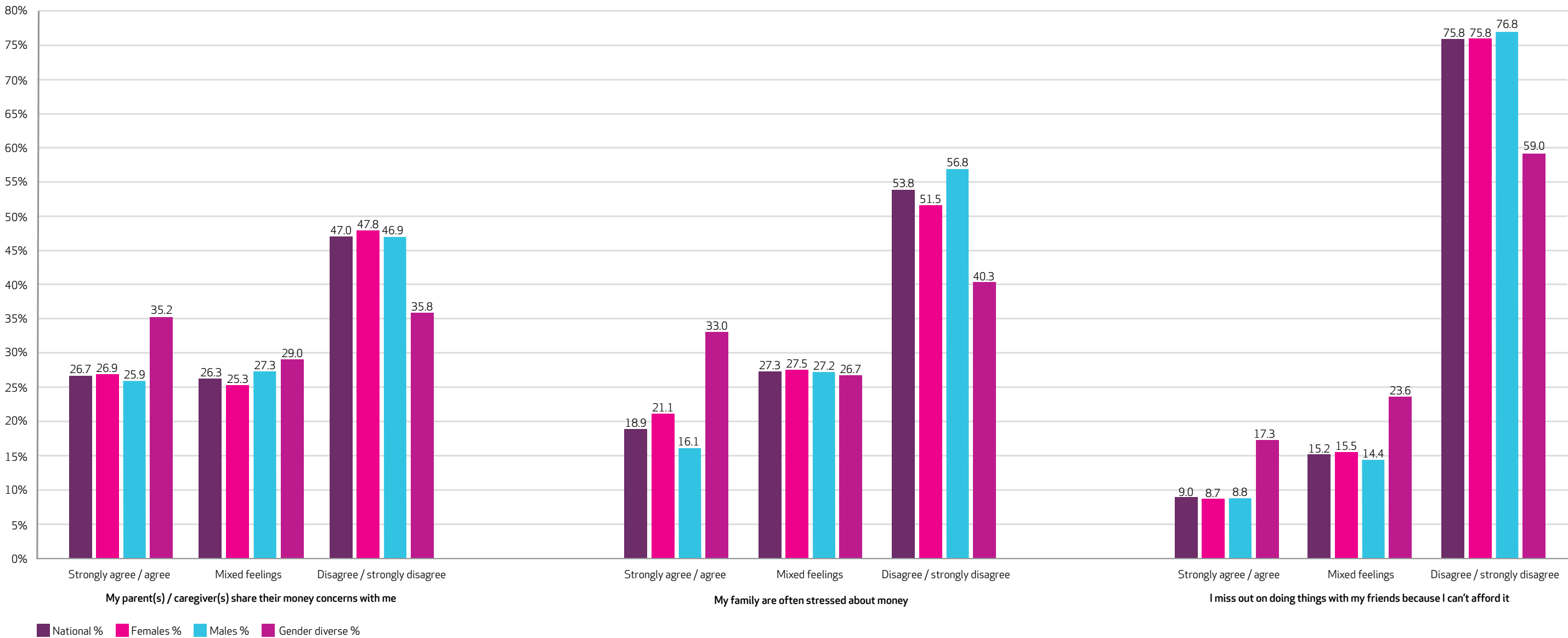
	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Couldn't participate in activities, hobbies or groups	7.9	9.3	6.0	18.0
Couldn't pay for school uniform, supplies, excursions or fees	5.2	5.8	4.3	10.8
Couldn't pay rent / mortgage	4.5	5.0	3.7	9.4
Missed at least one meal in the day	4.3	3.6	4.4	14.8
Couldn't buy clothes / other essential items	4.1	4.3	3.4	13.2
Couldn't access mental health support(s)	3.6	4.2	2.3	16.7
Couldn't get medical treatment / medicine	3.2	3.8	2.3	9.8
Other	0.9	0.3	1.0	3.2
I'm not sure	11.3	10.9	11.0	20.8
No, none of these options	73.4	73.2	75.6	43.8

Base: all respondents. National n = 16,253, females n = 7,693, males n = 7,943, gender diverse n = 347. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is) living comfortably so that I can pursue my hobbies.”
Gender diverse, 15, Victoria



Figure 4.1: Feelings young people have about money



Base: all respondents. Items are listed in order of national respondents' 'Strongly agree / agree' frequency. Note: sample sizes vary per statement.

"(One of my biggest hopes for my future is) being able to see my family not concerned about money."
Male, 16, South Australia



Table 4.2: Financial support received in the past year for young person and / or their family

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Yes, from government allowance	8.6	9.9	6.9	18.9
Yes, from family and / or friends	6.9	7.5	6.1	10.5
Yes, from a charity or foundation (e.g., Mission Australia, The Salvation Army etc)	1.3	1.2	1.3	3.8
No, but I / we needed financial support	2.5	2.1	2.7	4.2
No, I / we didn't need financial support	53.2	55.7	51.7	39.5
I'm not sure	30.3	26.8	33.7	29.0

Base: all respondents. National n = 16,400, females n = 7,750, males n = 8,026, gender diverse n = 351. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option ('yes' options only).



WELLBEING

Young people shared their experiences and perspectives on wellbeing, including happiness, hopes for the future, feelings of control, loneliness, psychological distress and self-identity. For questions that have been consistent over time, we were able to compare responses from 2023 and 2024 (weighted data) and observed positive shifts across several wellbeing indicators.

When asked about their **level of happiness with life as a whole**, 63% of young people reported feeling *very happy* or *happy*. As shown in Figure 5.1, this proportion was higher amongst males (69%) than females (60%) and gender diverse respondents (25%). Gender diverse respondents more often reported feeling *sad* or *very sad* (35%) compared to females (7.4%) and males (6.4%).

Young people were asked about their **biggest hopes for the future**, and the responses were subsequently coded into themes as shown in Figure 5.2. The most common theme was employment and career goals (59%), followed by family, relationships and connections (46%) and money, wealth and owning a home (45%). Females more frequently mentioned hopes for their education and learning (33% compared to 23% of males and 21% of gender diverse young people) and family, relationships and connections (51% compared to 43% of males and 32% of gender diverse respondents). Gender diverse respondents more often highlighted purpose, values and big dreams (34%) than males (27%) and females (26%), while a higher proportion of males had hopes related to money, wealth and owning a home (47%) compared females (43%) and gender diverse young people (38%).

When asked to describe their **feelings about the future**, close to three in five (58%) respondents were *very positive* or *positive*, as shown in Table 5.1. This is an increase from recent years (47% in 2024 and 50% in 2023).

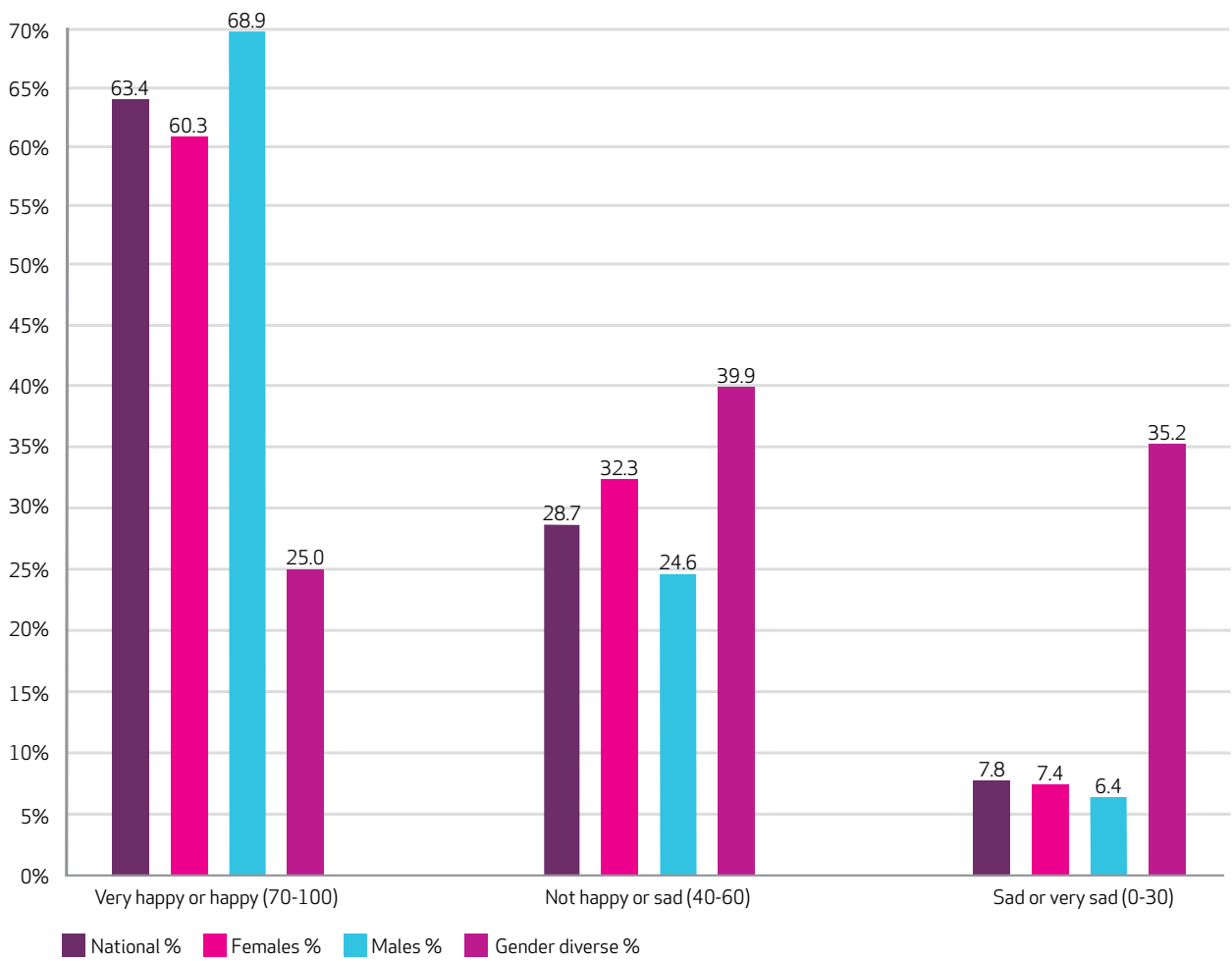
In terms of **control over their lives**, as shown in Table 5.2, two thirds (67%) of young people felt completely / mostly in control. This has increased since 2023 and 2024, when it was 56%. In 2025, gender diverse respondents more often reported feeling *almost no control* or *no control* (26% compared to 5.9% of females and 4.7% of males) over their lives.

When asked about their **level of loneliness in the past four weeks** (see Table 5.3), over half of respondents (55%) reported feeling lonely *none of the time* or *a little of the time*. This is a positive movement from 2024 (51%) and 2023 (48%). A higher proportion of males reported feeling lonely *none of the time* (29% compared to 18% of females and 12% of gender diverse young people). Gender diverse respondents reported higher levels of loneliness, with 43% feeling lonely *most of the time* or *all of the time* compared to females (18%) and males (14%).

One in five (19%) young people scored in the high **psychological distress range**, down from 25% in 2023. This is a measure of how frequently symptoms of anxiety and depression were experienced over the past four weeks. Levels of psychological distress varied across gender groups. More males reported low distress (65%) compared to females (45%) and gender diverse respondents (22%). Close to three in five (56%) gender diverse respondents experienced high psychological distress, compared to 24% of females and 13% of males (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.5 shows statements around **self-identity** and the level of agreement young people had with them. When reflecting on their feelings about themselves, most young people felt positively: 76% agreed they get along with others and 72% felt they could deal with things that happen in their life. Males and females reported higher levels of agreement with every statement compared to gender diverse respondents. More than two in five (43%) gender diverse young people disagreed with the statement *I feel good about myself* (compared to 15% females and 10% males) and 38% disagreed with *I'm able to do things as well as most other people* (compared to 11% of females and 8.1% males).

Figure 5.1: Level of happiness with their life as a whole



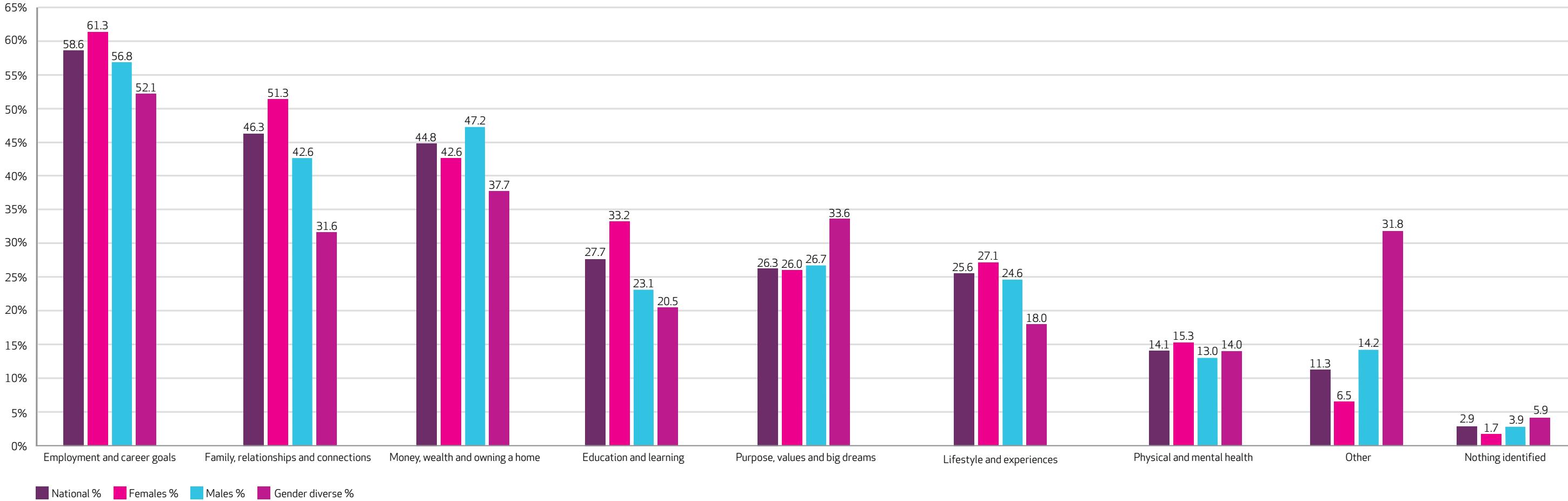
Base: all respondents. National n = 16,601, females n = 7,842, males n = 8,136, gender diverse n = 346. Note: respondents were asked to rate how happy they are with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes very happy or happy; 40-60 signifies not happy or sad; and 0-30 indicates sad or very sad.

"(One of my biggest hopes for my future is) to be happy all my life."

Male, 15, New South Wales



Figure 5.2: Biggest hopes for the future



Base: all respondents. National n = 15,433, females n = 7,354, males n = 7,484, gender diverse n = 333. Note: respondents were able to write up to three responses which have been categorised into key themes. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is) a positive outlook on life.”

Female, 16, South Australia

“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is) to achieve my dreams in my dream career.”

Gender diverse, 17, Australian Capital Territory

Table 5.1: Feelings about the future

	National 2025 %	Females 2025 %	Males 2025 %	Gender diverse 2025 %	National 2024 %	National 2023 %
Very positive or positive	57.9	57.8	60.0	28.7	47.1	49.6
Neither positive nor negative	30.6	32.3	28.9	32.2	34.2	34.0
Negative or very negative	11.5	10.0	11.1	39.1	18.7	16.4

Base: all respondents. 2025: National n = 16,255, females n = 7,686, males n = 7,945, gender diverse n = 351. 2024: National n = 16,930. 2023: National n = 18,889.

Table 5.2: Level of control over their life

	National 2025 %	Females 2025 %	Males 2025 %	Gender diverse 2025 %	National 2024 %	National 2023 %
Complete control	11.3	7.8	14.8	12.0	9.8	10.2
Mostly in control	55.2	56.5	55.7	28.2	46.6	45.3
Some control	27.4	29.8	24.7	34.1	33.2	33.6
Almost no control	4.8	5.1	3.6	17.7	8.3	8.3
No control	1.3	0.8	1.1	7.9	2.0	2.5

Base: all respondents. 2025: National n = 16,220, females n = 7,669, males n = 7,929, gender diverse n = 351. 2024: National n = 16,889. 2023: National n = 18,936.

Table 5.3: Level of loneliness in the past four weeks

	National 2025 %	Females 2025 %	Males 2025 %	Gender diverse 2025 %	National 2024 %	National 2023 %
None of the time	22.9	17.9	28.5	11.5	21.5	18.5
A little of the time	32.3	32.4	33.3	14.4	29.2	29.9
Some of the time	28.1	31.7	24.5	30.8	28.5	29.7
Most of the time	13.2	15.0	10.5	26.1	15.8	17.2
All of the time	3.6	3.1	3.1	17.2	4.9	4.7

Base: all respondents. 2025: National n = 16,231, females n = 7,679, males n = 7,929, gender diverse n = 349. 2024: National n = 16,932. 2023: National n = 18,937.

Table 5.4: Level of psychological distress

	National 2025 %	Females 2025 %	Males 2025 %	Gender diverse 2025 %	National 2024 %	National 2023 %
Low psychological distress	54.1	45.1	64.8	22.3	50.1	47.2
Moderate psychological distress	26.5	30.8	22.5	21.5	28.3	27.9
High psychological distress	19.4	24.1	12.7	56.2	21.6	24.9

Base: all respondents. 2025: National n = 15,761, females n = 7,462, males n = 7,702, gender diverse n = 337. 2024: National n = 16,628. 2023: National n = 18,462. 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).

Table 5.5: Feelings young people have about themselves

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
I think I get along with others				
Strongly agree / agree	75.5	76.6	76.3	49.2
Mixed feelings	19.3	19.2	18.5	30.0
Disagree / strongly disagree	5.2	4.2	5.2	20.8
I can deal with things that happen in my life				
Strongly agree / agree	72.1	68.9	77.7	38.5
Mixed feelings	22.4	25.4	18.3	35.8
Disagree / strongly disagree	5.5	5.7	3.9	25.8
I can achieve my goals even if they are hard				
Strongly agree / agree	65.8	61.2	72.3	39.2
Mixed feelings	27.7	32.2	22.4	38.9
Disagree / strongly disagree	6.5	6.6	5.2	21.9
I am able to do things as well as most other people				
Strongly agree / agree	65.6	62.4	71.0	35.4
Mixed feelings	23.9	26.5	20.9	27.2
Disagree / strongly disagree	10.5	11.2	8.1	37.5
I feel good about myself				
Strongly agree / agree	58.2	51.8	66.6	25.4
Mixed feelings	28.3	33.1	23.4	31.4
Disagree / strongly disagree	13.5	15.1	10.0	43.2

Base: all respondents. Items are listed in order of national respondents' 'Strongly agree / agree' frequency. Note: sample sizes vary per statement.



SUPPORT AND CONNECTEDNESS

This section explores the sources of support young people find helpful, their feelings about seeking help and their experiences of connection within their families and communities.

Young people were asked about **sources of support** and if they were helpful or not helpful (see Figure 6.1). They most commonly selected *friends* (77%) and *parent(s) or guardian(s)* (76%) as helpful sources of support. Other frequently selected helpful sources included *pet(s)* (56%), the *internet* (54%) and *other family members* (54%). Gender differences (see Tables 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3) were notable:

- Females more frequently selected *friends* (82% compared to 74% of males and 64% of gender diverse respondents) and *siblings* (50% compared to 48% of males and 27% of gender diverse respondents) as helpful sources of support.
- Males more often rated *parent(s) or guardian(s)* (79% compared to 75% of females and 47% of gender diverse young people), *other family members* (58% compared to 52% of females and 26% of gender diverse respondents) and *spiritual or religious mentors* (23% compared to 18% of females and 9.4% of gender diverse young people) as helpful.

When asked about **feelings about seeking support** (see Figure 6.2), three quarters (75%) of young people agreed that they had someone to turn to when they were unsure about important decisions in their life. More than half of young people (52%) preferred to tackle issues on their own and not seek support from others.

Most young people (81%) rated their **family's ability to get along with each other** as *excellent* (21%), *very good* (34%) or *good* (26%) as shown in Table 6.4. In 2025, respondents rated their family's ability to get along more positively than in recent years (74% in 2024 and 75% in 2023 rating *excellent*, *very good* or *good*). Males were more likely to rate their family's ability to get along with each other as *excellent* (24% compared to 19% of females and 14% of gender diverse young people) or *very good* (36% compared to 33% of females and 18% of gender diverse young people), while gender diverse respondents were more likely to rate their family relationships as *fair* (25% compared to 15% of females and 11% of males) or *poor* (15% compared to 6.1% of females and 3.5% of males).

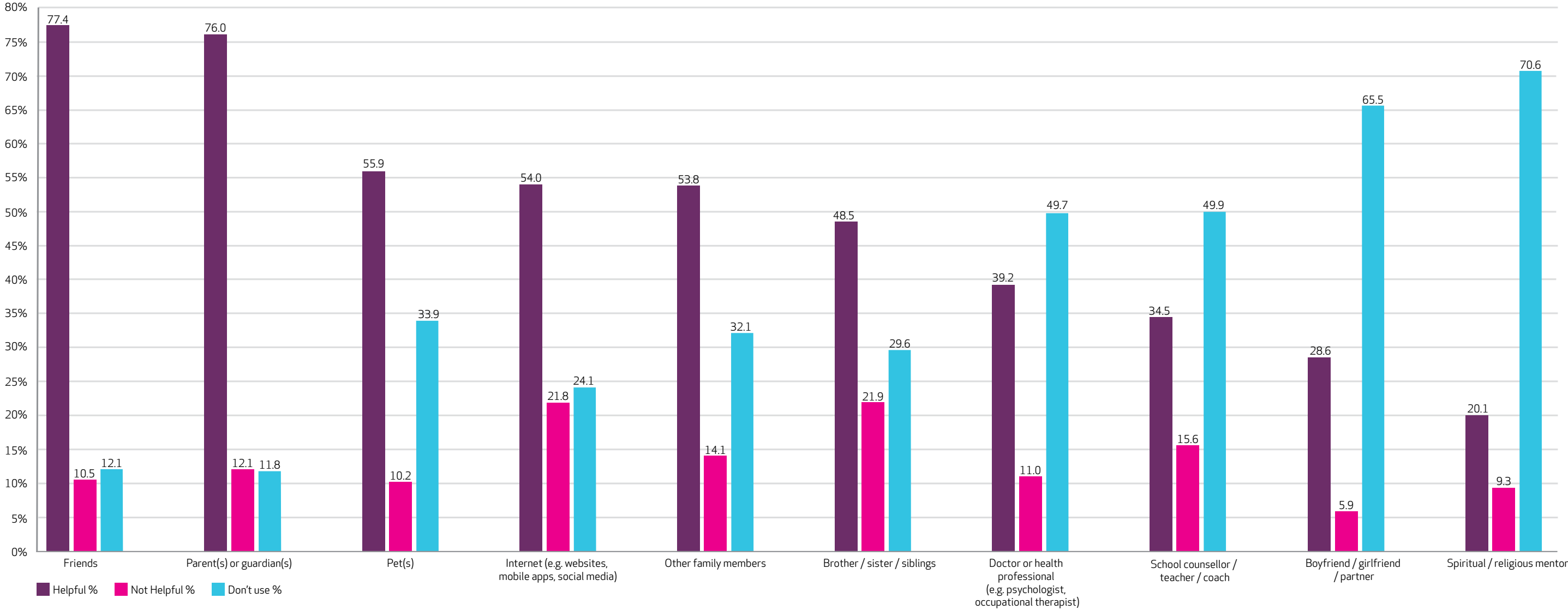
When asked about **neighbourhood connection** (see Table 6.5), around three quarters of young people said that they felt happy (74%) and safe (73%) in their neighbourhood. Just over half (54%) of young people agreed that their neighbourhood had the things they needed for a positive and thriving future and felt proud to be part of their neighbourhood. By contrast, only 35% of young people agreed that they felt connected to the people in their neighbourhood and around one in five (21%) felt they had a say in what goes on in their neighbourhood.

Young people were also asked about **activities they find easy to do** (refer to Table 6.6). Most found it easy to *do things in public places with friends* (88%), *travel around the community* (87%), *make choices and feel independent* (86%) and *do everyday activities* (84%). Just over half (52%) of respondents said they found it easy to turn to services or organisations for help. Compared to males and females, gender diverse young people were less likely to say they could easily do these things.

When asked about **community participation outside normal school hours**, the most common activities were *team sport* (54%), *individual sport* (37%) and *volunteer work* (33%). As shown in Figure 6.3, 17% of respondents reported that they did not participate in any of these activities outside of school hours in the past year. Males were more likely to take part in *team sport* (58% compared to 51% of females and 22% of gender diverse young people) or *individual sport* (41% compared to 33% of females and 18% of gender diverse respondents), while females were more likely to do *volunteer work* (38% compared to 29% of males and 26% of gender diverse young people) or participate in *church or other faith groups* (22% compared to 20% of males and 15% of gender diverse young people). Gender diverse respondents were more likely to engage in *art, music or performance lessons* (36% compared to 29% of females and 18% of males) and *clubs or groups* (35% compared to 26% of females and 25% of males).



Figure 6.1: Sources of support by helpfulness



Base: all respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per support source. Items are listed in order of frequency based on helpfulness.

Table 6.1: Sources of support by helpfulness for females

Females	Helpful %	Not helpful %	Don't use %
Friends	81.8	9.2	9.0
Parent(s) or guardian(s)	75.2	13.7	11.2
Pet(s)	59.6	8.7	31.7
Internet (e.g. websites, mobile apps, social media)	54.5	23.0	22.5
Other family members	51.8	14.4	33.8
Brother / sister / siblings	50.4	21.9	27.7
Doctor or health professional (e.g. psychologist, occupational therapist)	39.6	10.6	49.7
School counsellor / teacher / coach	34.6	15.9	49.5
Boyfriend / girlfriend / partner	26.4	5.5	68.2
Spiritual / religious mentor	17.7	8.6	73.7

Base: all female respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per support source. Items are listed in order of frequency based on helpfulness.

“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is to) have a strong relationship with family and friends.”
Female, 14, Western Australia

Table 6.2: Sources of support by helpfulness for males

Males	Helpful %	Not helpful %	Don't use %
Parent(s) or guardian(s)	79.0	9.4	11.6
Friends	74.2	11.3	14.5
Other family members	57.6	13.0	29.5
Internet (e.g. websites, mobile apps, social media)	53.6	20.4	25.9
Pet(s)	52.4	11.5	36.1
Brother / sister / siblings	48.2	21.1	30.8
Doctor or health professional (e.g. psychologist, occupational therapist)	38.7	10.8	50.5
School counsellor / teacher / coach	34.9	14.6	50.5
Boyfriend / girlfriend / partner	30.8	5.8	63.4
Spiritual / religious mentor	22.9	9.4	67.7

Base: all male respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per support source. Items are listed in order of frequency based on helpfulness.

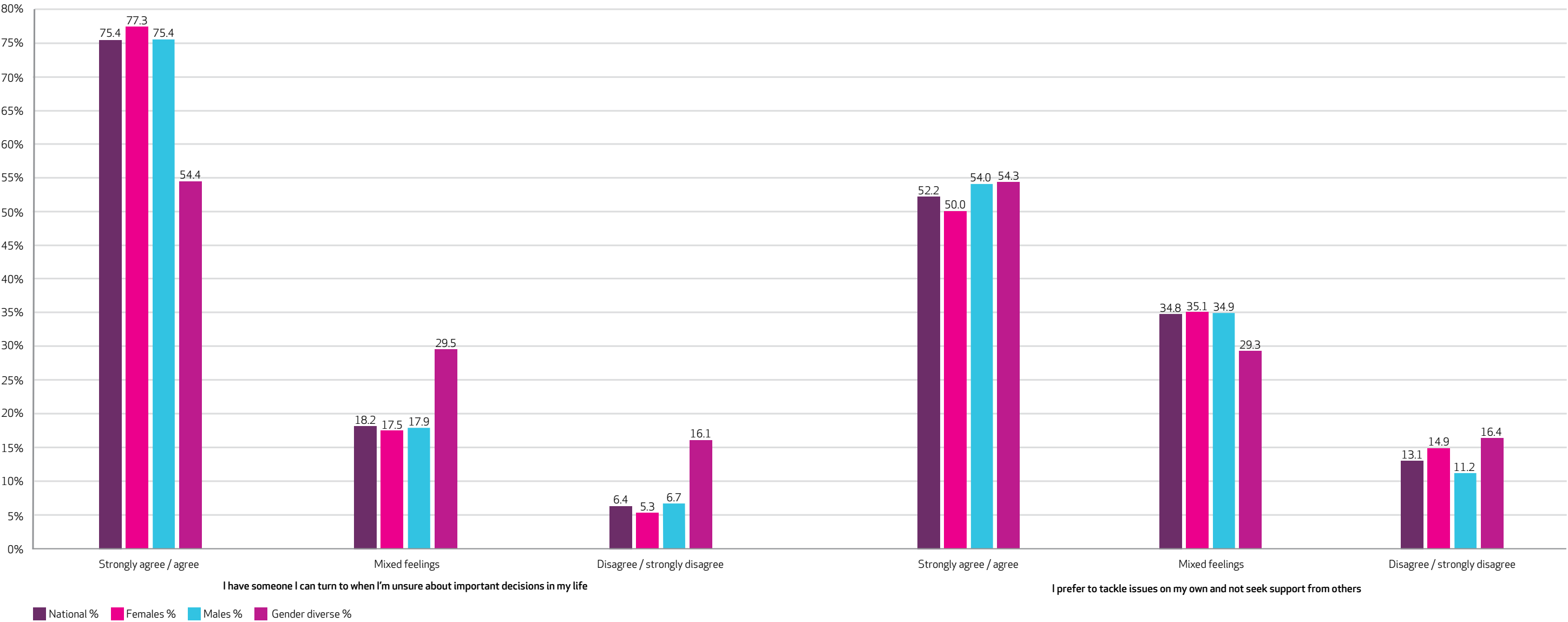
Table 6.3: Sources of support by helpfulness for gender diverse people

Gender diverse	Helpful %	Not helpful %	Don't use %
Friends	63.5	15.8	20.8
Pet(s)	60.0	7.6	32.4
Internet (e.g. websites, mobile apps, social media)	53.3	24.9	21.8
Parent(s) or guardian(s)	46.7	26.8	26.5
Doctor or health professional (e.g. psychologist, occupational therapist)	45.3	17.8	37.0
School counsellor / teacher / coach	34.3	22.4	43.3
Boyfriend / girlfriend / partner	30.2	8.4	61.3
Brother / sister / siblings	26.5	30.7	42.8
Other family members	25.5	23.2	51.4
Spiritual / religious mentor	9.4	13.4	77.1

Base: all gender diverse respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per support source. Items are listed in order of frequency based on helpfulness.



Figure 6.2: Feelings young people have about seeking support



Base: all respondents. Items are listed in order of national respondents' 'Strongly agree / agree' frequency. Note: sample sizes vary per statement.

Table 6.4: Family's ability to get along with one another

	National 2025 %	Females 2025 %	Males 2025 %	Gender diverse 2025 %	National 2024 %	National 2023 %
Excellent	21.1	19.1	23.6	14.4	19.1	20.9
Very good	33.9	32.9	36.0	18.1	29.4	28.8
Good	26.4	26.7	26.0	27.1	25.2	25.3
Fair	13.4	15.2	11.0	25.2	16.3	16.4
Poor	5.2	6.1	3.5	15.2	9.9	8.5

Base: all respondents. 2025: National n = 16,404, females n = 7,779, males n = 8,007, gender diverse n = 348. 2024: National n = 16,958. 2023 National: n = 18,877.

Table 6.5: Feelings young people have about their neighbourhood

	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
I'm happy to live in my neighbourhood				
Strongly agree / agree	74.1	75.1	75.0	48.4
Mixed feelings	18.6	18.4	17.8	29.5
Disagree / strongly disagree	7.4	6.5	7.2	22.1
I feel safe in my neighbourhood				
Strongly agree / agree	73.0	72.1	75.4	55.8
Mixed feelings	19.7	20.8	18.1	22.1
Disagree / strongly disagree	7.3	7.1	6.5	22.1
My neighbourhood has the things that I need to have a positive and thriving future				
Strongly agree / agree	54.2	54.2	55.5	37.6
Mixed feelings	29.7	29.9	29.1	34.0
Disagree / strongly disagree	16.1	16.0	15.4	28.3
I'm proud to be part of my neighbourhood				
Strongly agree / agree	53.8	53.5	56.0	27.6
Mixed feelings	33.7	34.6	32.4	37.0
Disagree / strongly disagree	12.5	11.8	11.7	35.4
I feel connected to the people in my neighbourhood				
Strongly agree / agree	35.0	33.0	38.0	18.4
Mixed feelings	29.6	30.2	29.3	19.7
Disagree / strongly disagree	35.4	36.9	32.7	61.9
I have a say about what goes on in my neighbourhood				
Strongly agree / agree	21.0	18.6	23.8	13.5
Mixed feelings	27.8	28.5	27.4	21.0
Disagree / strongly disagree	51.1	52.9	48.8	65.4

Base: all respondents. Items are listed in order of national respondents' 'Strongly agree / agree' frequency. Note: sample sizes vary per statement.

Table 6.6: What young people find easy to do

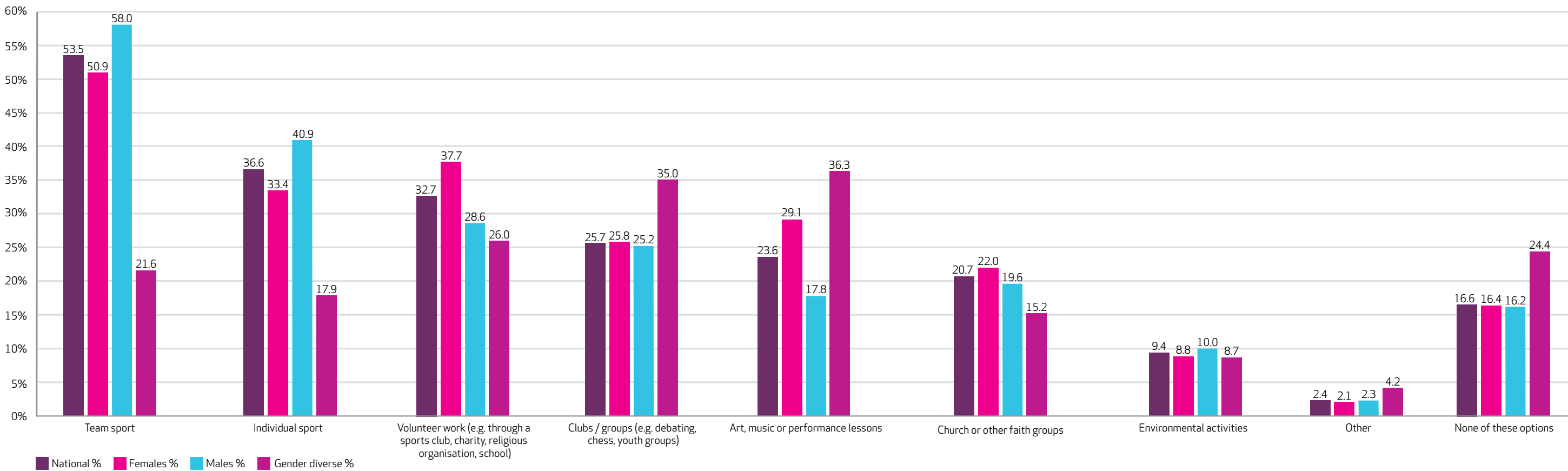
	National %	Females %	Males %	Gender diverse %
Do things in public places with friends? (e.g. go to shopping centres, sporting or music events)				
Yes	87.5	89.6	86.9	65.2
No	12.5	10.4	13.1	34.8
Travel around the community? (e.g. using footpaths or public transport)				
Yes	86.6	87.0	87.4	67.8
No	13.4	13.0	12.6	32.2
Makes choices and feel independent?				
Yes	85.9	84.8	88.6	64.5
No	14.1	15.2	11.4	35.5
Do everyday activities as young people your age usually do?				
Yes	84.0	83.5	86.3	51.2
No	16.0	16.5	13.7	48.8
Turn to friends and family if you need help?				
Yes	77.8	77.4	79.8	54.0
No	22.2	22.6	20.2	46.0
Fit in and socialise with everyone? (e.g. at school, work or socially)				
Yes	75.8	74.5	79.1	45.6
No	24.2	25.5	20.9	54.4
Turn to services / organisations if you need help?				
Yes	51.8	48.7	55.5	42.6
No	48.2	51.3	44.5	57.4

Base: all respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement. Items are listed in order of national 'Yes' frequency.

“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is to have) a nice house in a good neighbourhood.”

Male, 15, Victoria

Figure 6.3: Activities involved in during the past year (outside of standard school hours)



Base: all respondents. National n = 16,167, females n = 7,682, males n = 7,872, gender diverse n = 344. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.

“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is) to continue with my sport and maintaining physical health.”

Female, 16, New South Wales



UNFAIR TREATMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

As shown in Table 7.1, three in 10 (30%) young people reported experiencing **unfair treatment or discrimination** in the past year, unchanged from 2024 but higher than 2023. This was more commonly reported by gender diverse respondents (66%) and females (32%) compared to males (27%).

Among those who experienced unfair treatment or discrimination, the **most common reasons** were *physical appearance* (38%), *race / cultural background* (32%) and *personal views* (28%) as shown in Figure 7.1.

More than double the proportion of females than males reported they had experienced discrimination or unfair treatment due to *gender* (26% compared to 12% for males). A higher proportion of females than males also said they had been treated unfairly or discriminated against due to *mental health* (22% compared to 15% for males).

Compared to females and males, gender diverse respondents reported higher rates of discrimination and unfair treatment due to:

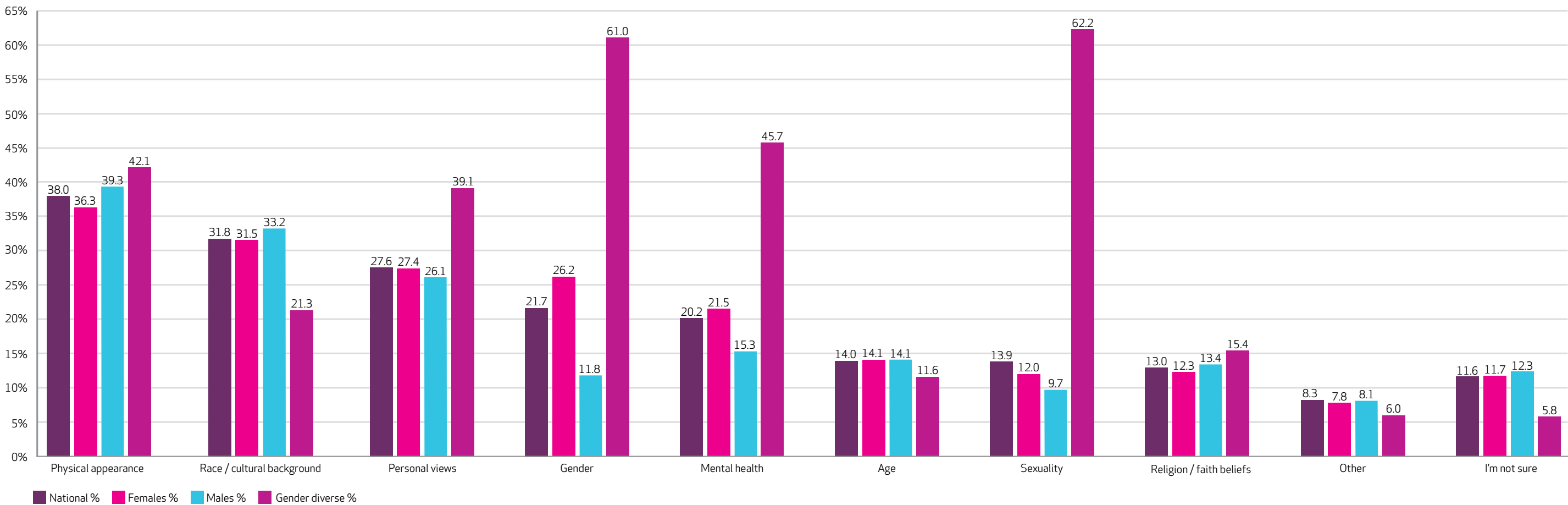
- *Sexuality* (62% compared with 12% for females and 9.7% for males)
- *Gender* (61% compared with 26% for females and 12% for males)
- *Mental health* (46% compared with 22% for females and 15% for males)
- *Personal views* (39% compared with 27% for females and 26% for males)

Table 7.1. Unfair treatment or discrimination in the past year

	National 2025 %	Females 2025 %	Males 2025 %	Gender diverse 2025 %	National 2024 %	National 2023 %
Yes	30.3	31.9	26.7	66.1	29.7	26.9
No	69.7	68.1	73.3	33.9	70.3	73.1

Base: all respondents. National n = 16,110, females n = 7,664, males n = 7,837, gender diverse n = 347. 2024: National n = 17,089. 2023: National n = 18,985.

Figure 7.1: Reason(s) for being treated unfairly in the past year



Base: respondents who reported they had been treated unfairly or faced discrimination. National n = 4,815, females n = 2,414, males n = 2,062, gender diverse n = 227. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of national frequency.



“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is) people aren’t judged off sexuality or race or orientation or anything.”

Male, 17, Victoria



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander results

- ▶ Profile of respondents
- ▶ National issues and personal stress
- ▶ Education and employment
- ▶ Financial situation
- ▶ Wellbeing
- ▶ Support and connectedness
- ▶ Unfair treatment and discrimination

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander results

PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

A total of **908** (5.6%) respondents identified as **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander**. Of this total, 789 (4.8%) identified as Aboriginal, while 50 (0.3%) identified as Torres Strait Islander and 68 (0.4%) identified as both.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people made up a relatively small portion of the overall sample, but the responses we received offer valuable insights. We're grateful to those who shared their experiences. While these findings help highlight important themes, we acknowledge that the smaller sample size may limit how confidently we can generalise the results or capture the full diversity of perspectives within these communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents came from all **states and territories**, with the largest proportions from New South Wales (43%), Queensland (23%) and Western Australia (9.8%) (see Figure 8.1).

The weighted **gender** breakdown among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents was 52% male, 38% female, 6.4% gender diverse and 4.2% preferred not to say. The number of gender diverse respondents was too small to support detailed reporting, though their contributions are valued. As shown in Figure 8.2, **disability** was reported by close to one in five (18%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Among those who reported disability, the most common types were *psychosocial* (70%), *intellectual* (34%) and *physical* (21%) as shown in Figure 8.3.

When asked about **mental health**, one quarter (25%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents identified as living with a mental health condition, while 16% preferred not to say. Gender differences were evident: more than one third (34%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female respondents reported a mental health condition, compared with 14% of male respondents. The most frequent mental health conditions listed were anxiety disorders, depressive disorders and neurodevelopment disorders.

In terms of **cultural heritage / ethnic background** (see Figure 8.4), the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents (85%) identified as *Indigenous / Aboriginal Persons*, followed by *European / Australian / New Zealander / British / Irish / North American / Russian* backgrounds (40%).

As for language, around one in seven (14%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported speaking a **language other than English at home**, such as Aboriginal languages, Italian and Spanish.

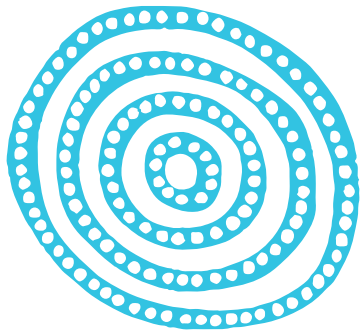


Figure 8.1: Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents by Australian state / territory (weighted)

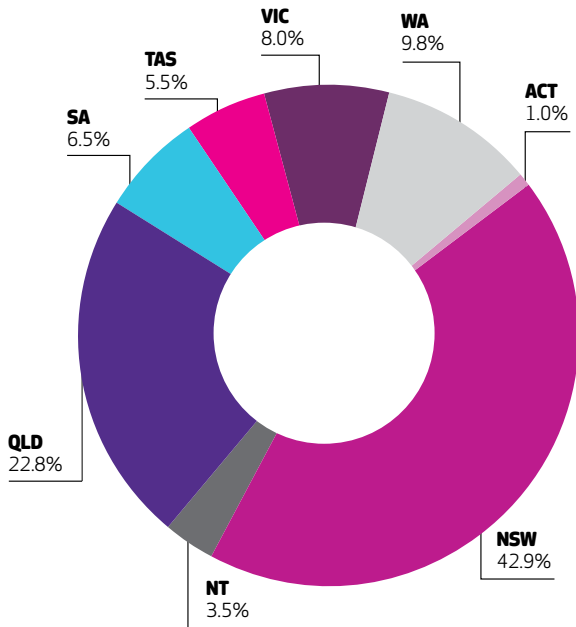
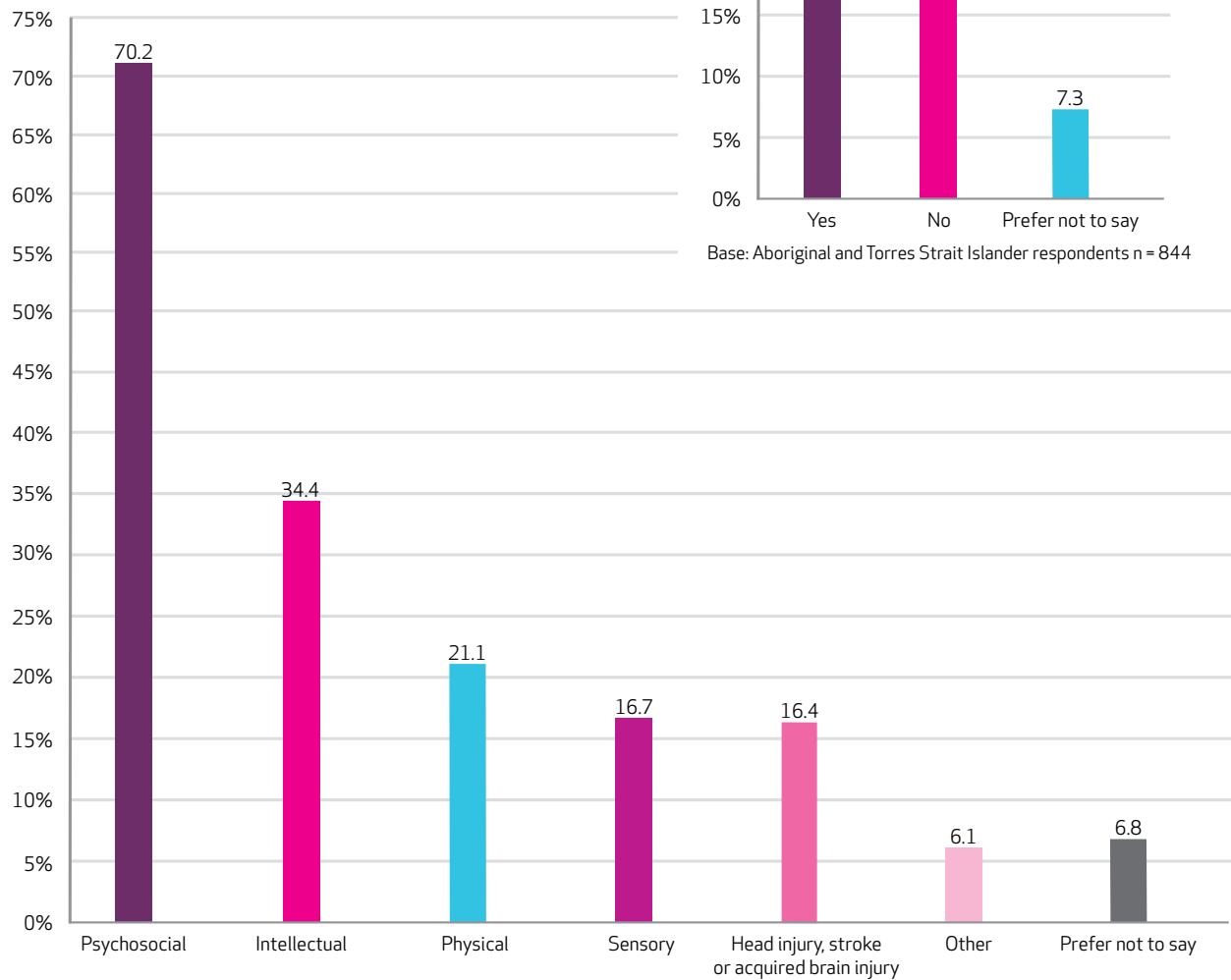
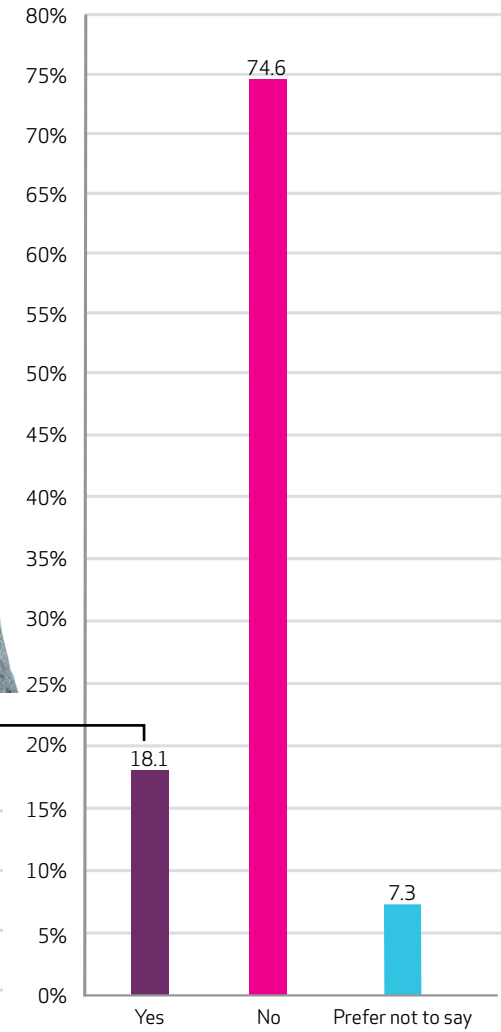


Figure 8.3: Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents by disability type



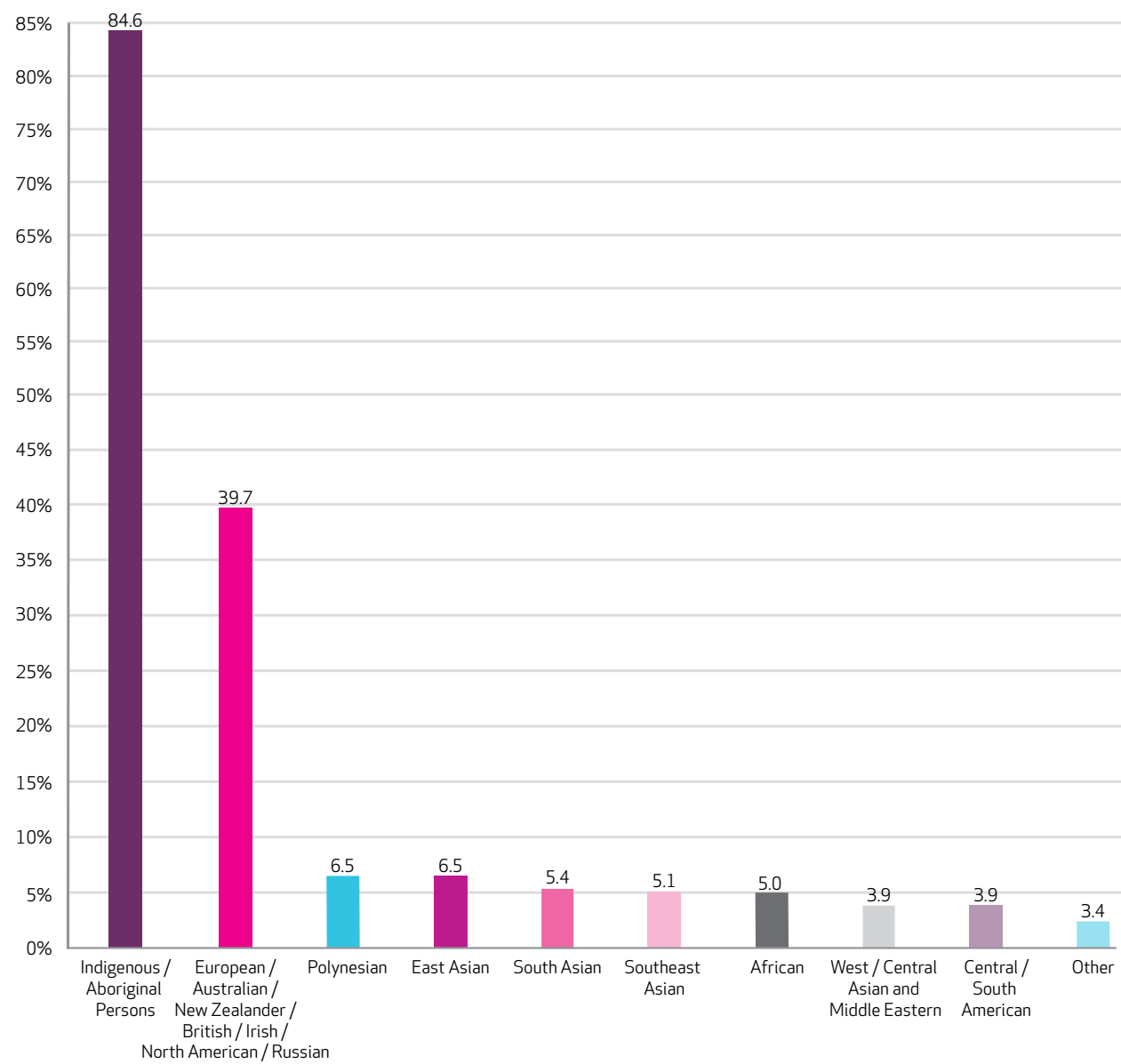
Base: those who said they had a disability. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 153. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of frequency.

Figure 8.2: Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents with disability



Base: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 844

Figure 8.4: Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents by cultural heritage / ethnic background



Base: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 850. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. *Indigenous / Aboriginal* includes Aboriginal people, Torres Strait Islander, First Nation and, Māori peoples. Items are listed in order of frequency.



NATIONAL ISSUES AND PERSONAL STRESS

As shown in Table 9.1, the most important issue in Australia as identified by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in 2025 was cost of living (53%), marking a substantial increase from 39% in 2024 and 26% in 2023.

Housing and homelessness (26%) and mental health (23%) were the most commonly cited national issues. For housing and homelessness, this represents an increase from 20% in 2024 and 17% in 2023. While housing and homelessness was mentioned by 28% of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females, one third (34%) of female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents identified mental health as a national issue compared with 19% of male respondents.

Other issues of national concern for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents included climate change and the environment (18%), violence, safety and crime (16%, down from 26% in 2024) and discrimination and inequality (14%, down from 20% in 2024).

When asked about **sources of personal stress** over the past year, *school or study problems* (46%) and *mental health and wellbeing* (45%) were the most frequently reported stressors by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people (refer to Figure 9.1). Female respondents were more likely to report stress from *mental health and wellbeing* (63%) and *school or study problems* (57%) than male respondents (32% and 40%, respectively).

Table 9.1: Top 10 most important issues in Australia today for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

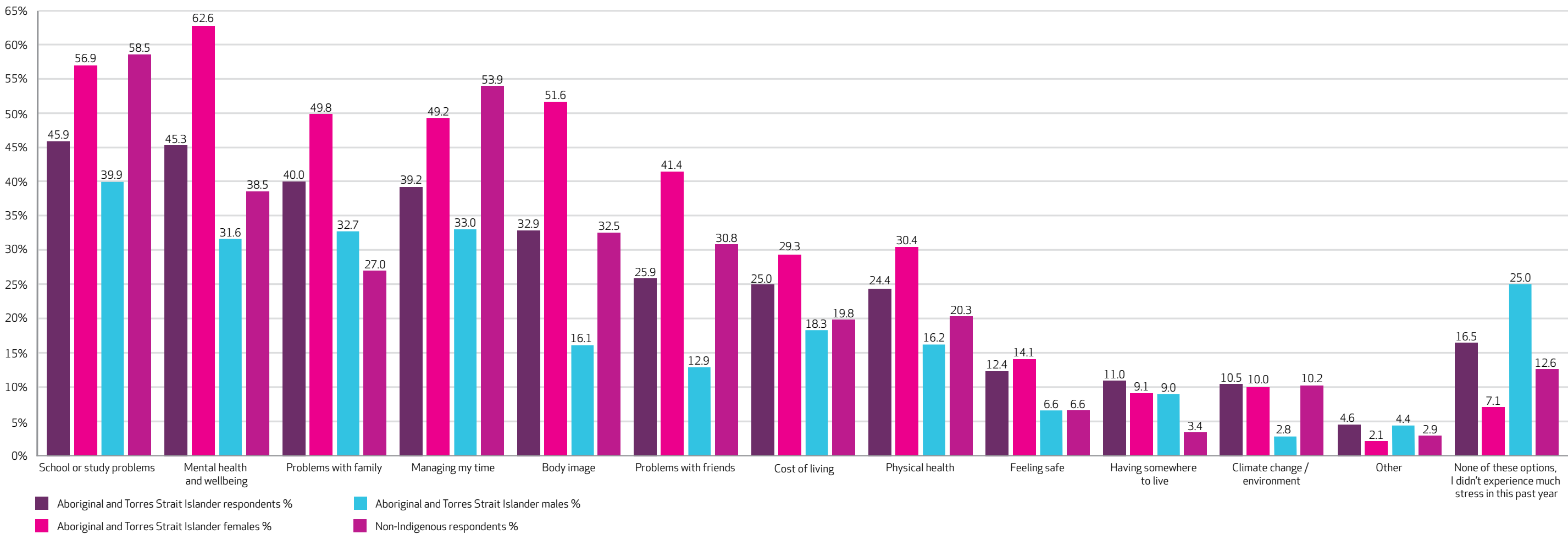
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males 2025 %	Non-Indigenous respondents 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2024 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2023 %
Cost of living	52.5	57.5	52.5	64.7	39.2	25.6
Housing and homelessness	25.8	27.7	28.0	24.6	19.9	16.9
Mental health	22.6	33.7	18.8	29.1	18.4	23.0
Climate change and environment	18.4	22.3	16.4	27.9	15.3	20.7
Violence, safety and crime	15.9	22.7	12.7	19.9	25.6	17.9
Discrimination and inequality	13.7	15.9	10.7	13.0	20.3	24.0
Education	10.1	13.9	7.7	9.6	6.4	7.5
Bullying	10.0	11.9	10.4	7.1	4.9	7.9
Alcohol and other drugs	9.7	7.4	11.5	6.4	22.8	18.5
Societal matters	9.0	9.6	7.8	7.7	4.1	1.6

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 801, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 287, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 428, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 13,737. Note: respondents were able to write up to three issues which have been categorised into key themes. Items are listed in order of 2025 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency. 2024 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1,138; 2023 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 913. Labels describing some issues were updated in 2024 to better reflect contemporary language so care needs to be taken when comparing with 2023 results.

"(One of my biggest hopes for my future is) being able to afford the things I want easier because I'm earning my money."

Male, 18, Australian Capital Territory

Figure 9.1: Issues that made Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people feel stressed in the past year



Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 893, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 337, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 459, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 15,157. Note: respondents were able to choose as many issues that applied. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency.



EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

As shown in Table 10.1, the vast majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported being **students** (96%).

Of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents at school, 83% intended to **complete Year 12**. A greater proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females said they plan to finish Year 12 (90%) compared with males (78%).

When asked about their **feelings about their school** (see Table 10.2), most Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents felt safe travelling to and from school (76%) and safe at school (69%). Just under two thirds (65%) agreed there was a teacher or another adult at their school they could reach out to for support when they need it. Slightly more than half of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students (52%) said they liked their school, and that teachers and students treat each other with respect at their school (51%).

Figure 10.1 shows the most common **reasons for missing days at school** among Aboriginal and Torres Strait respondents were being sick (69%), having an appointment (49%) and *family holiday or fun activity* (29%). *Anxiety / depression / mental health issues* were cited by over one quarter (26%), with more than double the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females (37%) reporting this reason compared to males (15%). Almost one quarter (24%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents indicated they had absences because they didn’t like school, with 29% of females choosing this reason compared with 18% of males.

Table 10.3 shows that more than two in five (43%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were **employed** full-time or part-time, with a further 42% looking for work.

Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who were working, the top **reasons for working** were to save up money (81%) and to pay for their own things (74%), as seen in Figure 10.2. Other reasons included building skills / experience (43%), to do fun activities (41%) and enjoying working (28%).

As shown in Table 10.4, almost three in 10 (29%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported **barriers to achieving their goals**. The most common barriers were *not feeling motivated* (46%) and *mental health concerns* (40%) as shown in Figure 10.3.

Table 10.1: Participation in education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Yes, I’m a student	95.5	96.5	95.3	99.0
No, I’m not a student	4.5	3.5	4.7	1.0

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 898, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 342, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 460, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 15,261.

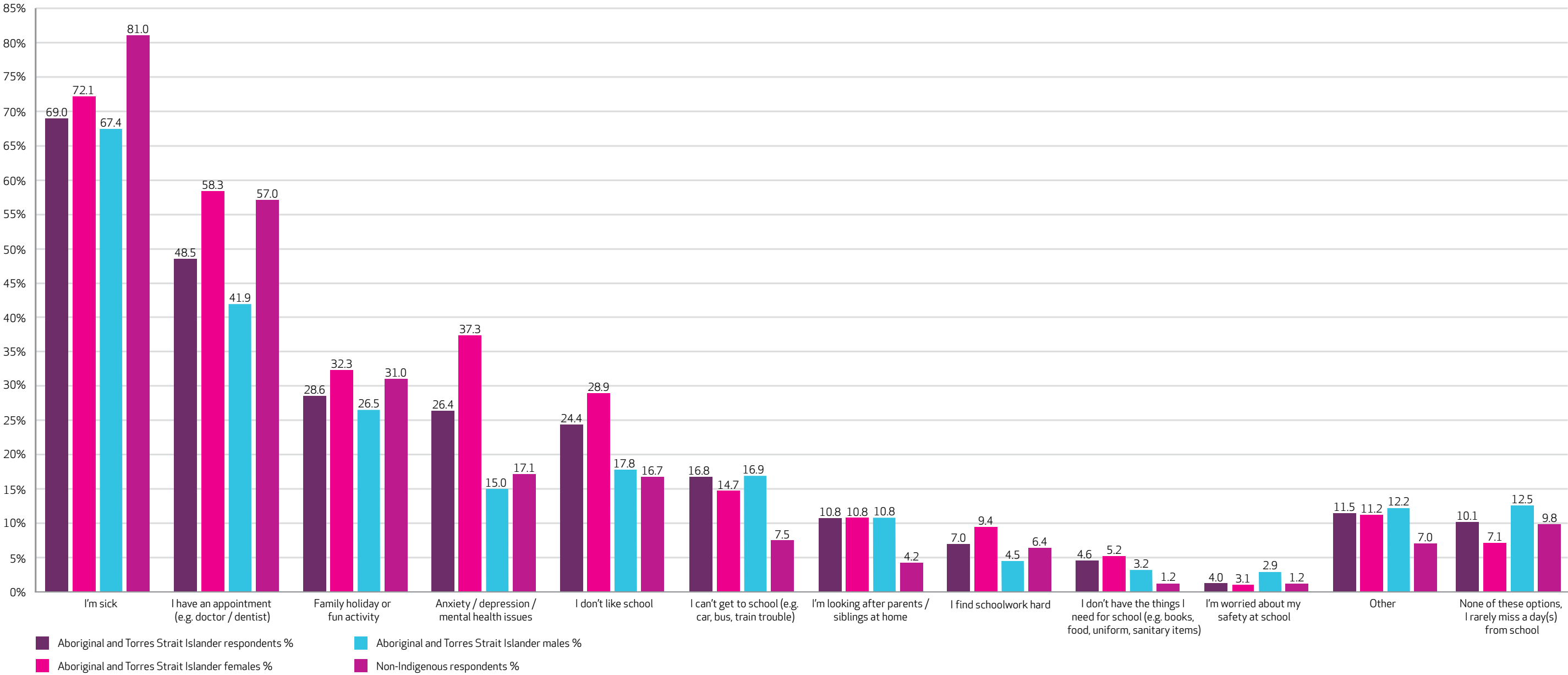
Table 10.2: Feelings Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have about their school

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
I feel safe travelling to and from school				
Strongly agree / agree	76.1	80.1	79.5	84.8
Mixed feelings	15.2	14.9	12.0	11.3
Disagree / strongly disagree	8.6	5.0	8.5	3.9
I feel safe at school				
Strongly agree / agree	68.5	70.6	74.0	80.1
Mixed feelings	20.7	22.5	16.6	14.6
Disagree / strongly disagree	10.8	6.9	9.4	5.3
There is a teacher or another adult at my school who I can reach out to for support when I need it				
Strongly agree / agree	65.0	69.7	64.4	70.3
Mixed feelings	20.0	17.4	23.3	19.6
Disagree / strongly disagree	15.0	12.8	12.3	10.1
I like my school				
Strongly agree / agree	51.8	47.7	57.9	62.2
Mixed feelings	31.3	37.2	29.0	26.0
Disagree / strongly disagree	16.9	15.1	13.1	11.8
Teachers and students treat each other with respect at my school				
Strongly agree / agree	51.2	44.8	60.4	59.3
Mixed feelings	33.6	42.6	27.6	29.6
Disagree / strongly disagree	15.3	12.6	12.0	11.2

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents studying at school or equivalent. Note: sample sizes vary per statement. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents’ ‘Strongly agree / agree’ frequency.



Figure 10.1: Reasons Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people miss days at school



Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents studying at school or equivalent. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 792, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 316, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 406, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 14,319. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency.

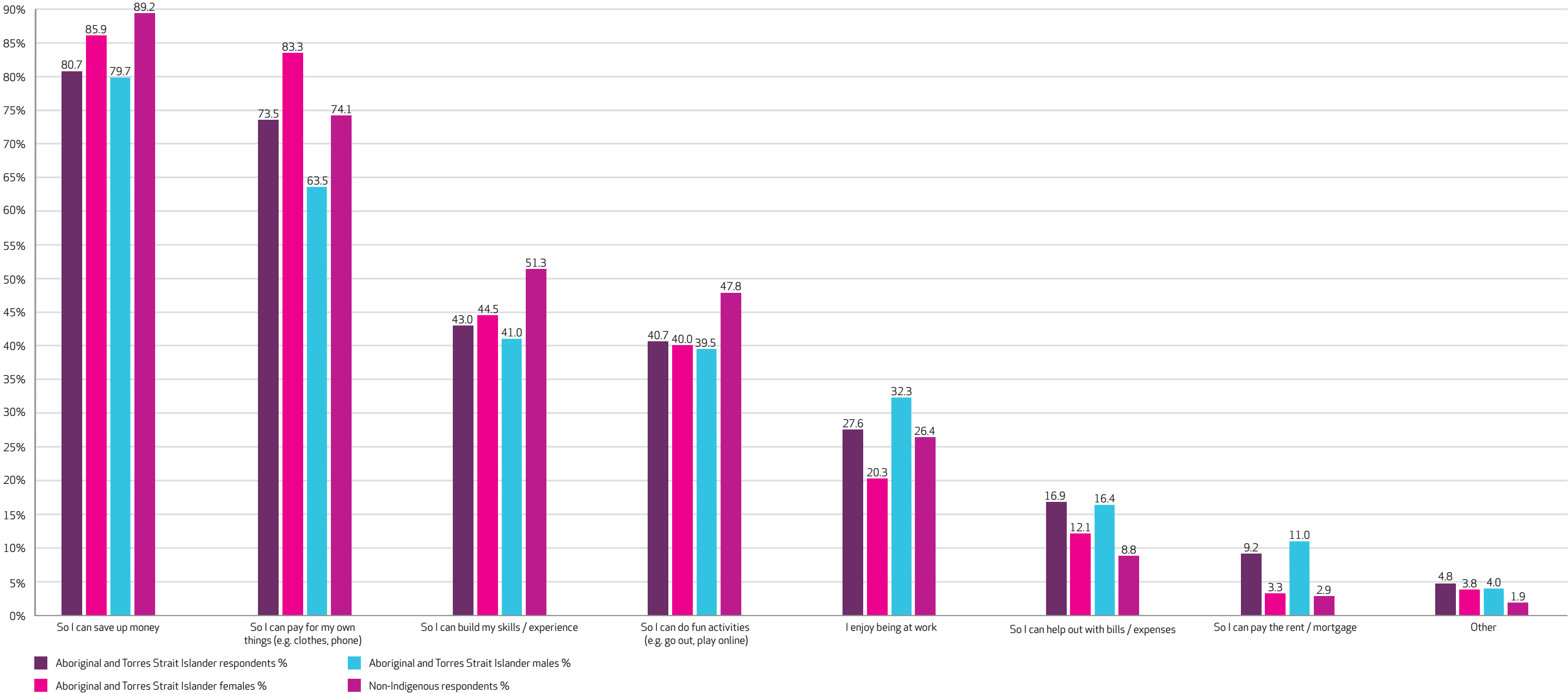


Table 10.3: Participation in paid work by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Looking for work	42.3	44.3	44.3	31.1
Not looking for work	15.0	9.6	15.5	21.1
Employed part-time	39.6	45.5	37.1	47.1
Employed full-time	3.1	0.6	3.0	0.7

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 893, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 339, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 458, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 15,043.

Figure 10.2: Reasons for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people working



Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents in paid employment. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 388, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 160, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 187, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 7,304. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency.

“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is to) be able to enjoy my life without stressing about money.”
Female, 16, Tasmania

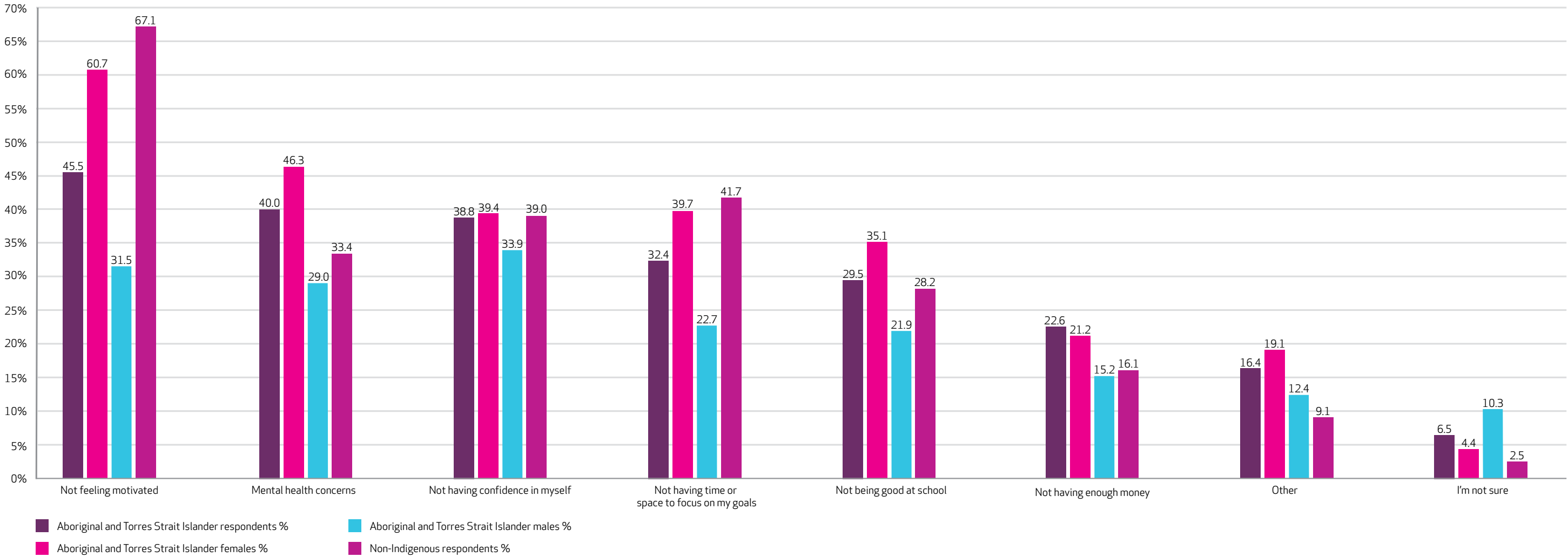


Table 10.4: Are there any barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people achieving their goals

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Yes	28.5	30.5	25.1	25.6
No	57.7	58.8	60.1	64.8
I don't have any study / work goals	13.9	10.7	14.8	9.5

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 892, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 338, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 461, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 15,272.

Figure 10.3: Barriers to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people achieving their goals



Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who said there were barriers to achieving goals. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 254, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 103, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 116, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 3,888. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency.

“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is to) have stability and motivation in my future.”
Prefer not to say, 15, New South Wales



FINANCIAL SITUATION

Over one in four (27%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported experiencing at least one form of **financial hardship** in the past year. As shown in Table 11.1, the most common experiences included: *couldn't participate in activities, hobbies or groups* (13%), *couldn't buy clothes / other essential items* (11%), *couldn't pay for school uniform, supplies, excursions or fees* (10%), *missed at least one meal in the day* (9.9%) and *couldn't pay rent / mortgage* (9.3%).

Figure 11.1 indicates **feelings about money** by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. Just under one third (32%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents agreed that their parent(s) / caregiver(s) share their money concerns with them. Close to three in 10 (28%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait young people agreed that *my family are often stressed about money*. Additionally, 18% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people agreed that they miss out on doing things with their friends because they can't afford it.

As shown in Table 11.2, just under one in five (19%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents reported receiving government **financial support**. Other sources of support included: family and / or friends (11%) and charities or foundations (5.5%). A small proportion (3.9%) said they needed financial support but did not receive it, while 35% said they did not need support. One third (34%) of respondents were unsure whether they or their family had received financial support.

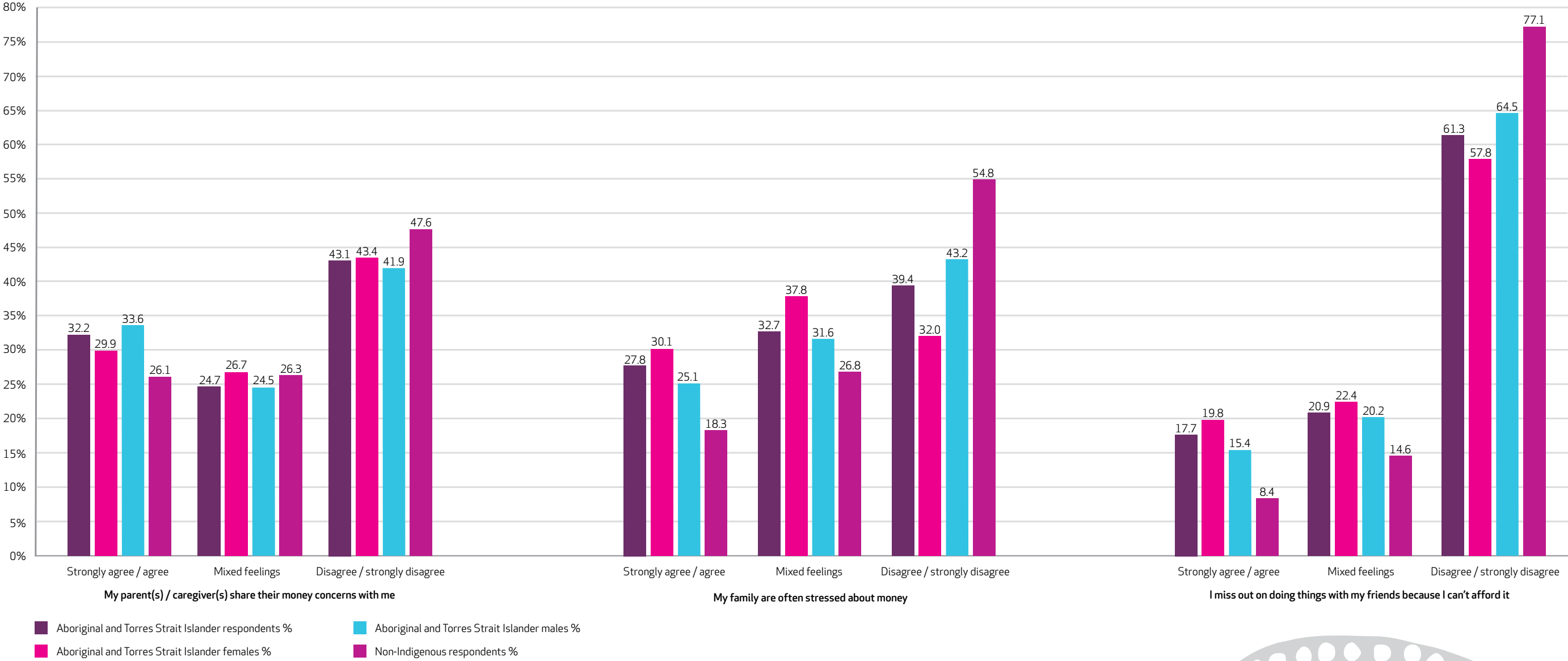
Table 11.1: Experiences of financial hardship by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Couldn't participate in activities, hobbies or groups	12.5	14.3	9.5	7.5
Couldn't buy clothes / other essential items	11.1	11.2	9.2	3.6
Couldn't pay for school uniform, supplies, excursions or fees	10.1	12.0	7.3	4.9
Missed at least one meal in the day	9.9	7.4	9.9	4.0
Couldn't pay rent / mortgage	9.3	9.5	7.6	4.2
Couldn't get medical treatment / medicine	5.9	6.0	3.9	3.0
Couldn't access mental health support(s)	5.1	3.9	3.2	3.4
Other	1.6	0.1	0.9	0.8
I'm not sure	17.0	19.0	14.8	10.8
No, none of the above	56.1	55.5	61.0	74.9

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 839, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 337, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 417, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 14,681. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency.



Figure 11.1: Feelings Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have about money



Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' 'Strongly agree / agree' frequency.

"(One of my biggest hopes for my future is) that I don't stress about financial problems."
Female, 16, South Australia

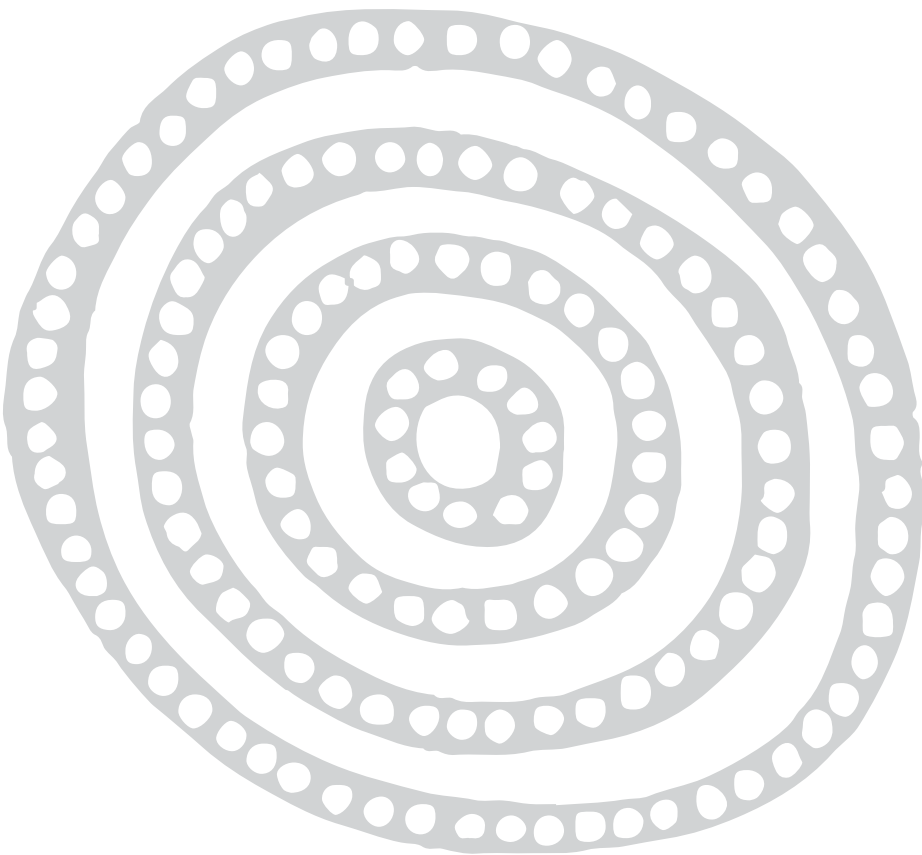


Table 11.2: Financial support received in the past year for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young person and / or their family

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondents %
Yes, from government allowance	19.3	24.8	14.3	7.8
Yes, from family and / or friends	11.4	10.2	11.7	6.7
Yes, from a charity or foundation	5.5	8.0	3.5	1.1
No, but I / we needed financial support	3.9	2.4	4.4	2.4
No, I / we didn't need financial support	34.7	30.8	38.7	54.6
I'm not sure	34.4	34.3	34.0	30.1

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 860, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 332, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 443, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 14,913. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option ('yes' options only).



WELLBEING

As shown in Figure 12.1, depicting **happiness with life as a whole**, half (50%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported feeling *very happy or happy* with their life overall, while 13% reported feeling *sad or very sad*.

When asked about their **biggest hopes for the future**, the most common hopes among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents were related to employment and career goals (55%) and money, wealth and owning a home (51%) as shown in Figure 12.2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females were more likely to cite hopes related to family relationships and connections (50% compared to 34% for males) and education and learning (26% compared to 16%), while Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males were more likely to mention purpose, values and big dreams (27% compared to 17% for females).

Around half (52%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people said their feeling about the future were *very positive* or *positive*. This is an increase from recent years (39% in 2024 and 43% in 2023), as shown in Table 12.1.

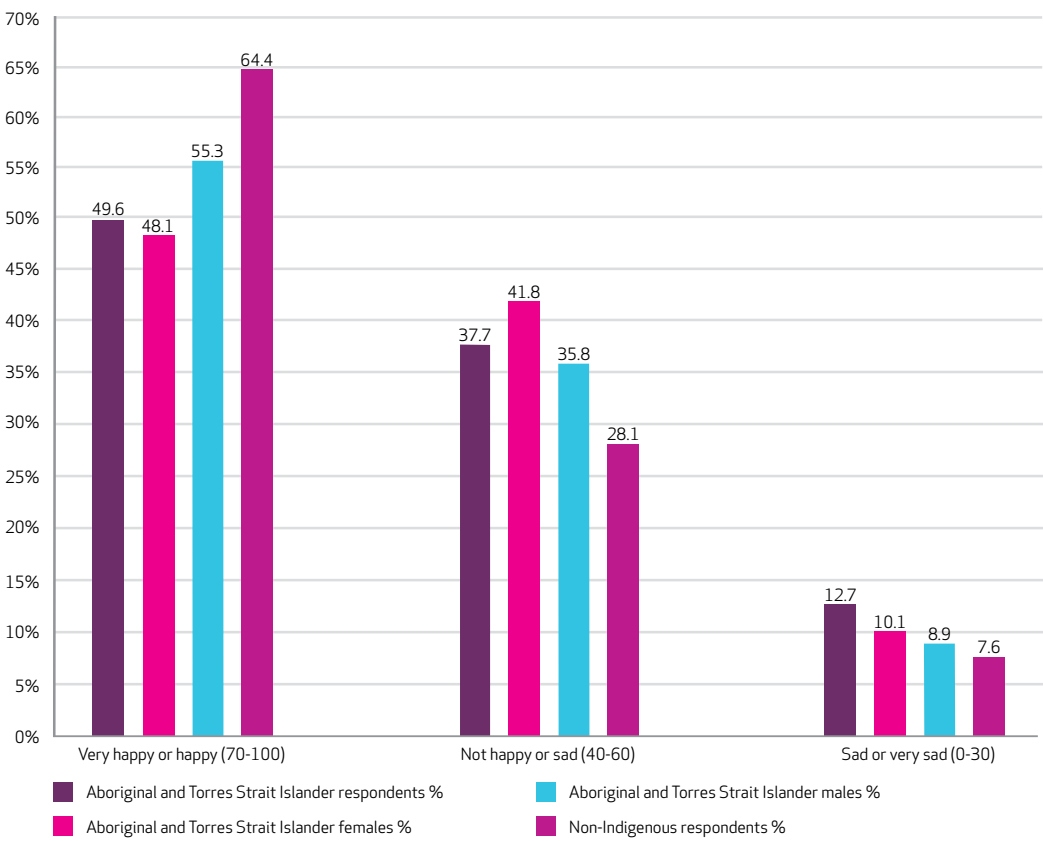
When asked about **control over their lives**, as shown in Table 12.2, almost half (47%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt *mostly in control*. This compares to 35% in 2024 and 36% in 2023. An additional 12% reported feeling completely in control in 2025, bringing the total to nearly six in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who felt either completely or mostly in control of their lives.

Table 12.3, depicting **level of loneliness in the past four weeks**, shows that 21% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people said they felt lonely *none of the time*, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males (26%) more likely than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females (15%) to report this. Almost one quarter (23%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people felt lonely *most of the time* or *all of the time*.

In terms of **psychological distress**, more than one quarter (27%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people scored in the high psychological distress range; refer to Table 12.4.

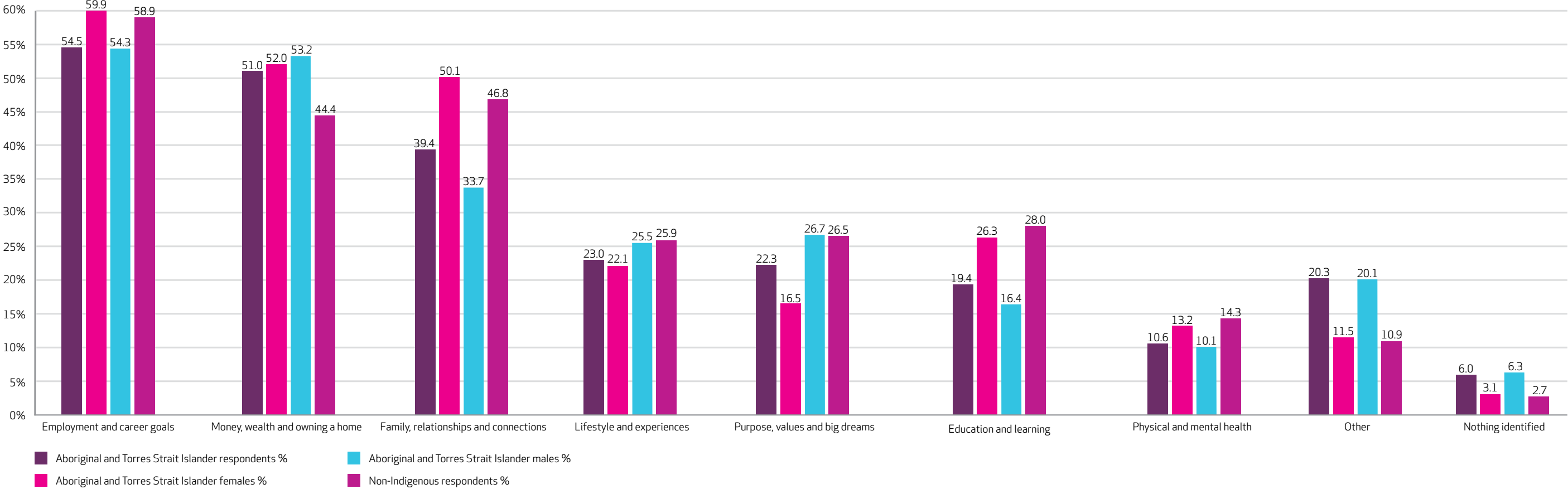
Self-identity is examined in Table 12.5. Half or more of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people agreed with **positive feelings about themselves**, with close to two thirds (64%) agreeing with the statements *I can deal with things that happen in my life* and *I think I get along with others*. Close to one in five (18%) disagreed with the statement *I feel good about myself*.

Figure 12.1: Level of happiness with their life as a whole for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people



Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 865, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 337, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 440, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 14,966. Note: respondents were asked to rate how happy they are with their life as a whole on a scale of 0 to 10. Responses were standardised on a scale of 0 to 100. For reporting purposes, the responses have been categorised into three groupings: the 70-100 range denotes very happy or happy; 40-60 signifies not happy or sad; and 0-30 indicates very sad or sad.

Figure 12.2: Biggest hopes for the future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people



Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 804, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 312, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 412, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 14,070. Note: respondents were able to write up to three responses which have been categorised into key themes. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency.

"(One of my biggest hopes for my future is) I can afford to live, to have a job I enjoy and can grow in."
Female, 18, New South Wales

Table 12.1: Feelings about the future for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males 2025 %	Non-Indigenous respondents 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2024 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2023 %
Very positive or positive	51.5	53.6	53.1	58.2	38.7	43.1
Neither positive nor negative	34.1	38.3	32.3	30.5	39.8	38.8
Negative or very negative	14.5	8.1	14.6	11.3	21.4	18.1

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. 2025: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 867, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 331, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 447, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 14,790. 2024: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1,246. 2023: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1,158.

"(One of my biggest hopes for my future is) be fulfilled and happy."
Female, 18, Australian Capital Territory

Table 12.2: Level of control over their life for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males 2025 %	Non-Indigenous respondents 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2024 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2023 %
Complete control	11.5	9.5	10.6	11.2	12.0	13.8
Mostly in control	47.3	47.1	53.7	55.8	35.4	35.8
Some control	28.2	32.6	24.7	27.2	32.5	35.0
Almost no control	8.7	8.9	6.6	4.6	13.2	9.9
No control	4.4	1.9	4.4	1.1	6.9	5.5

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. 2025: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 865, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 331, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 446, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 14,775. 2024: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1,219. 2023: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1,158.

Table 12.3: Level of loneliness in past four weeks for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males 2025 %	Non-Indigenous respondents 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2024 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2023 %
None of the time	20.7	14.6	25.7	23.0	22.4	21.7
A little of the time	24.7	27.5	25.5	32.8	24.0	24.2
Some of the time	31.4	36.4	28.9	27.9	24.8	26.8
Most of the time	15.2	18.4	12.5	12.9	17.1	17.2
All of the time	8.0	3.1	7.4	3.4	11.7	10.2

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. 2025: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 866, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 333, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 446, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 14,788. 2024: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1,226. 2023: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1,156.

Table 12.4: Level of psychological distress for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males 2025 %	Non-Indigenous respondents 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2024 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2023 %
Low psychological distress	47.5	42.9	54.9	54.7	43.8	42.3
Moderate psychological distress	25.9	27.5	25.0	26.4	26.5	27.6
High psychological distress	26.7	29.6	20.2	18.9	29.7	30.1

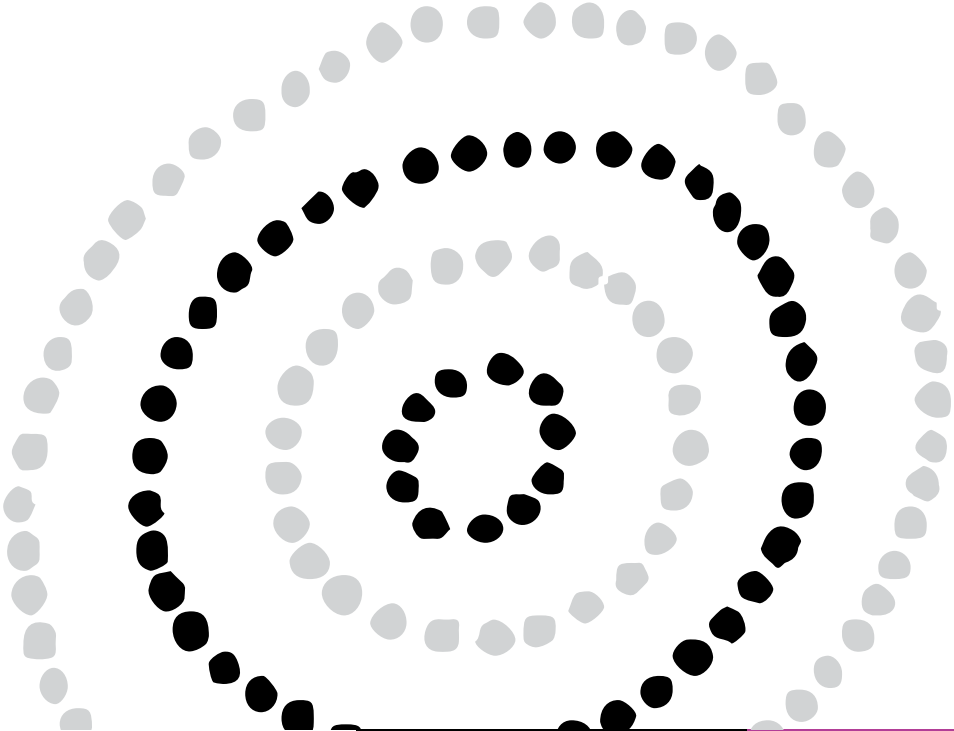
Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. 2025: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 801, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 310, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 420, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 14,406. 2024: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1,232. 2023: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1,132. 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).

“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is to) fix my health both mental and physical.”
Female, 15, Queensland

Table 12.5: Feelings Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have about themselves

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondent %
I can deal with things that happen in my life				
Strongly agree / agree	64.4	68.5	67.6	72.7
Mixed feelings	29.1	26.4	29.7	21.9
Disagree / strongly disagree	6.5	5.1	2.7	5.4
I think I get along with others				
Strongly agree / agree	64.0	69.1	65.1	76.1
Mixed feelings	28.8	26.8	30.4	18.7
Disagree / strongly disagree	7.2	4.1	4.5	5.1
I can achieve my goals even if they are hard				
Strongly agree / agree	62.2	60.2	67.9	66.1
Mixed feelings	29.7	35.6	24.7	27.5
Disagree / strongly disagree	8.0	4.2	7.4	6.4
I am able to do things as well as most other people				
Strongly agree / agree	54.6	55.5	58.9	66.3
Mixed feelings	28.6	30.9	26.3	23.6
Disagree / strongly disagree	16.8	13.6	14.8	10.1
I feel good about myself				
Strongly agree / agree	48.5	44.8	54.4	58.8
Mixed feelings	33.3	40.0	29.9	28.0
Disagree / strongly disagree	18.1	15.3	15.7	13.2

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' 'Strongly agree / agree' frequency.



SUPPORT AND CONNECTEDNESS

The most commonly cited **helpful sources of support** among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were *friends* (67%) and *parent(s) or guardian(s)* (66%), followed by *pet(s)* (58%), *other family members* (53%) and the *internet* (50%), as shown in Table 13.1. *Friends* (67%) and *parent(s) or guardian(s)* were the most common helpful sources of support among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females and males; see Tables 13.2 and 13.3.

As for **feelings about seeking support**, Figure 13.1 shows that two thirds (66%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents agreed that they had someone to turn to when they were unsure about important decisions in their life. However, 54% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people agreed that they prefer to tackle issues on their own and not seek support from others, with a further 33% reporting mixed feelings.

Seven in 10 (71%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people rated their **family’s ability to get along with one another** as *excellent* (16%), *very good* (27%) or *good* (28%) as shown in Table 13.4. In 2025, the proportion of respondents that rated their family’s ability to get along as *poor* was less than it has been in previous years (10% compared to 16% in 2024 and 15% in 2023).

Regarding **neighbourhood connection**, Table 13.5 shows that about six in 10 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents agreed that they felt safe in their neighbourhood (61%) and were happy to live (58%) there. Two in five (41%) felt proud to be part of their neighbourhood and 30% felt connected to others there. One in five (21%) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people agreed with the statement *I have a say about what goes on in my neighbourhood*.

As shown in Table 13.6 when reporting on **activities they find easy to do**, around four in five Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents found it easy to *make choices and feel independent* (82%), *do things in public places with friends* (80%) and *travel around the community* (79%). More males indicated they could *do everyday activities as young people your age usually do* (80% compared to 72% of females) and *fit in and socialise with everyone* (74% compared to 63% of females).

When asked about **community participation outside of school hours**, the most common activities Aboriginal and Torres Strait young people were involved in during the past year were *team sport* (48%), *individual sport* (33%) and volunteer work (27%) (see Figure 13.2).

Table 13.1: Sources of support by helpfulness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents			Non-Indigenous respondents		
	Helpful %	Not helpful %	Don’t use %	Helpful %	Not helpful %	Don’t use %
Friends	67.1	16.8	16.1	77.9	10.1	12.0
Parent(s) or guardian(s)	66.3	17.2	16.4	76.6	11.8	11.6
Pet(s)	57.8	13.1	29.1	55.8	10.1	34.1
Other family members	53.3	19.3	27.4	53.7	13.8	32.5
Internet (e.g. websites, mobile apps, social media)	49.9	23.8	26.3	54.0	21.9	24.1
Brother / sister / siblings	47.7	23.1	29.2	48.5	21.7	29.8
Doctor or health professional (e.g. psychologist, occupational therapist)	42.8	16.1	41.2	38.8	10.7	50.4
Boyfriend / girlfriend / partner	39.8	9.8	50.4	27.6	5.6	66.8
School counsellor / teacher / coach	37.7	17.8	44.5	34.1	15.4	50.5
Spiritual / religious mentor	19.7	13.0	67.2	19.7	9.1	71.3

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per support source. Items are listed in order of frequency based on helpfulness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.

Table 13.2: Sources of support by helpfulness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females

Females	Helpful %	Not helpful %	Don’t use %
Friends	73.7	12.6	13.6
Parent(s) or guardian(s)	70.4	14.2	15.4
Pet(s)	64.1	9.7	26.2
Other family members	55.0	13.1	32.0
Brother / sister / siblings	51.7	19.5	28.8
Internet (e.g. websites, mobile apps, social media)	50.0	24.0	25.9
Doctor or health professional (e.g. psychologist, occupational therapist)	47.5	10.5	42.0
Boyfriend / girlfriend / partner	42.6	7.7	49.7
School counsellor / teacher / coach	39.6	13.9	46.5
Spiritual / religious mentor	13.5	11.9	74.6

Base: all female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per support source. Items are listed in order of frequency based on helpfulness.

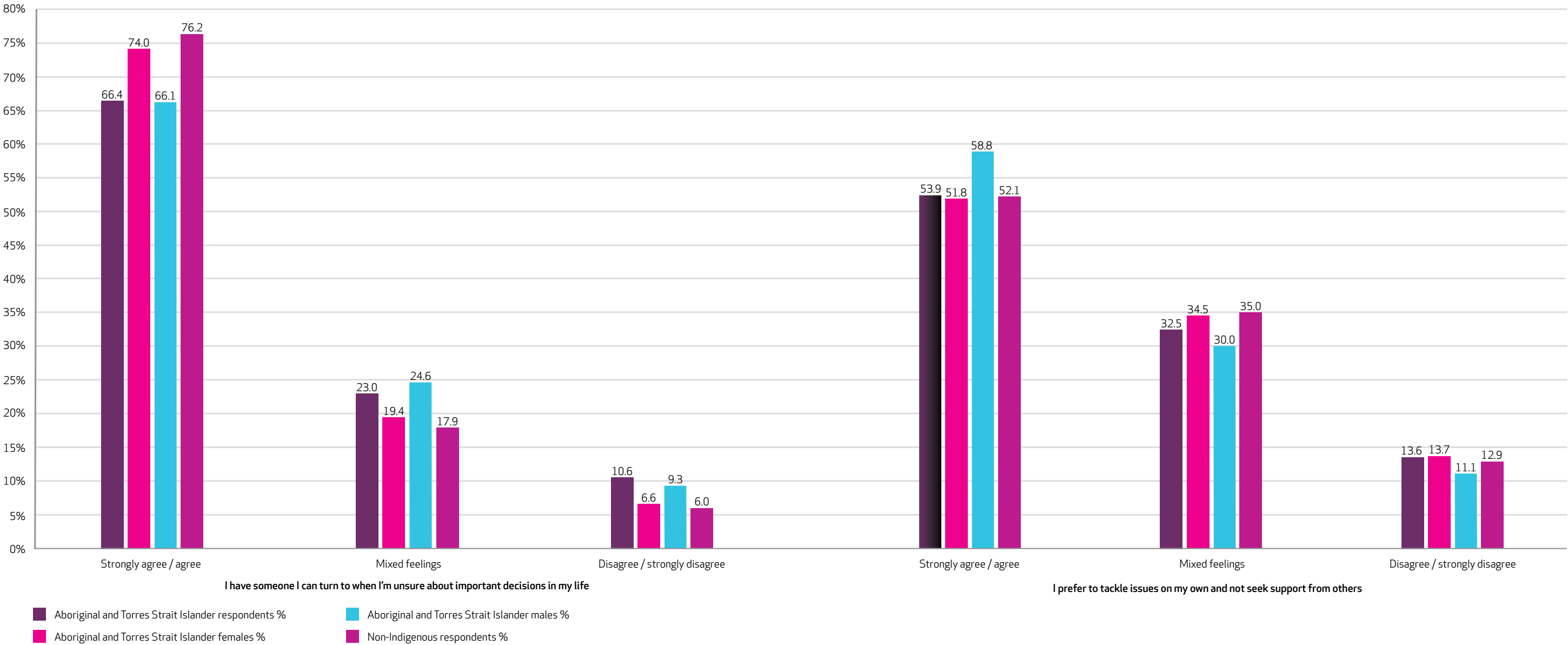
Table 13.3: Sources of support by helpfulness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males

Males	Helpful %	Not helpful %	Don’t use %
Parent(s) or guardian(s)	67.3	15.8	16.9
Friends	66.1	16.6	17.3
Other family members	57.1	20.2	22.7
Pet(s)	53.1	15.6	31.4
Internet (e.g. websites, mobile apps, social media)	49.0	23.6	27.4
Brother / sister / siblings	46.9	23.3	29.9
Doctor or health professional (e.g. psychologist, occupational therapist)	40.5	16.7	42.8
School counsellor / teacher / coach	38.9	17.2	44.0
Boyfriend / girlfriend / partner	37.0	9.2	53.9
Spiritual / religious mentor	24.3	7.9	67.8

Base: all male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per support source. Items are listed in order of frequency based on helpfulness.

“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is) having good friend and family relationships.”
Male, 15, Western Australia

Figure 13.1: Feelings Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have about seeking support



Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' 'Strongly agree / agree' frequency.

Table 13.4: Family's ability to get along with one another for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males 2025 %	Non-Indigenous respondents 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2024 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2023 %
Excellent	16.2	19.2	12.4	21.3	16.3	19.5
Very good	27.0	23.4	31.9	34.5	23.2	21.9
Good	27.7	25.5	31.0	26.3	24.8	26.0
Fair	18.9	20.0	18.5	13.0	19.7	18.1
Poor	10.1	11.9	6.2	4.9	16.0	14.5

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. 2025: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 858, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 334, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 443, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 14,863. 2024: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1,244. 2023: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1,154.



Table 13.5: Feelings Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people have about their neighbourhood

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondent %
I feel safe in my neighbourhood				
Strongly agree / agree	61.1	62.1	64.2	74.0
Mixed feelings	27.8	27.6	29.6	19.1
Disagree / strongly disagree	11.0	10.3	6.2	6.9
I'm happy to live in my neighbourhood				
Strongly agree / agree	57.9	59.2	60.8	75.3
Mixed feelings	28.2	29.2	27.7	17.8
Disagree / strongly disagree	13.9	11.6	11.5	6.8
I'm proud to be part of my neighbourhood				
Strongly agree / agree	41.0	38.6	45.9	54.7
Mixed feelings	40.3	40.5	41.8	33.3
Disagree / strongly disagree	18.7	20.9	12.3	12.1
My neighbourhood has the things that I need to have a positive and thriving future				
Strongly agree / agree	38.3	34.7	41.0	55.2
Mixed feelings	35.5	36.6	37.2	29.3
Disagree / strongly disagree	26.2	28.7	21.7	15.5
I feel connected to the people in my neighbourhood				
Strongly agree / agree	30.4	31.1	30.8	35.3
Mixed feelings	30.5	30.0	32.8	29.5
Disagree / strongly disagree	39.1	38.9	36.4	35.2
I have a say about what goes on in my neighbourhood				
Strongly agree / agree	20.5	19.0	21.1	21.1
Mixed feelings	28.1	29.5	28.7	27.6
Disagree / strongly disagree	51.5	51.4	50.2	51.3

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 'Strongly agree / agree' frequency.

Table 13.6: What Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people find easy to do

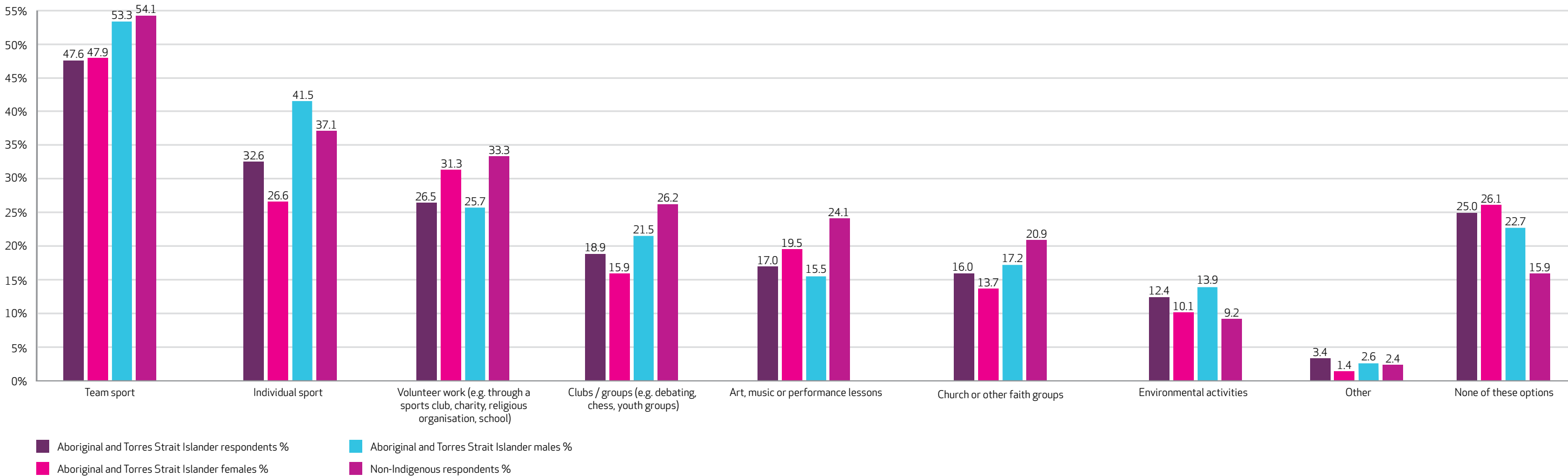
	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males %	Non-Indigenous respondent %
Makes choices and feel independent?				
Yes	82.1	82.3	85.1	86.1
No	17.9	17.7	14.9	13.9
Do things in public places with friends? (e.g. go to shopping centres, sporting or music events)				
Yes	80.1	80.9	82.4	88.1
No	19.9	19.1	17.6	11.9
Travel around the community? (e.g. using footpaths or public transport)				
Yes	79.2	79.9	82.6	87.1
No	20.8	20.1	17.4	12.9
Do everyday activities as young people your age usually do?				
Yes	75.0	72.1	79.7	84.6
No	25.0	27.9	20.3	15.4
Turn to friends and family if you need help?				
Yes	73.0	73.9	75.0	77.9
No	27.0	26.1	25.0	22.1
Fit in and socialise with everyone? (e.g. at school, work or socially)				
Yes	68.2	63.4	74.3	76.4
No	31.8	36.6	25.7	23.6
Turn to services / organisations if you need help?				
Yes	51.6	47.7	55.5	51.6
No	48.4	52.3	44.5	48.4

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Note: sample sizes vary per statement. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' 'Yes' frequency.

“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is to) maintain connection and community.”

Female, 16, Queensland

Figure 13.2: Activities Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people were involved in during the past year (outside of standard school hours)



Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 846, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 335, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 427, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 14,655. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency.



UNFAIR TREATMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Almost half (46%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people reported experiencing **unfair treatment or discrimination** in the past year (see Table 14.1). This was notably higher among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females (52%) compared with males (37%).

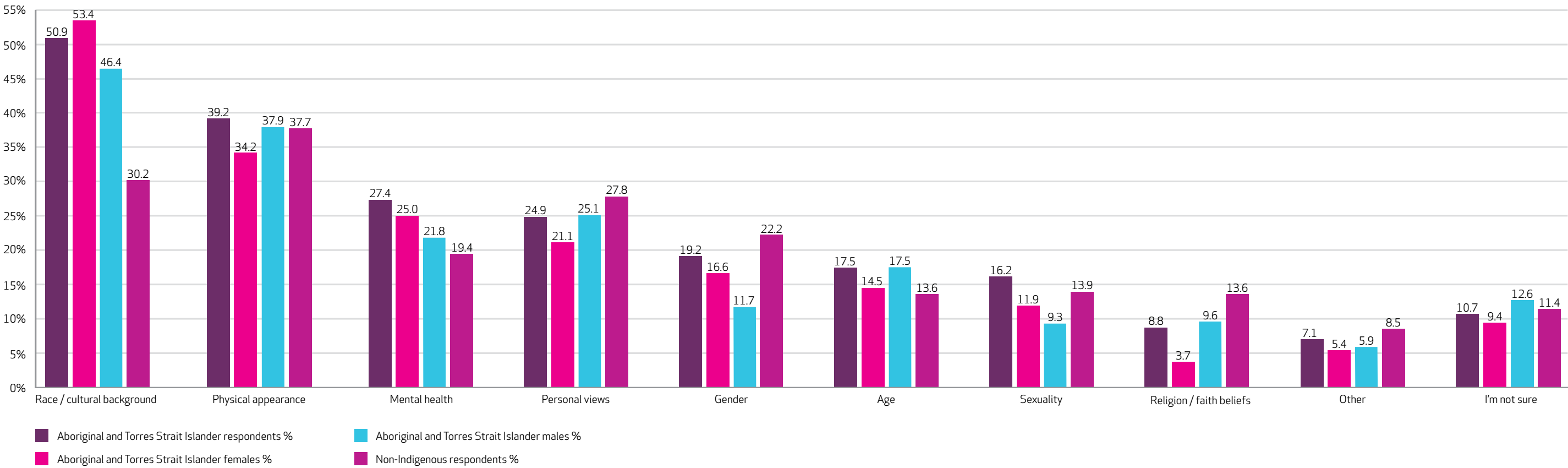
As shown in Figure 14.1, over half (51%) of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who experienced unfair treatment or discrimination said it was due to *race / cultural background*. Other frequently reported reasons for unfair treatment or [discrimination included *physical appearance* (39%), *mental health* (27%) and *personal views* (25%).

Table 14.1. Unfair treatment or discrimination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in the past year

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males 2025 %	Non-Indigenous respondents 2025 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2024 %	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents 2023 %
Yes	45.9	52.4	36.8	29.2	41.8	41.8
No	54.1	47.6	63.2	70.8	58.2	58.2

Base: all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. 2025: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 836, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 328, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 429, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 14,654. 2024: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1,295. 2023: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 1,174.

Figure 14.1: Reason(s) for being treated unfairly in the past year for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people



Base: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents who reported they had been treated unfairly or faced discrimination. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents n = 383, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females n = 171, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males n = 158, Non-Indigenous respondents n = 4,230. Note: respondents were able to choose more than one option. Items are listed in order of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents' frequency.



“(One of my biggest hopes for my future is) to live in a country where discrimination is rare and minimized.”
Male, 17, New South Wales



State and Territory Key Findings

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

YOUTH SURVEY 2025

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY RESULTS



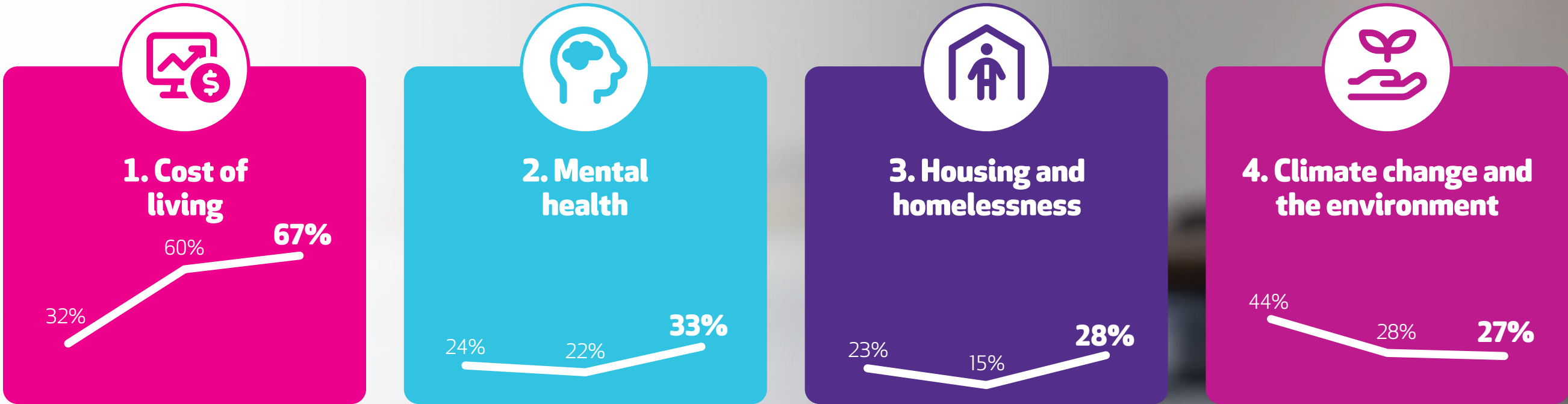
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Australian Capital Territory

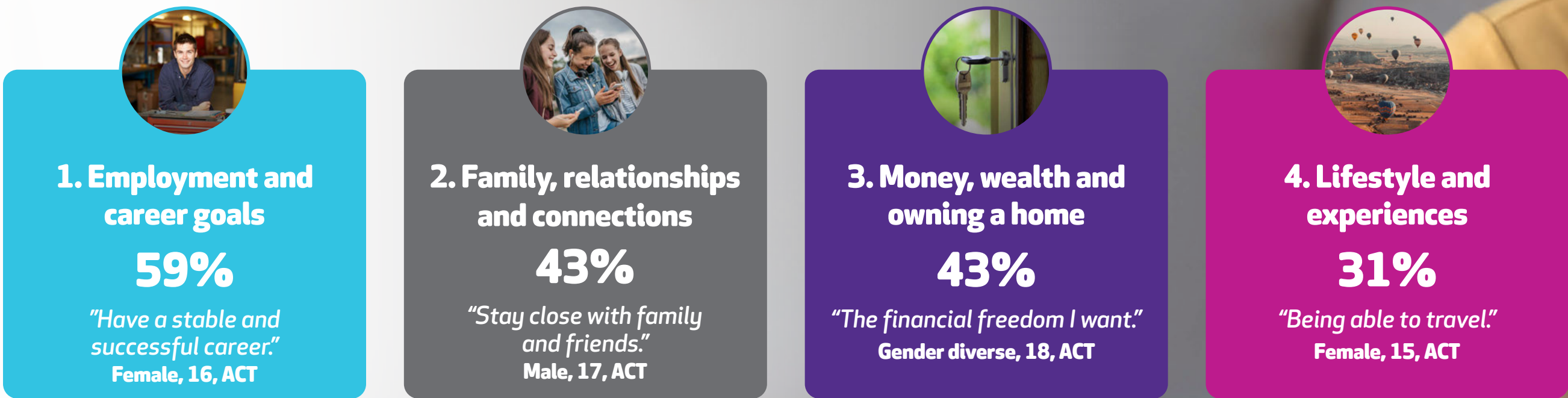
KEY FINDINGS



Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The charts show the proportion who mentioned each issue in 2023, 2024 and 2025.



While 64% of young people say they feel positive about the future, 97% articulated at least one of their biggest hopes, with the top themes being:



Australian Capital Territory

KEY FINDINGS



Young people shared what life looks like for them now...

Money, wealth and owning a home

14% agreed *my family are often stressed about money*

One in 20 (5.2%)

couldn't afford to participate in activities, hobbies or groups

2.7% felt stressed in the past year about *having somewhere to live*



Family, relationships and connections

24% felt stressed about *problems with friends* and **20%** about *problems with family* in the past year

13% felt lonely *all or most of the time*

36% felt connected to others in their neighbourhood



Employment and career

58% were currently working

Top reasons for working:

- To *save up money*
- To *pay for my own things*



Education and learning

73% of students agreed *I like my school*

52% felt stressed about *school /study problems* in the past year

18% faced barriers to achieving study or work goals—most commonly not feeling motivated



Lifestyle and experiences

19% experienced unfair treatment or discrimination in the past year

Participation in the past year:

- **65%** *team sport*
- **38%** *individual sport*



Purpose, values and big dreams

71% agreed *I can achieve my goals even if they are hard*

Participation in the past year:

- **35%** *volunteer work*
- **20%** *church or other faith groups*

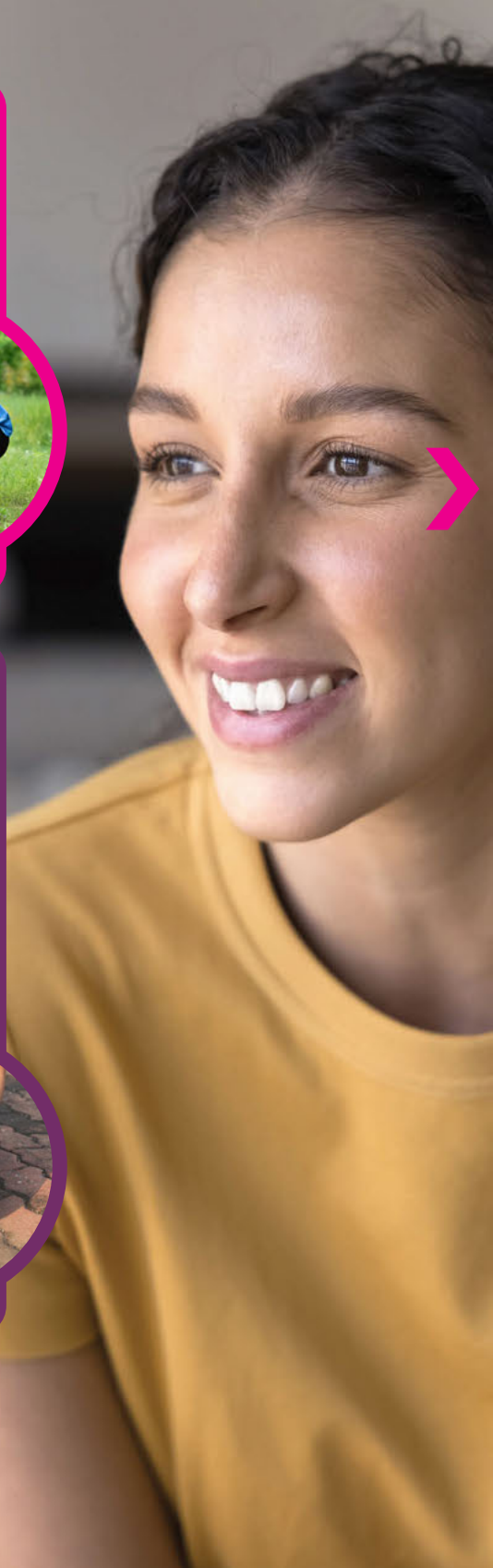


Physical and mental health

Young people felt stress in the past year about:

- **Mental health 33%**
- **Body image 25%**
- **Physical health 18%**

13% experienced high psychological distress – expressing feelings of anxiety, depression or being overwhelmed



YOUTH SURVEY 2025

NEW SOUTH WALES RESULTS

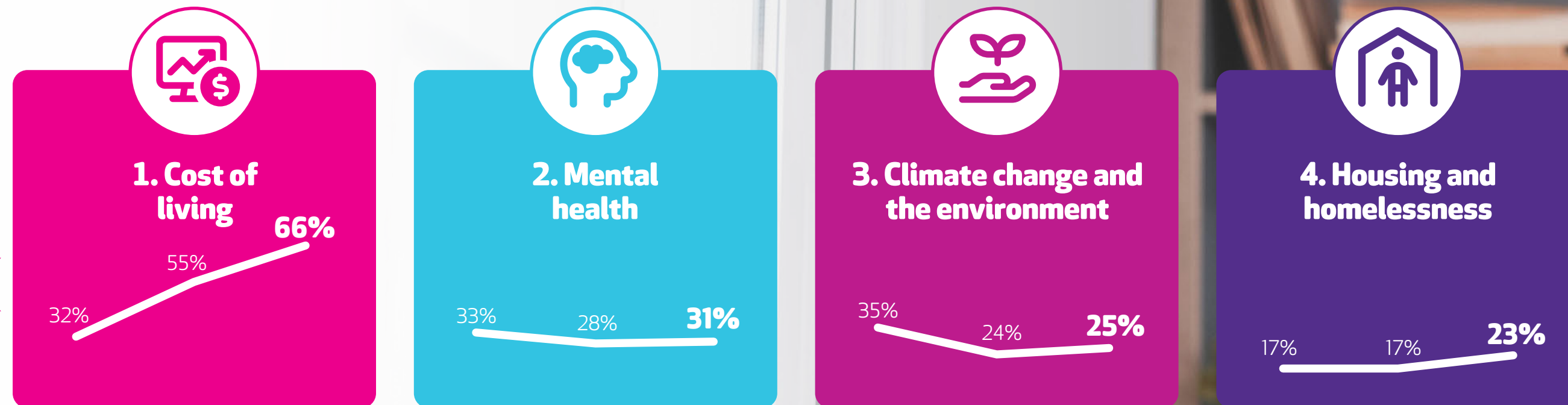


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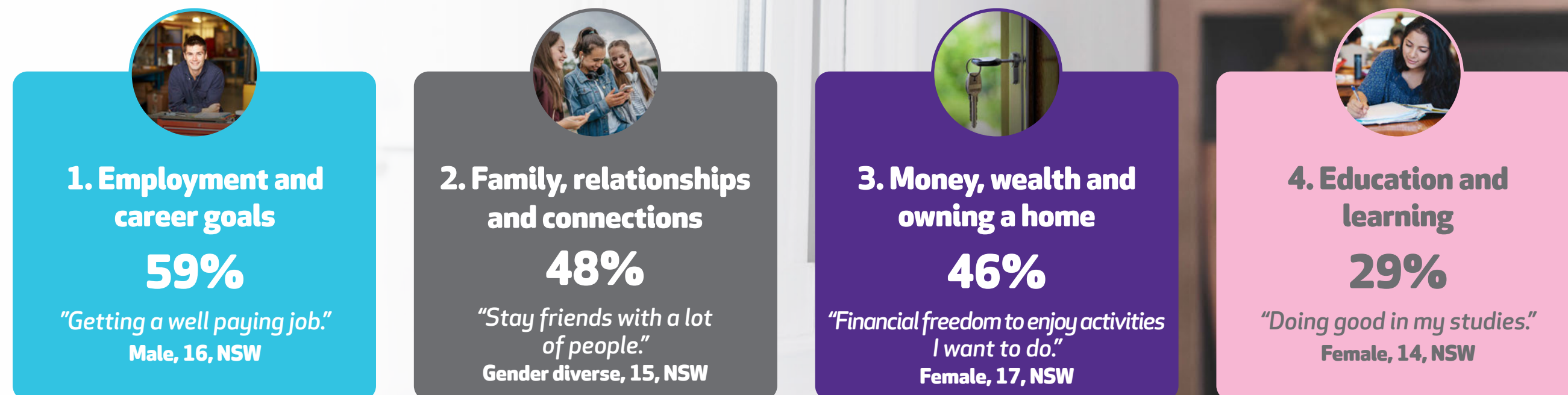
New South Wales KEY FINDINGS



Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The charts show the proportion who mentioned each issue in 2023, 2024 and 2025.



While 58% of young people say they feel positive about the future, 98% articulated at least one of their biggest hopes, with the top themes being:



New South Wales KEY FINDINGS



Young people shared what life looks like for them now...

Money, wealth and owning a home

18% agreed *my family are often stressed about money*

7.5% couldn't afford to participate in activities, hobbies or groups

3.0% felt stressed in the past year about *having somewhere to live*



Family, relationships and connections

32% felt stressed about *problems with friends* and **28%** about *problems with family* in the past year

17% felt lonely *all or most of the time*

36% felt connected to others in their neighbourhood



Employment and career

45% were currently working

Top reasons for working:

- To *save up money*
- To *pay for my own things*



Education and learning

Around six in 10 (58%) students agreed *I like my school*

60% felt stressed about *school / study problems* in the past year

27% faced barriers to achieving study or work goals—most commonly not feeling motivated



Lifestyle and experiences

32% experienced unfair treatment or discrimination in the past year

Participation in the past year:

- **52%** *team sport*
- **37%** *individual sport*



Purpose, values and big dreams

66% agreed *I can achieve my goals even if they are hard*

Participation in the past year:

- **35%** *volunteer work*
- **24%** *church or other faith groups*



Physical and mental health

Young people felt stress in the past year about:

- **Mental health 39%**
- **Body image 35%**
- **Physical health 21%**

21% experienced high psychological distress – expressing feelings of anxiety, depression or being overwhelmed



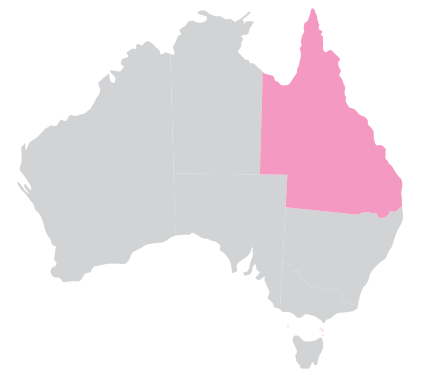
YOUTH SURVEY 2025

QUEENSLAND RESULTS

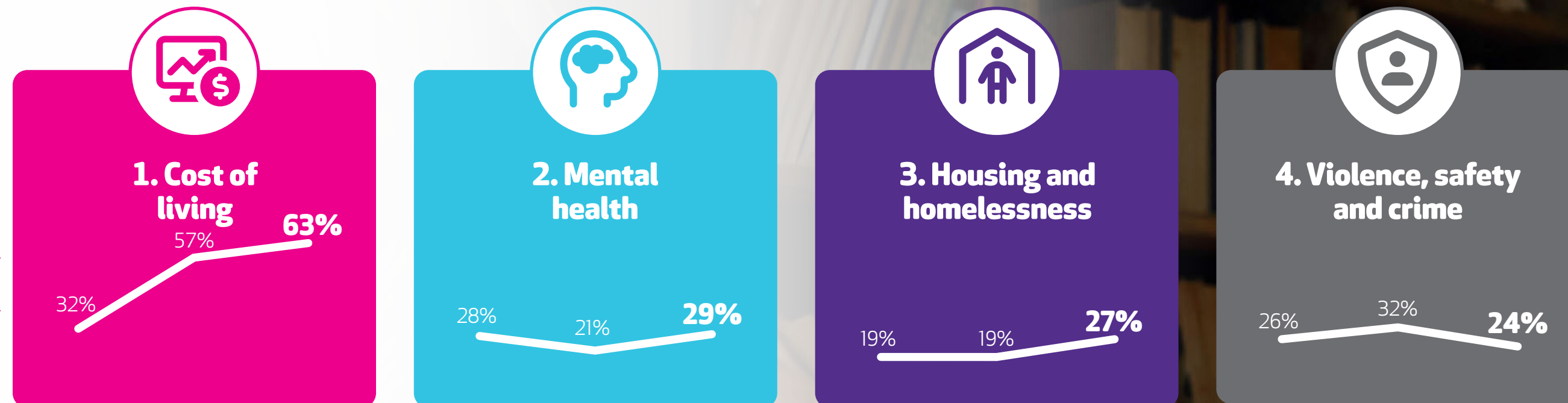


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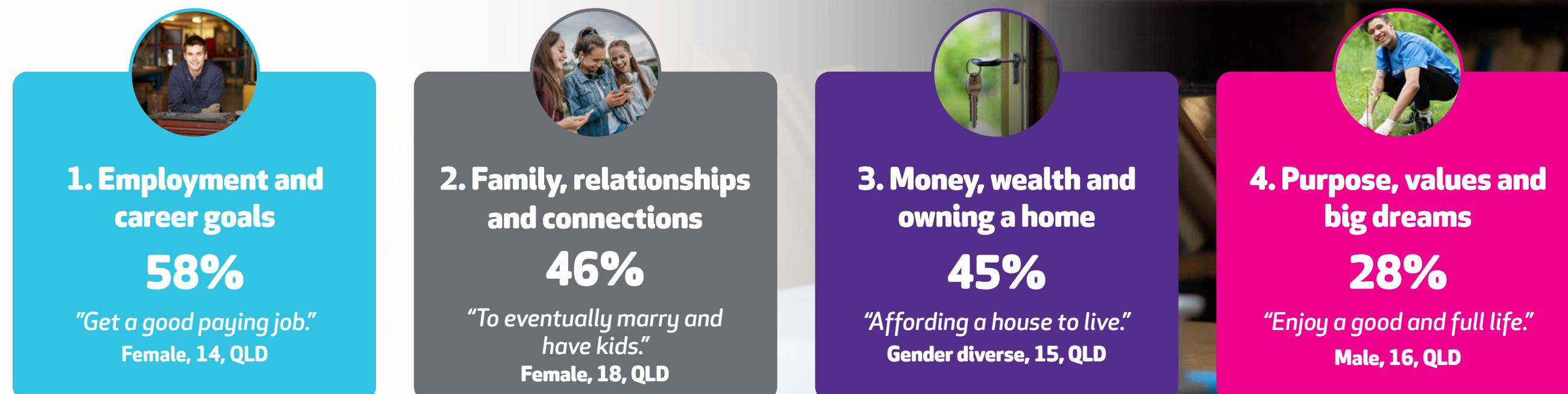
Queensland KEY FINDINGS



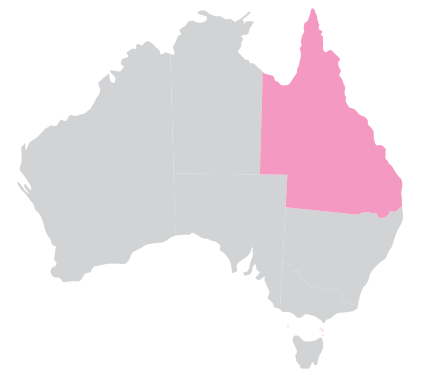
Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The charts show the proportion who mentioned each issue in 2023, 2024 and 2025.



While 57% of young people say they feel positive about the future, 96% articulated at least one of their biggest hopes, with the top themes being:



Queensland KEY FINDINGS



Young people shared what life looks like for them now...

Money, wealth and owning a home

One in five (20%) agreed *my family are often stressed about money*

8.6% couldn't afford to participate in activities, hobbies or groups

One in 25 (4.0%) felt stressed in the past year about *having somewhere to live*



Family, relationships and connections

29% felt stressed about *problems with friends* and **28%** about *problems with family* in the past year

18% felt lonely *all or most of the time*

33% felt connected to others in their neighbourhood



Employment and career

Half (52%) were currently working

Top reasons for working:

- To save up money
- To pay for my own things



Education and learning

63% of students agreed *I like my school*

59% felt stressed about *school / study problems* in the past year

26% faced barriers to achieving study or work goals—most commonly not feeling motivated



Lifestyle and experiences

30% experienced unfair treatment or discrimination in the past year

Participation in the past year:

- **52%** team sport
- **36%** individual sport



Purpose, values and big dreams

66% agreed *I can achieve my goals even if they are hard*

Participation in the past year:

- **34%** volunteer work
- **21%** church or other faith groups



Physical and mental health

Young people felt stress in the past year about:

- Mental health **39%**
- Body image **31%**
- Physical health **21%**

19% experienced high psychological distress – expressing feelings of anxiety, depression or being overwhelmed



YOUTH SURVEY 2025

SOUTH AUSTRALIA RESULTS



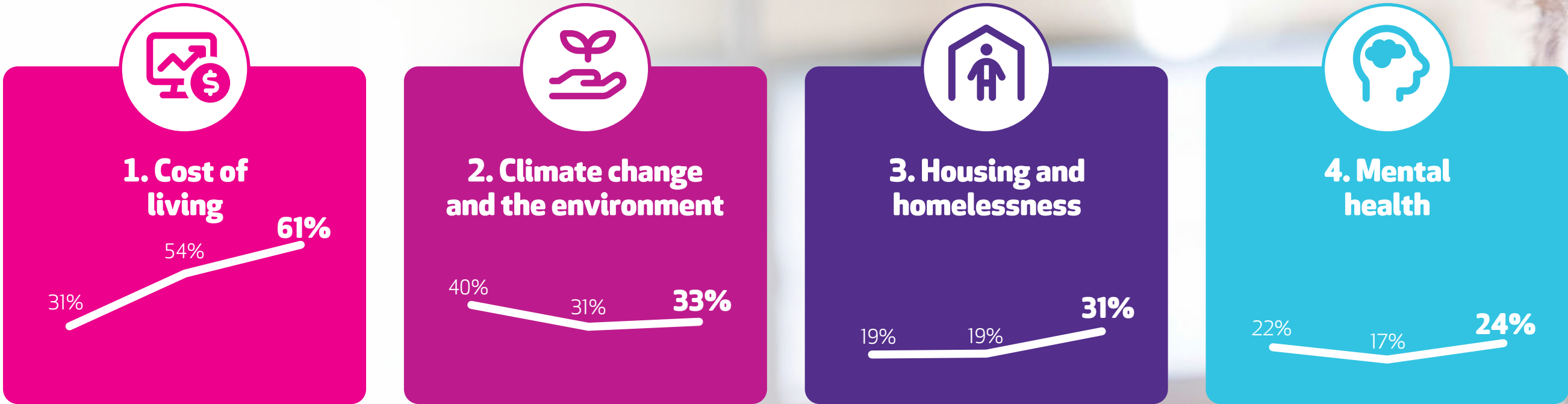
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South Australia

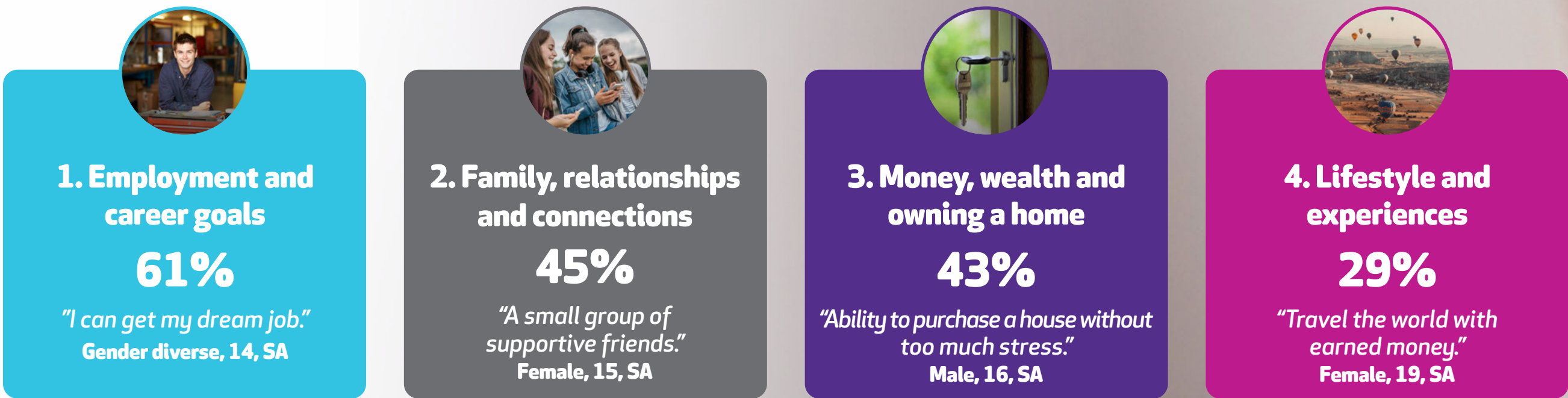
KEY FINDINGS



Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The charts show the proportion who mentioned each issue in 2023, 2024 and 2025.



While 55% of young people say they feel positive about the future, 95% articulated at least one of their biggest hopes, with the top themes being:



South Australia

KEY FINDINGS



Young people shared what life looks like for them now...

Money, wealth and owning a home

Over one in five (21%) agreed *my family are often stressed about money*

9.1% couldn't afford to participate in activities, hobbies or groups

One in 25 (3.9%) felt stressed in the past year about *having somewhere to live*



Family, relationships and connections

31% felt stressed about *problems with friends* and 28% about *problems with family* in the past year

17% felt lonely *all or most of the time*

34% felt connected to others in their neighbourhood



Employment and career

45% were currently working

Top reasons for working:

- To *save up money*
- To *pay for my own things*



Education and learning

Almost two in three (65%) students agreed *I like my school*

53% felt stressed about *school / study problems* in the past year

24% faced barriers to achieving study or work goals—most commonly not feeling motivated



Lifestyle and experiences

29% experienced unfair treatment or discrimination in the past year

Participation in the past year:

- 53% *team sport*
- 26% *individual sport*



Purpose, values and big dreams

63% agreed *I can achieve my goals even if they are hard*

Participation in the past year:

- 25% *volunteer work*
- 13% *church or other faith groups*



Physical and mental health

Young people felt stress in the past year about:

- Mental health 41%
- Body image 32%
- Physical health 21%

20% experienced high psychological distress – expressing feelings of anxiety, depression or being overwhelmed



YOUTH SURVEY 2025

TASMANIA RESULTS



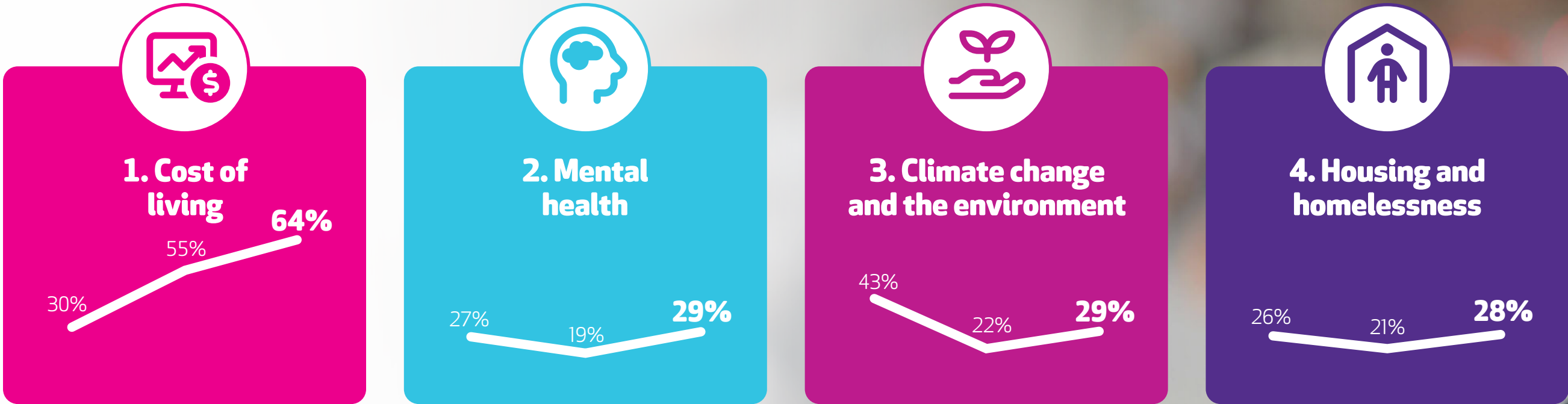
MISSION
AUSTRALIA

Tasmania

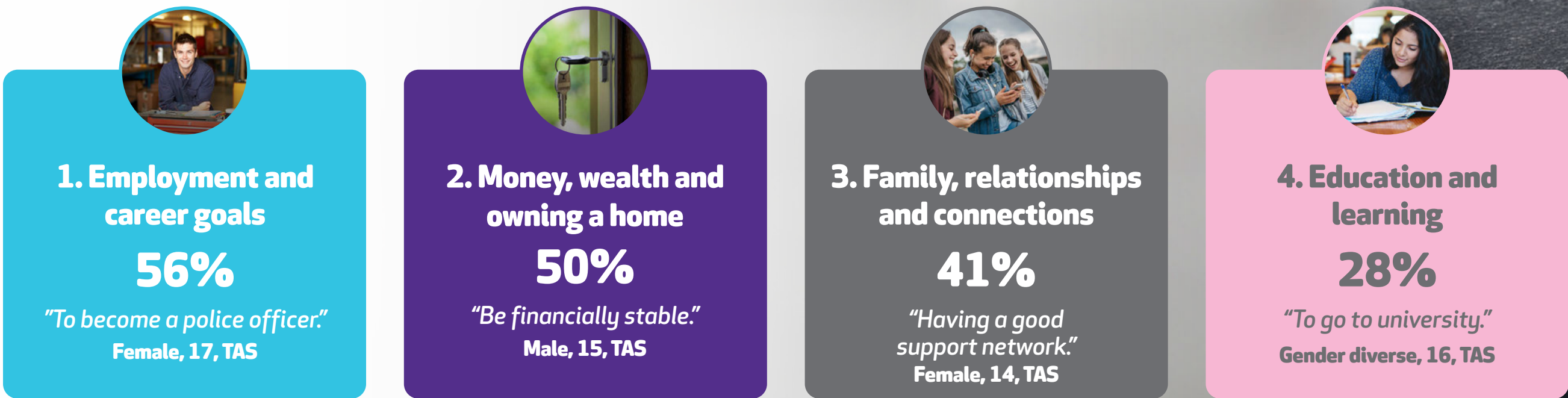
KEY FINDINGS



Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The charts show the proportion who mentioned each issue in 2023, 2024 and 2025.



While 55% of young people say they feel positive about the future, 96% articulated at least one of their biggest hopes, with the top themes being:



Tasmania

KEY FINDINGS



Young people shared what life looks like for them now...

Money, wealth and owning a home

24% agreed *my family are often stressed about money*

Over one in 10 (11%) couldn't afford to participate in activities, hobbies or groups

One in 25 (4.1%) felt stressed in the past year about *having somewhere to live*



Family, relationships and connections

32% felt stressed about *problems with friends* and **26%** about *problems with family* in the past year

15% felt lonely *all or most of the time*

30% felt connected to others in their neighbourhood



Employment and career

62% were currently working

Top reasons for working:

- To *save up money*
- To *pay for my own things*



Education and learning

Almost two in three (65%) students agreed *I like my school*

55% felt stressed about *school / study problems* in the past year

25% faced barriers to achieving study or work goals—most commonly not feeling motivated



Lifestyle and experiences

33% experienced unfair treatment or discrimination in the past year

Participation in the past year:

- **49%** *team sport*
- **34%** *individual sport*



Purpose, values and big dreams

62% agreed *I can achieve my goals even if they are hard*

Participation in the past year:

- **36%** *volunteer work*
- **10%** *church or other faith groups*



Physical and mental health

Young people felt stress in the past year about:

- **Mental health 45%**
- **Body image 34%**
- **Physical health 24%**

19% experienced high psychological distress – expressing feelings of anxiety, depression or being overwhelmed



YOUTH SURVEY 2025

VICTORIA RESULTS



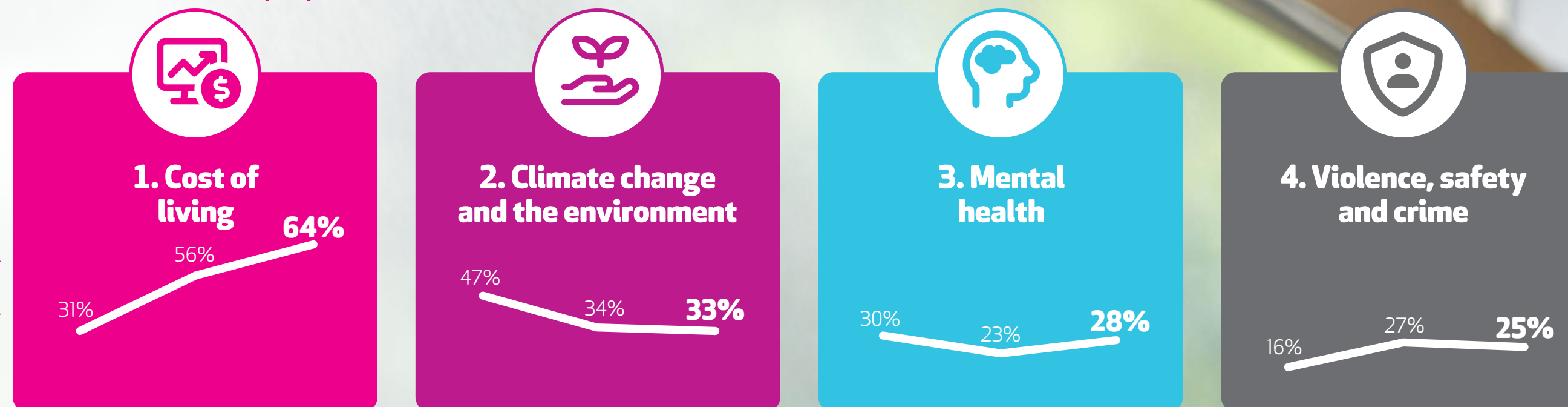
MISSION
AUSTRALIA

Victoria

KEY FINDINGS



Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The charts show the proportion who mentioned each issue in 2023, 2024 and 2025.



While 61% of young people say they feel positive about the future, 97% articulated at least one of their biggest hopes, with the top themes being:



Victoria

KEY FINDINGS



Young people shared what life looks like for them now...

Money, wealth and owning a home

18% agreed *my family are often stressed about money*

6.5% couldn't afford to participate in activities, hobbies or groups

3.4% felt stressed in the past year about *having somewhere to live*



Family, relationships and connections

30% felt stressed about *problems with friends* and **26%** about *problems with family* in the past year

15% felt lonely *all or most of the time*

38% felt connected to others in their neighbourhood



Employment and career

47% were currently working

Top reasons for working:

- To *save up money*
- To *pay for my own things*



Education and learning

Almost two in three (65%) students agreed *I like my school*

57% felt stressed about *school / study problems* in the past year

24% faced barriers to achieving study or work goals—most commonly not feeling motivated



Lifestyle and experiences

27% experienced unfair treatment or discrimination in the past year

Participation in the past year:

- **57%** *team sport*
- **40%** *individual sport*



Purpose, values and big dreams

68% agreed *I can achieve my goals even if they are hard*

Participation in the past year:

- **30%** *volunteer work*
- **17%** *church or other faith groups*



Physical and mental health

Young people felt stress in the past year about:

- **Mental health 38%**
- **Body image 31%**
- **Physical health 19%**

17% experienced high psychological distress – expressing feelings of anxiety, depression or being overwhelmed



YOUTH SURVEY 2025

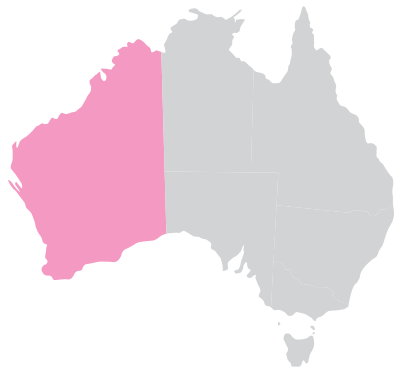
WESTERN AUSTRALIA RESULTS



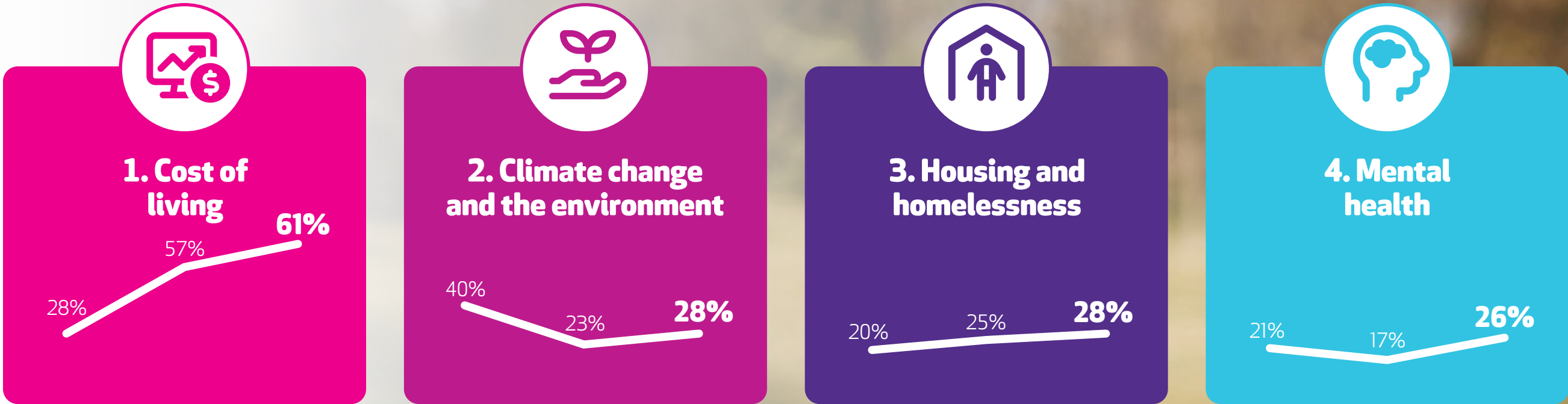
MISSION
AUSTRALIA

Western Australia

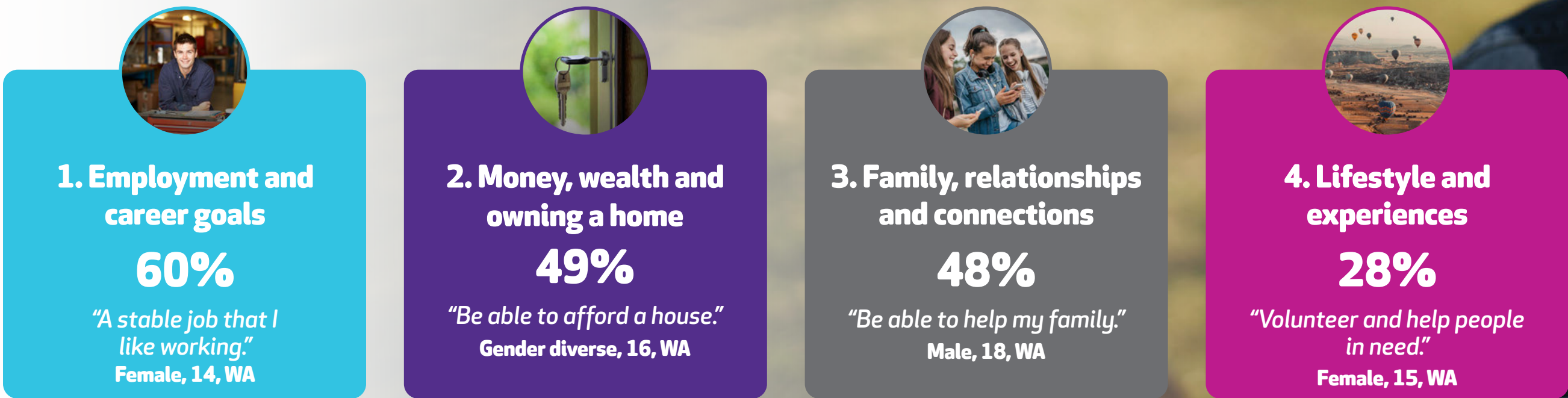
KEY FINDINGS



Young people were asked to list the three most important issues in Australia today. The charts show the proportion who mentioned each issue in 2023, 2024 and 2025.

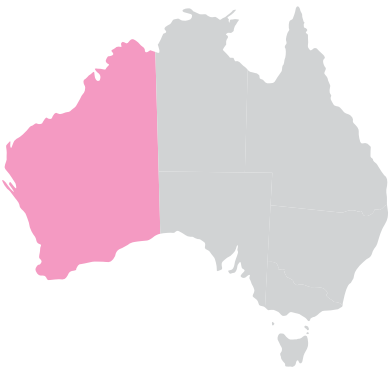


While 55% of young people say they feel positive about the future, 98% articulated at least one of their biggest hopes, with the top themes being:



Western Australia

KEY FINDINGS



Young people shared what life looks like for them now...

Money, wealth and owning a home

One in five (20%) agreed *my family are often stressed about money*

One in 10 (9.8%) couldn't afford to participate in activities, hobbies or groups

6.6% felt stressed in the past year about *having somewhere to live*



Family, relationships and connections

31% felt stressed about *problems with friends* and **30%** about *problems with family* in the past year

18% felt *lonely all or most of the time*

32% felt connected to others in their neighbourhood



Employment and career

44% were currently working

Top reasons for working:

- To *save up money*
- To *pay for my own things*



Education and learning

57% of students agreed *I like my school*

57% felt stressed about *school / study problems* in the past year

28% faced barriers to achieving study or work goals—most commonly not feeling motivated



Lifestyle and experiences

36% experienced unfair treatment or discrimination in the past year

Participation in the past year:

- **52%** *team sport*
- **36%** *individual sport*



Purpose, values and big dreams

63% agreed *I can achieve my goals even if they are hard*

Participation in the past year:

- **33%** *volunteer work*
- **24%** *church or other faith groups*



Physical and mental health

Young people felt stress in the past year about:

- *Mental health* **40%**
- *Body image* **34%**
- *Physical health* **21%**

21% experienced high psychological distress – expressing feelings of anxiety, depression or being overwhelmed



About the survey

Background

The Mission Australia *Youth Survey* is the largest, national annual survey of young people aged 14 to 19 in Australia. Now in its 24th year, the *Youth Survey* aims to identify the values, aspirations and issues of concern to young people. The *Youth Survey* was developed by Mission Australia to strengthen its capacity to support and advocate for young people in need.

Participation

In 2025, 17,155 young people aged 14 to 19 across Australia completed the *Youth Survey*.

Focus areas

The 2025 *Youth Survey* sought to capture the experiences and perspectives of young people on a broad range of issues as well as collecting valuable socio-demographic data. The survey enquired about issues of national importance, hopes for the future, personal stressors, mental health and wellbeing, and sources of support and community connections. Other topics included school and work, housing and financial, climate issues and unfair treatment / discrimination.

Research Ethics

The *Youth Survey* has Human Research Ethics Committee approval from the University of Melbourne (Ref: 2025-22721-64783-22).

Methodology

Data Collection

The 2025 *Youth Survey* was open to young people across Australia aged 14 to 19 years. The data collection period was 10 April to 20 August 2025. Survey participation by young people was voluntary and no survey incentives were offered to survey respondents. The survey could be completed online or by paper. Respondents were able to skip survey questions, except for state and date of birth, and could exit the survey at any point.

Young people were engaged via schools, local councils, community and service organisations and through Mission Australia services. The survey was also available on the Mission Australia website and promoted via social media. Following research approval from State and Territory Education Departments and Catholic Education Offices, secondary school principals were approached via email with information about the survey and how to get involved. Information about the *Youth Survey* was also distributed to peak bodies, local councils, community managed organisations, Universities and TAFEs 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 will be able to receive a tailored *Youth Survey* report if 100 or more (or a mutually agreed lower number) young people responded to the survey. To facilitate this, a pre-arranged code was allocated to the school or organisation that was linked

to these survey responses. Participating councils were also provided the option to obtain a tailored *Youth Survey* report representing responses from young people within nominated postcodes.

Child & Youth Safe Procedure

Mission Australia is committed to child and youth safety and extends this responsibility to the young people who participate in the *Youth Survey*. In line with the research approvals provided by State and Territory Education Departments and Catholic Education Offices, Mission Australia reported re-identifiable information to participating schools if a young person's responses to the Kessler 6 (K6) questions indicated psychological distress and / or if any free-text response indicated the young person was at potential risk of harm, abuse or neglect.

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

2025 Updates

Each year, the *Youth Survey* questions and analysis methods evolve based on feedback, learnings and technological improvements. In 2025, in response to consultation with a range of stakeholders, including young people, significant updates were made to the *Youth Survey* to enhance its accessibility, usability, and relevance.

Key changes include:

- **Expanded age range.** Following feedback from schools, the survey now includes young people aged 14 to 19, allowing Year 9 students to participate.
- **More strength-based questions.** New items were added to explore hopes for the future, activities young people find easy, and positive self-perception statements.
- **New questions on school and work engagement.** These include topics such as reasons for school absences, feelings about school, and motivations for working.
- **Improved clarity and readability.** Several questions and response options were revised for better interpretation and simplicity. For example:
 - Issues of concern was updated to issues that made young people feel stressed in the past year.
 - Sources of support now captures whether those sources are perceived as helpful.
- **Streamlined content.** Some questions were removed to reduce survey length and improve focus. Examples include:
 - Satisfaction with studies
 - Plans after school

- Biggest personal challenge and what helped address it
- Type of residence and living arrangements
- Questions on alcohol and drugs

Analysis & Weighting

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

Quantitative analysis was conducted using SPSS version 30.0.0.0 (172). Only comparisons between cohorts that are statistically significant are featured in the report commentary. A p-value equal or lower than 0.05 was interpreted as statistically significant. Thematic analysis of open-ended responses was conducted using QDA Miner version 2025.

Data was weighted to make the sample representative of 14 to 19-year-olds by gender, location (state / territory based on postcodes), and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) developed Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas for 2021 (SEIFA) (ABS, 2023). Gender and location correspond to the ABS's Estimated Residential Population (ERP) statistics for December 2024 (ABS, 2025), as it provides year on year figures. The *Youth Survey* uses Random iterative method (RIM) weighting, which balances the marginal distributions of each weighting element one after the other, repeating until all factors are within a reasonable margin of the target.

All data in this report, including historical data has been weighted. Data in this report is not comparable to *Youth Survey* reports prior to 2024, as they contain unweighted data.

Table 15.1: 2025 unweighted sample and weighted number by state / territory

	Unweighted sample	Unweighted %	Weighted count	Weighted %
NSW	4027	23.5	5218	30.4
VIC	4448	25.9	4256	24.8
QLD	3129	18.2	3674	21.4
SA	2396	14.0	1279	7.5
WA	1569	9.1	1845	10.8
TAS	586	3.4	400	2.3
NT	32	0.2	134	0.8
ACT	968	5.6	349	2.0
National	17155	100.0	17155	100.0

This report

This report contains an executive summary, national summary and findings, findings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, and a summary for each State and Territory, except for the Northern Territory due to small sample size (see Table 15.1). More detailed State and Territory reports can be found here: [Youth survey | Mission Australia](#).

Data tables and figures in the national findings section include total results alongside breakdown by gender. Data tables and figures in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander section include total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander results and a breakdown by female and male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. They also have responses from non-Indigenous young people. These data tables and figures exclude responses from gender diverse respondents due to low sample sizes.

Since 2021, responses from young people who identified as genders other than female and male have been included in the national summary (and state data were applicable). In the survey, gender options included are *Male*, *Female*, *A-gender / non-gendered*, *Non-binary gender*, *Transgender*, *Intersex*, *Other* (please specify) and *Prefer not to say*. Due to the small sample sizes, *A-gender / non-gendered*, *Non-binary gender*, *Transgender*, *Intersex* and *Other* are combined under the *gender diverse* reporting category. The gender question will be updated in 2026 to directly align with the Australia Bureau of Statistics standard.

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

Reference List

Australian Bureau of Statistics. Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia. (2023). <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/socio-economic-indexes-areas-seifa-australia/latest-release>

Australian Bureau of Statistics. National, state and territory population. (2025). <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/dec-2024>

Hilton, M. F., Whiteford, H. A., Sheridan, J. S., Cleary, C. M., Chant, D. C., Wang, P. S., & Kessler, R. C. (2008). The prevalence of psychological distress in employees and associated occupational risk factors. *Journal of occupational and environmental medicine*, 50(7), 746-757.

Rioseco, P., Warren, D., & Daraganova, G. (2020). Children's social-emotional wellbeing: The role of parenting, parents' mental health and health behaviours. Southbank, Victoria: Australian Institute of Family Studies.

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

Acknowledgements

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

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

These include:

- Albany Youth Support Association
- Alpine Shire Council
- Aquinas College
- Australian Christian College
- Ballarat High School
- Blacktown Girls High School
- Blue Mountains Grammar School
- Burnie Works
- Byford Secondary College
- Calrossy Anglican School
- Camperdown College
- Canberra Girls Grammar School
- Cardijn College
- Carey Baptist Grammar School
- Chairo Christian School
- Emmanuel Anglican College
- Emmanuel College Warrnambool
- Fintona Girls' School
- Geraldton Grammar School
- Goulburn Valley Grammar School
- Guilford Young College
- headspace, Onkaparinga & Marion
- Hennessy Catholic College
- Hillcrest Christian College
- Hills International College
- Hillsong Youth Australia
- Hope Christian College
- Hunter Trade College
- Kardinia International College
- Kilbreda College
- King's Christian College
- Kingsway Christian College
- Launceston Church Grammar School
- Loreto College (Coorparoo)
- Loreto College (Marryatville)
- Loreto Normanhurst
- Maclean High School
- Marist College Ashgrove
- Marist College Canberra
- Mater Christi College
- Mentone Grammar School
- Meriden School Strathfield
- Methodist Ladies' College
- Mission Australia
- Moriah College
- Mount St Benedict College
- Mount St Joseph Girls' College
- Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic College
- Palm Beach Currumbin State High
- Peter Moyes Anglican Community School
- Pimpama State Secondary College
- Point Cook Senior Secondary College
- Presbyterian Ladies' College Sydney
- Reece High School
- Richard Johnson Anglican College
- Sacred Heart College
- Santa Sabina College
- Southern Cross Catholic College
- St Aidan's Anglican Girls School
- St Bede's College
- St Clare's College
- St Dominic's Priory College
- St Francis Catholic College
- St Francis de Sales College
- St Laurence's College
- St Margaret's Berwick Grammar
- St Mary MacKillop College
- St Peter's Collegiate Girls' School
- St Ursula's College (Toowoomba)
- Tara Anglican School for Girls
- The Cathedral School of St Anne & St James
- The Lakes College
- Toowoomba Grammar School
- Westminster School
- Whyalla Secondary College
- Wimmera Lutheran College
- YouthCARE



Thank you





This publication would not have been possible without the 17,155 young people who completed the *Youth Survey* in 2025. We extend our deepest gratitude to them, as well as to the staff of Mission Australia and the many schools and organisations that supported their involvement.

Amplifying the voices of young people ensures that decisions and solutions reflect their realities. When their perspectives are valued, governments, communities and organisations become more inclusive, responsive and better positioned to support them to thrive.

For further information about this report please contact

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Who is Mission Australia?

Mission Australia has more than 165 years of experience meeting human need and is one of the largest and most trusted for-purpose community service and housing providers in the country.

As a national non-denominational Christian charity, Mission Australia’s values of respect, compassion, integrity, perseverance and celebration are at the heart of everything they do.

Every day, Mission Australia delivers homelessness services, provides social and affordable housing, helps families, children and young people thrive, improves mental health and wellbeing, supports people with disability, provides pathways to employment and financial stability, strengthens communities, offers alcohol and other drug support, and more.

Backed by supporters, partners, funders and collaborators, Mission Australia welcomes and works alongside people and communities of all backgrounds, ages and beliefs who seek the charity’s support, providing excellent services and safe, secure homes that offer hope and lasting impact.

With Mission Australia’s evidence and courageous voice, the charity advocates for a fairer nation and better outcomes for the people and communities they serve.

Guided by a bold Strategy 2030, Mission Australia is focused on delivering more safe, secure homes, expanding its impact and strengthening its organisation to meet the growing needs of people across Australia.

Together, Mission Australia is building hope and possibility for all.

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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