

A close-up, profile shot of a person with dark hair, wearing a light blue surgical face mask. They are looking out towards a bright, hazy sky with soft clouds. The lighting is warm and golden, suggesting sunrise or sunset. The person's hair is slightly tousled, and a small red earring is visible. The overall mood is contemplative and somber.

Without a home:

**First-time youth
homelessness in the
COVID-19 period**

**MISSION
AUSTRALIA**

Acknowledgements

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

A special thank you to the young people who shared with us, via the *2021 Youth Survey*, their responses on current issues, state of their mental health and housing.

We would like to thank the Mission Australia staff who contributed to this report by providing helpful insights, feedback, design and support.

About Mission Australia

Mission Australia is a national Christian charity that has been standing alongside Australians in need since 1859. Our vision is for an Australia where all of us have a safe home and can thrive.

Backed by our supporters, funders and community and faith-based partners, we combat homelessness, provide housing, assist struggling families and children, address mental health issues, fight substance dependencies, support people with disability and much more.

Given the right support, we believe everyone can reach their full potential. That's why we stand together with Australians in need, until they can stand for themselves.

ISBN: 978-1-875357-31-4

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This report may be cited as: Kalembe, J., Kos, A., Greenland, N., Plummer, J., Brennan, N., Freeburn, T., Nguyen, T. and Christie, R. (2022). Without a home: First-time youth homelessness in the COVID-19 period. Mission Australia: Sydney, NSW.

CEO MESSAGE

Most of us were fortunate enough to take sanctuary in our safe and secure homes during the COVID-19 pandemic. But for almost one in 20 young people, they instead were homeless for the first time in their lives. It is sobering to reflect on this.

In recent years, it has been troubling to see an increase in the proportion of young people that we survey who report first-time homelessness. Most concerning, of the young people across Australia who were homeless for the first time during the pandemic, more than half experienced high psychological distress and more than half faced discrimination.

While it will take time to reveal the full impacts of COVID-19 on youth homelessness, this report offers valuable insights.

Shining a light on these young people's experiences and the risk factors, including family conflict, poor mental health and discrimination, must lead to strong intervention and preventative action.

Sadly, for Mission Australia's practitioners and others who have been working with young people during the pandemic, the report's findings are not a surprise. However, we cannot accept this as just the way things must be.

These are young people for whom early support can radically change their life trajectory. I have seen lives turned around and transformed by our services. Our specialists can identify the risks of homelessness, offer support and work with young people and their families (when it's safe to do so) in a holistic way.

Despite this, I also know that far too many young people fall through the cracks of the service system. The need for a comprehensive approach to ending youth homelessness has never been more urgent. If we don't take action to prevent and address youth homelessness, too many young people will miss out on crucial education and employment opportunities.

All young people should have a safe place to call home. **Early intervention is key and we urge governments and others to do everything it takes so that young people are adequately supported to avoid homelessness and reach their full potential, both now and into their futures.**

I encourage you to read this report, come to terms with the issues and risks these young people are facing, and engage with the solutions that will support young people on their journey. Please join with us in working to end youth homelessness.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sharon Callister".

Sharon Callister
Mission Australia CEO

**MISSION
AUSTRALIA**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mission Australia Youth Survey is the largest annual survey of young people of its kind in Australia, attracting thousands of respondents each year who provide valuable insights into the issues and concerns affecting them.

In 2021, Mission Australia conducted its 20th annual *Youth Survey*, receiving 20,207 responses from young people aged 15 to 19 years. These young people were located around the country, with the vast majority completing the survey online. Responses from young people via schools, organisations, community services and individual households contribute to the rich *Youth Survey* data.

In 2021, many lives globally, including those of young people in Australia, were disrupted by the extensive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The *Youth Survey* was conducted between April and August 2021, a period when parts of Australia were in or were emerging from government enforced lockdowns.

Even before the pandemic, the crisis of youth homelessness was occurring at unacceptable levels in Australia. The actual number of young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness is challenging to ascertain, because there is little agreement on how youth homelessness is defined or measured. Nevertheless, the size of the problem is indicated by the 27,000 young people counted as homeless in the 2016 Census (widely accepted to be an undercount) and by the 42,400 young people assisted by Specialist Homelessness Services in 2019-2020^{1,2}. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and Mission Australia's *Youth Survey* all measure and report on youth homelessness differently, but each of these datasets and perspectives contributes to the overall picture. This report provides a unique view on the problem by shedding light on the lives of the young people who had a first experience of homelessness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We consider the young people who took part in the Mission Australia *Youth Survey* 2021 and reported a first experience of homelessness during the COVID-19 period, defined here as being within the year prior to the respondent completing the survey. We compare their experiences with those who did not experience homelessness for the first time over the same period. Depending on when each respondent completed the survey, their experience of first-time homelessness would have fallen sometime within the period between April 2020 and August 2021.

The purpose of this report is to bring these young people's experiences to light, by drawing on quantitative data to show the prevalence of first-time youth homelessness during the COVID-19 period. It provides insights into the risk factors for first-time youth homelessness in this group and provides an overview of their mental health and housing situation.

The report confirms that known causes of youth homelessness continued to be risk factors for young people having first-time homelessness experiences during the pandemic. This is particularly important because we know from other research that an individual's first episode of homelessness is, in most cases, followed by other episodes which, for some, can entrench long-term patterns of homelessness which are hard to resolve³. Conversely, if risk factors are quickly addressed so the young person avoids becoming homeless for the first time, they are unlikely to experience it later in life. Understanding first-time homelessness risk factors is thus crucial for designing early intervention approaches that can effectively alter trajectories away from long-term homelessness, which bring poor life outcomes and high societal costs.

As we move forward from the pandemic period, the issues and concerns raised in this report highlight the urgent need for a comprehensive approach to ending youth homelessness. The report discusses the implications for policy and practice, highlighting recommendations that move towards this ultimate goal.

¹ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2021a)

² ABS (2016)

³ Scutella et al. (2014)

KEY FINDINGS

This report shows a significant and worrying increase in the proportion of young people in Australia who experienced homelessness for the first time since 2017.

One in 20 (4.8%) of respondents to the 2021 *Youth Survey* reported experiencing homelessness for the first time, which was a significant increase from the 2017 rate of 3.9%. Although this is a small group of 956 individuals, the survey results paint a worrying picture of these young people, which points to the need for focused effort to assist them towards positive trajectories.

RATE OF FIRST-TIME HOMELESSNESS IN YOUNG PEOPLE



GENDER DIFFERENCE



DISABILITY DIFFERENCE

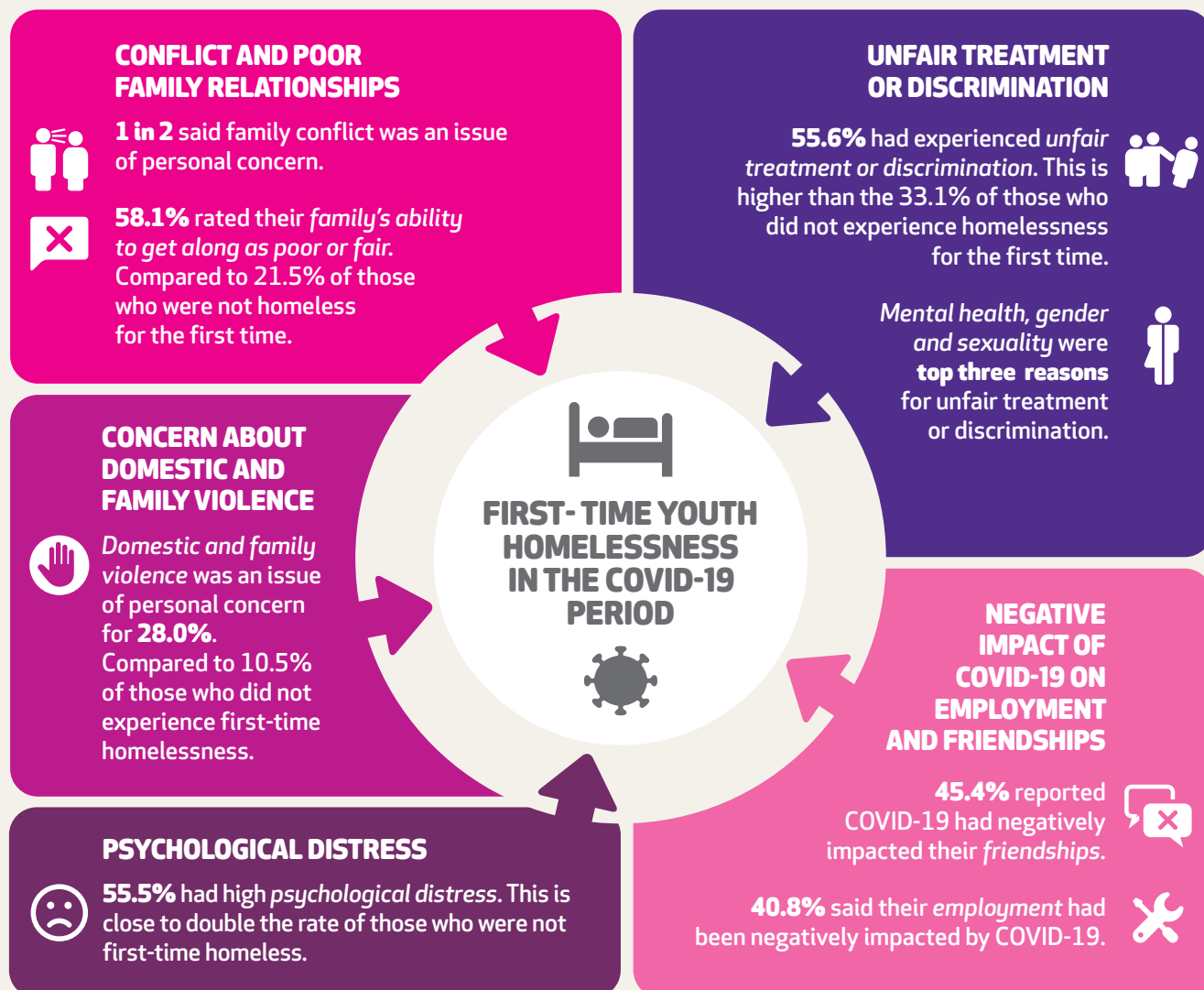


ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER DIFFERENCE



RISK FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH FIRST-TIME YOUTH HOMELESSNESS IN THE COVID-19 PERIOD

Five risk factors for first-time homelessness during the COVID-19 period were identified, which include known risk factors for youth homelessness. These risk factors are outlined below, including key data for young people who were homeless for the first time during the COVID-19 period.



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Mental health of young people who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19:



35.8%

Rated their mental health and wellbeing as *poor*



25.0%

Said they felt *negatively* about the future



32.1%

Said they were *very sad/sad*

"Mental health, the entire system needs to be redone, there is barely any help for mental health and the waiting time to see someone is months, and to get into an inpatient unit takes a really long time, and hospital ER don't care about you and don't take you seriously, every nurse should be trained in mental health!"

Female, 16, VIC, homeless for the first time during the COVID-19 period

HOUSING SITUATION

Housing situation of young people who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19:



86.2%

Were living in *privately owned/rented* housing when completing the survey



49.6%

Had moved house at least once in the last three years



33.6%

Said their housing was less than adequate in at least one aspect

"I moved out from my family home and came completely independent financially and emotionally. I had to get a job and become an adult over night while still studying full time. More needs to be taught about adult life in high school as it is a necessity."

Female, 18, WA, homeless for the first time during the COVID-19 period

POLICY AND PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for policy and practice presented here focus on the key issues and priority groups highlighted by the Youth Survey findings and informed by other research and by input from practitioners from Mission Australia.

The findings reveal that the known risk factors for young people experiencing first-time homelessness continued throughout the pandemic. These risks are likely to remain without significant policy change.



BUILDING A SOLID FOUNDATION TO END HOMELESSNESS

- 1.** Develop a national plan to end homelessness that is adequately funded.



PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

- 2.** Introduce universal risk screening for homelessness in all schools, along with more wrap-around supports for students in need and their families.



SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT

- 3.** Develop localised student wellbeing strategies in all schools.



MENTAL HEALTH AND ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS (AOD)

- 4.** Provide schools with the funds and skilled workforce necessary to respond to students' mental health needs.
- 5.** Improve access to appropriate youth AOD treatment options.



FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES AND RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

- 6.** Increase availability of family support services and domestic and family violence services.

POLICY AND PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS



SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

7. Increase flexible and alternative learning options for young people experiencing homelessness.



EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

8. Provide tailored youth-specific employment services.
9. Support employers to hire, train and develop young people.
10. Increase income support payments so young people and their families can live independently.



HOUSING

11. Increase rental subsidies, and investment in social and affordable housing.
12. Scale up youth-specific integrated housing-and-support models.



DISCRIMINATION AND UNFAIR TREATMENT

13. Introduce a comprehensive strategy to reduce discrimination across all aspects of society.



SERVICES AND CLIENT PRACTICE

14. Better support young people during times of national and localised emergencies.



Introduction

Defining homelessness

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) homelessness occurs when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives, and their current living arrangement: (a) is in an inadequate dwelling; (b) has no tenure or the initial tenure is short and not extendable; or (c) does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.¹ This definition of homelessness emphasises the core elements of the home including a sense of security, stability, privacy, safety, and the ability to control living space.

Youth homelessness includes sleeping rough, sleeping in a car, staying in unsuitable accommodation, couch-surfing, and living in overcrowded dwellings or places where there is a lack of social control over their space.² Most homeless young people have left childhood home settings where they had been socially and financially dependent on their parents or other adult caregivers. Therefore, youth homelessness entails not only the loss of stable housing, but also an interruption to or breakdown of access to material resources (including food, transport and study equipment) and social relations with parents and caregivers, family members, friends, neighbours and community.³

Youth homelessness in Australia

Australian young people are overrepresented in the nation's homeless population. According to the 2016 Census, young people (12-24 years) made up around 24% of the entire homeless population. On Census night, those young people were staying in supported accommodation for the homeless (18%), couch surfing (10%), living in boarding houses or other temporary lodgings (9%), sleeping out (3%), or living in severely overcrowded dwellings (59%). The Census reported an increase of 7% in young people living in severely crowded dwellings between 2011 and 2016.⁴

There is not consensus regarding how to define and measure homelessness in Australia.⁵ Further, the Census methodology only provides estimations of the total homeless population, and in particular its count of young people is highly likely to be a significant underestimate as support providers know that many young people who are couch surfing will not appear in the Census figures.⁶

Another approach to estimating the occurrence of youth homelessness in Australia is to consider the number of young people seeking support from Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS). According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), the number of young people (aged 15-24)

1 ABS (2012)

2 Boyle (2020)

3 Gaetz, et al. (2013)

4 ABS (2016)

5 Chamberlain (2012)

6 ABS (2016)

entering the SHS system has remained about 42,400 in 2019-2020.⁷ Of those seeking such help, most are female (63%) and almost three-quarters (73%) present alone, or not as part of a family group.⁸ The main reasons these young people accessed SHS in 2019-20 included housing crisis (17%), family and domestic violence (17%), inadequate or inappropriate dwelling conditions (12%), and relationship/family breakdown (12%).⁹

This is consistent with research which identified family violence, abuse and mental health as the main drivers of youth homelessness in Australia.¹⁰ Considering that main drivers of homelessness are increasing, there is likely to be a rising trend of the number of young people who experience homelessness in Australia.¹¹ This is concerning because people who first experience homelessness at a young age are more likely to experience persistent homelessness.¹²

Young people experiencing homelessness are vulnerable to adverse effects on their neurocognitive development, their achievement of educational milestones, and their mental and physical health.^{13, 14} While some of these problems may be short-lived and limited to the period of homelessness, others are more enduring in nature.¹⁵ For example, the chronic stress and deprivation associated with homelessness affects homeless young people's ability to develop and function at the same rate as their non-homeless counterparts. Homeless youth are more likely to develop more serious health issues, because they face difficulties accessing adequate and developmentally-appropriate health care.¹⁶

All this imposes significant costs on the Australian economy. Research conducted in 2016 found that the total costs to the Australia economy of health services associated with youth homelessness was \$8,505 per person per year, or \$355 million annually across all young people aged 15-24 accessing SHS support.¹⁷

COVID-19 and youth homelessness

The full impacts of COVID-19 on youth homelessness are not yet well known and may take some time to emerge. However, there is evidence that the COVID-19 pandemic and responses to limit the spread of the virus have increased risk factors for homelessness, including impacts on family and youth employment and income, mental health, and domestic and family violence.

7 AIHW (2020)

8 Ibid

9 AIHW (2020)

10 MacKenzie et al. (2020)

11 Youth Development Australia, & National Youth Commission. (2019)

12 Scutella et al. (2014)

13 Heerde & Patton, (2020)

14 Kirkman et al. (2010)

15 Edidin et al. (2012)

16 Ibid

17 MacKenzie et al. (2016)

Income

Young people are at an increased risk of homelessness owing to insecure employment, low incomes and declining rental affordability, issues which have intensified during the COVID-19 period.¹⁸ While post-pandemic unemployment rates are at historically low levels, during the period of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, youth unemployment rates amongst those aged 15-24 increased.¹⁹ Additionally, there were increases in the number of people receiving income support payments amongst those aged 16-24 in 2020 from March to May.²⁰

Mental health

It is well established that there is a bi-directional relationship between homelessness and poor mental health, which is to say that poor mental health is both a cause and consequence of homelessness.²¹ Experiences of trauma, abuse and neglect are associated with poor mental wellbeing and psychological distress, which as a consequence increase the risk of a person becoming homeless.²² Poor mental health has been identified as a contributing factor to homelessness.²³ Young people who are homeless report higher levels of mental health conditions and disorders, as well as psychological distress, compared with young people not experiencing homelessness.^{24, 25, 26, 27}

The pandemic has worsened mental health outcomes for many young people in Australia. Studies have additionally reported a decline in mental wellbeing and an increase in depressive and anxiety symptoms reported by young people due to COVID-19.^{28,29, 30} Isolation and loneliness experienced by young people living under COVID-19 restrictions have been linked with poor mental wellbeing.^{31, 32} Young people experiencing vulnerabilities, who are already at higher risk of youth homelessness, have reported worsening mental health symptoms due to the COVID-19 pandemic.^{33, 34}

18 AIHWA (2021a)

19 AIHWA (2021b)

20 Ibid

21 Costello et al (2013)

22 Kessler et al. (1995)

23 Embleton et al. (2016)

24 Fildes et al. (2018)

25 Hallet et al. (2020)

26 MacKenzie et al. (2016)

27 Mission Australia (2016)

28 Jones et al. (2021)

29 Li et al. (2021)

30 Magson et al. (2021)

31 Greenland (2021)

32 Loades et al. (2020)

33 Abramovich et al. (2021)

34 Jones et al. (2021)

Domestic and family violence

Domestic and family violence are common causes of youth homelessness.³⁵ Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, data showed that half of all 18-year-olds presenting to SHS for assistance had experienced domestic and family violence.³⁶ While we have not seen increased demand for SHS in the 2020 data, it has been widely reported that the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions to limit the spread of the virus have led to an increase in domestic and family violence.^{37, 38} In this context, increases in the incidence of domestic and family violence can occur due to the loss of employment and income, subsequent economic hardship and the stress and conflict that may ensue.³⁹ Public health restrictions on movements and closures of schools increase the exposure that children have to perpetrators and limit their ability to escape to places of respite and safety, while also limiting their exposure to mandatory reporters such as teachers and social workers.⁴⁰

Research exploring the impacts COVID-19 pandemic on unaccompanied homeless children and young people aged 10-17 in Tasmania found that the mandatory stay-at-home and social distancing directives had wide-ranging negative impacts on young people. This includes the child or young person's ability to experience relational consistency, have basic material and health needs met, access safe and secure accommodation, get support to access and engage in school, and receive guidance on managing income and personal risk.⁴¹ Members of share houses in Victoria reported that, under COVID-19, 74% had lost their job due to COVID-19, 47% had experienced a reduction in their financial security, and 50% had a deterioration in their mental health.⁴² The people living in such shared houses are more likely to be young, insecurely employed, on low incomes, recent migrants, living in informal and overcrowded conditions and at a higher risk of homelessness.⁴³

These indications of increases in risk factors for youth homelessness due to the COVID-19 pandemic are now supported by this report's analysis of the data gathered from the Mission Australia 2021 *Youth Survey*.

35 Embleton et al. (2016)

36 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2021)

37 Ibid

38 Graham-Harrison et al. (2020)

39 Fegert et al. (2020)

40 Barrett (2020)

41 Robinson (2020)

42 Raynor & Panza (2020)

43 Parkinson et al. (2019)



Methods

Quantitative methods were used to develop a better understanding of the risk factors for first-time homelessness during the COVID-19 period and the nature and experience of these risk factors for young people. The data analysed for this report is drawn from responses to a series of questions in the 2021 *Youth Survey*.

Sampling

In 2021, 20,207 young people responded to the *Youth Survey*. Of this total sample, 956 respondents (4.8%) reported their first time experience of homelessness during the previous 12 months. This is compared with 18,871 (95.1%) respondents who did not report a first-time experience of homelessness in the previous year.

Homelessness was determined based on responses to two questions in the 2021 Youth Survey: *'Have you ever experienced a time when you had no fixed address or lived in a refuge or transitional accommodation?'* and *'Have you ever spent time away from home because you felt you couldn't go back?'*

Whether or not homelessness fell within the COVID-19 period was determined by responses to the question *'how old were you the first time you spent time away from home because you felt you couldn't go back?'* Ages stated in response to this question had to be the same age, or one year younger than the participants' current reported age (determined based on their reported birth date) to be considered as occurring in the COVID-19 period. This condition means that, for the purposes of this report, the COVID-19 period extends roughly from April 2020 to August 2021.

The comparison group is young people who were not first-time homelessness during the COVID-19 period. This group is made up of respondents who have never had an experience of homelessness and those who had a first-time experience of homelessness prior to the COVID-19 period.

Analysis

Data analysis was completed in two steps. Firstly, descriptive statistics were calculated using SPSS (a statistical analysis software program) - comparing data across 2017, 2019 and 2021 to determine prevalence of first-time homeless; and then, focusing on 2021 data, looked at young people who were first-time homeless during the COVID-19 period vs. young people who were not first-time homeless during the period. Statistical significance testing was carried out on the data (where applicable) to determine, with 95% confidence, if the results were likely real movements or not.

As a second step, Stata (another statistical analysis software program) was used to undertake a logistic regression to determine the probability of various outcomes, for example whether psychologically distressed young people are more or less likely to report an experience of homelessness during COVID-19. Regression analyses reveal the existence of a relationship between two variables but do not

indicate whether the relationship is causative (for example, whether psychological distress causes homelessness or vice versa).

The logistic regression used the binary outcome of having a first-time homelessness experience during the previous 12 months. Independent factors included were socio-economic characteristics and some selected risk factors during the COVID-19 period. The selected factors are based on the literature of known risk factors for youth homelessness. The regression could not include all possible risk factors for homelessness because some (for example, data about interactions with the youth justice system) are not captured in the *Youth Survey*.

The results of the regression are presented as odds ratios (see Appendix 1). Odds ratios show the size and direction of a relationship. In the context of the current analysis, an odds ratio of (or near) 1 indicates that the factor has no relationship with homelessness, for example if the young person is currently studying. An odds ratio of less than 1 means that young people reporting those factors are less likely to experience homelessness, and odds ratios of greater than 1 mean that young people reporting those factors are more likely to experience homelessness. Only relationships that were statistically significant are discussed in this report, classified by a P-value of 0.05 or less.



Findings

Findings of this report are presented in four sections:

- Section One - explores the prevalence of first-time youth homelessness over time, specifically from 2017 to 2021.
- Section Two - identifies the risk factors associated with first-time youth homelessness during the COVID-19 period.
- Section Three - presents the mental health and wellbeing of the young people who were experiencing homelessness for the first time during COVID-19.
- Section Four - provides information on the state/territory location and an overview of the housing situation for the respondents who faced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19.

Together, these findings present a detailed picture of the experiences of first-time homeless respondents from the 2021 Mission Australia *Youth Survey*.

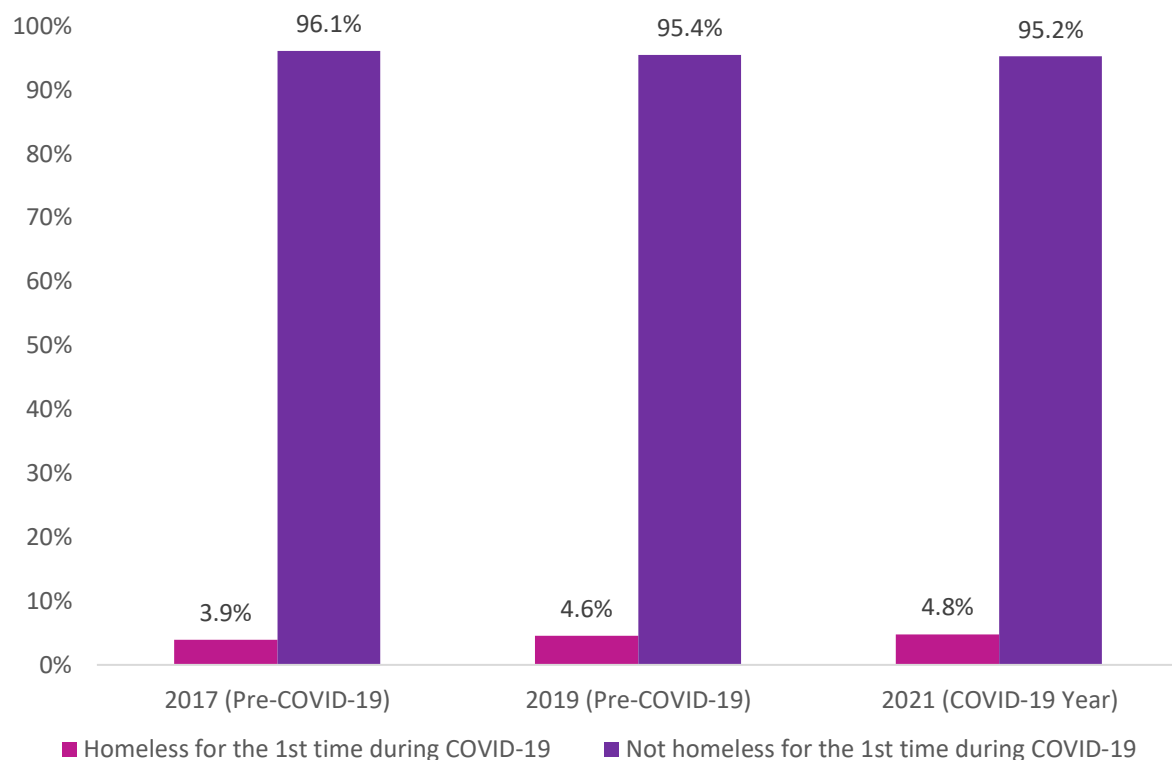


Section One: First-time youth homelessness over time – Youth Survey 2017-2021

The same questions on housing have been asked in the 2017, 2019 and 2021 *Youth Surveys*, and the following analysis was undertaken to understand the prevalence of first-time homelessness (determined using the same parameters as the 2021 data – see Methods section).

Figure 1 shows a steady increase in the proportion of young people who experienced first-time youth homelessness between 2017 and 2021. In 2017, 3.9% of young people reported first-time youth homelessness but by 2021, this had significantly increased to 4.8%.

Figure 1: Young people experiencing first-time homelessness vs. those with prior or no homelessness experience, 2017-2021

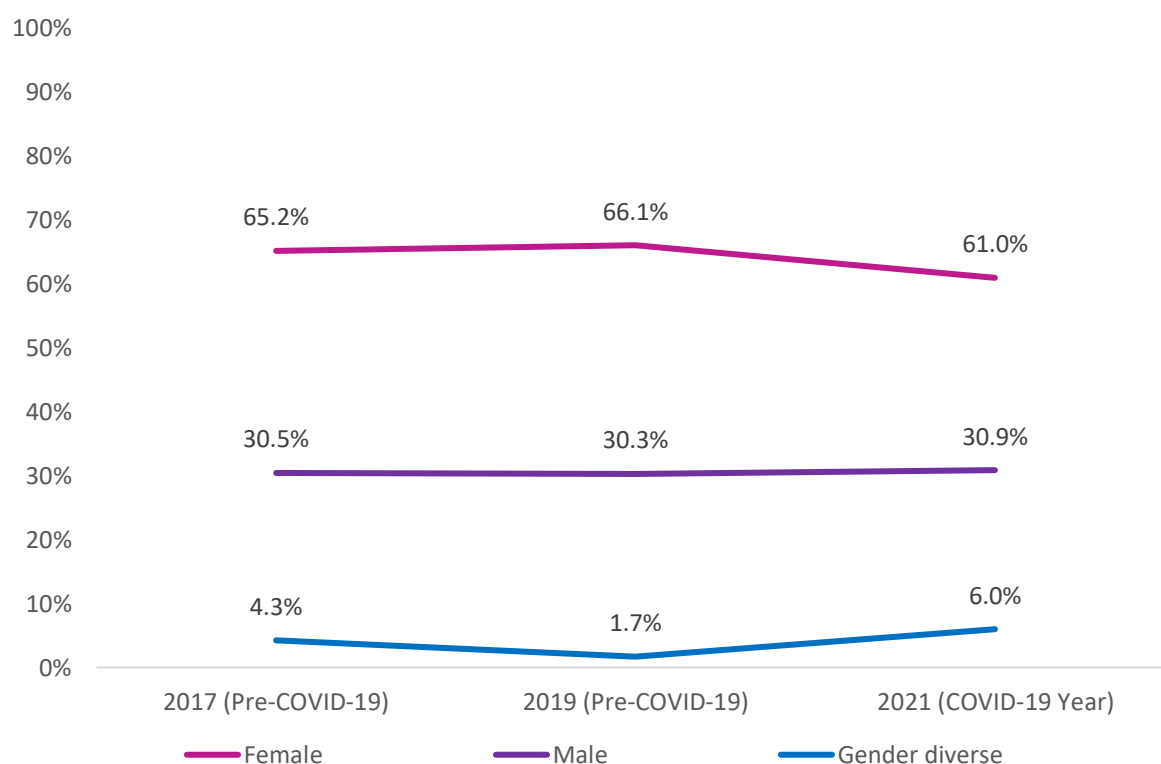


Sample – 2017 n=24,055; 2019 n=25,126 and 2021 n=19,827.

Consistently since 2017, twice as many females compared to males experienced first-time homelessness, as shown in Figure 2.

Six percent of those who experienced first-time homelessness during the COVID-19 period identified as gender diverse.

Figure 2: Young people who experienced first-time homelessness aged 15-19, by gender, 2017-2021

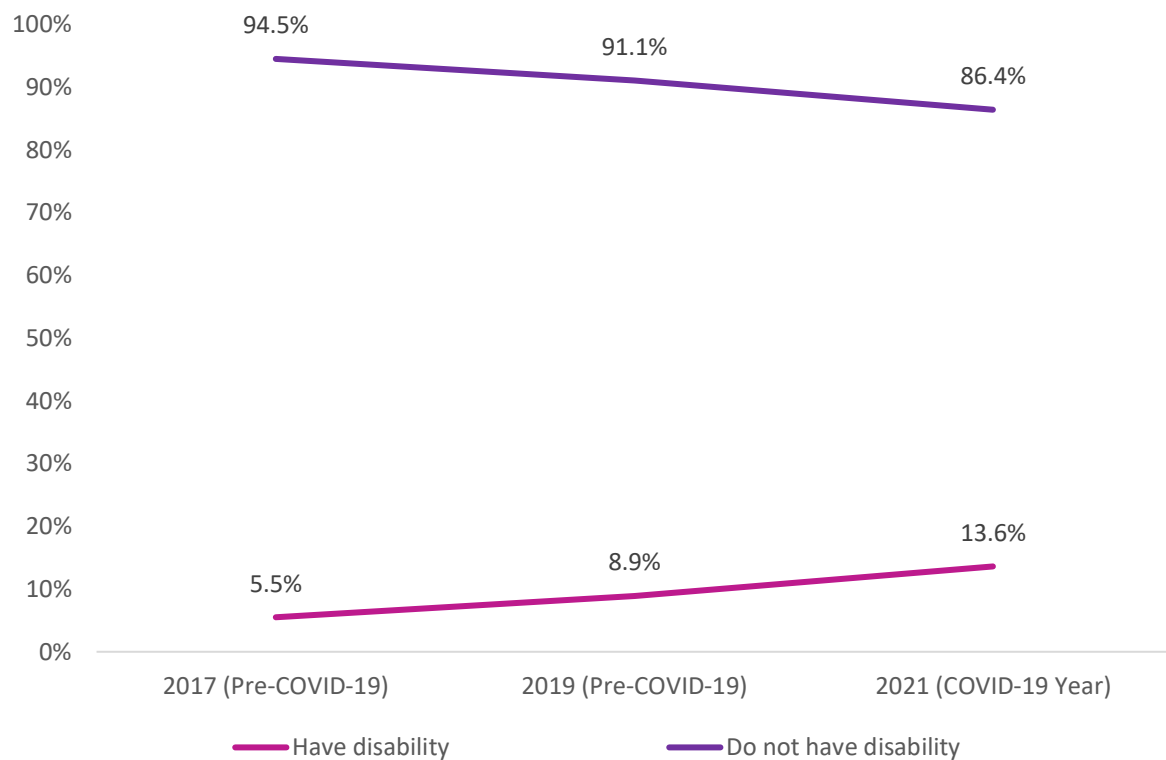


Sample: 2017 n=927, 2019 n=1,150 and 2021 n=940. Please note in 2019 1.8% and in 2021 2.2% preferred to not report their gender identity.

As seen in Figure 3, the proportion of young people with disability who experienced homelessness for the first time has significantly increased over the last four years. Pre-COVID-19, it was 5.5% in 2017 and 8.9% in 2019 but in 2021 it was 13.6%.

This increase aligns with greater representation of young people living with disability in the overall national sample of the Youth Survey across the same period. In 2017, 4.8% of the national sample identified as living with disability, which increased to 9.0% in 2021.

Figure 3: Young people who experienced first-time homelessness aged 15-19, by disability status, 2017-2021

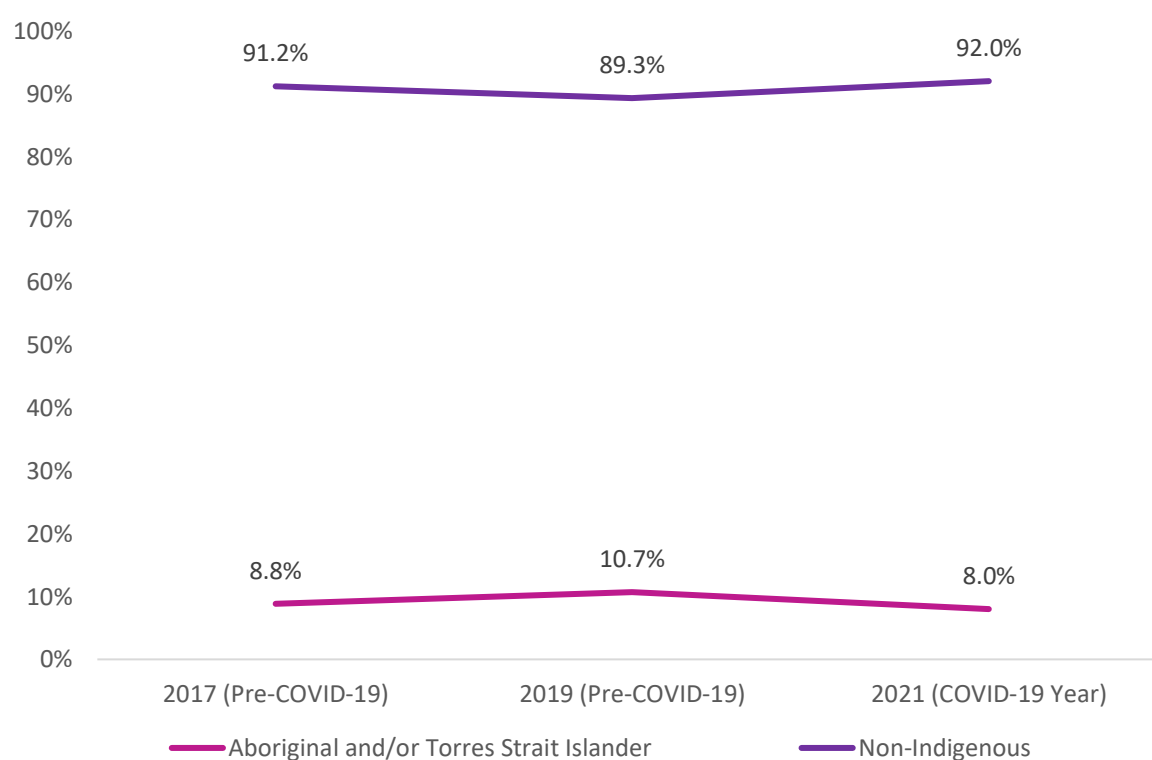


Sample: 2017 n=913, 2019 n=1,158 and 2021 n=949.

The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who experienced homelessness for the first time has remained relatively steady compared to 2017. In 2021, it was 8.0% and in 2017 it was 8.8% (see Figure 4 for more details).



Figure 4: Young people who experienced first-time homelessness aged 15-19, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2017-2021



Sample: 2017 n=924, 2019 n=1,147 and 2021 n=950.



Section Two: Identifying risk factors associated with first-time youth homelessness during COVID-19

A regression analysis was conducted to identify risk factors associated with first-time homelessness in young people who took part in the 2021 Mission Australia *Youth Survey* during the COVID-19 pandemic. The model considered a variety of independent variables available in the *Youth Survey*, such as responses to mental health and COVID-19 related questions. The dependent variable was experiencing homelessness for the first time. See Appendix for more details.

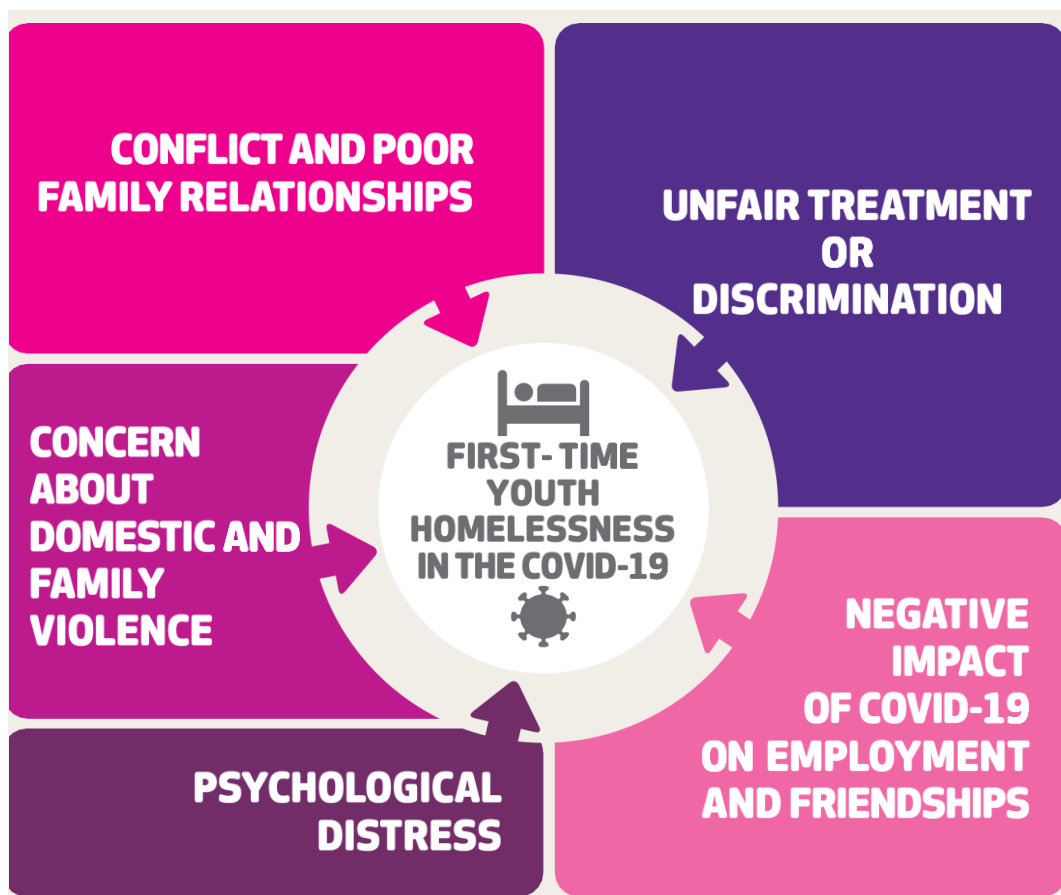
Summary of results

Young people who reported an experience of homelessness for the first time during COVID-19 were more likely to report:

- That their family did not get along
- Being personally concerned about family conflict
- Being personally concerned about domestic and family violence (DFV)
- Having psychological distress
- Being unfairly treated or discriminated against
- That COVID-19 has had a negative impact on their employment
- That COVID-19 has had a negative impact on their friendships



Figure 5: Risk factors associated with first-time youth homelessness during a COVID-19 period, 2021



Family's ability to get along

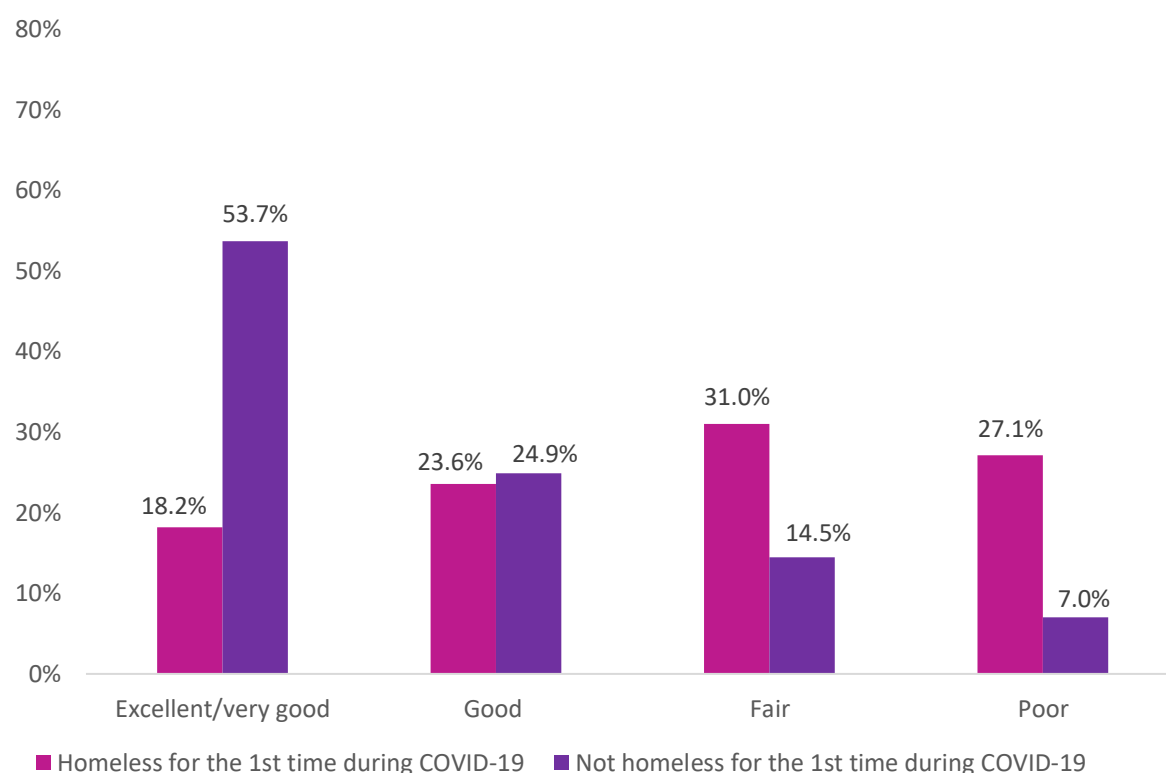
"I have also struggled with family issues which have caused a lot of stress and leading me to make dumb decisions with alcohol, drugs."

Female, 15, NSW, homeless for the first time during the COVID-19 period

Young people were asked to rate their family's ability to get along with one another using a five-point scale, ranging from *poor* to *excellent*. As shown in Figure 6, over half (53.7%) of the young people who did not experience homelessness for the first time during COVID-19 rated their family's ability to get along as *excellent/very good*. Meanwhile, over a quarter (27.1%) of young people who did experience

homelessness for the first time during COVID-19 reported their family's ability to get along as *poor*.

Figure 6: Young peoples' ratings on their family's ability to get along, by homelessness status, 2021



Sample: 2021 Homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=954, not homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=18,789.

Concerns about domestic and family violence

Young people were asked to rate how personally concerned they were about 19 pre-defined issues in the past 12 months, shown in Table 1. Responses were rated on a five-point scale, ranging from *extremely concerned* to *not at all concerned*. The items are ranked according to the summed responses for *extremely concerned* or *very concerned* for each item by those who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19.

The top three issues of concern for young people who reported experiencing homelessness for the first time during COVID-19 were *mental health*, *coping with stress* and *family conflict* (66.2%, 60.7% and 49.3%). *Coping with stress* and *mental health* were also in the top three issues of personal concern for respondents who did not experience homelessness for the first time during COVID-19, but they also reported concerns around *school or study problems* (45.4%, 40.8% and 36.4%).

Notably, higher proportions of young people who experienced homelessness for the first time reported they were concerned about most issues compared to those who did not. The largest gaps

between the two groups were for the issues of *family conflict*, *mental health*, *suicide* and *domestic and family violence* (difference of 32.0%, 25.4%, 20.3% and 17.5%).

Table 1: Young people aged 15-19 and the issues they were ‘very’ or ‘extremely’ concerned about, by homelessness status, 2021

	Homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	Not homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19
	%	%
Mental health	66.2	40.8
Coping with stress	60.7	45.4
Family conflict	49.3	17.3
Body Image	48.5	32.9
School or study problems	47.4	36.4
Suicide	36.3	16.0
Physical health	36.3	27.7
Financial security	31.9	15.1
Personal safety	31.7	18.7
Bullying	29.0	12.4
Domestic and family violence	28.0	10.5
COVID-19	27.3	28.8
Discrimination	24.2	17.9
Social media	23.1	15.6
Climate change	23.0	25.7
LGBTIQA+* issues	22.7	14.7
Drugs	15.1	6.7
Alcohol	9.5	4.7
Gambling	4.2	2.9

Sample: 2021 homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=945-955, not homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=18,676-18,810.

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19.

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Psychological distress

Psychological distress was measured using the Kessler 6 tool (K6). The K6 is a widely used and accepted measure of non-specific psychological distress and is particularly powerful at detecting depressive and anxiety disorders. It consists of a brief, six-item scale that asks respondents how frequently in the past four weeks they have felt: 1) *nervous*; 2) *hopeless*; 3) *restless or fidgety*; 4) *so sad that nothing could cheer them up*; 5) *that everything was an effort*; and 6) *worthless*. Based on established scoring criteria, the K6 can be used to classify young people into three groups: low psychological distress (mental disorder unlikely); medium psychological distress (mental disorder possible); and high psychological distress (mental disorder very likely).

Figure 7 illustrates that over half (55.5%) of the young people who experienced homelessness for the first time during the COVID-19 period had high psychological distress, compared with 27.1% of respondents who did not. A smaller proportion of respondents that experienced homelessness for the first time during the COVID-19 period reported low psychological stress (16.9%), compared with 45.1% who did not.

“The effects of my parent's divorce which is currently taking place (since January 2021) and has emotionally, mentally and physically strained me to the extent that I removed myself off social media, isolated myself away from my passions and friends and continue to experience my mother's manipulation as she placed an order against my father, meaning I'm unable to contact or see him. She also wants me to lie in court. I think that schools may need to provide more facilities or support for those experiencing domestic/family abuse. I've reached out to my school councillor [sic] and a couple of my teachers, but I feel I may need to catch up with at least one of them again.”

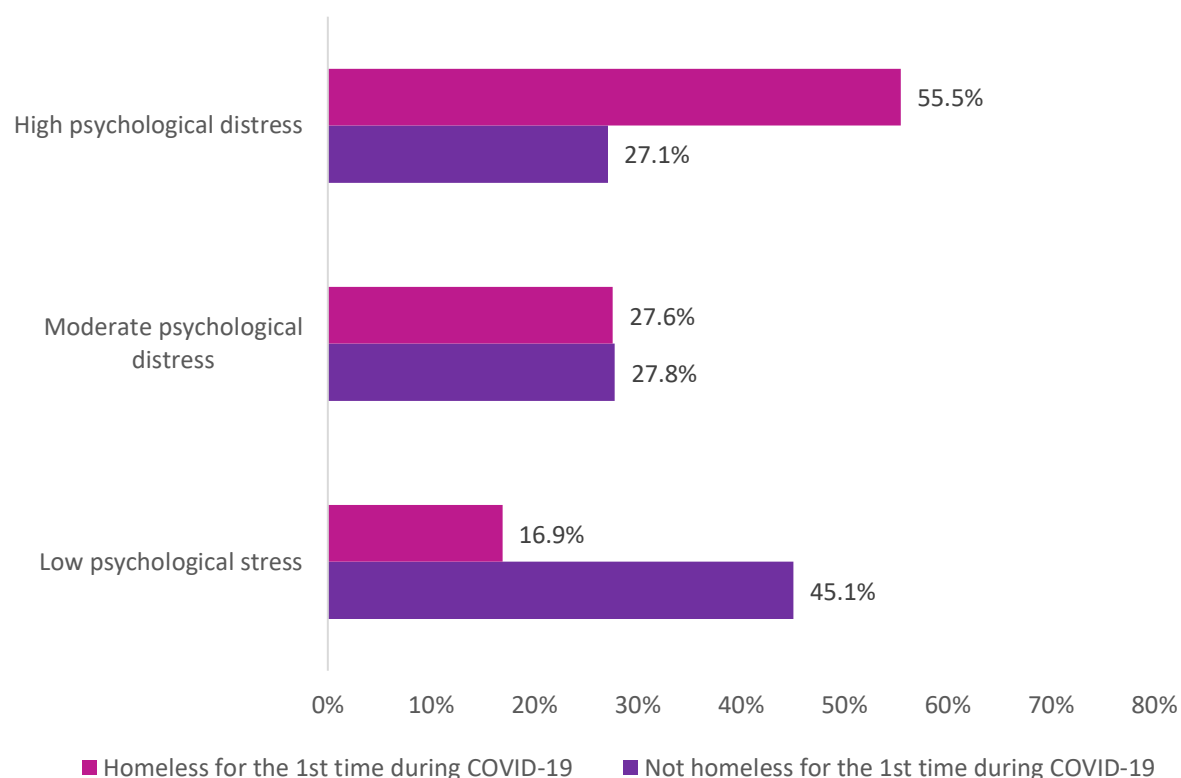
Female, 14, VIC, homeless for the first time during the COVID-19 period

“Feeling overwhelmed, after my dad's heart attack, pet's critical health and dealing with my suicidal sister, life became very overwhelming as I tried to remain committed to school activities while juggling year 11 studies.”

Female, 15, VIC, homeless for the first time during the COVID-19 period

Additionally, further analysis (see Table 6) indicates that psychological distress is a risk factor for youth homelessness in the COVID-19 period.

Figure 7: Level of psychological distress experienced by young people, by homelessness status, 2021



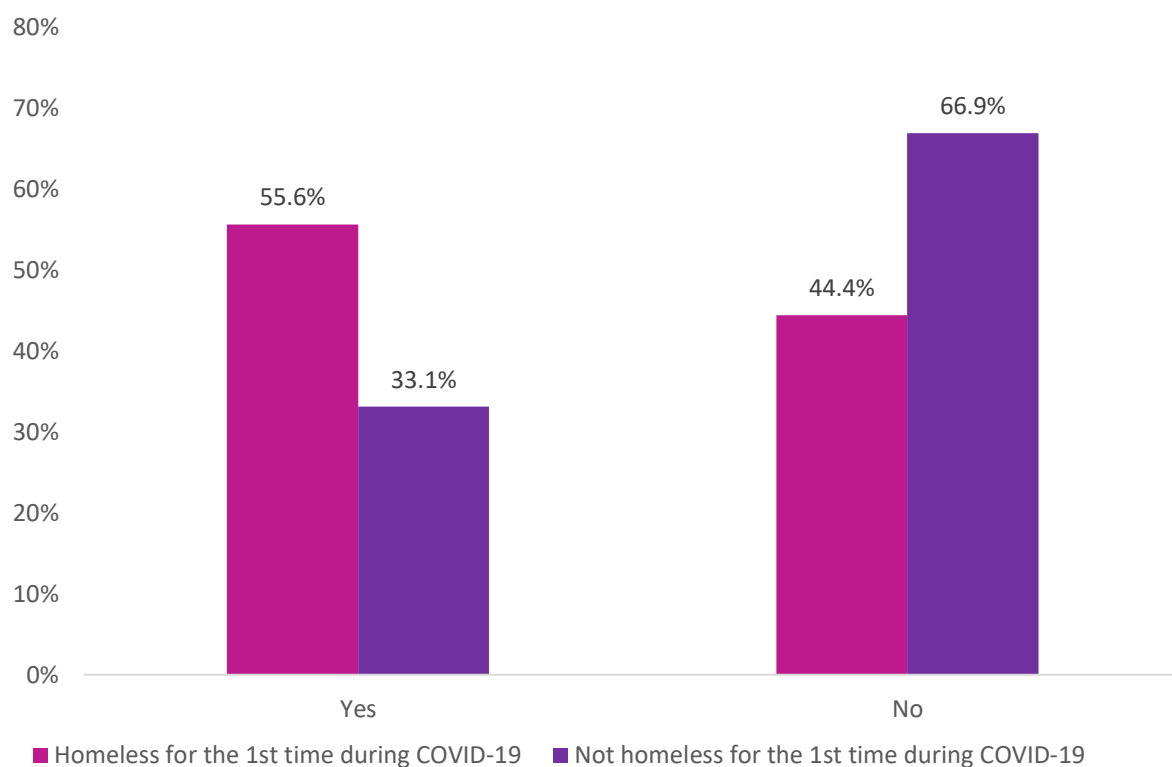
Sample: 2021 homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=935, not homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=18,348.

Unfair treatment or discrimination

Young people were asked whether they had been treated badly/unfairly in the past year because of their *gender, race, sexuality, disability, religion* or any *other* reason.

As shown in Figure 8, over half (55.6%) of the young people who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19 reported experiencing unfair treatment/discrimination in the past year, while a third (33.1%) of those who hadn't experienced homelessness said they experienced unfair treatment/discrimination.

Figure 8: Experience of unfair treatment or discrimination in previous 12 months, by homelessness status, 2021



Sample: 2021 homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=953, not homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=18,814.

Reasons for unfair treatment or discrimination

Of the 55.6% of young people experiencing homelessness for the first time who experienced unfair treatment/discrimination, 45.7% reported it was due to *mental health*. Table 2 shows that the top three reasons for experiencing unfair treatment/discrimination for young people who experienced homelessness for the first time were *mental health*, *gender* and *sexuality*.

The top three reasons for being treated unfairly, as reported by young people who did not experience homelessness for the first time during COVID-19, were *gender*, *race/cultural background* and *mental health*.

Young people who experienced homelessness for the first time had an average of 2.1 reasons for unfair treatment, compared to an average of 1.8 reasons for those who did not experience first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Table 2: Reasons for being treated unfairly, young people aged 15-19, by homelessness status, 2021

	Homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	Not homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19
	%	%
Mental health	45.7	26.1
Gender	41.8	37.1
Sexuality	27.7	21.3
Age reason	23.8	17.9
Other reasons	20.8	21.5
Race/cultural background	20.8	28.3
Financial background	10.6	6.6
Religion	9.2	11.6
Disability	8.1	6.9

Sample: 2021 homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=530, not homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=6,231.

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19.

“Homophobia in school and at home, as well as lack of support from schools.”

(Gender diverse, 15, Vic, homeless for the first time during the COVID-19 period)

Negative impact of COVID-19

Young people were asked to indicate if COVID-19 had negatively impacted them in nine domains of life. Table 3 illustrates that the top three domains of life that were

negatively impacted by COVID-19 for young people were *education, participation in activities* and *mental health*, regardless of their homelessness status.

In almost all domains of life, there were higher proportions of young people who experienced homelessness for the first time being negatively impacted by COVID-19, compared to those young

“I couldn't see my friends for a year.”

Gender diverse, 15, NSW, not homeless for the first time during the COVID-19 period

people who had not experienced homelessness for the first time. The only domain in which this second group had a slightly higher proportion was *participation in activities* (68.6% vs. 66.8%).

“COVID-19 has affected my siblings work and I feel as though it will affect my future in education.”

Female, 15, NSW, homeless for the first time during the COVID-19 period

The largest gaps between the two groups were for *mental health* and *family* (difference of 16.5% and 15.8%).

Table 3: Domains of life negatively impacted by COVID-19, young people aged 15-19, by homelessness status, 2021

	Homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	Not homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19
	%	%
Education	67.5	62.2
Participation in activities	66.8	68.6
Mental health	66.2	49.7
Physical health	53.4	45.8
Family	52.9	37.1
Friendships	45.4	33.3
Employment	40.8	29.5
Financial security	36.1	23.7
Housing	13.8	6.5

Sample: 2021 homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=947-953, not homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=18,695-18,786.
Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19.



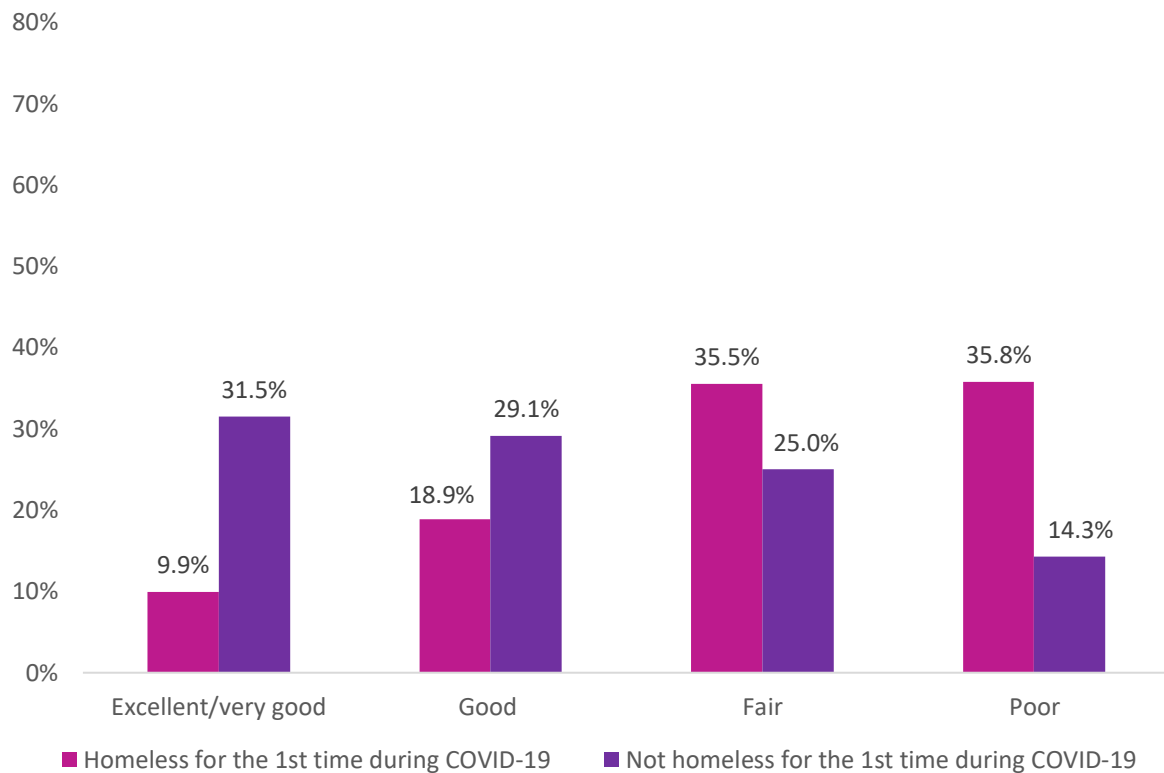
Section Three: Mental health and wellbeing of first-time homeless young people during COVID-19

The following section focuses on the questions that measured young people's overall rating on their mental health and wellbeing, their feelings about the future and how happy they currently felt about their life.

Overall rating of mental health and wellbeing

Young people were asked to rate their overall mental health and wellbeing using a five-point scale, ranging from *poor* to *excellent*. Figure 9 shows over a third (35.8%) of young people who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19 rated their mental health and wellbeing as *poor*. Meanwhile, three in five (60.6%) young people who did not experience first-time homelessness rated their mental health and wellbeing as *excellent/very good* or *good*.

Figure 9: Overall rating of mental health and wellbeing, young people aged 15-19, by homelessness status, 2021

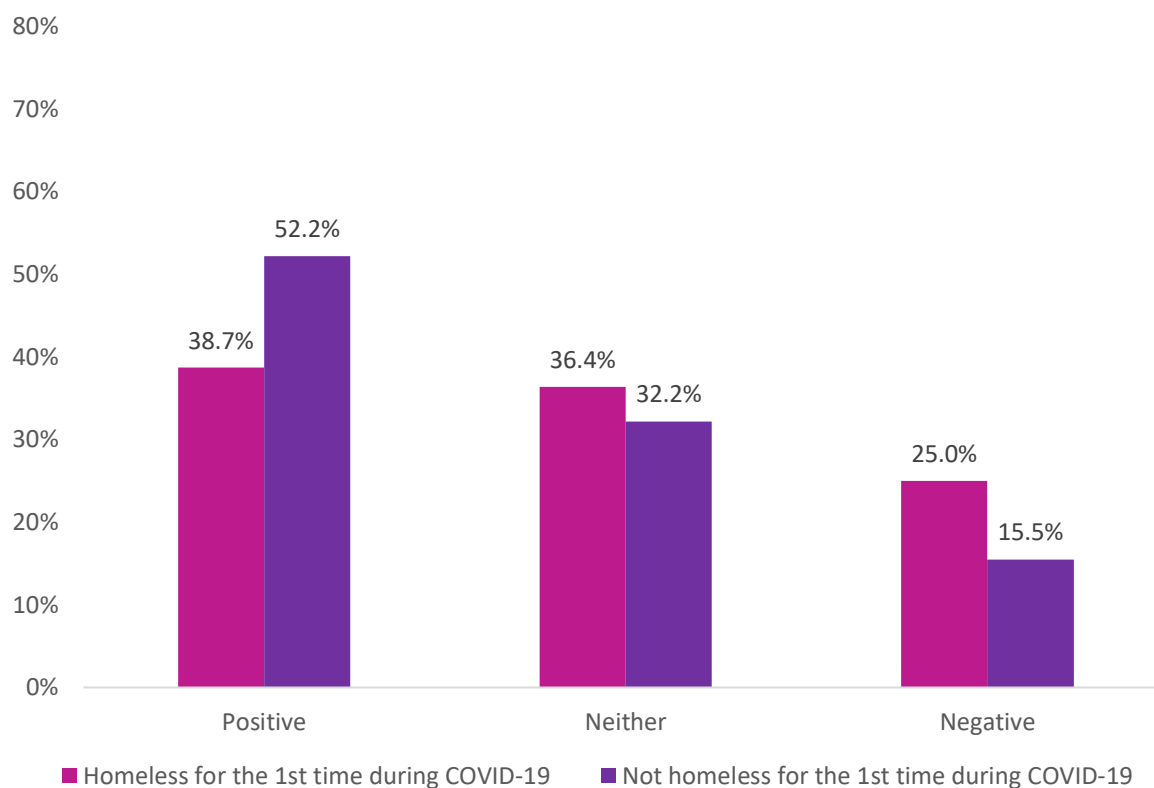


Sample: 2021 homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=953, Not homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=18,814.

Feelings about the future

Young people were asked to describe their feelings about the future using a five-point scale, ranging from *very negative* to *very positive*. Over half (52.2%) of young people who did not experience homelessness for the first time during COVID-19 said they felt *positive* about the future, compared to 38.7% of those who did not experience first-time homelessness. Meanwhile, a quarter (25.0%) of the young people who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19 said they felt *negatively* about the future.

Figure 10: Feelings about the future, young people aged 15-19, by homelessness status, 2021



Sample: 2021 homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=949, Not homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=18,787.

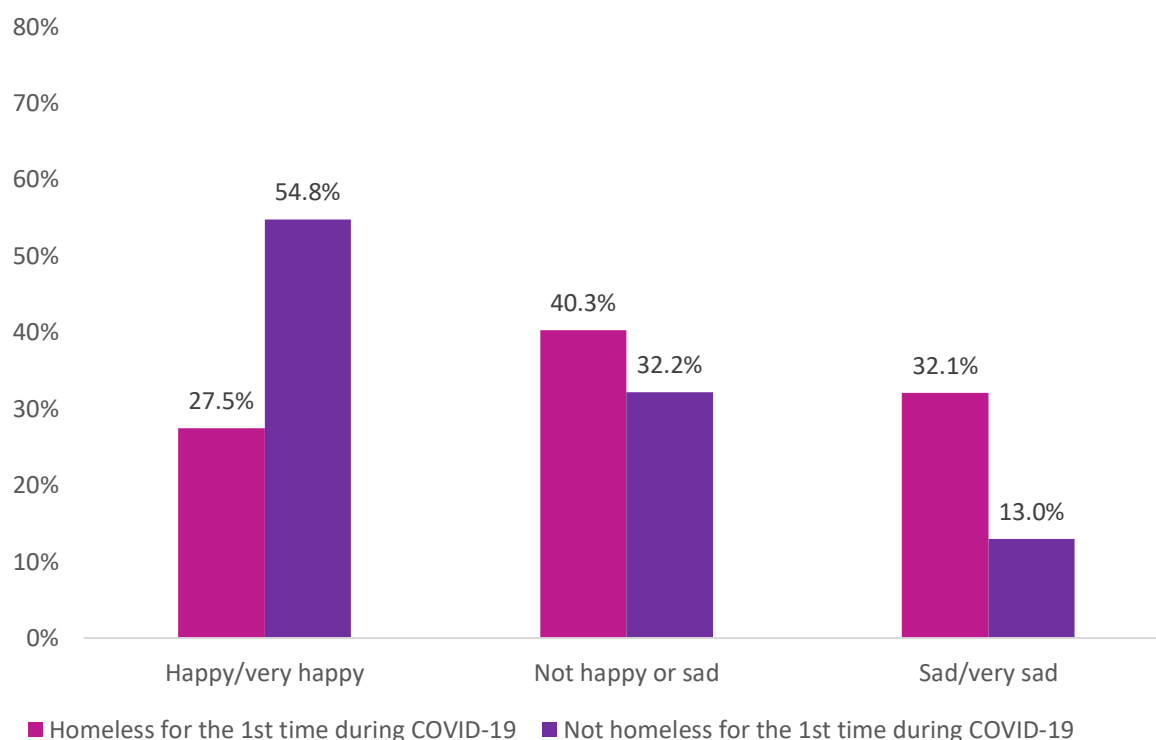
Current levels of happiness

Young people were asked to indicate how happy they were with their life using an 11-point scale, ranging from 0 = *very sad* to 10 = *very happy*, while 5 = *not happy or sad*. This question is part of the Personal Wellbeing Index (PWI) Scale.⁴⁴

Figure 11 below shows that close to a third (32.1%) of young people who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19 said they were *very sad/sad* (rating of 0 to 3) about their life. Meanwhile, over half (54.8%) of the young people who did not experience first-time homelessness report they were *very happy/happy* (rating of 7 to 10) about their life.

Figure 11: Current levels of happiness, young people aged 15-19, by homelessness status, 2021

⁴⁴ Cummins & Lau (2005)



Sample: 2021 homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=955; Not homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=18,825.



Section Four: Location and housing situation of young people who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19

State/territory, young people aged 15-19, by homelessness status, 2021

Table 4 illustrates that of the young people who were homeless for the first time during the COVID-19 period, 25.9% resided in Queensland, 22.1% in New South Wales and 18.4% in Victoria.

Table 4: State/Territory, young people aged 15-19, by homelessness status, 2021

	Homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	Not homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19
	%	%
QLD	25.9	23.1
NSW	22.1	22.0
VIC	18.4	23.1
SA	12.9	11.1
WA	12.0	11.3
TAS	3.7	4.9
ACT	3.3	3.8
NT	1.7	0.7

Sample: 2021 homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=956, not homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=18,871.

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19.

As in 2017 and 2019, the 2021 *Youth Survey* asked young people about their housing situation, to understand young people's living arrangements and to gauge the stability of their housing situation.

Living with parent(s) in the past three months

Young people were asked if they had spent most of their time in the past three months living with their parent(s) or somewhere else. Of those who reported experiencing homelessness for the first time during COVID-19, 10.2% said they were living *somewhere else* (compared to those who didn't experience first-time homelessness, 4.2%).

Adult/s lived with in the past three months

Of those who reported they were living *somewhere else* in the *past three months*, Table 5 outlines their type of living arrangements.

The top three people (instead of their parent(s)) that the young people who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19 lived with were *relative/sibling*, *partner* and *friend*. Over a quarter (25.8%) of these young people lived with a *relative/sibling*, more than double the young people who did not experience homelessness for the first time during COVID-19 (10.8%).

Table 5: Type of living arrangement utilised if not with parent/s, young people aged 15-19, by homelessness status, 2021

	Homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	Not homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19
	%	%

Relative/sibling	25.8	10.8
Partner	18.6	9.1
Friend	15.5	15.3
Other	15.5	41.7
I live alone	11.3	9.9
Non-related person	10.3	10.8
Foster parent	3.1	2.5
Relative/sibling	25.8	10.8

Sample: 2021 Homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=97; Not homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=770.

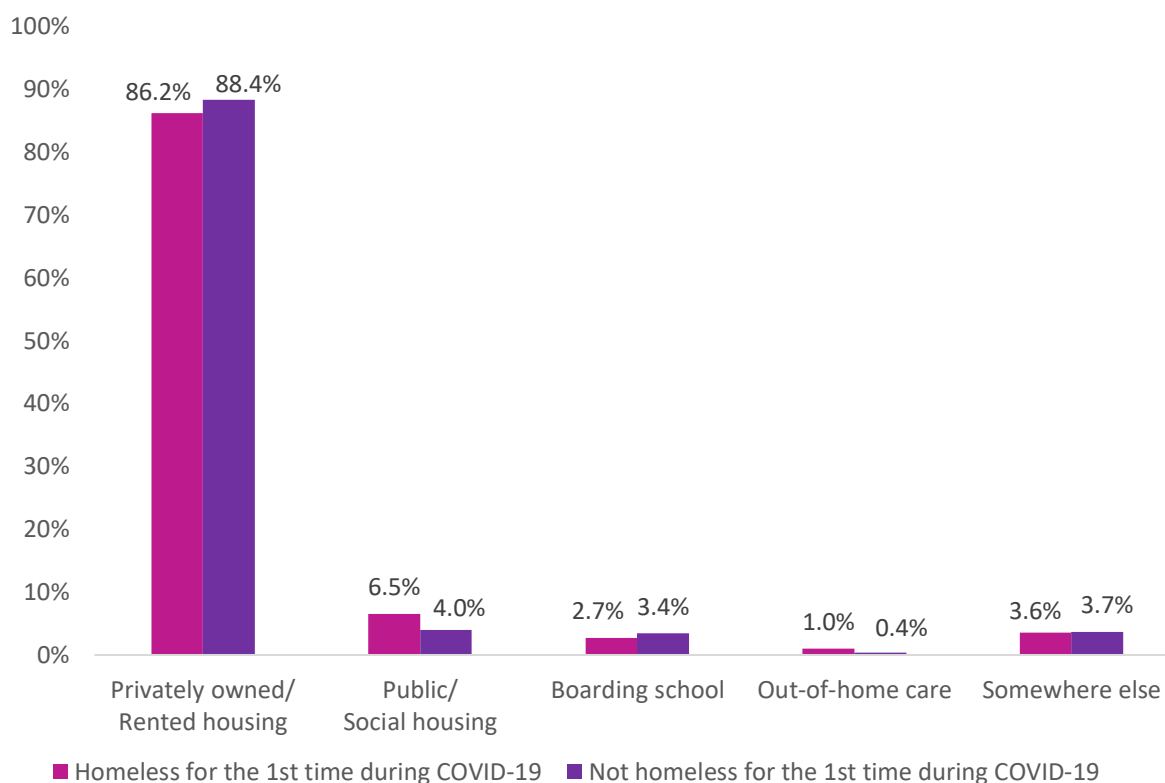
Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19.

Residential setting lived in, in the past three months

Young people were asked the type of residential setting they stayed at the most in the *past three months*. Figure 12 shows that most of them stayed in *privately owned/rented housing*, regardless of their homelessness status.



Figure 12: Type of residential setting stayed at the most, young people aged 15-19, by homelessness status, 2021



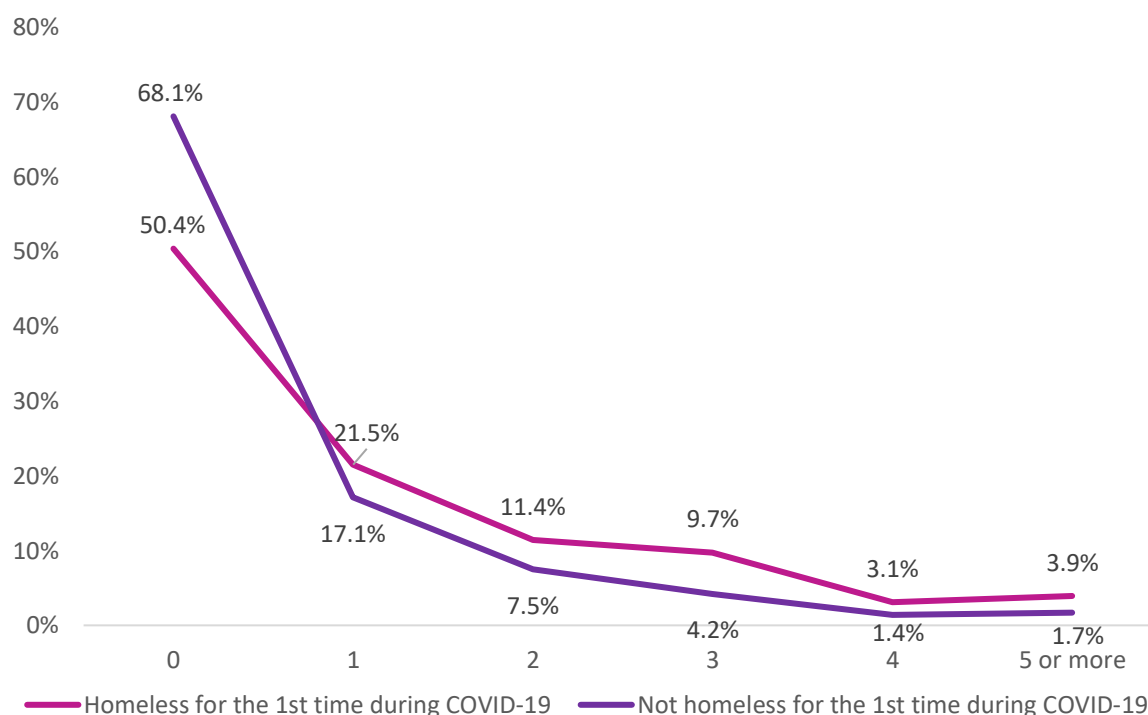
Sample: 2021 homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=904, Not homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=17805.
 Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19.

Frequency of moving houses in the past three years

As part of the housing questions, young people were asked how many times they have *moved house in the past three years*. As illustrated in Figure 13, close to half (49.6%) of the young people who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19 had moved one or more times from their house in the *past three years*, compared to 31.9% of those who hadn't experienced homelessness for the first time.



Figure 13: Frequency of moving houses in the past three years, young people aged 15-19, by homelessness status, 2021



Sample: 2021 homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=953, not homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=18,848.
 Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19.

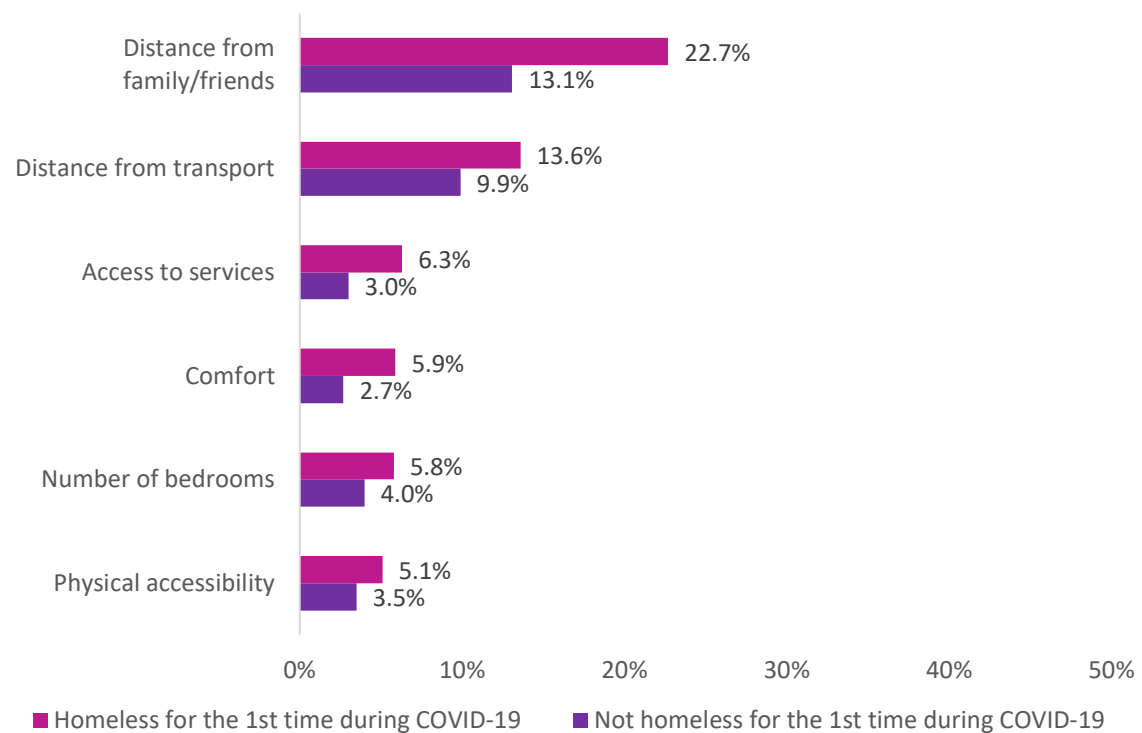
Level of adequate housing for young people

Young people were asked how adequate their housing was in relation to their needs in six aspects on a five-point scale ranging from *much less than adequate* to *much more than adequate*. The items were ranked according to the summed responses for *less than adequate* or *much less than adequate* for each item by those who experienced youth homelessness for the first time during COVID-19.

As seen in Figure 14, almost a quarter (22.7%) of young people who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19 reported that their housing was not adequate in relation to *distance from family/friends*. Overall, there were higher proportions of young people who were homeless for the first time during COVID-19 reporting their housing was not adequate across all aspects compared to those who were not homeless for the first time.

Just over a third (33.6%) of young people who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19 said their housing was *less than adequate* in at least one aspect.

Figure 14: Young people aged 15-19 and their housing situation being 'less' or 'much less than adequate', by homelessness status, 2021



Sample: 2021 homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=938-943, not homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=18,551-18,632.
 Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced homelessness for the first time during COVID-19.



Implications for Policy and Practice

One in 20 *Youth Survey* respondents reported that they experienced homelessness for the first time during the COVID-19 period. This is a concerning number of young people and also an increase in first-time homelessness since 2017 which should prompt urgent action. All levels of government, schools, services, and people that are central in young people's lives have a role to make sure homelessness is not a repeated or prolonged ordeal.

The issues and concerns raised by young people experiencing first-time homelessness during the pandemic further highlight the underlying issues that need to be addressed as part of a comprehensive approach to ending youth homelessness. The severity of the issues and concerns revealed in this report aligns closely with the findings in our previous report on the broad experiences of youth homelessness.⁴⁵

These *Youth Survey* findings were shared with Mission Australia services that support young people. They strongly resonated with what practitioners were seeing on the ground during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their expertise and insights, combined with other research and evidence of what we know works, have helped to shape the recommendations in this report.

While this report is focussed on first-time homelessness during the COVID-19 period, drawing attention to recent circumstances, the recommendations are part of the broader path towards ending youth homelessness.

Building a solid foundation to end homelessness

As outlined in the introduction to this report, the homelessness crisis in Australia is significant and young people make up almost one quarter of the estimated homeless population. Meaningful and lasting change to this crisis starts with a federally-coordinated national housing and homelessness policy framework. System change and dedicated long-term effort across all governments and the community is needed now.

1. Develop a national plan to end homelessness that is adequately funded

A national housing and homelessness strategy needs to be developed through consultation with all levels of government, people who have lived experience and expertise, the not-for-profit sector which is responsible for most service delivery, relevant industry sectors, researchers and other experts. While it should be a product of consultation, the following areas should be covered in the strategy:

- Responding to all policy drivers that affect homelessness and housing affordability;
- Adopting targets to drive change;

⁴⁵ Hall et al. (2020)

- Shifting the service system to have a greater focus on prevention and early intervention;
- Policy, reform and cohort priorities, including amending the list of priority cohorts in the current NHHA, in which young people should remain included; and
- Creating the environment for First Nations peoples to exercise self-determination in addressing the unique housing and homelessness issues they face.

At present, the National Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) is the primary mechanism under which governments derive the bulk of their funding and by which they agree to high level policy and reform priorities. However, the NHHA has failed to achieve its objective to reduce homelessness and increase access to affordable housing due to insufficient funding, lack of strong mechanisms to enact policy and reform, the absence of clear accountabilities around targets, the lack of measurable outcomes to steer progress, and the failure to concentrate investment on early intervention measures.⁴⁶

Prevention and early intervention

To stop young people becoming entrenched in homelessness, those at risk need to be identified as early as possible when signs such as family conflict, poor mental health and disengagement from school emerge. Following this, the right supports need to be available and rapidly put in place.

Early identification and intervention are cost effective, as costs increase as problems worsen and become more difficult to resolve. One key study concluded *“intervening early to stop children and young people becoming homeless could save taxpayers millions of dollars in health, legal and custodial services”*.⁴⁷

2. Introduce universal risk screening for homelessness in all schools, along with more wrap-around supports for in-need students and their families

Community of Schools and Services (COSS) is a proven place-based model of early identification and intervention which aims to help young people avoid homelessness and school disengagement.⁴⁸ COSS achieves this through the universal risk screening of young people and the provision of support to schools, young people, and their families through a collaborative network of the partners. Between 2013 and 2016, the number of adolescents entering the SHS system declined by 40% in Geelong, Victoria where COSS was first trialled.⁴⁹ The COSS model has since been replicated in other locations across Australia and should be further expanded.

Once a young person has been identified as being at risk of or experiencing homelessness, it is essential that they access holistic, wrap around supports to help them find a safe stable home and resolve any other issues. The Reconnect program, funded by the Federal Department of Social

⁴⁶ Mission Australia (2022)

⁴⁷ Baldry et al. (2012)

⁴⁸ McKenzie (2018)

⁴⁹ Ibid

Services, is an example of a comprehensive community-based early intervention approach that seeks to stabilise a young person's living situation and engagement with education, provide counselling and family mediation (if appropriate) and broker additional services to address co-occurring issues faced by the young person (e.g. mental ill-health). The model was positively evaluated by Mission Australia and demonstrates the types of holistic supports that are effective at combating youth homelessness and could be scaled up.⁵⁰

Impact Measurement of Reconnect

Data from Mission Australia's Impact Measurement program collected to December 2021, demonstrated that young people surveyed when exiting Mission Australia's Reconnect services have, on average, higher wellbeing than those entering the program. 79% of young people who completed both entry and exit surveys had improved wellbeing when leaving the service.



School-based support

The *Youth Survey* found that *mental health, coping with stress* and *school or study problems* were reported as issues that were *extremely/very concerning* across all of the young respondents. Those who had experienced first-time homelessness during the COVID-19 period, reported these issues in much higher proportions than those who had not. Additionally, *bullying* and *suicide* were reported by young people with first-time homelessness in the COVID-19 period at more than two times the rate of their peers.

Many of these concerns can be positively or negatively influenced by the school environment. Supporting schools to address these concerns can take many forms, including promoting awareness around mental health, or targeting issues impacting mental health such as self-esteem, school stress and bullying. However, a holistic approach to student health and wellbeing that is embedded in the school's ethos and approach to teaching has been found to be most effective.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Mission Australia (2016)

⁵¹ Hazell et al. (2017)

3. Develop localised student wellbeing strategies in all schools

Schools are key locations for identifying and providing support to young people.⁵² Most children and young people attend school, giving the education system a unique opportunity for broad-based interventions.

In a positive school environment, young people will have their mental and physical health needs met, can reach their education potential and can transition successfully into adulthood. Most State and Territory governments have in place wellbeing frameworks that provide a foundation for this work. These could be enhanced by incorporating identification of physical and mental health needs through universal screening tools and responding with broad-based and targeted wellbeing programs and well-defined processes to refer students to specialist support providers where necessary.

Schools should be adequately funded and resourced to carry out their wellbeing strategies and build partnerships with the local service system and community groups. Governments provide the enabling environment through policy direction, incentives and funding instruments, but community organisations, businesses and churches can partner with schools to offer specialised skills and resources that may otherwise be unavailable. For example, local sporting organisations and recreational facilities can coordinate initiatives to increase young people's participation in physical activity, and churches and faith-based groups can provide pastoral support to families.

Mental health and AOD

The *Youth Survey* found that larger proportions of young people reporting a first-time experience of homelessness during the COVID-19 period reported: higher psychological distress; more negative feelings about the future; and feeling less in control of their lives.

These findings highlight that the bidirectional relationship between poor mental health and homelessness is likely to have been exacerbated by the isolation and loneliness that young people have experienced as part of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions. Mission Australia has recently published two reports that focus on these

“We are currently experiencing significant wait times for psychologists and psychiatrists with wait times in excess of 12 months in some areas. With young people not being able to access these supports and other youth services at capacity, some young people are left with no choice but to present at emergency departments.”

(Regional Leader, Tas, Mission Australia)

⁵² Lawrence et al. (2015)
MISSION AUSTRALIA

topics: *Psychological Distress in Young People in Australia Fifth Biennial Youth Mental Health Report* and *Clusters of COVID-19 impact: Identifying the impact of COVID-19 on young Australians in 2021*.^{53,}

54

These reports provide expanded recommendations on what else needs to be done to comprehensively support young people's mental health so they can thrive and avoid homelessness.

4. Provide schools with the funds and skilled workforce necessary to respond to students' mental health needs

The Productivity Commission has identified mental health prevention and early intervention for children and young people as a priority reform area, with a particular focus on promoting this through schools.⁵⁵ The COVID-19 pandemic has added multiple stressors for young people, including uncertainty about their future, social isolation, increasing rates of unemployment and financial distress. This is increasing psychological distress among young people, making them more vulnerable to mental ill health, with a concurrent rise in suicide rates predicted.⁵⁶

Despite increasing attention by governments to provide greater welfare support in schools, school counsellor numbers remain low. Approximately only 3,000 of the 27,000 psychologists in the Australian workforce are employed in school settings.⁵⁷ Additional counsellors are required in schools with high proportions of students in families experiencing disadvantage and in areas which have been impacted by natural disasters such as fires and floods. Adequate resourcing will enable counsellors to spend sufficient time to build trusting relationships with students in need, and to form partnerships with the local service system to enable timely referrals to mental health and other specialist providers.

5. Improve access to appropriate youth AOD treatment options

The *Youth Survey* found that large proportions of young people reporting a first-time experience of homelessness during the COVID-19 period reported unhealthy coping strategies. With frequent feelings of being stressed, they were almost three times more likely than their peers to consume AOD (31.8% compared to 11.0% of respondents who did not report that they experienced homelessness for the first time in the COVID-19 period).

There is a high unmet need for AOD treatment services for young people in many locations around Australia, particularly residential rehabilitation and detoxification services, meaning some young people are treated in adult centres or cannot find appropriate treatment at all. There is a particular lack of treatment options for young people in rural and regional areas, and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people.⁶⁰ Evidence-based models can be replicated to meet this need, for

53 Brennan et al (2021)

54 Filia et al (2022)

55 Productivity Commission (2020)

56 Dolgin (2020)

57 AIHW (2021c)

example Mission Australia's successful Triple Care Farm model, which has been calculated to generate a Social Return on Investment of \$7 for every \$1 invested.⁶¹

Mission Australia has identified particularly urgent needs and opportunities for youth residential AOD treatment services in South West Western Australia and in Tasmania. An investment of \$2-3 million for building and establishment costs plus approximately \$2 million per annum for service delivery would fund a residential rehabilitation facility with 8-10 beds, based on the Triple Care Farm model.

All young people with harmful alcohol and drug addiction around the whole country should be offered appropriate treatment when and where they need it - a goal which is impossible to achieve without further investment.

Triple Care Farm model

Mission Australia's Triple Care Farm is a residential AOD program for young people aged 16-24 years. The 12-week residential rehabilitation uses a modified dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) program, followed by six months of community aftercare to help young people to sustain change upon return to their community.

A 10-year study in partnership between Mission Australia and the University of Wollongong explored the effectiveness of Triple Care Farm. Alarming, it found young people seeking residential treatment from 2018-2020 displayed significantly higher levels of poor mental health symptoms compared to 10 years ago. Examining outcomes for two groups of young people in 2008-2009 and 2018-2020, the research found the Triple Care Farm model was an effective intervention.

Young people using its service had reduced mental health symptoms, increased confidence to resist substances and increased quality of life at the end of treatment.⁶¹



Domestic and family violence

Strikingly, the *Youth Survey* highlights the lack of positive family functioning and high proportions of concern about family and domestic violence among young people experiencing homelessness for the first time during the COVID-19 period.

Other research has shown that domestic and family violence is the leading cause of homelessness among children and young people in Australia. Domestic and family violence has significant impacts on young people's physical and mental wellbeing, as well as disrupting education, friendships, and links to community and cultural activities.⁵⁸

Whether family conflict more broadly will lead to youth homelessness is dependent on a range of complex factors. The decision for a young person to leave their family is highly thought through, and typically follows situations where either a young person has:

- endured ongoing conflict without hope of resolution; or
- experienced significant and ongoing violence, abuse or neglect; or
- observed other well-functioning families which then triggered a realisation of their own situation.⁵⁹

In Central and Far West NSW, Mission Australia services saw an increase in clients with family breakdown during the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the area's low COVID-19 case numbers, at times these regions endured restrictions that were on par with areas in Greater Sydney experiencing high cases. The consequence was that some vulnerable young people were forced to live in a dwelling with parents and family members where their safety was at risk, increasing the potential of experiencing violence.

“Information about it being safe to leave the home came late in the pandemic. At the beginning there was no awareness that there needed to be flexibility. All the general safety mechanisms we put in place were upended and we had to adapt. Safety plans where you had a young person go to Nan's to stay safe, meant public orders would be breached and a young person fined for trying to protect themselves.”

Area Manager, NSW, Mission Australia

6. Increase availability of family support services and domestic and family violence services

It is critical to intervene early to support vulnerable families, identify family members who are not safe and, in some cases, assist them to escape violence. Aside from the immediate benefit to the young person, failure to act early can have a disastrous impact on young person's later life outcomes. People who are homeless or in insecure housing have had high rates of childhood neglect or physical and/or sexual abuse; childhood abuse is also associated with longer durations of homelessness.⁶⁰

The upcoming release of a National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032 provides the ideal opportunity for the Federal Government to commit to comprehensive and adequately funded family support services and domestic and family violence services.

School engagement

⁵⁹ Roche & Barker (2017)

⁶⁰ Scutella et al. (2014)

The *Youth Survey* reminds us that all young people hold aspirations for their future, regardless of whether they are facing adversity. Similar proportions of young people experiencing first-time homelessness and those who had not, indicated they intended to complete year 12. A strong body of research demonstrates that educational attainment is associated with positive outcomes in employment, health and cognitive, social and emotional skills development.⁶¹

The *Survey* findings indicate more needs to be done to help young people who were experiencing homelessness in the COVID-19 period, given their greater reporting of *school or study problems* and increased *barriers to achieving work/study goals* compared to their peers, and their lower confidence in achieving their goals.

Other research shows the significant accrued costs to an individual, government and society of not giving young people every opportunity to complete their education. For example, an average early school leaver's fiscal costs (e.g., lost tax payments, transfer payments and human services expenditure) and social costs (e.g., lost earnings, health burdens, reduced productivity) was calculated in 2017 to amount to \$950,800 over their lifetime; that cost is expected to have significantly escalated since then.⁶²

7. Increase flexible and alternative learning options for young people experiencing homelessness

Understandably, young people who are at risk of or experiencing homelessness face immediate issues that distract them from an adequate focus on schooling. This could be a disruptive or unsafe home environment, or concerns about where they will sleep that night and whether they will have something to eat. Expecting young people to remain actively engaged in education under these circumstances is unrealistic without offering flexible and alternative learning options.

During the first lockdown in 2020, Youth Off The Streets (YOTS) developed a schooling program via Off-campus Learning for At-Risk students (SOLAR) and integrated it into an independent school. The program offers students personalised curricula through a mix of in-class and remote settings. The program follows a project-based learning model to maximise student engagement and is delivered by one teacher, promoting trusting relationships to form with the teacher and the small group of classmates facing similar adversity, within a safe, less distracting and triggering environment.⁶³

Another example of an alternative approach to learning is the Flexible Learning Options (FLO) program that Mission Australia delivers in South Australia. In this program a student's learning can take place on-site or remotely to their school and attendance is supported through active case management.

61 OECD (2012)

62 Lamb & Huo (2017)

63 YOTS (2021)

Core activities of the program include helping students with personal learning plans, addressing barriers to learning and providing re-engagement supports to access the services students need.

Flexible Learning Options (FLO) in South Australia

Mission Australia has been providing FLO in South Australia since 2007 and currently supports over 500 students through 32 different schools and locations. The University of Adelaide's evaluation of FLO showed the successful outcomes which are achieved for young people who are disengaged from school in South Australia.⁶⁸

It demonstrated that, as a result of attending the program and receiving casework support, the majority of FLO students are able to identify educational or job-related goals, as well as discover their ambitions and put strategies in place to achieve them.⁶⁹



Employment and income

The *Youth Survey* showed that higher proportions of young people who were first-time homeless during the COVID-19 period reported that the pandemic impacted their employment.

This is an important finding in the context of a youth unemployment rate which is more than double the general unemployment rate: 8.3% compared to 4.0% as of March 2022.⁶⁴ Younger Australians are not making the same economic gains as previous generations; data show the economic gap between old and young has widened due to poorer wage and wealth growth and lower home ownership levels, leaving young people with a lower capacity for non-essential spending.⁶⁵

To enable young people to successfully transition from education to employment, policy changes need to focus on both improving young people's skills and confidence as well as supporting employers to change their practices.

8. Provide tailored youth-specific employment services

Evidence-based programs, supports and services can make a real difference to young people struggling to find or keep employment. For example, the Transition to Work (TtW) program funded by

⁶⁴ ABS (2002)

⁶⁵ Wood et al. (2019)

the Federal Department of Education, Skills and Employment adopts a human capital development approach, which produces more sustainable long-term outcomes than rapid placement ‘work first’ approaches.⁶⁶ Although the program could better address complex issues impacting a young person’s ability to engage in the workforce, such as homelessness, it works effectively to provide a pathway for disadvantaged young people not in employment, education and training towards full or partial participation. A recent evaluation of the program showed that 68% of young people exited income support within two years of program commencement. Not only did almost three quarters of participants (73%) agree that TtW had improved their work readiness, almost all (97%) of providers also agreed.⁶⁷

9. Support employers to hire, train and develop young people

The other side of the equation is employers’ willingness and capacity to take on young people. Employers’ demand for employability skills and work experience cannot be met through employment services alone. Most employers require applicants to hold previous work experience and are reluctant to hire and retain young people due to their limited experience and skills, especially during weak economic periods.⁶⁸

From the perspective of employers, five broad approaches are suggested:

- financial levers such as subsidies for hiring and schemes to promote training investment;
- better support models for employers;
- better linkage between pre-employment training and employers;
- integrated work and learning; and
- leveraging government procurement and contracting.⁶⁹

10. Increase income support payments so young people and their families can live independently

Across multiple questions of the *Youth Survey*, the issues of *financial difficulty* and *financial security* were reported at higher proportions by young people who were homeless for the first time during the COVID-19 period than those who were not. Over one third reported COVID-19 had a negative impact on their *financial security*.

This is consistent with the strong correlation between receiving income support and being homeless or at risk of homelessness. In NSW, 65% of people who presented to specialist homelessness services over 2011-12 to 2016-17 received income support, most commonly Jobseeker.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Thomas (2019)

⁶⁷ Department of Education, Skills and Employment (2021)

⁶⁸ Cross (2020)

⁶⁹ PwC (2021)

⁷⁰ Department of Communities and Justice (2021)

There is unequivocal evidence that boosting income support payments lifts people out of poverty. During March to December 2020 when the Coronavirus Supplement for Jobseeker and other allowances (including Youth Allowance) and JobKeeper were introduced, poverty in Australia was halved and income inequality was significantly reduced.⁷¹ Unfortunately, this boost to income support was short lived, along with its poverty alleviating effects.

An increase in income support dramatically lifts living standards

In 2020 ACOSS surveyed almost 1,000 people who received the new rate of Jobseeker and other allowances during the pandemic (4.8% of those surveyed received Youth Allowance).

The survey found:

1. 83% reported that they were eating better.
2. 75% reported that they were now able to catch-up on bills.
3. 69% reported that they were finding it easier to pay their rent, or were considering moving into safer or more appropriate accommodation.
4. 61% reported that they were better able to cover the cost of emergency expenses.
5. 59% were now able to save up for major household items like fridges and freezers.⁷⁸



Housing

⁷¹ Davidson (2022)

The *Youth Survey* showed that young people who experienced homelessness in the COVID-19 period for the first time were more than two times more likely to report that COVID-19 had a negative impact on their housing, compared with their peers. They were much more likely to indicate that their living conditions were less than adequate and had a history of moving frequently. One in ten from this group reported spending most of the previous three months living away from their parents, most commonly staying with a *partner or relative/sibling*.

“In Western and Far Western NSW there is no available youth accommodation after Orange; the only accommodation option is the crisis bed operated by Mission Australia for young people referred from Youth Justice which is a 28-day placement. The challenge with young people accessing this accommodation is that there are no transitional or supported accommodation options available upon exit. We work closely with the young person and their family to look at suitable and sustainable family placements however in many cases it is a lack of family options that has led them to need the crisis bed in the first place. In many cases, this has led to young people needing to go into motel accommodation arranged by DCJ, often for months at a time or they have returned to unsafe placements and often gone on to reoffend, identifying the safety and security provided by being in custody. “

Area Manager, NSW, Mission Australia

These findings illustrate one angle of Australia’s chronic shortage of housing for people on low and moderate incomes. As of June 2020, there are 150,000 people on waiting lists for social housing and according to the 2016 Census, 900,000 households are in housing stress and vulnerable to becoming homeless.^{72, 73} Projected interest rate rises and inflationary pressures across 2022 and 2023 will further add to household stress and pressure on the waiting

lists.⁷⁴ During the COVID-19 pandemic, Mission Australia’s service staff noted increases in homeless young people seeking crisis accommodation, and in some regions observed a steep rise in the number of individuals and families placed in inadequate accommodation such as motel rooms for prolonged periods. There was an overwhelming consensus among our practitioners that youth homelessness is being driven by rising housing unaffordability and the lack of safe, stable long-term housing.

11. Increase rental subsidies, and investment in social and affordable housing

72 AIHW (2020)

73 ABS (2017)

74 Reserve Bank of Australia (2022)

Some young people in the older age range can live independently, usually with Commonwealth Rent Assistance, other rental subsidies, and/or access to affordable housing stock which is currently very limited. Rental affordability remains low across Australia, and affordability for low-income households has worsened in many of the capital cities and in the regional areas of every state, driven by outward migrating city residents as a result of COVID-19.⁷⁵ At its current

“Due to the influx of people moving to the Gold Coast during the pandemic period, housing has become scarce and unaffordable, even for people on moderate incomes. I recently supported a 17-year-old to access accommodation as there were no listed private rentals on realestate.com, Flatmates.com or Facebook Market place that were suitable for a Youth allowance budget of \$220 a fortnight.”

Youth and Family Support Worker, QLD, Mission Australia

level, Commonwealth Rent Assistance does not meet the needs of families and young people already on low incomes paying high prices for rent, especially in the capital cities.⁷⁶

For many young people who can live independently with or without support, social housing is the best option, especially if they cannot find, keep or afford housing in the private rental market. The recent statutory review of the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation estimated that an additional 891,000 social and affordable dwellings would be required over the next 20 years, at a cost of \$290 billion.⁷⁷ This increase in social and affordable housing stock would allow access for more young people and their families who cannot afford private rentals, but may not currently be prioritised for social housing due to the high levels of demand.

12. Scale up youth-specific integrated housing-and-support models

Young people who cannot live at home fall into a number of cohorts, with different capabilities and needs, requiring a range of housing models.

However, most young people need extra help to transition to adulthood, develop skills and confidence to live independently, and require an integrated housing-and-support model. These vary according to the level of support intensity needed, from light-touch encouragement provided through outreach, to intensive support for young people with significant trauma provided through an in-home setting. This includes Housing First models, medium-term supported housing and transitional accommodation.

80 SGS Economics and Planning with National Shelter, Beyond Bank Australia and the Brotherhood of St Laurence (2021)

81 SGS Economics and Planning (2020)

77 Australian Government (2021)

Youth Foyers

This integrated housing-and-support model suits young people who are ready, able and willing to learn or earn. The young residents are supported to engage in education and employment, and gradually to reduce their dependence on social services.

Youth Foyers generally have self-contained accommodation, on-site support workers, education programs, variable levels of support where a young person can progress to more independent living, onsite facilities (for example health services) and sometimes social enterprises (such as a café). Participation in education, training and employment is a condition of the accommodation.

There is a strong evidence base nationally and internationally on the effectiveness of Youth Foyers and efforts are underway to scale the model into more regions around Australia.



Discrimination and unfair treatment

Young people responding to the *Youth Survey* who were first-time homeless in the COVID-19 period reported discrimination in higher proportions than their peers in regard to both: having experienced it themselves; and finding it personally concerning to them. Additionally, they experienced unfair treatment at higher proportions.

Although many young people show great resilience in the face of discrimination, the *Youth Survey* findings are concerning, as other studies have shown that discrimination can have a negative impact on mental health, with effects including increased psychological distress, depression and anxiety.⁷⁸ Particular policy attention should be paid to young people who are most vulnerable to being bullied based on discrimination around mental health, age, race, gender, sexuality, disability, material deprivation and obesity, as found in the *Youth Survey* and other research on bullying.⁷⁹

13. Introduce a comprehensive strategy to reduce discrimination across all aspects of society

Such a strategy should include:

- education across the lifespan that promotes equality and inclusion with age-appropriate, whole-of-school programs; and
- a race and gender analysis implemented across all new government policies.

It should be wide ranging and consider investment in community, organisational and media interventions. Critical to this will be education initiatives that address attitudes and behaviours of young people directly. While all forms of discrimination should be covered, gender and race should be

⁷⁸ Vogl et al. (2016)

⁷⁹ Rigby et al. (2016)

prominent. The *2021 Youth Survey* found gender and race/cultural background were in the top three reasons young people faced unfair treatment, and was reported by one in five young people that experienced homelessness for the first time during the COVID-19 period.⁸⁰ Gender discrimination has been linked to domestic and family violence,⁸¹ which is the major driver of homelessness for women and children. Promoting gender equality is a critical part of violence prevention.

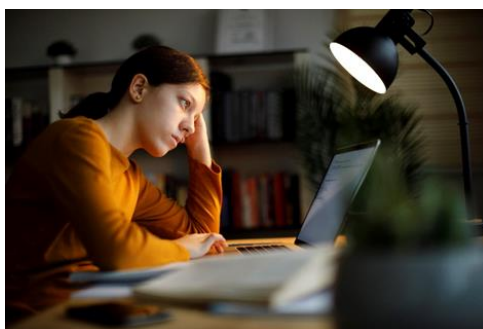
Services and client practice

Consultation with Mission Australia service staff on the *Youth Survey* findings found that it corresponded with their observations and experiences with young people in the COVID-19 period. Practitioners commonly raised the increase in presentations of young people with mental health concerns and the long waiting lists for treatment, and a significant disruption and disengagement from education and community.

Providing support during this time was particularly challenging. There were limitations on outreach and face to face support due to lockdown restrictions, and while there was an increased use of online activities and programs, this was not suitable for all young people. Also, providing young people with the technology, internet capability, and mobile data to participate was challenging, and complicated by poor internet coverage in some regions. Typical soft entry points to services were no longer available, such as a drop-in centres, and it was difficult to get 'eyes on' at-risk young people. As restrictions eased, the masks, screening and testing procedures added to the administrative burdens for young people in seeking and accessing support.

Despite these challenges, practitioners spoke of innovative ways in which they continued to work. Technology played a pivotal role not just with clients but in establishing and strengthening partnerships with government and community sector colleagues. Casework with young people was disrupted but practitioners found ways to remain COVID-19 safe and continue their work effectively.

This feedback reflects what Mission Australia found more broadly with our services during the COVID-19 pandemic, beyond just those for young people. This is outlined in the box below.



⁸⁰ Tiller et al. (2021)

⁸¹ Wall (2014)

Insights from service adaptation during COVID-19



1. The digital divide has become bigger – some groups are left behind even more and face increased barriers to accessing support or meeting their needs.
2. Many clients experienced increased social isolation and declining mental health.
3. Digital delivery of 1:1 support opened up new ways for clients to engage with our services. Some clients benefited from more individually tailored engagement approaches and greater choice.
4. Increased frequency of contact during COVID-19 had positive impacts for some clients.
5. The use of digital technology enabled organisations (including community services, government agencies and local groups) to better coordinate and integrate their service delivery, to the benefit of service users.
6. Some clients were empowered towards independence through the intensive focus and rapid increase in digital literacy and access to technology. Others struggled to adapt to or access new technology-enabled service delivery.
7. Digital technology was used to extend the reach of services.
8. Some entry pathways, particularly “soft entry” pathways, were no longer available. Some new entry pathways opened up that had not been available before.
9. Facebook groups were used successfully in some places to engage with communities and specific groups.
10. Internal collaboration and cross program networks supported staff to overcome challenges and continue to support clients through a period of rapid change.
11. The success of many digital based initiatives, such as Facebook groups, was dependant on the digital skills of individual staff and organisational support available.
12. In locations with COVID-19 restrictions, especially some inner city areas:
 - a. Intensive collaboration in the homelessness space saw unprecedented numbers of rough sleepers moved into temporary accommodation and engaged with wrap around supports
 - b. Fast tracked housing outcomes that would not usually have occurred during normal circumstances were achieved through focussed collaboration.
 - c. Services worked together across usual boundaries to pool resources to better support the communities they work in.

Case management by totem tennis

During the height of the pandemic our families and young people were at their most vulnerable with many being completely isolated outside of contact with our workers. While technology played a huge part in maintaining contact, many were desperate for in-person contact. Our services and workers had to be agile and come up with ways to keep working effectively and meet young people's needs. One of our staff innovations was setting up totem-tennis poles in front yards or nearby parks, allowing the worker and young person to interact, break down barriers, build trust and take part in physical activity – remaining close enough to have meaningful conversations, but separated enough to maintain safety. – **Regional Leader, Tas, Mission Australia.**



14. Better support young people during times of national and localised emergencies

In the metropolitan, regional and rural/remote areas across the country where Mission Australia operates, the COVID-19 pandemic placed extreme pressure on local service systems and pushed them beyond capacity. The COVID-19 pandemic increased demand for support for young people, particularly around mental health and housing, and brought additional challenges with social distancing and isolation requirements. It highlighted the need for a sufficiently funded service system with the capacity to respond quickly to a surge in need.

Brokerage (funds available to purchase items or services to support a client) was a vital tool that helped to overcome the challenges posed by this situation. However, the scarcity of brokerage funds and restrictive contractual requirements made it difficult to secure basic items (such as laptops) and services (such as data access) for young people. This hindered Mission Australia and other service staff from remaining connected to their clients, and also hindered young people from remaining connected with their friends, family and community, and from participation in remote learning. Programs such as the Optus Donate Your Data initiative can be highly valuable to enable digital connection for people in need, but sufficient and flexible brokerage is also critical to respond in a timely and effective manner when navigating times of crisis and unforeseen events (including natural disasters such as fires, floods and droughts) that threaten to further disadvantage already vulnerable groups, including young people.



“Shifting people to online/phone support relied heavily on brokerage to provide young people the resources they needed to stay in touch. Things as simple as mobile phone data allowed young people to stay in touch with us, their friends and other support services, particularly ones who only had an online or phone presence.”

Regional Leader, TAS, Mission Australia

Conclusion

The proportions of *Youth Survey* respondents who experienced homelessness for the first time increased from 2017 to 2021. For those who experienced first-time homelessness in during COVID-19 contributing factors included:

- conflict and poor family relationships,
- concerns about domestic and family violence,
- psychological distress, and
- negative impact of COVID-19 on employment and friendships.

This report has highlighted how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the housing situation of young people who experienced homelessness for the first time. These young people were living in conditions which were less than adequate, had a history of moving frequently and were likely to have spent the previous three months living away from their parents.

Overall, the findings presented in this report emphasise the urgent need for a holistic approach to combat youth homelessness involving policy makers, funding bodies, researchers, community organisations, schools and - most importantly - young people at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Meaningful and lasting change to this crisis starts with a federally-coordinated national housing and homelessness policy framework to drive system change through dedicated long-term effort across all governments and the community.



Appendix

Table 6: Adjusted odd ratios of homelessness during the COVID-19 period and influencing factors

Factors	Odd Ratio	95% CI	P-value
Family ability to get along			
Family gets along well (reference group)			
Family gets along poorly	2.67	2.29-3.12	<0.01
Family conflict			
Not personally concerned (reference group)			
Slightly to extremely personally concerned	2.20	1.74-2.77	<0.01
Family violence			
Not personally concerned (reference group)			
Slightly to extremely personally concerned	1.50	1.28-1.76	<0.01
Kessler AIFS (K6)			
Low psychological distress (reference group)			
Moderate psychological distress	1.73	1.39-2.15	<0.01
High psychological distress	2.38	1.91-2.97	<0.01
Unfairly treated or discriminated against			
Yes (reference group)			
No	0.69	0.59-0.80	<0.01
Negative impact of COVID-19 on employment			
Yes (reference group)			
No	0.80	0.69-0.93	0.005
Negative impact of COVID-19 on friendships			
Yes (reference group)			
No	0.85	0.72-0.99	0.05
Negative impact of COVID-19 on housing			
Yes (reference group)			
No	0.81	0.64-1.00	0.07
Negative impact of COVID-19 on participation			
Yes (reference group)			
No	1.12	0.95-1.32	0.16
Negative impact of COVID-19 on finance			
Yes (reference group)			
No	0.92	0.77-1.09	0.32

Negative impact of COVID-19 on education

Yes (reference group)

No	1.07	0.90-1.27	0.46
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Negative impact of COVID-19 on mental health

Yes (reference group)

No	0.99	0.83-1.20	0.98
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Negative impact of COVID-19 on physical health

Yes (reference group)

No	1.00	0.85-1.18	0.99
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Negative impact of COVID-19 on family

Yes (reference group)

No	1.00	0.85-1.17	0.99
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Parent part-time/full-time employment

Unemployed (reference group)

One parent has part-time or full-time job	1.02	0.76-1.36	0.88
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Both parents have part-time or full-time jobs	1.08	0.81-1.40	0.59
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Currently studying

No studying (reference group)

Full or part-time studying	0.95	0.70-1.19	0.69
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Gender

Male (reference group)

Female	0.86	0.73-1.01	0.06
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Others	0.75	0.57-1.02	0.051
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Aboriginal and Torres Islander

Yes (reference group)

No	0.76	0.56-1.02	0.07
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States

Victoria & NSW (reference group)

All other states	1.14	0.98-1.32	0.08
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Age (Mean ± SD)	1.10	1.02-1.18	0.007
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Table 7: State/territory breakdown, young people aged 15-19, by homelessness status, 2021

State or/ territory			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
ACT	Valid	Homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	32	4.2	4.3
		Not homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	715	93.6	95.7
		Total	747	97.8	100
	Total		764	100	
NSW	Valid	Homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	211	4.7	4.8
		Not homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	4158	92.1	95.2
		Total	4369	96.8	100
	Total		4515	100	
NT	Valid	Homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	16	10.1	10.3
		Not homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	140	88.6	89.7
		Total	156	98.7	100
	Total		158	100	
QLD	Valid	Homeless for the 1st time during COVID	248	5.3	5.4
		Not homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	4355	93.6	94.6
		Total	4603	98.9	100
	Total		4652	100	
SA	Valid	Homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	123	5.5	5.6
		Not homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	2086	92.5	94.4
		Total	2209	98	100
	Total		2255	100	
TAS	Valid	Homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	35	3.6	3.6
		Not homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	925	95	96.4
		Total	960	98.6	100
	Total		974	100	
VIC	Valid	Homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	176	3.8	3.9
		Not homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	4365	94.9	96.1
		Total	4541	98.7	100
	Total		4601	100	

WA	Valid	Homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	115	5	5.1
		Not homeless for the 1st time during COVID-19	2127	93	94.9
		Total	2242	98	100
	Total		2288	100	



Table 8: Young people who experienced homelessness for the first time in the COVID-19 period, by intention to complete year 12

	Not homeless for the 1 st time during COVID-19 %	Homeless for the 1 st time during COVID-19 %
Yes	96.5%	95.5%
No	2.9%	4.5%

Sample homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=828, not homeless for the first time during COVID-19 n=1677.

Table 9: Young people experiencing first-time homelessness vs. those who are not, 2017-2021

	2017 % n=24,055	2019 % n=25,126	2021 % n=19,827
First-time homeless	3.9	4.6	4.8
Not first-time homeless	96.1	95.4	95.2

Table 10: Sample characteristics of Youth Survey participants who reported first-time homelessness, 2017-2021

	2017	2019	2021
Sample size*	927	1,158	956
	%	%	%
Females	65.2	66.1	61.0
Males	30.5	30.3	30.9
Gender diverse	4.3	1.7	6.0
Prefer not to say	n/a	1.8	2.2
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	8.8	10.7	8.0
Non-Indigenous	91.2	89.3	92.0
Have disability	5.5	8.9	13.6
Do not have disability	94.5	91.1	86.4
15 year olds^	31.1	35.3	54.4
16 year olds	37.2	34.9	31.8
17 year olds	24.3	23.0	12.9
18 year olds	6.0	5.2	0.8
19 year olds	1.3	1.7	0.1
ACT	3.1	1.3	3.3
NSW	30.1	23.7	22.1
NT	0.9	2.3	1.7
QLD	18.4	24.9	25.9
SA	13.2	12.5	12.9
TAS	5.7	5.5	3.7
VIC	16.5	17.8	18.4
WA	12.1	11.9	12.0

*Please note that the *Youth Survey* does not collect longitudinal data, therefore sample characteristics fluctuate year on year. Please see www.missionaustralia.com.au/publications for more information. Please also note the sample for each demographic category varies, since these questions were not mandatory.

^May include young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

Table 11: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19, by gender, by State, 2017

	ACT %	NSW %	NT %	QLD %	SA %	TAS %	VIC %	WA %
Female	5.1	4.0	4.3	4.8	6.4	4.3	3.4	5.3
Male	2.9	3.3	1.1	2.6	3.0	3.9	2.4	3.4
Gender diverse	0.0	9.4	0.0	3.4	6.8	2.1	9.4	3.1

Sample base varied for each cohort in each state.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 12: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19, by gender, by State, 2019

	ACT %	NSW %	NT %	QLD %	SA %	TAS %	VIC %	WA %
Female	4.2	4.6	9.5	6.0	5.5	5.7	4.9	7.0
Male	5.9	3.0	6.9	3.7	3.4	3.3	3.7	3.0
Gender diverse	0.0	11.1	0.0	1.3	3.2	5.6	7.7	10.4

Sample base varied for each cohort in each state.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 13: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19, by gender, by State, 2021

	ACT %	NSW %	NT %	QLD %	SA %	TAS %	VIC %	WA %
Female	5.5	4.9	15.3	6.4	6.4	3.6	4.4	7.6
Male	3.3	4.6	4.3	4.1	3.2	3.5	2.5	3.2
Gender diverse	7.4	8.0	25.0	6.9	14.1	5.4	7.7	2.7

Sample base varied for each cohort in each state.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 14: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, by State, 2017

	ACT %	NSW %	NT %	QLD %	SA %	TAS %	VIC %	WA %
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	5.9	6.5	5.2	7.1	7.8	4.7	8.5	5.0
Non-Indigenous	3.9	3.7	2.3	3.6	4.7	4.0	3.1	4.3

Sample base varied for each cohort in each state.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 15: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, by State, 2019

	ACT %	NSW %	NT %	QLD %	SA %	TAS %	VIC %	WA %
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Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	0.0	7.5	12.8	7.3	8.6	7.5	7.6	7.6
Non-Indigenous	5.1	3.9	7.3	4.7	4.4	4.0	4.6	4.8

Sample base varied for each cohort in each state.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 16: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, by State, 2021

	ACT %	NSW %	NT %	QLD %	SA %	TAS %	VIC %	WA %
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	4.0	10.5	10.5	9.6	8.1	6.2	7.0	3.1
Non-Indigenous	4.2	4.5	10.3	5.1	5.4	3.5	3.8	5.3

Sample base varied for each cohort in each state.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 17: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19, by disability status, by State, 2017

	ACT %	NSW %	NT %	QLD %	SA %	TAS %	VIC %	WA %
Have disability	6.8	4.9	0.0	4.5	4.3	5.7	2.1	5.6
Do not have disability	3.8	3.9	3.3	3.7	4.9	4.0	3.2	4.4

Sample base varied for each cohort in each state.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 18: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19, by disability status, by State, 2019

	ACT %	NSW %	NT %	QLD %	SA %	TAS %	VIC %	WA %
Have disability	0.0	6.8	10.5	6.4	7.7	1.9	7.5	5.0
Do not have disability	5.0	4.0	8.4	4.7	4.3	4.4	4.4	5.0

Sample base varied for each cohort in each state.

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 19: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19, by disability status, by State, 2021

	ACT %	NSW %	NT %	QLD %	SA %	TAS %	VIC %	WA %
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Have disability	6.8	7.2	13.3	7.7	7.7	4.8	7.2	6.8
Do not have disability	4.0	4.6	9.9	5.1	5.2	3.5	3.6	4.9

Sample base varied for each cohort in each state.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 20: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19, by age, by State, 2017

	ACT %	NSW %	NT %	QLD %	SA %	TAS %	VIC %	WA %
15 year olds	4.3	3.6	0.0	3.5	4.2	5.4	3.0	5.6
16 year olds	5.0	4.4	1.3	3.8	5.0	4.6	3.3	3.8
17 year olds	2.8	3.7	4.7	4.1	4.6	2.2	3.0	3.6
18-19 year olds^	0.0	3.3	7.1	0.8	5.9	1.7	3.9	4.2

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

Sample base varied for each cohort in each state.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 21: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19, by age, by State, 2019

	ACT %	NSW %	NT %	QLD %	SA %	TAS %	VIC %	WA %
15 year olds*	9.7	4.7	10.8	4.9	4.9	4.5	5.1	4.3
16 year olds	3.7	4.1	8.4	5.2	4.0	3.5	4.9	5.3
17 year olds	1.8	3.5	6.7	4.6	4.8	4.7	3.7	6.1
18-19 year olds^	5.8	3.8	3.4	2.1	3.6	4.4	5.0	2.6

*Also includes young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

Sample base varied for each cohort in each state.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 22: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19, by age, by State, 2021

	ACT %	NSW %	NT %	QLD %	SA %	TAS %	VIC %	WA %
15 year olds*	4.4	4.6	10.0	4.8	5.0	4.2	3.9	4.5
16 year olds	4.2	5.2	10.4	6.2	6.1	3.1	4.0	6.0
17 year olds	4.1	5.6	13.3	8.3	6.6	2.2	3.8	5.0
18-19 year olds^	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	20.0	0.0	3.7

*Also includes young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

Sample base varied for each cohort in each state.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 23: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19 and family's ability to get along, by gender, 2021

	Female % n=573	Male % n=288	Gender diverse % n=56
Excellent	3.3	9.4	0.0
Very good	11.2	17.7	12.5
Good	23.2	27.4	10.7
Fair	32.3	25.3	39.3
Poor	30.0	20.1	37.5

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 24: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19 and family's ability to get along, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2021

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander % n=76	Non-Indigenous % n=872
Excellent	7.9	4.5
Very good	15.8	13.3
Good	22.4	23.7
Fair	35.5	30.5
Poor	18.4	28.0

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 25: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19 and family's ability to get along, by disability status, 2021

	Have disability % n=129	Do not have disability % n=818
Excellent	6.2	4.6
Very good	5.4	14.8
Good	19.4	24.3
Fair	30.2	30.9

Poor

38.8

25.3

Table 26: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19 and family's ability to get along, by age, 2021

	15 years* % n=519	16 years % n=303	17 years % n=123	18-19 years^ % n=9
Excellent	4.4	4.6	6.5	11.1
Very good	12.9	12.5	18.7	0.0
Good	22.7	29.0	13.8	22.2
Fair	32.2	30.4	27.6	33.3
Poor	27.7	23.4	33.3	33.3

*Also includes young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 27: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19 and family's ability to get along, by State, 2021

	ACT % n=32	NSW % n=211	NT % n=16	QLD % n=247	SA % n=123	TAS % n=35	VIC % n=175	WA % n=115
Excellent	0.0	4.3	0.0	4.9	5.7	11.4	3.4	7.0
Very good	15.6	14.7	25.0	13.4	13.8	11.4	10.3	13.9
Good	21.9	22.7	18.8	23.5	20.3	17.1	33.1	17.4
Fair	21.9	30.8	43.8	30.8	32.5	20.0	29.7	36.5
Poor	40.6	27.5	12.5	27.5	27.6	40.0	23.4	25.2

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 28: Young people aged 15-19 experiencing first-time homelessness and the issues they were 'very' or 'extremely' concerned about, by gender, 2021

	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %
Mental health	72.2	49.5	85.5
Coping with stress	68.3	42.9	64.3
Family conflict	57.2	32.5	60.7

Body Image	57.7	28.0	55.4
School or study problems	54.5	32.8	51.8
Suicide	39.3	24.6	53.6
Physical health	39.3	33.7	25.0
Financial security	35.6	25.3	30.4
Personal safety	34.6	22.6	46.4
Bullying	33.5	16.4	48.2
Domestic and family violence	30.6	19.7	39.3
COVID-19	30.3	18.7	32.1
Discrimination	26.3	16.3	45.3
Social media	26.4	16.3	23.2
Climate change	23.6	16.6	40.0
LGBTIQA+* issues	21.3	10.8	80.4
Drugs	15.2	15.9	12.5
Alcohol	9.3	9.7	8.9
Gambling	3.9	4.2	7.1

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample base varied for each cohort in each issue category.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 29: Young people aged 15-19 experiencing first-time homelessness and the issues they were 'very' or 'extremely' concerned about, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2021

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander %	Non-Indigenous %
Mental health	66.7	62.2
Coping with stress	61.1	58.7
Family conflict	49.7	46.7

Body Image	48.8	48.0
School or study problems	48.0	40.8
Suicide	36.1	40.5
Physical health	36.0	38.9
Financial security	31.9	34.7
Personal safety	31.5	34.7
Bullying	29.0	32.0
Domestic and family violence	28.1	28.0
COVID-19	27.5	25.0
Discrimination	23.2	38.4
Social media	23.4	21.3
Climate change	23.9	13.3
LGBTIQA+* issues	23.0	19.7
Drugs	14.4	24.0
Alcohol	9.3	12.0
Gambling	4.2	4.0

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample base varied for each cohort in each issue category.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 30: Young people aged 15-19 experiencing first-time homelessness and the issues they were 'very' or 'extremely' concerned about, by disability status, 2021

	Have disability %	Do not have disability %
Mental health	78.1	64.5
Coping with stress	66.1	60.0
Family conflict	61.7	47.5
Body Image	48.1	48.8
School or study problems	51.6	46.9

Suicide	48.4	34.6
Physical health	39.1	35.9
Financial security	45.3	29.9
Personal safety	43.4	30.1
Bullying	35.7	28.1
Domestic and family violence	39.5	26.2
COVID-19	35.2	26.3
Discrimination	32.3	23.0
Social media	17.8	23.9
Climate change	28.3	22.4
LGBTIQA+* issues	45.0	19.2
Drugs	18.0	14.8
Alcohol	14.0	8.9
Gambling	9.3	3.4

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample base varied for each cohort in each issue category.

Table 31: Young people aged 15-19 experiencing first-time homelessness and the issues they were 'very' or 'extremely' concerned about, by age, 2021

	15 years* %	16 years %	17 years %	18-19 years^ %
Mental health	66.3	65.9	65.6	77.8
Coping with stress	59.7	62.4	61.2	55.6
Family conflict	48.9	49.0	51.2	55.6
Body Image	50.9	46.5	43.1	55.6
School or study problems	47.7	46.4	48.0	55.6

Suicide	38.0	35.0	31.1	55.6
Physical health	36.4	34.3	40.0	44.4
Financial security	28.5	32.8	41.5	66.7
Personal safety	33.1	26.5	37.2	44.4
Bullying	30.6	26.7	29.5	11.1
Domestic and family violence	30.0	24.4	29.5	11.1
COVID-19	26.4	25.5	33.3	55.6
Discrimination	23.6	25.8	23.8	11.1
Social media	25.4	21.2	17.1	33.3
Climate change	24.9	22.5	17.4	11.1
LGBTIQA+* issues	24.3	22.8	16.4	11.1
Drugs	13.7	15.9	18.7	22.2
Alcohol	8.8	10.6	9.8	11.1
Gambling	3.3	5.6	4.1	11.1

*Also includes young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

~Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample base varied for each cohort in each issue category.

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 32: Young people aged 15-19 experiencing first-time homelessness and the issues they were 'very' or 'extremely' concerned about, by State, 2021

	ACT %	NSW %	NT %	QLD %	SA %	TAS %	VIC %	WA %
Mental health	83.3	66.8	37.5	62.5	66.9	60.0	77.8	55.7
Coping with stress	78.1	63.3	43.8	54.3	59.8	55.9	70.5	54.4
Family conflict	65.6	48.3	31.3	45.2	49.2	48.6	55.4	49.1
Body Image	40.6	49.8	43.8	44.9	47.5	40.0	59.1	44.3
School or study problems	50.0	47.9	37.5	45.7	49.6	31.4	58.4	36.5

Suicide	53.1	43.3	31.3	30.4	35.2	34.3	38.3	31.3
Physical health	53.1	42.8	25.0	32.8	25.6	17.1	44.0	34.2
Financial security	28.1	33.0	18.8	33.2	28.9	14.3	36.6	31.3
Personal safety	50.0	33.3	37.5	24.7	30.3	11.4	43.2	27.4
Bullying	40.6	29.7	18.8	24.7	28.7	32.4	34.1	27.0
Domestic and family violence	34.4	27.5	31.3	25.0	27.0	26.5	33.5	26.1
COVID-19	28.1	30.1	12.5	18.2	24.6	17.1	42.0	27.0
Discrimination	31.3	26.2	18.8	19.0	24.0	25.7	28.5	23.9
Social media	25.0	23.2	12.5	18.5	22.1	14.3	34.9	19.3
Climate change	25.0	21.8	18.8	20.9	23.8	31.4	30.1	15.7
LGBTIQA+* issues	31.3	25.6	12.5	16.6	26.8	25.7	28.2	15.7
Drugs	18.8	16.2	6.3	12.5	19.7	5.7	14.8	17.4
Alcohol	6.3	7.6	0.0	8.1	12.3	14.3	12.5	9.6
Gambling	9.4	4.7	6.3	2.4	7.4	0.0	2.9	5.2

*Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer, Asexual issues.

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample base varied for each cohort in each issue category.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 33: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19 and psychological distress, by gender, 2021

	Female % n=559	Male % n=286	Gender diverse % n=54
Low psychological distress	14.3	24.5	7.4
Moderate psychological distress	25.2	33.9	24.1
High psychological distress	60.5	41.6	68.5

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 34: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19 and psychological distress, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2021

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander % n=74	Non-Indigenous % n=856
Low psychological distress	13.5	17.2
Moderate psychological distress	25.7	27.8
High psychological distress	60.8	55.0

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 35: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19 and psychological distress, by disability status, 2021

	Have disability % n=128	Do not have disability % n=800
Low psychological distress	10.2	17.9
Moderate psychological distress	21.9	28.5
High psychological distress	68.0	53.6

Table 36: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19 and psychological distress, by age, 2021

	15 years* % n=507	16 years % n=297	17 years % n=122	18-19 years^ % n=9
Low psychological distress	16.0	18.5	16.4	22.2
Moderate psychological distress	26.0	28.6	30.3	44.4
High psychological distress	58.0	52.9	53.3	33.3

*Also includes young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 37: First-time homelessness for young people aged 15-19 and psychological distress, by State, 2021

	ACT % n=32	NSW % n=205	NT % n=16	QLD % n=242	SA % n=118	TAS % n=35	VIC % n=174	WA % n=113
Low psychological distress	15.6	16.6	37.5	19.4	13.6	14.3	14.9	16.8
Moderate psychological distress	15.6	23.9	12.5	31.4	26.3	34.3	31.0	25.7
High psychological distress	68.8	59.5	50.0	49.2	60.2	51.4	54.0	57.5

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 38: Experience of unfair treatment, young people aged 15-19 first-time homeless, by demographic characteristics, 2021

	Yes %	No %
Females (n=570)	57.2	42.8
Males (n=290)	47.9	52.1
Gender diverse (n=56)	76.8	23.2
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (n=76)	57.9	42.1
Non-Indigenous (n=871)	55.2	44.8

Have disability (n=129)	73.6	26.4
Do not have disability (n=818)	52.7	47.3
15 year olds* (n=519)	59.7	40.3
16 year olds (n=302)	52.0	48.0
17 year olds (n=123)	49.6	50.4
18 - 19 year olds^ (n=9)	22.2	77.8
ACT (n=32)	46.9	53.1
NSW (n=211)	58.3	41.7
NT (n=16)	62.5	37.5
QLD (n=248)	54.0	46.0
SA (n=122)	53.3	46.7
TAS (n=35)	54.3	45.7
VIC (n=175)	56.6	43.4
WA (n=114)	57.0	43.0

*Also includes young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 39: Reasons for being treated unfairly, young people first-time homeless aged 15-19, by gender, 2021

	Female % n=326	Male % n=139	Gender diverse % n=43
Mental health	45.4	42.4	48.8
Gender	44.5	21.6	79.1
Sexuality	24.5	17.3	69.8
Age reason	26.4	20.9	14.0

Other reasons	20.6	23.0	18.6
Race/cultural background	20.2	27.3	7.0
Financial background	11.3	10.8	7.0
Religion	8.9	12.2	2.3
Disability	7.7	6.5	18.6

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first time homelessness during COVID-19.
Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 40: Reasons for being treated unfairly, young people first-time homeless aged 15-19, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2021

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander % n=44	Non-Indigenous % n=481
Mental health	43.2	46.2
Gender	29.5	43.0
Sexuality	31.8	27.4
Age reason	22.7	24.1
Other reasons	13.6	21.6
Race/cultural background	54.5	17.3
Financial background	18.2	10.0
Religion	11.4	9.1
Disability	9.1	8.1

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first time homelessness during COVID-19.
Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 41: Reasons for being treated unfairly, young people first-time homeless aged 15-19, by disability status, 2021

	Have disability % n=95	Do not have disability % n=431
Mental health	57.9	43.2
Gender	50.5	39.9
Sexuality	41.1	24.8
Age reason	28.4	22.7
Other reasons	20.0	20.9

Race/cultural background	13.7	22.3
Financial background	16.8	9.0
Religion	7.4	9.7
Disability	40.0	1.2

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 42: Reasons for being treated unfairly, young people first-time homeless aged 15-19, by age, 2021

	15 years* % n=310	16 years % n=157	17 years % n=61	18-19 years^ % n=2
Mental health	46.5	42.7	50.8	0.0
Gender	44.8	36.9	39.3	50.0
Sexuality	30.0	26.8	19.7	0.0
Age reason	21.6	26.1	26.2	100.0
Other reasons	23.5	17.8	14.8	0.0
Race/cultural background	19.4	24.2	19.7	0.0
Financial background	10.6	7.0	18.0	50.0
Religion	7.1	14.0	8.2	0.0
Disability	5.8	9.6	16.4	0.0

*Also includes young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 43: Reasons for being treated unfairly, young people first-time homeless aged 15-19, by State, 2021

	ACT % n=15	NSW % n=123	NT % n=10	QLD % n=134	SA % n=65	TAS % n=19	VIC % n=99	WA % n=65
Mental health	60.0	52.0	40.0	44.8	49.2	36.8	45.5	32.3
Gender	33.3	34.1	40.0	42.5	50.8	47.4	50.5	33.8
Sexuality	26.7	29.3	10.0	23.9	35.4	36.8	28.3	24.6
Age reason	6.7	15.4%	30.0	32.1	32.3	21.1	26.3	13.8

Other reasons	6.7	22.0	10.0	23.1	18.5	31.6	19.2	20.0
Race/cultural background	13.3	22.0	50.0	17.9	26.2	21.1	17.2	21.5
Financial background	0.0	8.9	0.0	17.2	12.3	10.5	8.1	6.2
Religion	0.0	8.9	10.0	14.2	10.8	5.3	6.1	6.2
Disability	13.3	8.9	0.0	8.2	6.2	5.3	11.1	4.6

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 44: Negative impact of COVID-19 on young people first-time homeless aged 15-19, by gender, 2021

	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %
Education	69.0	64.4	69.6
Participation in activities	68.8	65.4	57.1
Mental health	70.5	56.6	69.6
Physical health	55.7	52.6	34.5
Family	55.5	44.8	66.1
Friendships	46.8	43.3	44.6
Employment	40.5	39.4	42.9
Financial security	39.5	29.1	37.5
Housing	13.5	13.6	14.3

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample varied within in each cohort.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 45: Negative impact of COVID-19 on young people first-time homeless aged 15-19, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2021

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander %	Non-Indigenous %
Education	68.0	67.7
Participation in activities	63.2	67.1
Mental health	57.9	67.1
Physical health	52.6	53.5
Family	53.9	53.0
Friendships	40.8	45.8

Employment	38.7	40.9
Financial security	35.6	36.4
Housing	17.3	13.5

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample varied within in each cohort.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 46: Negative impact of COVID-19 on young people first-time homeless aged 15-19, by disability status, 2021

	Have disability %	Do not have disability %
Education	68.8	67.4
Participation in activities	64.1	67.3
Mental health	73.6	65.4
Physical health	51.2	53.9
Family	62.8	51.7
Friendships	50.0	44.9
Employment	51.6	39.5
Financial security	45.3	34.7
Housing	23.4	12.4

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample varied within in each cohort.

Table 47: Negative impact of COVID-19 on young people first-time homeless aged 15-19, by age, 2021

	15 years* %	16 years %	17 years %	18-19 years^ %
Education	65.3	69.2	73.0	66.7
Participation in activities	68.0	65.2	66.4	55.6
Mental health	64.8	66.4	72.4	55.6
Physical health	53.8	51.8	54.1	77.8
Family	53.0	50.7	57.7	55.6

Friendships	48.0	43.2	41.0	33.3
Employment	39.2	43.0	41.8	44.4
Financial security	34.6	35.7	42.6	44.4
Housing	13.7	10.3	23.0	11.1

*Also includes young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample varied within in each cohort.

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 48: Negative impact of COVID-19 on young people first-time homeless aged 15-19, by State, 2021

	ACT %	NSW %	NT %	QLD %	SA %	TAS %	VIC %	WA %
Education	65.6	72.9	43.8	62.9	58.7	54.3	84.7	58.8
Participation in activities	75.0	67.5	62.5	61.7	62.3	74.3	78.3	59.6
Mental health	71.9	69.1	43.8	57.3	64.2	54.3	86.9	55.8
Physical health	58.1	55.6	25.0	42.1	52.5	54.3	69.3	53.1
Family	62.5	56.9	25.0	47.6	47.5	42.9	65.7	47.4
Friendships	56.3	45.7	31.3	39.9	33.1	45.7	66.3	36.8
Employment	31.3	46.7	37.5	42.9	41.3	25.7	40.3	33.3
Financial security	25.8	34.9	12.5	37.5	36.7	20.0	44.6	32.5
Housing	9.4	13.9	0.0	13.0	12.4	11.4	16.0	17.7

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19

Sample varied within in each cohort.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 49: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their general mental health & wellbeing, by gender, 2021

	Female % n=572	Male % n=289	Gender diverse % n=55
Excellent	1.2	5.2	0.0
Very good	5.2	13.8	1.8
Good	18.0	22.1	9.1
Fair	38.6	32.2	27.3

Poor 36.9 26.6 61.8

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 50: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their general mental health & wellbeing, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2021

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander % n=75	Non-Indigenous % n=872
Excellent	1.3	2.4
Very good	2.7	8.0
Good	28.0	18.0
Fair	34.7	35.3
Poor	33.3	36.2

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 51: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their general mental health & wellbeing, by disability status, 2021

	Have disability % n=129	Do not have disability % n=817
Excellent	2.3	2.2
Very good	3.1	8.3
Good	10.9	20.2
Fair	25.6	37.0
Poor	58.1	32.3

Table 52: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their general mental health & wellbeing, by age, 2021

	15 years* % n=519	16 years % n=303	17 years % n=122	18-19 years^ % n=9
Excellent	1.5	4.0	1.6	0.0
Very good	7.5	5.9	10.7	22.2
Good	20.4	18.2	13.9	22.2
Fair	33.5	38.9	35.2	33.3

Poor 37.0 33.0 38.5 22.2

*Also includes young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 53: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their general mental health & wellbeing, by State, 2021

	ACT % n=32	NSW % n=210	NT % n=16	QLD % n=248	SA % n=123	TAS % n=35	VIC % n=175	WA % n=114
Excellent	0.0	1.4	0.0	2.0	4.1	5.7	2.3	2.6
Very good	6.3	8.1	12.5	6.9	3.3	8.6	8.6	10.5
Good	6.3	20.0	18.8	22.6	19.5	5.7	17.7	17.5
Fair	37.5	33.3	37.5	33.1	40.7	45.7	36.0	34.2
Poor	50.0	37.1	31.3	35.5	32.5	34.3	35.4	35.1

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 54: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their feelings about the future, by gender, 2021

	Female % n=569	Male % n=288	Gender diverse % n=56
Very positive	9.0	7.0	1.8
Positive	33.0	33.0	17.9
Neither	34.7	36.6	35.7
Negative	15.3	17.0	30.4
Very negative	8.0	6.3	14.3

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 55: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their feelings about the future, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2021

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander % n=76	Non-Indigenous % n=867
Very positive	7.9	7.3
Positive	32.9	31.3
Neither	32.9	36.7

Negative	15.8	17.5
Very negative	10.5	7.3

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 56: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their feelings about the future, by disability status, 2021

	Have disability % n=128	Do not have disability % n=814
Very positive	6.3	7.4
Positive	21.9	33.2
Neither	32.8	36.9
Negative	25.0	16.2
Very negative	14.1	6.4

Table 57: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their feelings about the future, by age, 2021

	15 years* % n=516	16 years % n=303	17 years % n=121	18-19 years^ % n=9
Very positive	7.2	8.6	5.0	0.0
Positive	28.9	34.3	34.7	33.3
Neither	37.6	34.0	35.5	55.6
Negative	18.8	15.2	18.2	11.1
Very negative	7.6	7.9	6.6	0.0

*Also includes young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 58: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their feelings about the future, by State, 2021

	ACT % n=32	NSW % n=209	NT % n=16	QLD % n=248	SA % n=121	TAS % n=35	VIC % n=174	WA % n=114
Very positive	3.1	5.7	6.3	8.1	5.8	5.7	9.2	8.8
Positive	18.8	32.5	18.8	31.0	26.4	22.9	33.3	40.4
Neither	28.1	34.9	56.3	38.3	47.9	25.7	32.8	30.7

Negative	31.3	19.1	18.8	15.3	14.9	31.4	16.1	15.8
Very negative	18.8	7.7	0.0	7.3	5.0	14.3	8.6	4.4

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 59: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their level of happiness with their life, by gender, 2021

	Female % n=573	Male % n=289	Gender diverse % n=56
Very happy/happy	26.0	34.3	14.3
Neither	42.2	37.0	37.5
Very sad/sad	31.8	28.7	48.2

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 60: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their level of happiness with their life, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2021

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander % n=76	Non-Indigenous % n=874
Very happy/happy	28.9	27.5
Neither	32.9	40.7
Very sad/sad	38.2	31.8

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 61: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their level of happiness with their life, by disability status, 2021

	Have disability % n=129	Do not have disability % n=819
Very happy/happy	20.9	28.7
Neither	31.0	41.8
Very sad/sad	48.1	29.5

Table 62: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their level of happiness with their life, by age, 2021

	15 years* % n=519	16 years % n=304	17 years % n=123	18-19 years^ % n=9
Very happy/happy	25.0	32.9	23.6	44.4

Neither	42.0	38.8	37.4	33.3
Very sad/sad	32.9	28.3	39.0	22.2

*Also includes young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 63: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their level of happiness with their life, by State, 2021

	ACT % n=32	NSW % n=211	NT % n=16	QLD % n=248	SA % n=122	TAS % n=35	VIC % n=176	WA % n=115
Very happy/happy	12.5	27.0	31.3	27.4	32.0	25.7	29.5	25.2
Neither	34.4	38.9	50.0	39.9	38.5	31.4	43.2	44.3
Very sad/sad	53.1	34.1	18.8	32.7	29.5	42.9	27.3	30.4

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 64: Where the young people aged 15-19 first-time homeless were living in the past three months, by demographic characteristics, 2021

	Yes, with my parent/s or guardian/s %	No, somewhere else %
Females (n=577)	89.5	10.5

Males (n=288)	91.7	8.3
Gender diverse (n=56)	87.5	12.5
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (n=75)	84.0	16.0
Non-Indigenous (n=873)	90.3	9.7
Have disability (n=128)	85.2	14.8
Do not have disability (n=819)	90.6	9.4
15 year olds* (n=518)	94.6	5.4
16 year olds (n=304)	86.5	13.5
17 year olds (n=123)	79.7	20.3
18 - 19 year olds^ (n=9)	66.7	33.3
ACT (n=32)	87.5	12.5
NSW (n=210)	87.1	12.9
NT (n=16)	93.8	6.3
QLD (n=248)	91.5	8.5
SA (n=123)	87.8	12.2
TAS (n=34)	91.2	8.8
VIC (n=176)	93.2	6.8
WA (n=115)	87.8	12.2

*Also includes young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 65: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their living arrangements (if living somewhere else in the past three months), by gender, 2021

	Female % n=60	Male % n=24	Gender diverse % n=7
Relative/sibling	26.7	16.7	42.9

Partner	16.7	20.8	14.3
Friend	16.7	20.8	0.0
Other	18.3	8.3	14.3
I live alone	13.3	12.5	0.0
Non-related person	6.7	16.7	28.6
Foster parent	1.7	4.2	0.0

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 66: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their living arrangements (if living somewhere else in the past three months), by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2021

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Indigenous
	% n=12	% n=85
Relative/sibling	16.7	27.1
Partner	8.3	20.0
Friend	25.0	14.1
Other	25.0	14.1
I live alone	8.3	11.8
Non-related person	16.7	9.4
Foster parent	0.0	3.5

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 67: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their living arrangements (if living somewhere else in the past three months), by disability status, 2021

	Have disability	Do not have disability
	% n=19	% n=77
Relative/sibling	26.3	26.0

Partner	15.8	18.2
Friend	15.8	15.6
Other	15.8	15.6
I live alone	10.5	11.7
Non-related person	10.5	10.4
Foster parent	5.3	2.6

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 68: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their living arrangements (if living somewhere else in the past three months), by age, 2021

	15 years*	16 years	17 years	18-19 years^
	% n=28	% n=41	% n=25	% n=3
Relative/sibling	42.9	17.1	24.0	0.0
Partner	10.7	26.8	12.0	33.3
Friend	17.9	19.5	8.0	0.0
Other	14.3	12.2	24.0	0.0
I live alone	10.7	7.3	12.0	66.7
Non-related person	0.0	14.6	16.0	0.0
Foster parent	3.6	2.4	4.0	0.0

*Also includes young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 69: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their living arrangements (if living somewhere else in the past three months), by State, 2021

	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA
	% n=4	% n=27	% n=1	% n=21	% n=15	% n=3	% n=12	% n=14

Relative/sibling	50.0	18.5	100.0	23.8	20.0	33.3	41.7	21.4
Partner	0.0	14.8	0.0	28.6	13.3	0.0	25.0	21.4
Friend	50.0	14.8	0.0	9.5	13.3	33.3	16.7	14.3
Other	0.0	14.8	0.0	14.3	20.0	33.3	8.3	21.4
I live alone	0.0	14.8	0.0	9.5	13.3	0.0	8.3	14.3
Non-related person	0.0	18.5	0.0	4.8	20.0	0.0	0.0	7.1
Foster parent	0.0	3.7	0.0	9.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 70: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their residential setting in the past three months, by gender, 2021

	Female % n=563	Male % n=283	Gender diverse % n=56
Privately owned/Rented housing	87.6	83.4	85.7
Public/Social housing	5.9	8.1	5.4
Somewhere else	3.2	4.2	5.4
Boarding school	2.8	2.5	3.6
Out-of-home care	0.5	1.8	0.0

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 71: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their residential setting in the past three months, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2021

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander % n=73	Non-Indigenous % n=860
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Privately owned/Rented housing	56.2	88.8
Public/Social housing	21.9	5.1
Somewhere else	5.5	3.5
Boarding school	13.7	1.7
Out-of-home care	2.7	0.8

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 72: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their residential setting in the past three months, by disability status, 2021

	Have disability % n=127	Do not have disability % n=804
Privately owned/Rented housing	84.3	86.4
Public/Social housing	9.4	6.1
Somewhere else	4.7	3.5
Boarding school	0.8	3.0
Out-of-home care	0.8	1.0

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Table 73: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their residential setting in the past three months, by age, 2021

	15 years* % n=512	16 years % n=296	17 years % n=121	18-19 years^ % n=9
Privately owned/Rented housing	90.2	83.1	77.7	77.8
Public/Social housing	5.3	8.4	7.4	0.0
Somewhere else	2.9	3.0	6.6	22.2
Boarding school	1.4	3.0	7.4	0.0
Out-of-home care	0.2	2.4	0.8	0.0

*Also includes young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 74: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and their residential setting in the past three months, by State, 2021

	ACT % n=31	NSW % n=206	NT % n=16	QLD % n=245	SA % n=119	TAS % n=32	VIC % n=176	WA % n=113
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Privately owned/Rented housing	93.5	85.4	68.8	86.1	86.6	87.5	88.6	84.1
Public/Social housing	3.2	8.7	31.3	5.7	3.4	3.1	5.1	8.0
Somewhere else	3.2	3.4	0.0	3.7	3.4	6.3	5.1	1.8
Boarding school	0.0	1.5	0.0	3.3	5.9	3.1	1.1	3.5
Out-of-home care	0.0	1.0	0.0	1.2	0.8	0.0	0.0	2.7

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 75: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and how frequently they moved houses in the past three years, by gender, 2021

	Female % n=570	Male % n=290	Gender diverse % n=56
None	50.9	51.4	48.2
One	21.6	21.0	16.1
Two	11.8	10.7	10.7
Three	10.0	7.9	14.3
Four	2.8	3.8	3.6
Five or more	3.0	5.2	7.1

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 76: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and how frequently they moved houses in the past three years, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2021

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander % n=75	Non-Indigenous % n=872
None	36.0	51.6
One	28.0	21.0
Two	9.3	11.6
Three	14.7	9.2
Four	8.0	2.8
Five or more	4.0	3.9

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting result

Table 77: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and how frequently they moved houses in the past three years, by disability status, 2021

	Have disability % n=128	Do not have disability % n=818
None	50.0	50.7
One	19.5	21.8
Two	10.9	11.2

Three	8.6	9.8
Four	5.5	2.8
Five or more	5.5	3.7

Table 78: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and how frequently they moved houses in the past three years, by age, 2021

	15 years* % n=520	16 years % n=302	17 years % n=122	18-19 years^ % n=9
None	48.8	55.3	45.1	44.4
One	23.7	19.5	18.0	11.1
Two	12.1	8.6	14.8	22.2
Three	9.0	10.3	10.7	11.1
Four	3.3	2.6	4.1	0.0
Five or more	3.1	3.6	7.4	11.1

*Also includes young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 79: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and how frequently they moved houses in the past three years, by State, 2021

	ACT % n=32	NSW % n=209	NT % n=16	QLD % n=248	SA % n=122	TAS % n=35	VIC % n=176	WA % n=115
None	56.3	44.0	31.3	50.0	43.4	62.9	55.7	59.1
One	18.8	20.1	25.0	19.8	27.9	22.9	24.4	16.5
Two	12.5	11.5	12.5	10.9	13.9	11.4	10.8	10.4
Three	6.3	13.4	25.0	10.5	9.8	2.9	8.0	4.3
Four	3.1	4.3	6.3	3.6	2.5	0.0	1.1	4.3
Five or more	3.1	6.7	0.0	5.2	2.5	0.0	0.0	5.2

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 80: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and level of adequate housing, by gender, 2021

	Female %	Male %	Gender diverse %
Distance from family/friends	22.4	22.4	26.8
Distance from transport	13.9	12.3	17.9
Access to services	5.5	5.6	14.3

Comfort	5.0	7.7	7.1
Number of bedrooms	6.4	5.9	1.8
Physical accessibility	4.4	6.6	3.6

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample varied within in each cohort.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 81: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and level of adequate housing, by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander status, 2021

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Non-Indigenous
	%	%
Distance from family/friends	20.0	22.9
Distance from transport	21.3	12.9
Access to services	11.8	5.8
Comfort	6.8	5.9
Number of bedrooms	10.5	5.3
Physical accessibility	9.2	4.7

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample varied within in each cohort.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Table 82: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and level of adequate housing, by disability status, 2021

	Have disability	Do not have disability
	%	%
Distance from family/friends	28.1	22.0
Distance from transport	17.2	13.1
Access to services	12.5	5.2
Comfort	11.0	5.2
Number of bedrooms	10.2	5.2
Physical accessibility	7.8	4.7

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample varied within in each cohort.

Table 83: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and level of adequate housing, by age, 2021

	15 years*	16 years	17 years	18-19 years^
	%	%	%	%
Distance from family/friends	24.6	17.9	27.0	11.1
Distance from transport	14.2	10.8	17.6	22.2
Access to services	6.4	4.4	10.7	0.0
Comfort	5.2	5.1	10.8	11.1

Number of bedrooms	4.8	5.1	10.7	22.2
Physical accessibility	5.8	4.1	4.9	0.0

*Also includes young people who reported their age as 14 at time of completing the survey but would be turning 15 by the end of data collection period.

^Note: due to the small sample size for 19 year olds they have been combined with 18 year olds throughout the rest of this report.

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample varied within in each cohort.

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

Table 84: First-time homeless young people aged 15-19 and level of adequate housing, by State, 2021

	ACT %	NSW %	NT %	QLD %	SA %	TAS %	VIC %	WA %
Distance from family/friends	19.4	22.1	31.3	25.9	19.0	31.4	16.6	27.0
Distance from transport	9.7	12.6	12.5	14.0	12.6	25.7	10.2	18.8
Access to services	9.7	5.8	6.3	6.6	4.9	5.7	6.3	7.1
Comfort	12.9	5.8	18.8	6.1	3.3	14.3	3.4	6.2
Number of bedrooms	3.2	4.8	0.0	8.2	5.7	2.9	3.4	8.9
Physical accessibility	12.9	3.9	25.0	7.0	3.3	2.9	2.3	5.4

Note: Items are listed in order of frequency among respondents who experienced first-time homelessness during COVID-19.

Sample varied within in each cohort.

Sample is n<100, please use caution when interpreting results

Sample is n<30, please use extreme caution when interpreting results

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