



# national survey of young australians 2009

key and emerging issues

■ YOUNG PEOPLE



# Foreword

## NATIONAL SURVEY OF YOUNG AUSTRALIANS 2009

I am delighted to write a foreword for the 2009 National Survey of Young Australians.

I well remember sharing a copy of a previous edition with a youth minister working in a large church with a highly successful youth based ministry. His feedback suggested this was probably the most helpful resource in capturing trends and issues facing young Australians, and the report assisted in giving shape to future programs.

This comprehensive report fits comfortably into all that Mission Australia seeks to do within the community. One of our goals is to assist young people to navigate through a successful youth, and this report will provide insights and information to assist many on that journey.

The human journey at any age and stage is full of complexity and challenge and I do hope this well-presented resource becomes a valuable tool in understanding and responding to the challenges facing our young people today.

**Bruce Eagles**

National Chaplain



# Introduction

## Introduction

In 2009 Mission Australia conducted its eighth annual survey of young Australians. The primary purpose of the survey, as in previous years, was to identify both the values and issues of concern to young people in Australia.

## Participation

47,735 young people aged 11 to 24 participated in the survey in 2009, including 8,693 who completed the survey online.

## Areas of focus

The survey was deliberately kept brief (15 questions) in order to encourage a large response from a diversity of young people. Seven questions sought respondents' views on a variety of issues such as what they value, their issues of concern, who they turn to for advice and support, what activities they are involved in, and who they admire. The remaining questions collected demographic information including age, gender, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander identification, state/territory location, postcode and disability status.

## Methodology

The survey was distributed to a wide range of organisations, including all secondary schools and public and tertiary libraries in Australia. It was also distributed to all Mission Australia services as well as to a large network of other service providers, Commonwealth, state/territory and local government departments, youth organisations, peak bodies and corporate partners.

The questions relating to what young people value, their concerns and their sources of advice presented respondents with a list of options which they were asked to rank in order of importance. The data reported for these questions are the proportions of respondents who ranked each item first, second or third. This methodology follows that of previous years and enables comparisons with previous survey results. An online version of the survey was available, which contained an additional free text question inviting respondents to comment on their issues of concern.

## This report

This report contains an executive summary as well as summaries at the national level and for each state/territory. There is also a chapter that compares responses from Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents. Each of the chapters contains a breakdown of the key data by age and gender.



# Executive summary

## Demographic information

Responses to the survey were received from 47,735 young people living in a range of communities in each state and territory. The largest proportion (36.6%) came from the most populous state, New South Wales. About 56% of respondents were living in a capital city and the remainder in other areas of each state and territory. The largest proportion of respondents were aged 11 to 14 (51.1%), followed by those aged 15 to 19 (46.8%) and a small number of respondents aged 20 to 24 (2.1%). As in previous years, slightly more females than males participated in the survey (52.4% compared with 47.6%). 2,301 surveys were returned by Indigenous young people, and 6,861 from those who spoke a language other than English at home. 1,109 respondents indicated they had a disability.

## What young people value

As in previous years, the top two items valued by young people were *family relationships* and *friendships*. This was the case for both genders and all age groups. Nationally, about three quarters of respondents highly valued *family relationships*, and about 60% highly valued *friendships*. *Being independent* and *physical and mental health* were each highly valued by about a third of respondents nationally. Young adults were much more likely than those aged 11 to 19 to highly value *financial security*. Males were more likely than females to highly value *getting a job*.

## Issues of concern

The top three issues of concern for respondents nationally were *drugs*, *suicide* and *body image*, with just over a quarter of young people identifying each of them as major concerns. A complex picture emerged from responses to this question, with eight issues being of significant concern to at least one in five respondents. The online qualitative data also indicates that the nature of young people's concerns may be personal, or may relate to concern about their peers, family or the broader community. Analysis of the data by age and gender provides a more nuanced understanding of young people's issues of concern.

*Drugs* were the top issue of concern for 11 to 14 year olds, and this group was almost twice as likely as those aged 20 to 24 to identify it as a major concern (31.0% compared with 17.5%). This is despite the fact that rates of substance use among early adolescents are much lower than for young adults<sup>1</sup>.

The trend for young adults to be concerned about mental health issues continued this year. The top two concerns for young adults were *depression* and *coping with stress*, with about 30% of them identifying each as an area of major concern. By comparison, about 16% of 11 to 14 year olds were concerned about these issues, as were 21% of 15 to 19 year olds.

There were considerable differences between the genders on two issues of concern – namely *alcohol* and *physical/sexual abuse*. Males were much more likely than females to identify *alcohol* as a significant concern (27.6% compared with 19.0%), while females were much more likely than males to identify *physical/sexual abuse* (27.5% compared with 17.0%).

Some issues were of concern to a substantial proportion of young people irrespective of age and gender, and these included *suicide*, *family conflict*, *personal safety* and *bullying/emotional abuse*.

## Where young people go for advice and support

The top three sources of advice and support for young people in 2009, as they have been in previous years, were *friends*, *parents* and *relative/family friend*. This was true for all age groups and both genders. Nationally, about 85% of respondents identified *friends* as an important source of advice, while around three quarters indicated they turn to *parents* for advice and support. About 60% identified *relative/family friend* as a key source of advice. The proportion identifying the *internet* continued to grow in 2009, with 22.5% of respondents indicating it is a top source of advice and support. 86.5% of respondents indicated that they had enough information on issues of concern when they needed it.

<sup>1</sup> AIHW, 2008

## Community participation

*Sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *arts/cultural* activities were the three most popular activities for respondents in 2009. Nationally, participation in activities declined from 2008 levels, particularly for *arts/cultural* activities. About 64% of young people took part in *sports (as a participant)*, as did 39% in *sports (as a spectator)*. Around a quarter (23.4%) of respondents participated in *arts/cultural* activities in 2009, compared with 44.1% in 2008. There is no clear indication from the survey data to explain this decline, however participation in activities may have been influenced by the global financial crisis impacting on the spending patterns of families and young people.

Participation in *sports (as a participant)* declined with age, while the proportion taking part in *volunteer* activities increased with age. Around 40% of young adults were involved in *volunteering*. As in previous years, males were slightly more likely than females to take part in *sports* activities, and females more likely than males to take part in *arts/cultural* activities.

## Who young people admire

Nationally, the top two responses to this question were *family* members and *friends*, as they have been in previous years. Other popular responses included *sports teams, players and coaches, entertainers, international aid organisations* and *community agencies helping disadvantaged people*.

## Some priority issues

A number of priority issues emerged from this year's survey. The qualitative responses indicate that young people clearly identify links between various issues that affect them and this provides a clear guiding principle to inform government, community and other initiatives aimed at enhancing the wellbeing of young people. Efforts to support young people must be holistic – whether this is at home, school, in the workplace or through other more formal health, community and employment services.

1. **Family:** *Family conflict* can have a deep impact on young people, and consistent concern about this issue across the age groups and genders echoes the high value most young people place on *family relationships*. Skilling up parents, other family members and friends to openly communicate with young people, including through times of family stress and change, is critical. Early intervention strategies that work to avoid conflict escalating are also important.
2. **Drugs:** The level of concern regarding *drugs* appears from the qualitative responses to reflect young people's concern about the potential negative impact of drugs on themselves, friends, family and the broader community. The degree and nature of concern about this issue expressed by 11 to 14 year olds suggests the need to review current drug education campaigns to ensure that they are evidence based and equip young people with the skills to effectively deal with the issue, and keep safe and healthy, if and when they come across drugs. Young people need to be able to apply the knowledge they learn through such programs in the specific social contexts in which they mix – providing them with information alone will not be sufficient.
3. **Mental health:** A number of issues of concern relate to mental health, such as *suicide, coping with stress* and *depression*. Young people are particularly impacted by mental health issues, with over 75% of mental illnesses beginning between 15 and 25 years of age<sup>2</sup>. Early intervention, including supporting those who young people are most likely to turn to when they have a problem, namely friends, parents and other relatives and family friends, is critical. The ongoing development of integrated and youth-friendly mental health services is also required.
4. **Financial issues:** Qualitative responses indicate that young people's concerns about *financial security* may reflect the early impact of the global financial crisis, but they also indicate both the financial struggles some young people experience in the transition to adulthood as well as the personal burden they take on when their family is struggling. This is especially true for young adults, a quarter of whom indicated that *financial security* was highly valued.
5. **Personal safety:** The level of concern expressed by young people regarding *personal safety* was significant across the age and gender groups. Balancing good personal safety habits with the goal of young people's active participation in the community remains a challenge for young people themselves, their families and the wider community.

## Where to from here?

Close to 48,000 young people from around the country took the time to participate in the 2009 survey. At a time when the Commonwealth Government has embarked on a national conversation with young Australians to inform the development of a National Youth Strategy, the survey provides unique insights, directly from the voices of young people, into their concerns and values.

As well as helping to inform governments, non government organisations and other institutions interested in the wellbeing of young people, these findings also provide young Australians themselves with relevant information and opportunities for action and discussion in the context of their families, educational institutions, workplaces and communities. It is also hoped that the report will act as a stimulus for discussion for those closely involved in the daily lives of young people, such as parents, carers, family members and friends.

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<sup>2</sup> Hickie et al, 2004



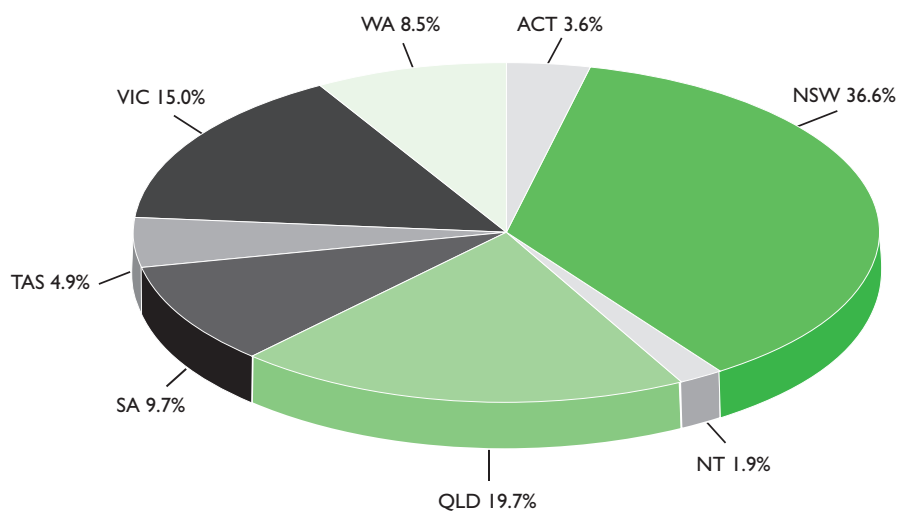
# National summary

## Profile of respondents

### State and territory distribution

A total of 47,735 young people responded to Mission Australia's 2009 National Survey of Young Australians. Respondents came from every state and territory, including 16,414 from New South Wales, 8,827 from Queensland, 6,748 from Victoria, 4,347 from South Australia, 3,812 from Western Australia, 2,208 from Tasmania, 1,631 from the Australian Capital Territory and 839 from the Northern Territory. Around 2,900 respondents did not indicate which state/territory they lived in.

Figure 1: Percentage of respondents by state/territory



### Age breakdown

The survey was open to young people aged between 11 and 24 years and the results have been collated into three age groups. The largest group was aged 11 to 14 years (51.1%), followed by those aged 15 to 19 (46.8%). As in previous years, the smallest group of responses came from young adults aged 20 to 24 years (2.1%).

Table 1: Age profile of respondents

Age in years	Number of respondents	Percentage of respondents
11-14 years	23,859	51.1
15-19 years	21,877	46.8
20-24 years	960	2.1
Total	46,696	100.0

Note: Percentages in all tables, figures and text are rounded to 1 decimal place and may not necessarily total 100%. Not all respondents answered all survey questions. The data is for those who responded.

### Gender breakdown

Just over half of the responses (52.4%) were completed by females and 47.6% by males.

## Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

2,301 (5.0%) respondents identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Table 2: Identify as Indigenous

	Total number	% of respondents	11-14 yrs %	15-19 yrs %	20-24 yrs %
Indigenous	2,301	5.0	4.8	4.8	7.6
Non Indigenous	44,134	95.0	95.2	95.2	92.4

## Languages other than English spoken at home

Around 86% of respondents indicated that English was the only language they spoke at home. The 6,861 (14.4%) who spoke a language other than English at home spoke over 75 languages between them. The most frequently spoken were (in order of frequency): Chinese; Arabic; Vietnamese; Italian; Cantonese; Greek; Filipino/Tagalog; Korean; Mandarin; French; and Spanish.

## Disability

1,109 (2.3%) respondents indicated that they had a disability. The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order): learning disability; autism; Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD); deafness or hearing impairment; physical disability; intellectual disability; blindness or vision impairment; and mental illness or psychiatric disability.

## Where respondents were living

As in previous years, the vast majority of respondents (93.2%) lived *with family*. Table 3 shows that with increasing age a higher proportion of respondents lived independently in a *share house, with a partner or alone*.

Overall, 925 respondents were living in a *boarding school or university college*, 460 were in a *juvenile justice centre or prison* and a further 328 respondents indicated that they were *homeless or in insecure housing*. 225 young people in *foster care* also participated.

Table 3: Where respondents were living

	All ages %	11-14 yrs %	15-19 yrs %	20-24 yrs %
With family	93.2	96.2	91.7	55.0
Boarding school or university college	2.1	1.3	3.0	1.9
Share house including with friends	1.4	0.6	1.5	20.0
Juvenile justice centre/prison	1.0	0.8	1.3	1.2
Homeless/insecure housing	0.7	0.5	0.9	1.8
Alone	0.6	0.2	0.7	9.3
Foster care	0.5	0.4	0.7	0.5
With partner/husband/wife including with own children	0.2	0.0	0.1	9.2
Other	0.1	0.1	0.2	1.2

## Living in or outside a capital city

As Table 4 shows, around 56% of respondents lived in a capital city. The proportion of young people living outside a capital city was lowest among the 20 to 24 year age group, with just over a quarter (28.6%) not living in a capital city.

Table 4: Geographic location of respondents

	Total number	All ages %	11-14 yrs %	15-19 yrs %	20-24 yrs %
Live in capital city	26,064	56.4	55.4	56.9	71.4
Not in capital city	20,109	43.6	44.6	43.1	28.6

## Main source of income

Parents/family, as in previous surveys, were the main source of income for the majority of respondents (73.1%). Table 5 shows that respondents became less financially dependent on parents/family as they became older and found employment or were eligible for a government allowance. The main sources of income were very similar for male and female respondents.

Table 5: Main source of income

	All ages %	11-14 yrs %	15-19 yrs %	20-24 yrs %	Female %	Male %
Parents/family	73.1	89.0	58.6	9.7	74.8	71.4
Employment	21.9	8.7	34.3	65.6	21.1	22.6
Government allowance	4.1	1.1	6.4	23.3	3.5	4.8
Other	0.5	0.6	0.3	1.3	0.4	0.6
No income	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.6

## Study and work

The survey included questions about the study and employment status of respondents. Results for 11 to 14 year olds have been excluded from this section, as the compulsory age for secondary education in Australia is around 16 years of age.

Three quarters (74.1%) of respondents aged 15 to 24 were *studying full time*. As might be expected, the 15 to 19 year age group were much more likely than the young adult group to be *studying full time* (75.0% compared with 48.1%). About 15% of both age groups were *studying part time*, while just over a third (35.6%) of 20 to 24 year olds compared with 10.5% of 15 to 19 year olds were *not studying*. Female respondents were more likely than male respondents to be *studying full time* (78.8% compared with 69.0%) while male respondents were slightly more likely than female respondents to be *not studying* (14.2% compared with 8.8%).

Table 6: Participation in education

	Total %	15-19 yrs %	20-24 yrs %	Female %	Male %
Studying full time	74.1	75.0	48.1	78.8	69.0
Studying part time	14.5	14.5	16.3	12.4	16.8
Not studying	11.4	10.5	35.6	8.8	14.2

Table 7 shows respondents' participation in employment. About one third (33.8%) of the young adult group were *working full time* compared with only 1.3% of the 15 to 19 year age group. About half of the younger age group, however, were *working part time* or had *casual or temporary work*. Participation rates for males and females were similar, although females (30.6%) were slightly more likely than males (25.3%) to have *casual or temporary work*, and males were slightly more likely than females to be *unemployed/looking for work* (29.0% compared with 24.9%).

Table 7: Participation in employment

	Total %	15-19 yrs %	20-24 yrs %	Female %	Male %
Working full time	2.5	1.3	33.8	2.7	2.2
Working part time	22.0	22.1	19.0	21.6	22.4
Casual or temporary work	28.1	28.2	23.6	30.6	25.3
Unemployed/looking for work	26.8	27.2	17.6	24.9	29.0
Too young to work or choose not to	20.6	21.2	6.0	20.2	21.0

## Detailed national results

### What do young people value?

Young people were asked to rank what they value from the list of options set out in Table 8. The data from this question has been very consistent across the eight years of the survey. In 2009, as in previous years, *family relationships* and *friendships* were highly valued by a large proportion of respondents and were clearly ranked first and second respectively. *Being independent* was ranked third in 2009, while *physical and mental health* was highly valued by a similar proportion of respondents and had been ranked third in 2008 and 2007.

- *Family relationships* and *friendships* were highly valued by 75.6% and 60.6% of respondents respectively.
- *Being independent* and *physical and mental health* were each highly valued by about a third of respondents.

Table 8: What young people value

	2009 %	2008 %	2007 %	2006 %
<b>Family relationships</b>	<b>75.6</b>	<b>75.3</b>	<b>76.2</b>	<b>72.3</b>
<b>Friendships (other than family)</b>	<b>60.6</b>	<b>62.3</b>	<b>60.3</b>	<b>66.8</b>
<b>Being independent</b>	<b>32.7</b>	31.7	32.9	<b>35.2</b>
Physical and mental health	31.1	<b>31.8</b>	<b>33.1</b>	N/A
Feeling needed and valued	26.1	26.2	25.6	29.3
School or study satisfaction	22.0	21.0	19.5	24.9
Getting a job	18.1	16.9	15.9	20.3
Financial security	13.8	13.4	12.6	16.2
Spirituality/faith	12.8	14.0	14.5	13.9
Making a difference in the community	8.2	7.8	N/A	N/A
Peer acceptance	N/A	N/A	9.8	12.2
Environmental issues	N/A	N/A	N/A	8.9

Note: Data is aggregated and includes items ranked one, two or three by respondents.

## Age differences

Table 9 highlights the similarities as well as the differences in what young people valued across the age groups. The top two items for all age groups were *family relationships* and *friendships*, with over 70% of respondents in each age group highly valuing *family relationships*. The proportion of young adults who highly valued *friendships* was considerably lower than for those aged 11 to 19 (43.1% compared to around 60%). Close to a third of respondents in all age groups highly valued *being independent* and *physical and mental health*.

- *Family relationships* was ranked first by all age groups, with more than 70% of respondents in each age group indicating it was highly valued.
- Just over 60% of young people aged 11 to 19 highly valued *friendships*, compared with 43.1% of 20 to 24 year olds.
- About a third of young people in each age group highly valued *being independent* and *physical and mental health*.

**Table 9: What young people value, by age**

	11-14 yrs %	15-19 yrs %	20-24 yrs %
<b>Family relationships</b>	<b>77.5</b>	<b>73.8</b>	<b>71.9</b>
<b>Friendships (other than family)</b>	<b>61.3</b>	<b>60.9</b>	<b>43.1</b>
<b>Being independent</b>	30.2	<b>35.2</b>	<b>36.0</b>
Physical and mental health	<b>30.6</b>	31.7	30.4
Feeling needed and valued	25.8	26.2	32.7
School or study satisfaction	23.4	20.8	12.5
Getting a job	19.2	16.7	17.4
Financial security	12.2	15.0	26.6
Spirituality/faith	12.5	12.7	18.9
Making a difference in the community	8.5	7.5	12.5

Note: Data is aggregated and includes items ranked one, two or three by respondents.

*Feeling needed and valued* was valued highly by close to a third of the young adult group, and around a quarter of respondents aged 11 to 19. Not surprisingly, *school or study satisfaction* was highly valued by a greater proportion of those in the 11 to 19 year age group than those aged 20 to 24. Conversely, a greater proportion of the young adult group than those aged 11 to 19 highly valued *financial security*.

- Around a third (32.7%) of young adults highly valued *feeling needed and valued*, compared with about a quarter of 11 to 19 year olds .
- *School or study satisfaction* was highly valued by just over a fifth of young people aged 11 to 19, compared with 12.5% of those aged 20 to 24.
- *Financial security* was highly valued by 26.6% of young adults, about twice the rate of young people aged 11 to 14 (12.2%) and 15 to 19 (15.0%).

## Gender differences

As shown in Table 10, the top three items for both male and female respondents were *family relationships*, *friendships* and *being independent*. A significant proportion of both genders also highly valued *physical and mental health*.

- About 80% of female respondents and 70% of male respondents highly valued *family relationships*.
- *Friendships* were highly valued by nearly two thirds (65.6%) of female respondents and just over half (54.7%) of male respondents.
- *Being independent* was highly valued by about a third of both male and females respondents.
- Around 30% of both genders highly valued *physical and mental health*.

Table 10: What young people value, by gender

	Female %	Male %
Family relationships	79.9	70.6
Friendships (other than family)	65.6	54.7
Being independent	31.8	33.8
Physical and mental health	29.8	32.6
Feeling needed and valued	26.9	25.1
School or study satisfaction	22.4	21.5
Getting a job	13.0	23.9
Financial security	11.6	16.3
Spirituality/faith	12.2	13.4
Making a difference in the community	7.5	9.0

Note: Data is aggregated and includes items ranked one, two or three by respondents.

As in previous years, responses from males and females were similar on a number of items, with the main difference being the proportion of each group who valued *getting a job*. Male respondents were almost twice as likely as female respondents to highly value this item.

- *Getting a job* was highly valued by nearly a quarter (23.9%) of male respondents compared with 13.0% of female respondents.

### What issues are of concern to young people?

Young people were asked to rank the issues that concerned them from the list of options set out in Table 11. The list was unchanged from the one provided in 2008. There was no one 'standout' issue in 2009, with eight issues being of concern to at least one in five respondents. These were: *drugs*; *suicide*; *body image*; *family conflict*; *bullying/emotional abuse*; *alcohol*; *physical/sexual abuse*; and *personal safety*.

Table 11 shows that the top three issues of concern for young people in 2009 were *drugs*, *suicide* and *body image*, with just over a quarter of respondents being highly concerned about each of them.

- *Drugs* was the top ranked issue in 2009, with 26.8% of respondents indicating that it was a major concern.
- 26.3% of young people indicated that *suicide* was of major concern to them.
- *Body image* was the third-ranked issue of concern to young people in 2009, with just over a quarter (25.5%) indicating that it was a major concern.

Table 11: Issues of concern to young people

	2009 %	2008 %	2007 %	2006 %
<b>Drugs</b>	<b>26.8</b>	<b>26.0</b>	20.1	N/A
<b>Suicide</b>	<b>26.3</b>	24.6	23.9	28.0
<b>Body image</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>26.3</b>	<b>32.3</b>	<b>28.1</b>
Family conflict	24.1	<b>25.9</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>28.6</b>
Bullying/emotional abuse	23.4	22.6	22.7	27.5
Alcohol	23.0	20.9	20.5	N/A
Physical/sexual abuse	22.7	22.6	21.2	27.9
Personal safety	22.2	22.9	N/A	N/A
Coping with stress	18.7	20.4	<b>26.9</b>	27.6
Depression	18.7	17.8	19.6	25.8
School or study problems	17.3	18.6	25.4	26.4
The environment	16.7	18.4	23.4	N/A
Self harm	13.3	13.7	14.7	21.5
Discrimination	11.7	12.6	12.9	18.4
Sexuality (relationships, health, identity)	11.4	12.2	9.6	13.3
Alcohol and other drug issues*	N/A	N/A	N/A	<b>28.2</b>

Note: Data is aggregated and includes items ranked one, two or three by respondents. \*From 2007, alcohol and other drug issues appears as two items, alcohol and drugs.

The clustering of issues in Table 11 makes the age and gender breakdowns provided below of particular interest.

### Age differences

Table 12 shows that there were some substantial differences between the concerns of the different age groups on a couple of key items. *Coping with stress* and *depression* were of concern to a higher proportion of young adults than they were to respondents aged 11 to 19. Conversely, *drugs* were of greater concern to 11 to 14 year olds than 15 to 24 year olds.

- *Drugs* were a major concern to nearly one in three (31.0%) 11 to 14 year olds, almost twice the proportion of young adults (17.5%) who indicated they were of concern.
- A much higher proportion of young adults than those aged 11 to 19 indicated that they were concerned about *coping with stress* and *depression*. Both were a major concern for about 30% of young adults, close to twice the proportion of 11 to 14 year olds (about 16%).

Table 12: Issues of concern to young people, by age

	11-14 yrs %	15-19 yrs %	20-24 yrs %
Drugs	31.0	22.6	17.5
Suicide	26.3	26.6	21.8
Body image	23.7	27.4	28.7
Family conflict	24.7	23.5	21.2
Bullying/emotional abuse	25.4	21.2	19.4
Alcohol	24.4	21.6	18.5
Physical/sexual abuse	22.7	22.8	24.4
Personal safety	23.4	21.0	21.9
Coping with stress	15.9	21.2	30.2
Depression	15.5	21.8	30.5
School or study problems	16.7	18.2	12.4
The environment	18.7	14.4	18.9
Self harm	12.5	14.4	9.9
Discrimination	10.3	13.1	13.0
Sexuality (relationships, health, identity)	10.9	11.9	14.4

Note: Data is aggregated and includes items ranked one, two or three by respondents.

Some issues were of concern to a similar proportion of respondents across the age groups, including *family conflict*, *personal safety* and *physical/sexual abuse*.

- *Family conflict*, *personal safety* and *physical/sexual abuse* were each of concern to between a fifth and a quarter of respondents across the age groups.

## Gender differences

There were both differences and similarities in the issues of concern for males and females. For female respondents, three issues were clustered closely together as their top concerns: *physical/sexual abuse*; *body image*; and *suicide*. The top three issues of concern for male respondents were *drugs*, *alcohol* and *suicide*. Male respondents were much more likely than female respondents to be concerned about *alcohol* and, to a lesser extent, *drugs*, while females were more likely than males to be concerned about *physical/sexual abuse*. A similar proportion of both groups were significantly concerned about *suicide*.

- Female respondents were much more likely than male respondents to indicate that *physical/sexual abuse* was an important concern (27.5% compared with 17.0%).
- *Alcohol* was a major concern for 27.6% of male respondents compared with 19.0% of female respondents.
- 29.5% of males compared with 24.4% of females indicated that *drugs* were a major concern.
- *Body image* was a major concern for close to a quarter of male and female respondents.
- *Suicide* was a major concern for just over a quarter of both genders.

Table 13: Issues of concern to young people, by gender

	Female %	Male %
Drugs	24.4	<b>29.5</b>
Suicide	<b>27.1</b>	<b>25.3</b>
Body image	<b>27.4</b>	23.4
Family conflict	24.4	23.7
Bullying/emotional abuse	22.7	24.1
Alcohol	19.0	<b>27.6</b>
Physical/sexual abuse	<b>27.5</b>	17.0
Personal safety	22.8	21.6
Coping with stress	19.5	17.7
Depression	20.1	17.2
School or study problems	17.0	17.7
The environment	15.4	18.2
Self harm	14.0	12.4
Discrimination	10.9	12.5
Sexuality (relationships, health, identity)	9.7	13.6

Note: Data is aggregated and includes items ranked one, two or three by respondents.

Almost all of the remaining items were of concern to similar proportions of male and female respondents, including *family conflict*, *bullying/emotional abuse* and *personal safety*.

- *Family conflict*, *bullying/emotional abuse* and *personal safety* were each of concern to between a fifth and a quarter of male and female respondents.

### Where do young people turn for advice and support when they have a personal problem?

As shown in Table 14, the sources of advice and support for young people when they have a problem have remained very consistent over time. The top three sources were very clearly *friends*, *parents* and *relative/family friend*, as they have been in previous years. The fourth-ranked item, the *internet*, has been identified as a key source of advice and support by an increasing proportion of young people over the years of the survey, from 10.1% in 2002 to 22.5% in 2009.

- *Friends*, *parents* and *relative/family friend* were overwhelmingly the most important sources of advice for respondents in 2009, as they have been for each of the eight years of the survey.
- *Friends* were a major source of advice and support for 84.5% of respondents, and *parents* were an important source for about three quarters (73.4%) of respondents.
- Three in five (60.8%) respondents identified *relative/family friend* as a major source of advice.
- More than a fifth (22.5%) of respondents identified the *internet* as an important source of advice and support.

Table 14: Where young people turn for advice and support

	2009 %	2008 %	2007 %	2006 %
Friends	84.5	85.1	86.0	86.4
Parents	73.4	74.1	73.6	74.2
Relative/family friend	60.8	61.0	63.3	64.0
Internet	22.5	20.3	19.1	16.8
Community agencies eg youth worker	12.5	11.1	11.6	9.3
Magazines	11.0	11.2	11.6	13.5
Teacher	11.0	11.4	10.5	9.3
School counsellor	10.8	11.5	10.8	11.6
Someone else in your community eg doctor, church minister	8.9	8.5	8.6	8.6
Telephone helpline	5.9	5.9	5.8	6.2

Note: Data is aggregated and includes items ranked one, two or three by respondents.

### Age differences

The major sources of advice and support for all age groups were *friends*, *parents* and *relative/family friend*. The proportions who identified *friends* as a main source of advice remained fairly consistent across the age groups. The proportions who identified *parents* and *relative/family friend* as an important source of advice and support declined somewhat with age.

- *Friends*, *parents* and *relative/family friend* were the top three sources of advice and support for all age groups.
- Over 82% of respondents in each age group identified *friends* as an important source of advice.
- Just over three quarters (77.7%) of 11 to 14 year olds identified *parents* as a major source of advice, as did 69.3% of 15 to 19 year olds and 67.1% of 20 to 24 year olds.

Table 15: Where young people turn for advice and support, by age

	11-14 yrs %	15-19 yrs %	20-24 yrs %
Friends	82.8	86.6	83.8
Parents	77.7	69.3	67.1
Relative/family friend	63.4	58.4	55.1
Internet	17.7	27.0	33.0
Community agencies eg youth worker	11.2	13.5	16.3
Magazines	10.5	11.6	8.4
Teacher	12.4	9.7	6.6
School counsellor	11.3	10.4	6.8
Someone else in your community eg doctor, church minister	7.9	9.4	17.1
Telephone helpline	6.5	5.1	5.4

Note: Data is aggregated and includes items ranked one, two or three by respondents.

The proportion of each group who identified the *internet* and *someone else in the community* as key sources of advice and support increased with age.

- One third (33.0%) of 20 to 24 year olds identified the *internet* as a top source of advice, compared with 17.7% of 11 to 14 year olds and 27.0% of 15 to 19 year olds.
- Just under one in five (17.1%) young adults compared with less than one in ten 11 to 19 year olds identified *someone else in the community* as a key source of advice and support.

## Gender differences

The top three sources of advice were identical for both genders in 2009, namely *friends*, *parents* and *relative/family friend*. However, a higher proportion of female than male respondents identified *friends* and *relative/family friend* as key sources of advice, while similar proportions of both genders identified *parents*.

- *Friends* were identified as a top source of advice and support by 88.7% of female respondents and 79.6% of male respondents.
- Over 70% of each group identified *parents* as a top source of advice and support (75.4% of female and 71.2% of male respondents).
- Close to two thirds (65.0%) of female respondents and 55.9% of male respondents identified *relative/family friend* as a key source of advice.

**Table 16: Where young people turn for advice and support, by gender**

	Female %	Male %
Friends	88.7	79.6
Parents	75.4	71.2
Relative/family friend	65.0	55.9
Internet	18.1	27.7
Community agencies eg youth worker	8.8	16.9
Magazines	12.0	9.8
Teacher	9.7	12.5
School counsellor	10.4	11.2
Someone else in your community eg doctor, church minister	7.7	10.3
Telephone helpline	4.9	7.0

Note: Data is aggregated and includes items ranked one, two or three by respondents.

The major differences by gender were in the proportions of each group who identified the *internet* and *community agencies* as key sources of advice, with males more likely than females to identify these items.

- The *internet* was an important source of advice and support for over a quarter (27.7%) of male respondents, compared with 18.1% of female respondents.
- Male respondents were nearly twice as likely as female respondents to identify *community agencies* as a key source of advice (16.9% compared with 8.8%).

## Is there enough information on issues that concern young people?

86.5% of respondents indicated that they had enough information on issues that concerned them. This is a slight increase on the 2008 figure of 83.7%. As in previous years, and shown in Table 17, the proportion who indicated they did not have enough information was higher for respondents aged 20 to 24 (21.3%) than for those aged 11 to 19 (about 13%). The responses for males and females were similar.

**Table 17: Access to enough information**

	2009						2008
	All ages %	11-14 yrs %	15-19 yrs %	20-24 yrs %	Female %	Male %	All ages %
Enough information	86.5	87.1	86.3	78.7	86.3	86.8	83.7
Not enough information	13.5	12.9	13.7	21.3	13.7	13.2	16.3

The survey asked what respondents would like more information about, and a number of issues featured in their responses. They included (in order of most frequently mentioned): alcohol and drugs; depression; sexuality and sex education; suicide and self harm; stress and anxiety; environmental issues; school and study; family conflict; bullying; and global issues including terrorism, war, and politics.

## What activities are young people involved in?

Young people were asked to identify the activities they are involved in from the list set out in Table 18. Table 18 shows that the top three activities for young people in 2009 were *sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *arts/cultural* activities. *Youth groups and clubs* and *religious* activities were again the fourth and fifth-ranked activities. Participation in all of the activities has declined since 2008, quite markedly in the case of some, such as *arts/cultural* activities.

- *Sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *arts/cultural* activities were again the three most popular activities for respondents in 2009.
- Close to two thirds (64.2%) of respondents participated in *sports (as a participant)*, while 39.3% indicated that they were involved in *sports (as a spectator)*.
- Just under a quarter (23.4%) of respondents were participating in *arts/cultural* activities, down from 44.1% in 2008.
- One fifth of respondents indicated that they participated in *youth groups and clubs* and *religious* activities.
- *Volunteer* activities were also undertaken by close to one in five (18.5%) young people.

Table 18: Activities young people were involved in

	Number 2009	2009 %	2008 %	2007 %	2006 %
Sports (as a participant)	30,631	64.2	67.6	66.7*	68.2*
Sports (as a spectator)	18,751	39.3	46.5		
Arts/cultural eg drama, music, dance	11,181	23.4	44.1	42.8	43.0
Youth groups and clubs	9,693	20.3	26.8	27.4	27.1
Religious	9,560	20.0	25.9	24.7	23.6
Volunteer	8,845	18.5	22.2	21.6	21.4
Environmental	4,665	9.8	14.3	13.2	11.0
Student Representative Council	4,515	9.5	12.4	13.1	13.6

Note: Data is a tally of all activities listed. \*Appeared as the single item *sports* prior to 2008.

## Age differences

Table 19 shows that while *sports (as a participant)* had the highest levels of involvement for all three age groups, participation declined significantly with age. Conversely, as in previous years, participation in *volunteer* activities increased with age.

- Involvement in *sports (as a participant)* was highest for 11 to 14 year olds (70.4%), declining to 59.4% for 15 to 19 year olds and 47.1% of 20 to 24 year olds.
- Around a quarter of all age groups were involved in *arts/cultural* activities.
- Over a third (36.6%) of young adults were engaged in *volunteer* activities, compared with 14.6% of 11 to 14 year olds and 22.4% of 15 to 19 year olds.

Table 19: Activities young people were involved in, by age

	11-14 yrs %	15-19 yrs %	20-24 yrs %
Sports (as a participant)	70.4	59.4	47.1
Sports (as a spectator)	38.4	41.2	35.0
Arts/cultural eg drama, music, dance	22.5	24.7	25.5
Youth groups and clubs	19.4	21.4	25.2
Religious	20.4	19.8	21.9
Volunteer	14.6	22.4	36.6
Environmental	9.7	9.9	11.4
Student Representative Council	7.5	11.8	7.2

Note: Data is a tally of all activities listed.

## Gender differences

The top two activities for both genders were *sports (as a participant)* and *sports (as a spectator)*. Participation in *religious* activities was the third most popular response for males, while for females it was *arts/cultural* activities.

- 67.9% of male respondents and 61.7% of female respondents were involved in *sports (as a participant)*.
- Male respondents were more likely than female respondents to be involved in *sports (as a spectator)* (44.9% compared with 34.6%).
- Over a quarter (27.4%) of female respondents were involved in *arts/cultural* activities, compared with around a fifth (19.3%) of male respondents.
- About one in five male and female respondents were involved in *youth groups and clubs* and *religious* activities.

Table 20: Activities young people were involved in, by gender

	Female %	Male %
Sports (as a participant)	61.7	67.9
Sports (as a spectator)	34.6	44.9
Arts/cultural eg drama, music, dance	27.4	19.3
Youth groups and clubs	19.8	21.1
Religious	20.0	20.3
Volunteer	20.5	16.6
Environmental	9.4	10.3
Student Representative Council	9.5	9.5

Note: Data is a tally of all activities listed.

## What three people or organisations do young people admire?

Respondents were asked to list three people or organisations they admired. As in previous years, *family* members were most commonly listed and comprised about 30% of the responses given. The second most common response was *friends* (16.1%). The information provided by respondents has been categorised and listed in order of frequency in Table 21.

Table 21: People and organisations young people admire

	Total number	Percentage
<b>Family</b>	<b>30,224</b>	<b>29.2</b>
<b>Friends</b>	<b>16,692</b>	<b>16.1</b>
<b>Sports teams, players and coaches</b>	<b>8,757</b>	<b>8.5</b>
Entertainers	7,171	6.9
International aid organisations	6,168	6.0
Community agencies helping disadvantaged people	4,697	4.5
Organisations and research supporting seriously ill people	4,026	3.9
Animal protection groups	3,530	3.4
Schools and their staff	2,503	2.4
Businesses and business people	1,946	1.9
Political organisations and figures	1,896	1.8
Environmental groups	1,850	1.8
Religious figures	1,700	1.6
Protection agencies	1,564	1.5
Youth organisations and leaders	1,468	1.4
Medical professionals and hospitals	1,233	1.2
Organisations and research supporting mental health	915	0.9
Telephone helplines	883	0.9
Historical figures	783	0.8
Myself	588	0.6
Confident/successful/hardworking people	348	0.3
Volunteers/donors	282	0.3
Community groups/organisations	198	0.2
Dance/music/ballet teachers outside school	198	0.2
Pets and other animals	186	0.2
Government and government departments	172	0.2
Scientists and scientific organisations	153	0.1
Sick and disabled people, people in difficult times	110	0.1
Employer/boss/manager/work colleague	108	0.1



# Indigenous young people summary

## Profile of respondents

The 2009 National Survey of Young Australians asked respondents whether they identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. 2,301 or 5.0% of respondents indicated they identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

## State and territory distribution

The highest proportion of surveys from Indigenous respondents came from New South Wales (40.4%), which also had the highest proportion of survey responses overall (36.6%). A high proportion of responses came from Indigenous young people in the Northern Territory and Queensland relative to the overall number of responses from these state/territories.

**Table 1: Percentage of Indigenous respondents by state/territory**

	Indigenous %	Non Indigenous %
Australian Capital Territory	2.8	3.7
New South Wales	40.4	36.4
Northern Territory	6.3	1.6
Queensland	24.8	19.4
South Australia	9.6	9.7
Tasmania	3.6	5.0
Victoria	5.8	15.6
Western Australia	6.2	8.6
Total	99.6	100.0

Note: Percentages in all tables, figures and text are rounded to 1 decimal place and may not necessarily total 100%. Not all respondents answered all survey questions. The data is for those who responded.

## Age breakdown

There were very similar response rates for Indigenous and non Indigenous young people across all three age groups. Indigenous young people aged 11 to 14 years were the largest group to participate and returned just over half (50.2%) of the surveys from Indigenous respondents. 46.6% of Indigenous respondents were aged 15 to 19, and a small number (72 or 3.2%) were aged 20 to 24. Given the relatively small number of respondents aged 20 to 24, results for this group should be interpreted with caution.

**Table 2: Age profile of respondents**

Age in years	Number of Indigenous	Indigenous %	Non Indigenous %
11-14 years	1,117	50.2	51.0
15-19 years	1,038	46.6	47.0
20-24 years	72	3.2	2.0

## Gender breakdown

The response rates for Indigenous and non Indigenous young people by gender were quite similar: 48.0% of Indigenous respondents were female and 52.0% were male. This compares with 52.9% female and 47.1% male for non Indigenous respondents.

## Where respondents were living

A majority of both Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents were living *with family*. However, the proportion of Indigenous respondents was substantially lower than their non Indigenous counterparts (82.6% compared with 93.7%).

Table 3: Where respondents were living

	Indigenous %	Non Indigenous %	11-14 yrs	Indigenous % 15-19 yrs	20-24 yrs
With family	82.6	93.7	88.7	79.7	38.1
Juvenile justice centre/prison	4.4	0.8	2.4	5.5	14.3
Boarding school or university college	4.3	2.0	4.4	4.5	1.6
Homeless/insecure housing	2.5	0.7	1.6	3.1	7.9
Share house	2.4	1.4	1.0	3.0	15.9
Foster care	1.9	0.4	1.4	2.1	3.2
Alone	1.7	0.6	0.5	2.1	11.1
With partner/husband/wife including with own children	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.0	6.3
Other	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.1	1.6

## Living in or outside a capital city

Table 4 shows the proportion of respondents who were living in or outside a capital city. A higher proportion of Indigenous respondents (55.5%) than non Indigenous respondents (42.9%) lived outside the capital cities.

Table 4: Geographic location of respondents

	Indigenous %	Non Indigenous %
Live in capital city	44.5	57.1
Not in capital city	55.5	42.9

As Table 5 shows, a higher proportion of Indigenous respondents than non Indigenous respondents in all three age groups lived outside of the capital cities.

Table 5: Geographic location of respondents, by age

	Indigenous %			Non Indigenous %		
	11-14 yrs	15-19 yrs	20-24 yrs	11-14 yrs	15-19 yrs	20-24 yrs
Live in capital city	41.6	47.1	50.0	56.1	57.3	73.0
Not in capital city	58.4	52.9	50.0	43.9	42.7	27.0

## Main source of income

Table 6 show that a majority of both Indigenous (66.4%) and non Indigenous (73.5%) respondents relied on *parents/family* as their main source of income. Close to a fifth of both groups indicated that *employment* was their main source of income. Indigenous respondents were somewhat more likely than non Indigenous respondents to identify *government allowance* as their main source of income.

**Table 6: Main source of income**

	Indigenous %	Non Indigenous %
Parents/family	66.4	73.5
Employment	19.4	22.0
Government allowance	13.2	3.6
Other	0.7	0.5
No income	0.3	0.4

## Study and work

The 2009 survey included questions about the study and employment status of respondents. The participation of 11 to 14 year olds was excluded from this section as the compulsory age for secondary education in Australia is around 16 years of age.

Table 7 shows that 59.7% of Indigenous respondents were *studying full time*, substantially below the rate of their non Indigenous counterparts (75.0%). Conversely, Indigenous respondents were slightly more likely than non Indigenous respondents to be *studying part time* (19.0% compared with 14.2%). Just over a fifth (21.3%) of Indigenous respondents were *not studying*, compared with one in ten (10.8%) non Indigenous respondents.

**Table 7: Participation in education**

	Indigenous %	Non Indigenous %
Studying full time	59.7	75.0
Studying part time	19.0	14.2
Not studying	21.3	10.8

Table 8 shows respondents' participation in employment. Indigenous respondents were slightly more likely than non Indigenous respondents to be *working full time* (5.7% compared with 2.3%) and less likely than their non Indigenous counterparts to have *casual or temporary work* (19.3% compared with 28.6%). Indigenous respondents (34.3%) were more likely than non Indigenous respondents (26.5%) to be *unemployed/looking for work*.

**Table 8: Participation in employment**

	Indigenous %	Non Indigenous %
Working full time	5.7	2.3
Working part time	22.6	21.9
Casual or temporary work	19.3	28.6
Unemployed/looking for work	34.3	26.5
Too young to work or choose not to	18.1	20.6

## Disability

137 (6.0%) Indigenous respondents indicated that they had a disability. The most frequently cited disabilities were (in order of frequency): Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD); intellectual disability; learning disability; mental illness or psychiatric disability; physical disability; autism; and deafness or hearing impairment.

## Detailed results

### What do young people value?

Young people were asked to rank what they value from the list of options set out in Table 9. The top three items were the same for Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents, namely *family relationships*, *friendships* and *being independent*, although the proportions who identified *friendships* and *being independent* as being highly valued varied between the groups. *Physical and mental health* and *feeling needed and valued* were ranked fourth and fifth respectively by both groups, and were both highly valued by at least one quarter of each group.

- About three quarters of both Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents highly valued *family relationships*.
- *Friendships* were highly valued by just over half (50.7%) of Indigenous respondents, compared with 61.2% of non Indigenous respondents.
- Indigenous respondents were more likely than non Indigenous respondents to highly value *being independent* (39.6% compared with 32.4%), although it was the third-ranked item for both groups.
- About a quarter (26.6%) of Indigenous respondents, and a third (31.3%) of non Indigenous respondents, indicated that they highly valued *physical and mental health*.
- *Feeling needed and valued* was highly valued by about a quarter of both Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents.

Table 9: What young people value

	Indigenous 2009 %	Non Indigenous 2009 %	Indigenous 2008 %	Indigenous 2007 %
Family relationships	73.1	75.7	72.8	72.7
Friendships (other than family)	50.7	61.2	50.0	49.5
Being independent	39.6	32.4	38.7	38.9
Physical and mental health	26.6	31.3	25.5	26.9
Feeling needed and valued	26.4	26.0	28.1	24.8
Getting a job	25.8	17.6	24.4	26.4
School or study satisfaction	23.5	21.9	21.3	21.8
Financial security	13.7	13.8	15.2	15.6
Spirituality/faith	12.4	12.8	13.3	13.1
Making a difference in the community	10.7	8.0	10.8	N/A
Peer acceptance	N/A	N/A	N/A	10.7

Note: Data is aggregated and includes items ranked one, two or three by respondents.

As in previous years, one of the main differences between Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents was the proportion who highly valued *getting a job*. Indigenous respondents were more likely than non Indigenous respondents to highly value this item.

- Just over a quarter (25.8%) of Indigenous respondents highly valued *getting a job*, compared with 17.6% of non Indigenous respondents.

### What issues are of concern to young people?

Young people were asked to rank the issues that concerned them from the list of options set out in Table 10. Table 10 shows that there were a number of similarities as well as differences in the responses between Indigenous and non Indigenous young people. The top issue for Indigenous respondents was *alcohol*, and a much higher proportion of Indigenous than non Indigenous respondents indicated it was a concern. *Body image* and *drugs* were the second and third-ranked items for Indigenous respondents, and also appeared in the top three issues of concern for non Indigenous respondents. *Bullying/emotional abuse*, *suicide* and *family conflict* were all of concern to about a quarter of both Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents.

- *Alcohol* was identified as a major concern by close to a third (32.4%) of Indigenous respondents, compared with just over a fifth (22.5%) of non Indigenous respondents.
- *Body image* was a major concern for 29.7% of Indigenous respondents and 25.3% of non Indigenous respondents.
- About 27% of both Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents were concerned about *drugs* (27.5% and 26.7% respectively).
- Around a quarter of respondents from both groups identified *bullying/emotional abuse*, *suicide* and *family conflict* as issues of concern.

**Table 10: Issues of concern to young people**

	Indigenous 2009 %	Non Indigenous 2009 %	Indigenous 2008 %	Indigenous 2007 %
<b>Alcohol</b>	<b>32.4</b>	22.5	<b>31.2</b>	<b>31.8</b>
<b>Body image</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>25.3</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>34.9</b>
<b>Drugs</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>26.7</b>	24.4	21.4
Bullying/emotional abuse	25.5	23.2	<b>26.3</b>	22.9
Suicide	24.7	<b>26.3</b>	23.2	21.4
Family conflict	22.9	24.1	23.4	<b>29.3</b>
Physical/sexual abuse	20.0	22.9	21.0	15.8
Personal safety	18.5	22.4	18.5	N/A
School or study problems	16.6	17.4	16.0	22.3
Coping with stress	15.8	18.9	17.4	19.7
Depression	15.8	18.9	14.8	15.6
The environment	14.9	16.7	18.3	25.1
Discrimination	13.9	11.5	13.1	16.5
Sexuality (relationships, health, identity)	12.6	11.4	15.0	14.0
Self harm	12.3	13.3	14.6	13.2

Note: Data is aggregated and includes items ranked one, two or three by respondents.

## Age differences

Table 11 breaks down responses by age for Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents. Indigenous respondents across the age groups were more likely than their non Indigenous counterparts to be concerned about *alcohol*. Responses for the 11 to 14 and 15 to 19 year age groups were similar for both the Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents on most other items. However, there were substantial differences between the Indigenous and non Indigenous young adults on a number of items including *body image*, *bullying/emotional abuse*, *coping with stress* and *depression*.

- Across each of the age groups, Indigenous respondents were more likely than their non Indigenous counterparts to identify *alcohol* as a major concern.
- *Body image* was also identified as a concern by a higher proportion of Indigenous than non Indigenous respondents across each of the age groups, with the difference being most stark for 20 to 24 year olds (39.4% compared with 27.7%).
- Indigenous 20 to 24 year olds were much more likely than their non Indigenous counterparts to be concerned about *bullying/emotional abuse* (27.7% compared with 18.6%).
- Conversely, non Indigenous 20 to 24 year olds were much more likely than Indigenous respondents of the same age to be concerned about *coping with stress* (30.7% compared with 24.2%) and *depression* (31.5% compared with 19.4%).

Table 11: Issues of concern to young people, by age

	Indigenous %			Non Indigenous %		
	11-14 yrs	15-19 yrs	20-24 yrs	11-14 yrs	15-19 yrs	20-24 yrs
Alcohol	32.2	31.9	35.4	23.9	21.0	17.1
Body image	27.1	31.7	39.4	23.5	27.2	27.7
Drugs	31.0	24.7	13.8	31.0	22.4	17.9
Bullying/emotional abuse	24.9	25.3	27.7	25.5	21.0	18.6
Suicide	25.7	23.8	26.2	26.2	26.7	21.5
Family conflict	23.2	22.9	21.2	24.7	23.6	20.9
Physical/sexual abuse	21.5	18.6	16.7	22.8	23.1	25.1
Personal safety	19.0	18.3	16.7	23.7	21.2	22.6
School or study problems	16.8	17.5	6.2	16.7	18.2	12.7
Coping with stress	14.5	16.3	24.2	16.0	21.5	30.7
Depression	14.2	17.2	19.4	15.5	22.0	31.5
The environment	16.6	12.4	21.5	18.8	14.5	18.7
Discrimination	12.0	16.4	12.1	10.2	12.9	13.1
Sexuality (relationships, health, identity)	12.7	12.7	7.7	10.8	11.8	14.9
Self harm	11.0	13.7	10.6	12.5	14.4	9.9

Note: Data is aggregated and includes items ranked one, two or three by respondents.

### Where do young people turn for advice and support when they have a personal problem?

The top three sources of advice and support for Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents were identical, namely *friends*, *parents* and *relative/family friend*. However, as Table 12 shows, the proportions of respondents who identified each were lower than the proportions of non Indigenous respondents. More than a fifth of both groups identified the *internet* as a main source of advice. As in previous years, Indigenous respondents were more likely than non Indigenous respondents to turn to *community agencies* for advice and support.

- *Friends*, *parents* and *relative/family friend* were the top three sources of advice for both Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents.
- *Friends* were a main source of advice and support for 79.2% of Indigenous respondents and 84.9% of non Indigenous respondents.
- Just under two thirds (62.6%) of Indigenous respondents, compared with three quarters (73.9%) of non Indigenous respondents, identified *parents* as a top source of advice.
- Close to a quarter of both groups identified the *internet* as a top source of advice and support.
- *Community agencies* were a source of advice and support for nearly twice the proportion of Indigenous as non Indigenous respondents (22.2% compared with 12.0%).

Table 12: Where young people turn for advice and support

	Indigenous 2009 %	Non Indigenous 2009 %	Indigenous 2008 %	Indigenous 2007 %
Friends	79.2	84.9	79.3	77.9
Parents	62.6	73.9	61.5	63.3
Relative/family friend	55.2	61.1	52.3	56.7
Internet	26.0	22.3	25.1	21.6
Community agencies eg youth worker	22.2	12.0	24.1	23.1
Teacher	13.5	10.8	12.3	11.0
School counsellor	12.3	10.7	11.7	12.7
Magazines	11.8	10.9	13.3	13.6
Someone else in your community eg doctor, church minister	11.8	8.8	12.3	11.4
Telephone helpline	8.2	5.8	10.1	9.7

Note: Data is aggregated and includes items ranked one, two or three by respondents.

### Is there enough information on issues that concern young people?

81.2% of Indigenous respondents indicated that they had enough information on issues that concerned them, slightly lower than the proportion of non Indigenous respondents (86.7%).

Table 13: Access to enough information

	Indigenous 2009 %	Non Indigenous 2009 %	Indigenous 2008 %
Enough information	81.2	86.7	76.9
Not enough information	18.8	13.3	23.1

The most commonly mentioned issues that Indigenous respondents wanted more information on were (in order of frequency): sexuality and sex education; alcohol and drugs; suicide and self-harm; depression; family conflict; relationships and friendships; and school and study.

### What activities are young people involved in?

Respondents were asked to select the activities they are involved in from the list set out in Table 14. The top three activities for both Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents were *sports (as a participant)*, *sports (as a spectator)* and *arts/cultural* activities, although the proportion of respondents participating in *sports (as a participant)* and *arts/cultural* activities varied between the groups. Indigenous respondents were slightly more likely than their non Indigenous counterparts to be involved in *youth groups and clubs* and *environmental* activities. Responses for other activities were similar between the groups.

- The most popular activity for Indigenous respondents was *sports (as a participant)*, although the proportion who participated in this activity was slightly lower for Indigenous (58.6%) than non Indigenous (65.1%) respondents.
- Similar proportions of Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents were involved in *sports (as a spectator)* (38.3% and 39.7% respectively).
- Close to a third (31.3%) of Indigenous respondents, compared with just under a quarter (23.2%) of non Indigenous respondents, were involved in *arts/cultural* activities.
- Just over a quarter (26.8%) of Indigenous respondents, and one in five (20.1%) non Indigenous respondents participated in *youth groups and clubs*.
- Indigenous respondents were slightly more likely than non Indigenous respondents to participate in *environmental* activities (14.6% compared with 9.6%).

Table 14: Activities young people were involved in

	Indigenous %	Non Indigenous %
Sports (as a participant)	58.6	65.1
Sports (as a spectator)	38.3	39.7
Arts/cultural eg drama, music, dance	31.3	23.2
Youth groups and clubs	26.8	20.1
Religious	20.8	20.2
Volunteer	19.9	18.7
Environmental	14.6	9.6
Student Representative Council	12.3	9.4

Note: Data is a tally of all activities listed.

## Age differences

Table 15 provides a breakdown of activities for Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents by age. There were a number of differences across the age groups between Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents, particularly for the 11 to 14 years and 20 to 24 years age groups.

- Indigenous respondents aged 11 to 14 were less likely than their non Indigenous counterparts to be involved in *sports (as a participant)* (61.4% compared with 70.9%).
- Conversely, 11 to 14 year old Indigenous respondents were more likely than 11 to 14 year old non Indigenous respondents to be involved in *arts/cultural activities and youth groups and clubs*.
- About two in five (40.3%) Indigenous young adults, compared with around a quarter of their non Indigenous counterparts, were involved in *arts/cultural activities and youth groups and clubs*.
- About 37% of both Indigenous and non Indigenous young adults were involved in *volunteer* activities.

Table 15: Activities young people are involved in, by age

	Indigenous %			Non Indigenous %		
	11-14 yrs	15-19 yrs	20-24 yrs	11-14 yrs	15-19 yrs	20-24 yrs
Sports (as a participant)	61.4	58.2	36.1	70.9	59.6	48.0
Sports (as a spectator)	36.5	40.9	37.5	38.6	41.3	35.0
Arts/cultural eg drama, music, dance	30.8	30.9	40.3	22.2	24.3	24.4
Youth groups and clubs	25.3	27.3	40.3	19.1	21.1	23.9
Religious	19.5	21.1	26.4	20.5	19.8	21.6
Volunteer	15.9	22.6	37.5	14.6	22.5	36.7
Environmental	12.7	15.8	22.2	9.5	9.5	10.5
Student Representative Council	8.1	16.1	15.3	7.5	11.6	6.5

Note: Data is a tally of all activities listed.

## What three people or organisations do young people admire?

Respondents were asked to indicate three people or organisations they admired. As in previous years, *family* members were most commonly listed by both Indigenous and non Indigenous respondents and comprised about 30% of responses for both groups. The second most common response for both groups was *friends*. The information provided by respondents has been categorised and listed in order of frequency in Table 16.

Table 16: People and organisations young people admire

	Indigenous %	Non Indigenous %
<b>Family</b>	<b>32.4</b>	<b>28.9</b>
<b>Friends</b>	<b>19.9</b>	<b>15.9</b>
<b>Sports teams, players and coaches</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>8.4</b>
Entertainers	6.5	6.9
Community agencies helping disadvantaged people	3.6	4.6
Schools and their staff	2.9	2.4
International aid organisations	2.9	6.1
Businesses and business people	2.7	1.8
Youth organisations and leaders	2.2	1.4
Organisations and research supporting seriously ill people	2.1	4.0
Animal protection groups	1.7	3.5
Political organisations and figures	1.6	1.9
Religious figures	1.5	1.7
Environmental groups	1.2	1.8
Protection agencies	1.1	1.5
Medical professionals and hospitals	0.9	1.2
Myself	0.7	0.6
Telephone helplines	0.7	0.9
Organisations and research supporting mental health	0.4	0.9
Historical figures	0.4	0.8
Government and government departments	0.3	0.2
Employer/boss/manager/work colleague	0.2	0.1
Pets and other animals	0.2	0.2
Confident/successful/hardworking people	0.2	0.3
Volunteers/donors	0.2	0.3
Dance/music/ballet teachers outside school	0.1	0.2
Sick and disabled people, people in difficult times	0.1	0.1
Community groups/organisations	0.1	0.2
Scientists and scientific organisations	0.1	0.2

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- Youth Affairs Council of Victoria
- Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia
- Youth Affairs Network of Queensland
- Youth Coalition of the ACT
- Youth Network of Tasmania (YNOT)
- Youth Off The Streets
- youthcentral ([www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au](http://www.youthcentral.vic.gov.au)) – the Victorian Government's website for young people

## About Mission Australia

Mission Australia is an empowering and compassionate community services organisation that, for the past 150 years, has been helping to transform the lives of Australians in need.

Our staff, supporters and Board are committed to eliminating disadvantage and creating a fairer Australia. We believe everyone should have the chance to enjoy a full and active life, irrespective of their personal challenges or circumstances. That's why we stand up and advocate for the most disadvantaged people in Australia.

Through our programs and services, we combat homelessness, assist families and children to develop a safe, nurturing environment, support disadvantaged young people and help unemployed people find permanent work.

We recognise the unique status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the original owners and custodians of this country.

## Thank you

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